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No Quarter

Ireland's Anti-Fascist Magazine

Issue 2



**Irish Ferries... An Injury to One is
an Injury to ALL!**

Fascism- The Nature of the Beast
Asylum Seekers- Slaying the Myths
Frank Ryan- A Profile
Residents Against Racism Interview

Editorial

"In this world, shipmates, sin that pays its way can travel freely, and without a passport; whereas virtue, if a pauper, is stopped at all frontiers". —Herman Melville, 'Moby Dick'.

Welcome to Issue 2 of No Quarter. Back by popular demand (or so we'd like to believe!). Yes, it's been a while since Issue 1 but the aim is to get the magazine out with increased regularity from now on which, given how prolific we've been to date, shouldn't be too hard. Having said all that, we move on to matters at hand.

Since we last went to print, the political landscape has altered quite dramatically. While huge changes have taken place in the nature and scale of inward migration, for example, many of the same challenges that existed for anti-racists and anti-fascists in 2002 persist today. Deportations and state harassment of non-EU citizens have, if anything, become more widespread and vicious in the intervening period. Dawn raids on the homes of immigrants by the Gardai and our own brand of "rendition flights" of these immigrants back to their countries of origin are now more commonplace than ever.

Meanwhile, the Fortress Europe project is beginning to bear fruit. The free movement of labour that followed enlargement has brought with it massive wage exploitation for those mostly Eastern European workers grafting at the jobs that a lot of Irish are unwilling to do. More pointedly, for those of us engaged in anti-fascist work, is the political fallout being stored up for the future for both Irish and non-Irish workers by opportunists in the political establishment.

Our cover story examines the issues surrounding the recent high-profile Irish Ferries dispute. When viewed in connection with the struggle of the Turkish GAMA construction workers, we see emerging what has become known as a "race to the bottom"- a depression of wages and conditions of all workers the eventual outcome.

The macroeconomic arguments about our country's labour needs into the future lie beyond AFA's remit and, in any case, cannot be predicted with any degree of accuracy. However, what does concern us is the degree of opportunism being displayed at present in relation to theories of 'displacement' of Irish workers by foreign ones. Apart from the fact that overall statistics don't bear this out, certain politicians hope to gain mileage by playing to the gallery with misleading anecdotes of occasions when this has happened. This does not constitute a trend.

It is clear that the pro-establishment parties are on an election footing. While AFA has never been under any illusion that the Labour Party especially represents working class interests, it is still telling when even they are flagging the canard of future threat of foreign displacement. With the prodding of their paymasters in ICTU and the main pro-establishment unions, Labour are now cynically and for their own ends hoping to appeal to their 'Old Labour' base while relentlessly pursuing 'New Labour' policies. Their initial concerns about the rights of migrant workers, now diluted, their public utterances of late seem to be much more in accord with a smooth 'berthing' of the next round of partnership talks and continued loyalty to the status quo. This is of course posturing and electioneering on their part, rather than actual racism, but the implications of the language being used and the message being sent out should not be lost on those involved in genuinely progressive working class anti-racist and anti-fascist politics.

Articles, letters and news for the next issue are more than welcome, let us know what's going on in your area or country...

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If you have any information on fascist or racist activity in your area please forward it to us at the following address:

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Kit Conway Remembered

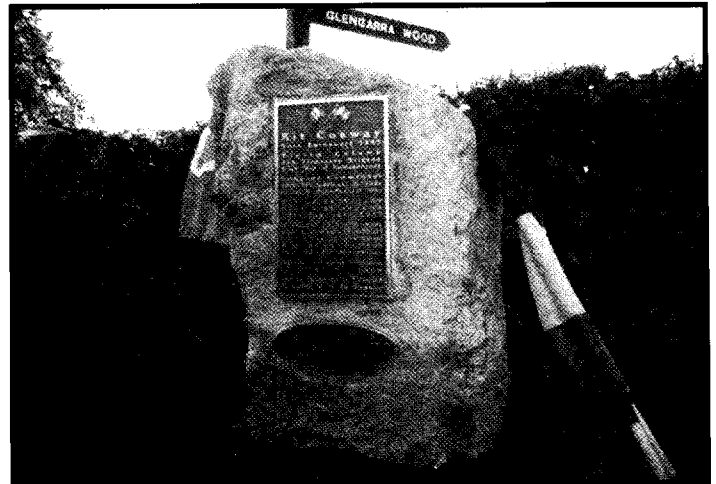
Over 100 people gathered on a blistering hot day on the 11th of June, 2005 in the village of Burncourt, Co. Tipperary, birthplace of International Brigader Kit Conway, for the unveiling of a memorial to him. Conway was killed in action in the Battle of Jarama in the Spanish Civil War in February 1937. Having already excelled as a fighter during the War of Independence, Conway went on to fight with distinction on the Republican side during the Civil War. Conway had a familiarity and empathy with the privations of Tipperary farm workers and the hardship of the poor of Dublin when living there that made him a natural socialist. This informed his decision to side with the left-wing Republican Congress when the IRA split in 1934 and ultimately to volunteer to fight alongside the workers in Spain.

Among the speakers at the memorial unveiling were the last two surviving Irish members of the 15th International Brigade, Michael O'Riordan and Bob Doyle. They, and the other speakers, spoke affectionately and in glowing (and often humorous) terms about Conway's selfless bravery and valour in battle. Mattie McGrath, Chairperson of South Tipperary County Council reminded the crowd that at the time of his death, Conway was Commander not only of his Irish company, but also of two British companies whose own commanders had already been killed in battle.

Michael O'Riordan recalled that on the day of his departure for Spain, Conway mounted an oil barrel on the building site where he worked and, addressing his fellow workers on the situation in Spain remarked: "sooner than Franco should win there, I would leave my body in Spain to manure the fields".

Among those attending on the day were relatives of other Brigade members, some of whom had fought alongside Conway. The Mayor of Waterford, Councillor Seamus Ryan, represented his late granduncle Peter O'Connor, while other relatives represented veterans Frank Edwards and Gerry Doran. Also in attendance was a four-person contingent from Spain who had traveled to pay personal tribute to Conway. In a moving highlight of the day's ceremony, one of them, Severiano Montero, produced a bag of soil from the battle site of Jarama where Kit had fallen and spread it around the memorial to him in Tipperary.

All in all, a fitting end to a well-organised and well-attended event. It was inspiring to see so many locals as well as those who had traveled considerable distances turn out to pay their respects to the hero of Jarama.



Neo-Nazi mentalist jailed for synagogue spray-painting

David Hughes (40) from Drogheda, Co Louth received 20 months in prison after being found guilty of four counts of criminal damage for spray-painting swastikas on three Dublin synagogues on dates in May and June of this year. He was also found guilty on one charge of possession of a knife.

A guilty plea and defence arguments that Hughes was a lone ranger, unconnected to any fascist organisations, cut little ice with Judge John Coughlan who said he wanted the message to go out that "racism or racial bigotry" would not be tolerated in Ireland. A lofty and less than credible claim given the state's own record of institutional racism, we would argue. Nonetheless, a welcome shot across the bows to others in that small band of internet Nazi warriors who might be contemplating getting out a bit more.

Hughes' barrister submitted his client's diagnosis with schizophrenia as a mitigating factor in his behaviour. He told the court that one of the symptoms of his illness was that he sometimes hears voices. It is not clear if the illness referred to is schizophrenia or being a Nazi wingnut.

Under a Convenient Flag

Irish Ferries decision to lay off 543 Irish seafarers and replace them with cheaper labour from Eastern Europe in recent months, not surprisingly has caused outrage among the company's workforce. It was an act reminiscent of the recent Gama dispute in which a Turkish construction company had also attempted to cut costs by paying its workers in Ireland 2.20 per hour. This latest move to exploit migrant at the expense of domestic workers was openly supported by the employers group IBEC, increasing as it does "competitiveness in Ireland". This competitiveness however, pits Irish against migrant workers, the cry sounded from some quarters being, that Irish employers should, "look after their own people first".



In any countries where migrant labour is used to undercut the wages of the domestic workforce, blaming the outsiders and not the puppet-masters defies logic; but it happens. To those that have their eyes fixed on profits, such alliances are trifling; racial allegiance being an idea concocted by the capitalists to be handed down to the workforce. Apologists for this way of thinking are full of "that's the way the world is" and "that's the reality of how things are today", throwing up their hands as though they regret this state of affairs, happy to make their peace with the status quo. The reality is that economics are in control, the class that holds power calling the tune. The sad delusion that an accident of birth and a shared cultural heritage should override the fact that foreign workers live in conditions comparable to their Irish counterparts is a way of thinking of no use to workers anywhere.

The Irish Ferries ship, the MV Normandy led the way for the company by no longer flying an Irish flag, re-registering under the flag of the Bahamas,

earlier this year. The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, of which both the Bahamas and Ireland are signatories, Article 91 insists that there must be a genuine link between a ship's ownership and the country where it is registered. There is of course, no link between Irish Ferries and the Bahamas, the latter being one of the countries that makes itself available to those wishing to abandon their own national labour laws. Irish Ferries therefore are attempting to escape all Irish and EU laws that are designed to protect the rights of those who work on Irish ships, the "flags of convenience" providing an opportunity for Irish Ferries to increase their profits. This last remaining Irish-owned passenger ship company, therefore is abandoning the Irish flag and making it clear that it intends to re-register all ferries elsewhere. The philosopher Anacharsis, writing in 600 BC, pointed out that, "Laws are like cobwebs, for if any trifling or powerless thing falls into them, they hold it fast, but if a thing of any size falls into them it breaks the mesh and escapes". A workforce divided against itself, however, does not constitute, "a thing of any size".

What Irish Ferries has imposed on the Ireland-France route and now wants to impose on all Irish routes is a unilaterally determined pay rate that is less than half the national minimum wage. This creation of what has been described as floating sweatshops will naturally help promote a "race to the bottom" that will have consequences for all workers regardless of ethnicity. The company claims that employing its workers on 12-hour shifts, seven days a week at around 3.50 an hour, is necessary to guarantee its future profitability. With flags of convenience, all protections for workers will be eroded, the seafarers being forced to give up their legal entitlements to annual leave or even days off (including weekends), a minimum wage, statutory entitlements to leave and working time directives.

While the company has reported substantial profits for a number of years, the Irish Continental Group (the parent company of Irish Ferries) released a statement on September 28th. Attempting to justify its actions the statement claimed that, "... it must be recognised that, unless the company takes the immediate steps proposed to reduce its cost base, the competition which it is facing from low-cost surface competitors, from low-cost air carriers and from the impact of a rapidly reducing passenger/car market and a steep rise in fuel costs, will hinder Irish Ferries' survival." Using the familiar tactic of fabricating a crisis to justify its actions, the reality is that while the passenger business has declined on British routes, this is more than offset by an increase in its freight operations.

The Assistant General Secretary of ICTU, Peter Bunting, in a letter printed in the Irish Times (8th Oct), threw some light on the situation, commenting that, "... the company has argued consistently that unless it makes drastic savings it will be broke within two years. Yet in 2004 top managers with the company were awarded lavish pay increases: the chief executive saw his pay rise from 652,000 to 687,000; the finance director's salary rose from 283,000 to 321,000; while the marketing director saw his wage packet increase from 224,000 to 244,000". In an agreement that both Irish Ferries and the unions involved had agreed to, with a view to analysing options for cutting costs in the company, a consultants report, finalized in late September, suggested among other things, a 5 percent salary cut for IF directors and senior managers. These recommendations were rejected out of hand.

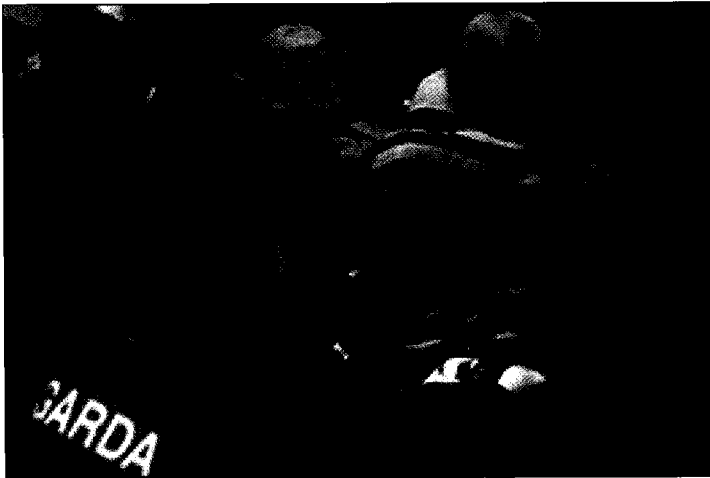
Bosses, both foreign and domestic therefore, retain common interests; the maximisation of their profits independent of, and at the expense of the workforce. These bosses consequently, can only gain from longer, harder work hours, for less pay and less benefits, Irish or foreign workers making huge profits for Irish or foreign bosses. From an employers point of view therefore, it would be madness if they should start practicing some kind of ethnic allegiance, the proposed, "we should look after our own first..." racial solidarity having always been designed to work one way. To those of you within the Irish workforce who yearns for some kind of racial allegiance with your employer while working security on a freezing building site; you can always be secure in the knowledge that Irish bosses do look after their own; it just isn't you.

Interview with Residents Against Racism

Residents Against Racism was set up to fight against state racism, and to oppose all manifestations of racism. In recent years they have successfully campaigned in support of refugees facing deportation, Garda frame-ups and other forms of harassment from the state.

AFA: On the 18th October last year, there were mass deportations, you were present, can you tell me about them?

RAR: We knew deportation was on the cards because people who had deportation orders against them were told to report to Dublin. We in Resident's Against Racism (RAR) started to receive telephone calls before seven o'clock as, although these people were to sign on in their local garda stations they had their houses raided at 7.00 a.m. One of the people taken was a lady with an autistic child who was not even due to sign on and after some effort she was released. The guards came to her door and pulled her and her children out of her house bundled her into the back of a van in order to deport them even though it was not even her day to sign on – it was like a police raid. One particular woman was told to report to Burgh Quay, she was deported even though her appeal is still in the process of going through the Courts. This woman's children were left behind.



AFA: Do you feel that the police attitude has hardened to foreign nationals?

RAR: Certainly it has. Their treatment was atrocious. We feel now that there is a real hardening of attitudes. Not just towards foreign nationals but also towards their supporters. One example of the appalling treatment of foreign nationals is the story of Miriam. The garda tried to deport her on the incorrect date, when she tried to explain this they refused to listen. The police chased her out of the building and she ended up unconscious on the street being straddled by police officers. She was then taken to Pearse Street Garda Station. A number of RAR supporters followed and were witness to racial comments from the garda. During this time some RAR supporters decided to block the back garage entrance, as it is our experience that the garda try to get deportees out the back door. Riot squad police surrounded us and an officer was holding one of our members. The man had his arms pinned behind his back and one officer had his knee in his back. The man was in excruciating pain and yelling to be let go. Some of our people were thrown into the street. Eventually Miriam was released due to the initial problem of the wrong date. The actions by the gardai on this occasion were totally unnecessary and there was excessive use of force on their behalf. We were shocked by this behaviour as up until this point we had had a good relationship with the gardai.

AFA: And when you asked them to desist? Did they take any

heed?

RAR: We didn't ask them. We simply caved in because we were physically overcome, and no we didn't ask them to desist, we were just pushed out of the way basically. They simply used their muscle to move us.

AFA: One of your colleagues was sent to court for breach of the peace. What exactly happened?

RAR: It sounds ridiculous, we were in the courts where the proceedings began. Courts are great, justice must be seen to be done or be heard to be done. However, I couldn't really hear what the judge said he had done. And he was the guy they had been misusing so badly that I was afraid his back was going to break. Maybe this was simply to cover themselves in case they'd hurt him. That was the speculation anyway.

AFA: Was everyone who was deported legally deported on the correct date?

RAR: A number of people were illegally deported as often happens. There are only a small number of solicitors who deal with this type of case and, as you can imagine on days like this their phone lines are jammed. There are always a number of people who have cases pending and have the right to remain in the country until these are finalised. On that particular day there were two people who had been taken as far as the airport before they were released. One of these people was a woman with a long term illness, the doctor on site refused to let her fly due to her condition, but the garda attitude was to stick her on the flight because they would look after her on the other side.

AFA: You said that a number of people were deported when their case was pending. Now, isn't it illegal to deport people when their cases are pending?

RAR: Yes, but there's no come back if the person is gone, that's it.

AFA: Have you informed any ministers?

RAR: They know, it happens every time. You know it's a waste of time reporting such things to them. One of the best known immigration lawyers turned up while we were outside the court, really after everyone had gone. This was because they had taken several vanloads of police out, to go to Nigeria with the plane. They have to have a very heavy police presence on the flight in case there's disruption. This solicitor was congratulating us on our demonstration, but he told us that he had to find a judge. What you have to do is when someone is taken into custody for deportation, solicitors have to, they can't just get them out on their word, they have to go to the courts and find a judge. We have had times when solicitors have got judges from their homes and any judge will do. You have to get hold of a judge and get him into a court and get a court injunction, and only when you've got that do you have a chance. The judge then came down himself, and two of the people were lucky. So they managed to access their solicitors.

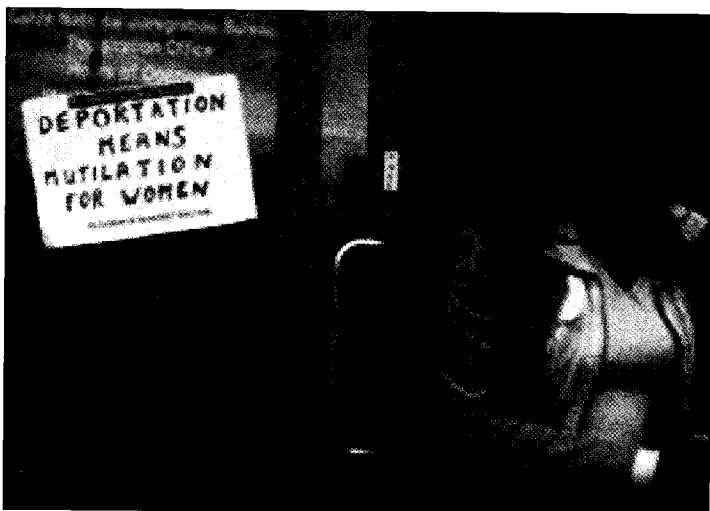
Also there was a man on the previous picket; the last one was in July. On this picket the man was outside because we in RAR didn't know about this case. He was an Irish guy, a lorry driver from Drogheda, who we know quite well now. He was very distressed, saying; "They've taken my partner to deport her and she's pregnant with my child". They had lied to him, as they had done on previous occasions (I myself don't trust them anymore). They had taken his partner in and he had said, "Can't I go with her? I'm her partner". And they said, "We'll come and get you in five minutes". And she was taken out of the back way, put in a

van and driven out, and he was standing in the front office. And she was gone. When he kept asking they said finally, "Oh no, she's gone, she's on her way. We're driving her to Drogheda to pick up her gear". And that's what they are doing. And the guy actually, belted to Drogheda himself. But we got an injunction and she was brought out of the airport on the grounds that she was pregnant by an Irishman, and she was kept.

There was another young woman on that flight who was also pregnant by an Irish man and her partner was not supporting her. She was a young woman, 20 years old and she's gone and her mother and her two brothers are still here.

AFA: Now, those two cases alone, does that not signify that the guards are aware of the illegality of what they are doing?

RAR: Yes they do and they continue to do it, and they get away with it. If the people are gone they're gone, because once your in Nigeria there are a lot of cases and some people that we speak to have been deported. The women from Athlone, the case that was on Prime Time, where the children were left behind, cases like that where there's nothing that anyone can do once their gone because its no good a European solicitor trying to do something from Nigeria, they can't. It has to be, if you can find one, a civil rights lawyer within Nigeria who could sue the Irish government. That's how it has to be done, but it doesn't seem that anyone has ever been successful at doing that. A lot of them don't have the money to do it anyway.



AFA: How do you feel about the Green Card system that the government is now adopting?

RAR: Well let's see how it works out, what happens. The migrant workers however are another category of people that are very much abused and mistreated. We have a member who is a migrant worker from South Africa and he has two children here. Actually they've got status because they were born before January, before the law changed. He had two older children left behind in South Africa with his parents and he had to make the terrible choice of either going back to South Africa and having a job that paid an absolute pittance, that wasn't enough to keep a family properly or to choose to stay here and by doing that he has had to give up the rights of bringing his other children, them and his wife here, forever. He can never do that. And its heartbreak for the family, you know. I mean, that sort of thing just isn't right. Alright if you want to bring your second cousin or your aunt, three times removed maybe that's different. But your own children should be allowed to join you.

It's very, very sad when you think of the Declaration of Independence talking about all the children of the nation being equal. The children of the nation are surely the children who live here and whose parents work here and are at school here for anything up to five and six years. These are getting deportation

orders. People who came here with their children that weren't born here. What's the difference where your child is born? A child is a child, for heavens sake. And the child is here and it should be the moral duty of the country to care for them and, I'm sure the founding fathers of the nation would be turning in their graves over what is going on.

AFA: Do you think the policies of the Irish government are racially motivated?

RAR: Yes I do.

AFA: So, fair skin counts does it?

RAR: Yes, absolutely.

AFA: So they are more likely to target Africans that they would target whites?

RAR: Yes Africans and Eastern European gypsies. They're the two groups that are hit the most. There was recently a flight to Romania and Moldova and the deportees on board were mostly Roma gypsies. They are the two groups that they don't want here at all.

Among the things we do in RAR is get publicity in individual cases. A very nice Russian family approached us one time and without any real hope we got one of our friends, a reporter with the Star, a member of the group actually. She said that really these people are what the government would call economic migrants and that the paper wouldn't go with the story. The paper however, went front page with it because the family happened to be blonde haired and blue eyed.

AFA: They looked like white Irish?

RAR: Yes, the parents and the children. It got enormous coverage. And you more often get a really hard case, and the family are black and their story is shoved in black and white in the middle of the paper, if your lucky.

AFA: Have you any support in the media?

RAR: We do have some reporters that do their best. I could name individual reporters, there are several on the Irish Times, our friend on the Star has moved and is a news editor on the Independent. The Irish Examiner has also been quite good, but at the moment, since the referendum, our reporters write stuff up and quite often the editor won't go with the story. They say, "oh, immigrants, that's not flavour of the month, it's not fashionable at the moment". At the time of the referendum it was big news, now it's really difficult to get press coverage. And I don't know why because things are worse now. All families before the referendum were of course portrayed as the same, apparently coming over here to have Irish children. They come over here, they get pregnant and then they're allowed to stay. All the decent people, of course, wouldn't do that.

Most asylum seekers however, happen to be in the age group where people have children, in their twenties and early thirties. Those are the age groups they happen to be. But there were lots of people, particularly women who are usually, quite often in abusive relationships, they've brought their children and were here, the longest time we know about is six years and they didn't have any more children but their children went to school and the minister was saying that that's what good people do. Now, they're the people that are getting the deportation orders. People who have become part of their communities, who have great support, like the cases in Castleblaney, there was Mketchie, who was torn away with her children who were very much part of the local community. The local schools, the local priest, everyone was on board. In Athlone it's also happened, it's happened in Tralee,

and I can think of all kinds of places, where I could just talk about them, where local communities have fought and done their best to keep their friends here, and yet they have been deported. And they could never have been accused of misusing the loophole of the Irish children.

AFA: Do you believe attitudes have changed since the referendum?

RAR: Racist incidents on the streets did increase around the time of the referendum. They doubled during and in the six months after the referendum. And that is not at all surprising because it was a totally racist referendum, and we stick by that. We were criticised at the time for using those words but it was proved to be true. Racist attacks increased tremendously afterwards. We do a stall every Saturday, and people came up to us to say, "I really didn't know what I was voting for, I didn't understand it and now I've realised I voted the wrong way". There was so much rubbish coming out at that time.

AFA: One time, in my job as a taxi driver, I gave a young woman a lift. Although she was of African origin, she had been brought up in Dublin and had a strong Dublin accent. On this occasion she was house-hunting and I was driving her to meet with a prospective landlord. On the way, she complained profusely that landlords, speaking to them on the phone, she said, they would be quite friendly. On discovering however, that she was non-white, their attitudes changed and she would be told that the flat had gone. She had only just said this, when, on getting out of the car where her prospective landlord was waiting, I was shocked to see this man's face fall visibly when he realised the woman he had talked to on the phone was not, 'white'. Do you find that this is common?

RAR: It's very common, very common indeed. Again another member of our group is very foreign looking, she looks like a Roma gypsy, and at the time of the referendum, we were handing out leaflets together and this woman was so abused. There were people telling her to go back where she came from. And she was saying, "well actually I come from Clondalkin". And that was it, but they didn't obviously buy that.

One night, trying to get emergency accommodation for women with children and no taxi would stop. We had to hide them round the corner, because every taxi was going straight past us. I'm not saying that all taxi men are racist that's not true. I've had some extremely helpful taxi drivers myself and I could name instances of going out to the airport in a hurry and guys have really gone out of their way to help us. But, it's just like any other job, there's that quota of people who judge everyone.

AFA: Do you feel that the guards are doing anything to tackle racism?

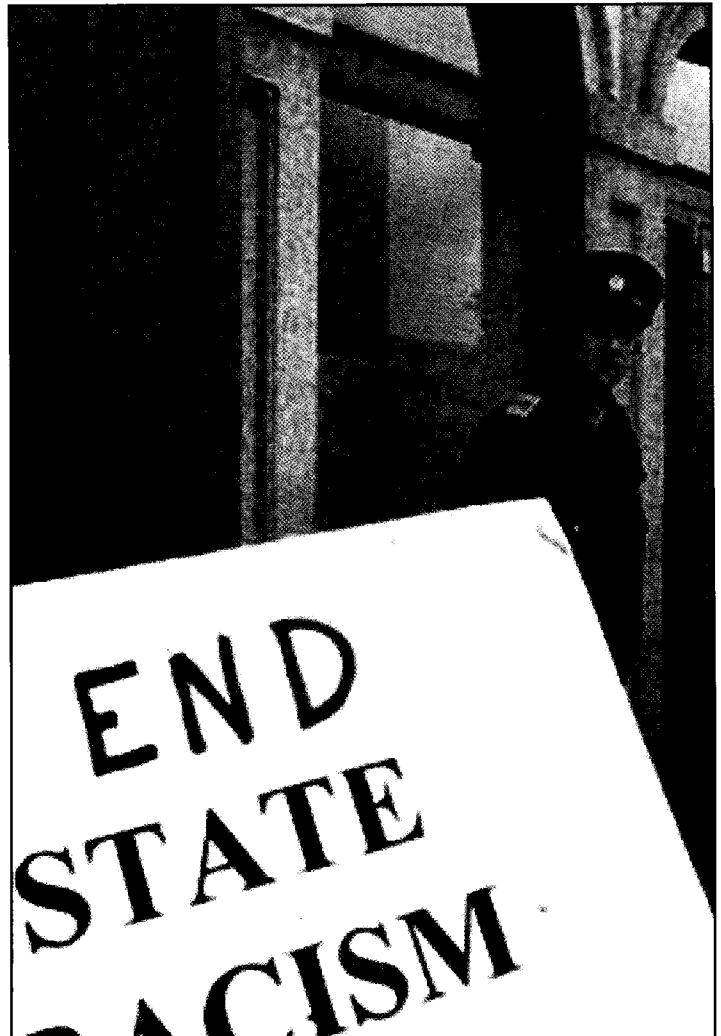
RAR: I think that racism in the guards is endemic. It's there. They have the so-called Ethnic Liaison Body, which seems to consist of two men and an unattended telephone. You ring up and you get a phone message. One time it took five days for me to get an answer. Now I'm not saying that those two officers are not trying to do their best but where are they? They evidently send them all over the country talking to schoolchildren, as they're certainly not in their office in Dublin. You get a phone message saying, "the office is unattended at the moment, if your complaint is serious, please call your local garda station". So they might as well disband them, forget about it. And whatever training is going on, it isn't working.

AFA: I was talking to a particular woman who was married to an African gentleman and even for him to get working visas. The legality of his whole situation is that a year after they were married is still quite untenable and didn't seem to be improving, is that normal?

RAR: The run-around that people get is terrible, the obstacles just go on and on. There's another area too, some friends of mine have had their status for quite some time, but have found what seems to be terrible prejudice within the job's market. The only work that they can get however, is as security men. You might have all kinds of qualifications. I know people who have done all kinds of courses, have a string of qualifications. They're still working as security men, and that's not right. They just don't get the references I've given to people, and I don't even get a phone call, a letter sent to me. You know, I've given your name as a personal reference, but no follow-up if you have an African name or an African accent on the phone, that's your lot really.

AFA: Have you any final comments, opinions, or anything you'd like people to hear?

RAR: Don't just listen to what your told by the government and by some parts of the media. Ask the questions, look into it properly and you will find that there is a totally false picture out there of asylum seekers. These are people who want to work, want to pay taxes and want to be part of Irish society. We need the workers, so what's the problem, and get angry about it, complain about it. Complain to your local TD's and councillors. Demonstrate, when you her that we need your help. We need more than thirty people, if we'd been a hundred people down maybe we could have made some sort of impact. And that is what we need.



Residents Against Racism can be contacted on: 087 666 2060 and 087 797 4622,
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UNCOUTH AFA ROUGHS RE-DEFINE NORMS OF STUDENT DEBATING- RULED WELL OUT OF ORDER!

Two weighty tomes recounting the proud debating history of UCD's Literary & Historical Society (L&H) were published last year. AFA historians were miffed, however, upon leafing through the annals in a local bookshop (well, we weren't going to let them shell out for this rubbish!) at the glaring omission by the editors of AFA's own unique contribution to the history of this august society.

For those who might have missed it, in October 2004 AFA made history (of a sort) in causing the first ever cancellation of an L&H debate. The background. AFA's contribution to a debate on immigration was deemed out of order by the overly sensitive souls of the Literally Hysterical society. The meeting ended in disarray after AFA roughs stormed the stage to engage in meaningful dialogue with our old friend and L&H guest of honour, Justin Barrett. The Boy Barrett's involvement in far-right politics in Ireland and abroad is at this stage well-known to many, thanks to AFA's expose of his links to both Germany's NDP and Forza Nuova in Italy. The lovely and always eloquent Aine Ni Chonaill of the Immigration Control Platform was also on hand to provide amusement for the barristers-in-training of the L&H. Such cads!

AFA music fans were thrilled to catch a glimpse of "Ireland's premier National Socialist Black Metal band", Ketzner in the audience. Apparently starstruck and eager to grab an autograph, they doggedly pursued their idols who must've got the wrong end of the stick, cos one of the master race was last seen tumbling deftly down the steps of the auditorium and pleading with college security to protect him from the groupies.

This unpleasantness notwithstanding, a thoroughly enjoyable evening was had by those AFA members present who were frankly unused to the, at times, almost colonial trappings of modern student debating. Foolishly, we thought that this carry-on was the stuff of those excellent period dramas on TV of a wet Sunday afternoon. Anyway, a heartfelt thanks to the L&H for affording us the opportunity to better ourselves in respectable society, if only for an evening (sigh!..pass the brandy..)

But I digress. The book-readers (historians) in our ranks demand that I make amends in this article for what they say is the L&H's petulance in snubbing our contribution to your history in your Big Book of L&H. To this end, they have supplied me with some student press clippings that they have assiduously compiled from that fateful evening by way of redress. So for our entertainment and yours, we present here the edited lowlights of said reportage:

"The events of the L&H Immigration debate will linger in the memory for a long time. While the peaceful protests involving UCD students were carried out in an exemplary manner both inside and outside Theatre Q, the kind of thuggery displayed by members of Anti Fascist Action was an absolute disgrace"
(College Tribune, Editorial, 27.10.04)

Quite right. Those AFA boys and girls have never heard of Queensbury rules, obviously. Jolly poor show.

"...there were 'two neo-nazis sitting at the back of the theatre and three or four socialists went up to them, disguised as neo-nazis'. At a later stage, these activists in disguise 'hit the real neo-nazis a few digs' before moving towards Barrett."
(College Tribune, 'Barrett bashed at L&H', 27.10.04)

Disguised as neo-nazis?? No comment. This slight on the sartorial elegance of AFA personnel is currently subject of a defamation challenge and rests with our legal team.

"AFA did not argue that Barrett should be prevented from speaking simply because he is an obnoxious racist; rather, they justified their action on the grounds that he has connections with the far right and is a figurehead for those seeking to organise racist violence"
(College Tribune, 'AFA ends justify the means', 27.10.04)

One of the few sober reflections of events. And oh! What's this? Bringing up the rear in the also-rans, the following commentary was provided by Socialist Worker. So bizarre, even by their standards, we re-produce in full:

"The physical attack on Justin Barrett at the L&H debate was a futile act and has only served to discredit the left in UCD. In order to combat racism and the extreme right we need to build movements that are democratic and involve hundreds of students not the type individual conspiratorial actions which took place at the debate (sic). We are concentrating on building broad anti-war activity in UCD"
(Socialist Worker, 28.10.04)

AFA discrediting the left in UCD? And here we were thinking that that was the SWP's job! And by way of explanation as to their uselessness, this reads to us like a 'washing my hair' excuse. (Not that their presence was in any way missed, mind). Obviously so deep in concentration in "building anti-war activity in UCD" that their peripheral vision was affected. Can somebody explain to us why these two issues are mutually exclusive? Or was somebody sickened at missing out on a potentially lucrative paper sale/recruitment pitch? Answers on a postcard...

FROM RUSSIA WITHOUT LOVE

On the evening of November 13, 2005, Timur Kacharava was sat outside the Bukvoyed bookshop in St Petersburg with his friend Max "Zgibov" Zgibai. They were enjoying a quiet smoke and a chat, when they were suddenly attacked by a group of 8 to 10 Nazi skinheads.

Timur was lead guitarist with political punk band Sandinista. He was also active in the fight against the Nazis in St Petersburg, and was a member of the Food Not Bombs group, and the Epitsentr Infoshop.

Timur suffered multiple stab wounds, and died of blood loss before the ambulance arrived. Zgibov was taken to Mariinsky hospital with five stab wounds, and was last reported to be in a stable condition.

While the details of Timur's murder are horrific, he was not the first victim of Russia's neo-Nazi skinheads, and its pretty clear he won't be the last.

The skinhead phenomenon in Russia has grown at an incredible rate over the past decade, and Russian skinheads, or 'Britogolovy,' now number over 60,000, and account for nearly half the skins in the world. The vast majority of them adhere to a neo-Nazi ideology and rabid Russian nationalism. Forty-four people were killed in racially motivated attacks in Russia in 2004, many of them victims of vicious beatings administered by skinhead street-gangs. Victims are rarely shot, but are mostly beaten to death with knuckle-dusters and chains, or stabbed with screwdrivers and knives.

Increasingly, skinheads make little distinction between children and adults. In St Petersburg, Hurshida Sultanova, a 9-year-old Tajik girl was murdered last year. She was stabbed to death in front of her father by a group of about 10 skinheads. She was knifed 11 times.

When asked whether he felt sorry for the murdered Tajik girl, one skinhead replied. "When you kill cockroaches you don't feel sorry for them, do you?"

Nikolai Girenko, an anti-skinhead expert, was murdered in an attack designed to punish him for his work in helping convict young neo-Nazis. Girenko acted as a special adviser to the public prosecutor in St Petersburg in high-profile race-hate cases. He was shot with a sawn-off shotgun. A shadowy far-right group called "Russian Republic" claimed responsibility for the murder.

A few months later, a 20-year-old Vietnamese student, Vu Anh Tuan, was stabbed to death in St Petersburg.

Again in St Petersburg, skinheads attacked a group of Tajik women and children at a railway station. Armed with knuckle-dusters and metal bars, 10 to 12 skinheads fell on the group. Five-year-old Nilufar Sangbaeva died on the spot and a 6-year-old girl died later.

Attacks on several high-profile Jews in Moscow followed, and a Jewish cemetery in St Petersburg was desecrated. A man with Uzbek features was murdered in provincial Russia and a man from the Caucasus knifed to death in Moscow.

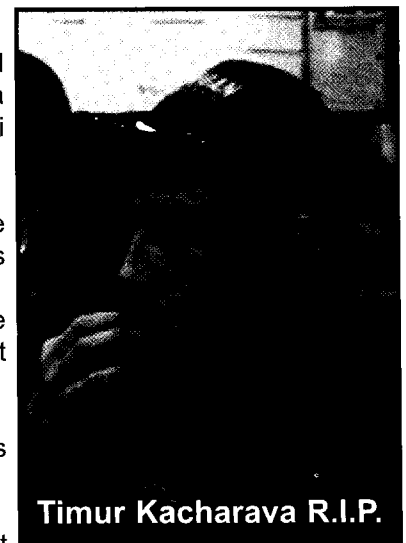
In Voronezh, a university town 480km south of Moscow, Amaro Antonio Limo, a 24-year-old medical student from Guinea Bissau, was stabbed to death last year. "We were bored so we decided to go down to Mir St where there are many foreign hostels and kill a black," said one skinhead. "It didn't matter to us which country he came from."

A report on the situation, 'How to quell the neo-Nazi setbacks in a country that defeated fascism', by the Moscow Bureau for Human Rights claimed that:

"If nothing is done to combat the skinhead menace, their numbers could swell to 100,000 within a few years."

"With names such as "Blood and Honour", "Moscow Hammer Skins", "United Brigades 88," and "Skin Legion", there are estimated to be up to 10,000 in Moscow and perhaps 5,000 in St Petersburg."

Poverty, slum housing, high unemployment and low wages, coupled with humiliation over the collapse of the Soviet Union and outrage over Chechen separatist attacks have all, no doubt, contributed to the rise of the Russian neo-Nazi skinhead phenomenon. It is a series of problems that Timur Kacharava was undoubtedly aware of himself. He chose a path that didn't involve hatred, murder and fascism. He didn't look for easy targets on which to vent his frustrations, and for that reason he was murdered.

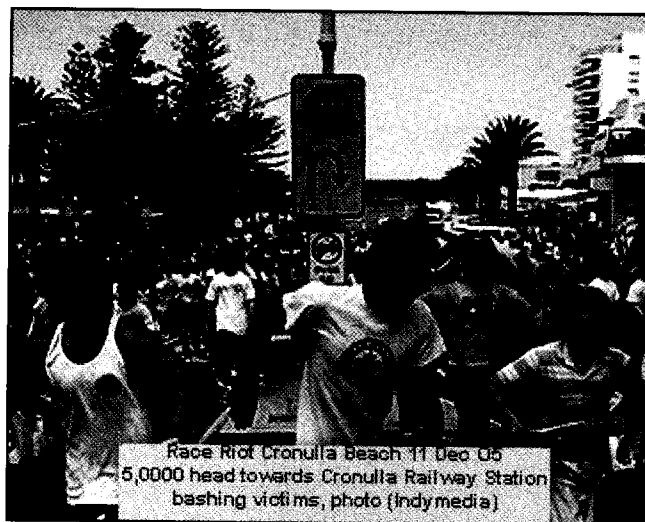


FIGHT DEM ON THE BEACHES...

It's not often that I'm ashamed to be a Sydney-sider but the events of December 11 at Cronulla beach have certainly given me pause for thought.

In the UK and Ireland your TV screens would have been filled with beer-laden, Union Jack waving louts screaming racist slogans. The sort of thing you'd expect on SOME football terraces, not on an Aussie beach.

What basically happened was this: a couple of run-ins between groups of Lebanese youths with the local lifesavers led to a serious altercation and a lifesaver was beaten up. That's not cool. The week following this assault, a vicious text message and email campaign flooded around Sydney calling for all "Proud Aussies to come to Cronulla for Leb and Wog bashing day." The origin of these messages has not yet been determined by the authorities.



What has been determined however is the amount of incitement that took place on various racist internet sites (eg Stormfront). Come the following week, two separate groups of Aussie fash flexed their braces on the beach. The Australia First Party with their youth division the Patriotic Youth League and the NSW contingent of Blood & Honour. The fash handed out their poorly designed leaflets and according to some media outlets, also flooded the crowd with free alcohol and revved them up with racist chanting "NO MORE LEBS" etc.

Of the 5000 people in attendance, roughly 100 of them would have been organised fash. The rest were just beach-going piss-heads looking for a fight. Kind of like non-political football hooligans who'll punch-on with anyone, irrespective of their colour.

The fash definitely took advantage of this situation and did their best to manipulate crowd sentiment.

The whole day went nova. Anyone who looked non-white was assaulted (including women). Bangladeshi, Indian, Greek, Italian and even a Croat were attacked. Thankfully the whole thing calmed down as night fell and alcohol sales were cut off.



The following week saw Aussie fash trying to milk the day for all it was worth. Internet radio shows, Cronulla videos, calls to arms - you know the story, "sound the glory horn of Valhalla - the day of the rope is a comin".

Thankfully, a week on, some common sense appears to have reared it's head and everything has calmed down. The affected communities have held meetings and worked out their differences with plenty of hugs, kisses and hommous going around.

Of course, this didn't stop a handful of very silly boneheads from trying to drive to Cronulla with carload of petrol bombs, smoke bombs, knives, kevlar helmets, masks and racist leaflets.

Following those arrests, various law enforcement agencies (including our equivalent of MI5 - ASIO) have gone all out on the local fash with half the boneheads in Sydney being raided. Think what you will of the law-man, but you can't deny the beauty in watching people who spend most of their time trying to kill you having their wife's knickers rifled through by the police.

For more updates on the fight against organised race-hate in Australia and New Zealand, swing by www.fightdemback.org

HOLY TOLEDO BATMAN!

In early August 2005, a dispute between black and white neighbours in a racially mixed area of North Toledo, Ohio, briefly flared out of control, as Thomas Szych, a white man, threatened two black children with a loaded pistol as they took garbage out to the street.

Two black officers attended the scene and calmed the situation down. They confiscated Szych's gun, but no criminal charges were filed against him, not even a misdemeanour.

Most normal people would have realised that they'd had a lucky break, and left it at that, but Szych it seems is not only one of those proverbial "Neighbours From Hell," but a real pain in the arse as well. He went to the local news media with his campaign to have his pistol returned, and in the process managed to call the two officers who attended the scene, "gorillas with guns."

While all this was unfolding, the National Socialist Movement, a Nazi group based in Roanoke, VA, decided to poke their noses into the trough. Under the pretext of offering support to Szych, the NSM announced that they were going to hold a march and rally in north Toledo on Oct 15th in order to assist the "beleaguered" white populace.

With only a few days notice, local activists began to organise opposition to the NSM. An anti-fascist coalition of anarchists, socialists and trade unionists was formed. They immediately contacted anti-fascists from other cities, spoke with local gangs, who agreed to call a truce with each other in order to confront the Nazis, and distributed 2,500 leaflets in the area concerned.

On the day itself, about 70 people showed up at the anti-fascist rallying point, including a contingent of Dexter Boys, a notorious gang from the North End of Toledo. As the anti-fascists marched to where the NSM were gathering at Woodward High School, many local people joined the demonstration, and by the time they reached the Nazi rallying point they numbered several hundred. The following is an account of the day's events by Colin, an anti-racist skinhead from Toledo.



"When we got to Woodward, the first thing I noticed were boneheads standing side by side with cops. At least two of the boneheads were brandishing submachine guns. In all there were only about 30 of them. Some boneheads and brownshirts. The anti-Nazis were in the hundreds at this time. The neighborhood really came out."

"Yes, there was some violence. I saw Dexter Boys throw baseballs, rocks, and eggs at the Nazis. When the Nazi march started, SWAT mounted, and riot police showed. There were cops taking photos of anti-Nazi demonstrators but I didn't see them photographing the Nazi filth. There were anarchists, one, my room mate, got arrested.

There was some anarchist rabble rousing but it really was the neighborhood people that started throwing bricks and rocks at cops and Nazis. While my room mate was in the police car he heard on the radio that Thomas Szych's house was damaged and he was running around waving a gun. The police did launch a tear gas bomb. Damn that shit was loud. I never heard one before."

Despite the best efforts of the police to disperse the anti-fascist protestors, the NSM were forced to withdraw from the area under a barrage of concrete, bricks and stones, and it was left to Police Chief Navarre to tell them to "get out of town or be arrested."

Later in the day there was a riot, during which businesses suspected of being sympathetic to the police, or the aims of the NSM, were attacked. Police vehicles were bricked, a petrol station destroyed, and a bar known as the haunt of white police officers was set ablaze. 114 arrests were made.

The anti-fascist coalition in Toledo issued the following statement after the events of Oct 15th:

"The coalition feels a great sense of pride that we kept the Nazis off our streets and forced the police to get them out of town, quickly. This was a mini-insurrection by the local residents—one of the few times that the alliance of cops and neo-fascists failed to accomplish a march or rally in the United States."

(<http://www.antiracistaction.us>)

"A FASCIST NOT A RACIST"



Lazio player Paolo Di Canio, has been banned for one game and fined 10,000 Euros by the Italian FA for making a fascist salute during a game against Juventus. The 37-year-old striker, a favourite with right-wing elements amongst the club's B9s supporters, has now made the straight-armed salute, which is banned in Italy, three times during recent matches.

The ageing Di Canio, who obviously has one eye on a career in right-wing politics once his waning football skills finally succumb to the ravages of time, told the Ansa News Agency "I am a fascist, not a racist. I made the Roman salute because it's a salute from a comrade to his comrades and was meant for my people. With this stiff arm I do not

want to incite violence or racial hatred."

The former Celtic, West Ham and Sheffield Wednesday player was fined 10,000 Euros, but escaped a ban for making the fascist salute towards AS Roma fans during a stormy derby match in January 2005. It has subsequently been claimed that Lazio B9s right-wing supporters clubbed together and raised the money to pay off the fine.

After being substituted against Livorno on December 11th, Di Canio repeated the gesture. Emboldened by the lack of reaction from the football authorities, he again made the salute when playing against Juventus a few weeks later. He was subsequently fined a further 10,000 Euros and received the one-match ban.

The salute during the match against Livorno was particularly provocative, because Livorno supporters are traditionally regarded as being left-wing. During the match, which Livorno won 2-1, Lazio B9s notoriously racist supporters waved Swastika flags, while Livorno fans held aloft Communist banners and sang anti-fascist songs.

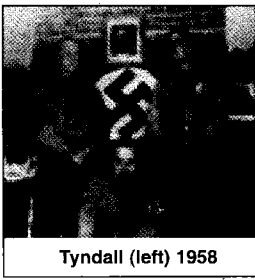
There were clashes between rival supporters after the match, and a policeman was injured. Di Canio later told reporters, "I will always salute as I did yesterday because it gives me a sense of belonging to my people. Before the game a flare was fired at our coach, but it was obvious I was the target. No-one is talking about this. It was a cowardly gesture, which is being minimalised. To be honest I am proud to be the target for people who cannot embody our values. I just want to thank from the bottom of my heart all the Lazio supporters who travelled to Livorno. They brought with them civil values and are always there in person and are never afraid to show their faces."

In a reference to the Livorno fans' left-wing tendencies, Di Canio added: "I embrace Lazio's fans just as I would embrace anyone who entered into a red square that has always been vulgar towards us. I am proud of Lazio's fans; when you have true values you are always right."

Di Canio, who had previously praised Benito Mussolini, added that the salute was not intended as a political statement and he would continue to acknowledge his fans in whatever way he chose.

He was condemned by a wide array of politicians, players, supporters and Jewish groups. In a rare foray into the world of common-sense, FIFA president Sepp Blatter rattled his bones and called for players who make fascist salutes to be banned for life. Even Lazio distanced themselves from Di Canio, saying the club rejected any "politicisation" of football, so Di Canio might be making that career switch sooner than he might have expected

The incident at the Juventus game occurred two days after Di Canio carried the Olympic torch through Rome as part of the preparations for the Turin Winter Olympics, which take place in 2006. After handing over the torch, he addressed the crowd in the Stadio Dei Marmi. During his speech, Di Canio, who was banned for pushing over a referee while playing in England, spoke about the importance of sportsmanship.



Tyndall (left) 1958

A LIFETIME OF FAILURE

The Death Of John Tyndall



The announcement of the death of John Hutchyns Tyndall in his Hove flat on July 19th was greeted with almost universal approval amongst anti-fascists and the general populace. People with a penchant for comb-overs, ill-fitting suits and neo-nazism were in somewhat less good humour however.

Despite bearing a remarkable resemblance to the proverbial bulldog licking piss off a stinging nettle, Tyndall was the public face of British neo-nazism for the best part of four decades. During the period between 1968 and 1999 he was successively leader of both the National Front (NF) and the British National Party (BNP), and was frequently seen on our TV screens scaring more young children than the Daleks and Cybermen combined.

Pompous and a bit snobby-sounding, Tyndall cut a rather ridiculous "Carry On" type figure, although there was a poisonous hatred at the core of his being that would be out of place in any comedy film. He was at his most venomous when addressing his own supporters, and could always be relied upon to rally the troops with a rabidly racist speech. In one instance he declared the National Health Service to be "indiscriminately compassionate", in another he suggested towing boatloads of immigrants out to sea and "bombing them as they do in Singapore."

Although he was undoubtedly an orator of some ability, Tyndall never got the mandate from the British people that he sought, and was forever a peripheral figure on the political scene. This was despite the fact that many schoolchildren in the East End of London actually believed that he was Prime Minister during the height of the NF's 1970's campaign in the area.

Tyndall's failure was partly due to his own personal and political failings, but was also due to the efforts of anti-fascists who stubbornly refused to allow fascist activists to implement their strategy of taking control of the streets.

Time and again Tyndall was thwarted in his efforts to become tin-pot dictator of Britain. He made his first mistake when he allowed himself to be secretly photographed in neo-nazi uniform at a paramilitary training camp in the English countryside, which somewhat dented his claims of respectability. His second mistake was to underestimate the determination of the anti-fascist resistance. The "march and grow" strategy which he espoused was ruthlessly exposed as a non-starter when first the NF, and later the BNP, succumbed to violent anti-fascist opposition.

By the mid-90's it was clear to many in the BNP that Tyndall was a busted flush. His old-style tub-thumping rhetoric was a throwback to another era, his strategy for taking the master-race forward was clearly defunct, and his earlier fetish for nazi paraphernalia was embarrassing for a party that had pretensions to respectability. He was a man out of time, and his inability to see the writing on the wall led him to develop an almighty sulk when he was eventually ousted from power by Nick Griffin.

Still smarting from his humbling at the hands of Griffin, Tyndall embarked upon a campaign to reclaim the leadership of the BNP. This again resulted in failure, leading to him being expelled from the party twice, and later proscribed.

His personal life was no more successful than his political one. His engagement to French Nazi perfume heiress Françoise Dior in the early 1960's ended acrimoniously when she married fellow nazi Colin Jordan instead, leaving Tyndall romantically and financially bereft.

His tightened financial circumstances led to him sharing a room in a house with fellow fascist Martin Webster in the mid-sixties. Despite the fact that Webster was openly homosexual, Tyndall claimed never to have noticed this fact when he later denounced his former room-mate.

Tyndall's was self-important, tedious and dull socially. He famously once wined and dined Conservative minister Alan Clark, only for Clark to declare later that it was "the most boring hour and three quarters of my political life," and that the Italian restaurant Tyndall had taken him to was "appalling."

The last time Tyndall came to the attention of the British public was when he was secretly filmed by an undercover reporter telling an audience of disaffected BNP members that Africa had given nothing to the world except "cannibalism, witchcraft and AIDS."

And what legacy has Tyndall left the world, pray tell, apart from fascism, failure and flyaway hair?



The Nature of the Beast

On the 10th of April this year, the inaugural meeting of the 318th session of the University Philosophy Society of Trinity College was organised amid some controversy. Once again, a student philosophy department, like a small band of incorrigible children, had decided to prod the slumbering beast with a pointed stick in pursuit of pseudo-intellectual thrills. Jorg Haider, the former leader of Austria's Freedom Party, had been invited by the society to speak at the meeting on the future of Europe and the importance of the nation-state. Naturally of course, anti-fascist protests and an extensive Garda security operation followed.

As those that had attended Haider's meeting in the Graduate Memorial Building, filed out past the heavy Garda presence, some of the protesters booed and hissed while others stood impassively. Passing through the Garda barriers, one of the attendees from the meeting called out that Haider, "spent most of his speech attacking the Americans". It was of course, no surprise to the AFA members present that Haider had neglected to mention any 'final solutions' he had in mind for his political opponents. As the slogan goes, "Fascism doesn't start with concentration camps, that's where it ends".

Haider, therefore was a wolf in sheep's clothing. A guise greatly aided by the bumbling failures of mainstream commentators to analyse the true nature of fascism, taking refuge in hysteria and blind denial. While Haider's stated admiration for Hitler's employment policies and his honouring of Nazi SS veterans were frequently acknowledged in the media coverage that followed, a class analysis of Haider's doctrine was consistently lacking. Such analysis is of course necessary, if the warnings from the past are to educate us in the present.

While liberal anti-fascists are indignant in their condemnation of those that supported fascists, they tend to be less vocal in exposing those that were supported and indeed benefited from fascism, pointing as this does towards the realities of capitalism as a system. As close collaboration between fascism and big business was deliberately ignored and denied in the post WWII world, a serious revision of history was perpetrated. Fascism became an ideology of 'hate', the assertion being that a political movement could ultimately be a manifestation of negative emotion. There were also attempts, in view of Mussolini's socialist origins and indeed the presence of the word 'socialist' in the Nazi party's full title, the National-Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP), to label fascism itself as a mutant form of socialism. Furthermore, older, pre-war myths were resurrected including that fascism was the government of the petit-bourgeoisie or the lumpen-proletariat over finance capital as some social democrats had at one time asserted.

New York Times writer AM Rosenthal, when discussing Hitler and the Nazi's, displays the familiar 'incredulity' of most liberal commentators when he talks of the Nazi's having a, "link of hatred so strong as to transcend all bonds of humanity." Rosenthal concludes that this is, "a hatred built on a vision of existence that excludes the very concept of a common humanity and divides those who live on this Earth into the good and the damned, those worthy of life and those not." However, while fascism makes a virtue out of irrationality, there was and is quite clearly, a definite rationale to the actions of all fascist organisations. The image of the ranting and raving madman covered the reality of fascism and its function within the capitalist system.

The rise of socialism in the wake of the Industrial Revolution, with its demands for dignity, justice and equality led eventually to its most powerful form during the Great War, in the Russian Revolution of 1917. In the war's aftermath, the European middle and upper classes feared for the fate of their well-established positions in capitalist society as a militarily trained and battle scarred section of the European working-class returned home. The emergence of fascism therefore was seen by many of the aristocracy and bourgeoisie as offering salvation from the revolutionary upsurges that were taking hold among workers and peasants across Europe and the rest of the world. This was especially true of Mussolini in Italy, who was frequently portrayed as a 'shield against the red menace'. Fascism therefore, was in the words of Trotsky, a "razor in the hands of the class enemy", seeking mass appeal by way of its cosmetic submergence within the symbols of progress.

Often referred to as the ideology of nihilism and despair, fascism thereupon surfaced on the political scene as a form of anti-socialist violence under dictatorial control. Appearing as a result of the decline of the capitalist system, fascism, in the countries where it took hold, destroyed the relics of bourgeois democracy, elevating open violence to a system of government.

As democratic illusions were undermined, fascism frequently came to power in the course of a mutual struggle against the old bourgeois parties, a section within these parties or in the course of struggle within the fascist camp itself.

The Communist International, in 1935 was to define fascism in power as, "the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic and most imperialist elements of finance capital."

Bulgarian anti-fascist, Georgi Dimitrov, added to this, "Fascism comes to power as the *party of attack* on the revolutionary movement of the proletariat, on the mass of the people who are in a state of unrest; yet it stages its accession to power as a "revolutionary" movement against the bourgeoisie on behalf of the whole nation" and for the "salvation" of the nation."

Fascist development and fascist dictatorships have always assumed different forms in different countries adapting to the historical, social and economic conditions as well as the national peculiarities of each. The governments and indeed the ruling classes in Italy and Germany in the run-up to the fascist take-overs were also greatly weakened, aiding the fascists rise to power. Acting in the interests of extreme imperialism, fascism presented itself as the champion of supposedly downtrodden nations and their outraged national sentiments. Germany for example, was smarting from its post-WWI humiliation and the 'Treaty of Versailles' that had hamstrung it militarily and confiscated its colonies.

The working-classes in these countries, reduced by want to despair, unemployment and the insecurity of their existence, were confronted by movements seeking to impress the masses by the vehemence of their attacks on the established bourgeois power structures. As Dimitrov pointed out "fascism intercepts the disappointed masses who desert the old bourgeois parties".

Benito Mussolini, the son of a blacksmith and fascism's founder was, before WWI, a socialist engaging in violent political activity as an organiser, agitator and journalist. Many of his comrades were reputed to have suspected that he was less interested in advancing socialism than promoting himself. Consequently, when the Italian upper class offered recognition, financial support, and promise of power, he changed sides moving from left to right. Having once organised strike action, Mussolini went on to break up strikes on behalf of financiers and bankers. Among such beneficiaries were the car manufacturers FIAT.

The concept of class struggle was anathema to fascism whose proponents stressed instead the necessity for class allegiance in the service of the state and nation. This allegiance however, in practice, flowed only one way. Mussolini's doctrine claimed to seek a middle ground between laissez-faire capitalism with its economic cycles, and bureaucratic nationalised economies, seeking harmony between capital and labour through what it called corporativism. This involved forming organisations that were composed of both management and workers in similar industries that would theoretically act together through governing councils. Each corporation was to assume control of the relevant section of the economy. The councils supposedly, exercised overall economic control via the National Council of Corporations. Corporativism however, was never fully implemented, the NCC eventually being incorporated into the more overtly state-controlled Council of Fasci and Corporations. In spite of the talk of corporativism, all organs both economic and political remained under the control of the state. Although some Nazis wrote in early years in favour of corporativism, no attempt was made to establish a corporate state at any level in Germany.

The most reactionary form of fascism to date has been the German variety. Requiring the presence of certain conditions to facilitate the Hitlerite-fascist seizure of power, as with Italy, a large disgruntled section of society that would be open to the supposedly 'new' philosophy was of primary importance. Sizeable sections of the German middle-class, especially the petit-bourgeoisie, ruined in the aftermath of WWI and aided by both the panic of the times and it's inherent blind conservatism, proved eager for the deliverance offered by Hitler. Under the cover of social demagogy, fascism sought to draw the support of the mass of the petit-bourgeoisie and certain elements of the most backward strata of the proletariat. Appealing to the most urgent needs and demands of its target audience, fascism portrayed itself in purist and anti-corruption terms, taking advantage of working-class hatred of banks, trusts and financial magnates, it made a show of sweeping away the parasites that 'fed off the nation'.

Conducting a policy of economic nationalism or autarchy, the fascists, wherever they laid hold of state power seized a large part of their nation's national incomes to prepare for war. This effectively undermined a countries economic life, accentuating economic conflict between capitalist states. Fascism therefore attempted to solve the problems of domestic markets by enslaving weaker nations, intensifying colonial oppression and attempting to repartition the world by means of war.

Playing on the fears of the wealthy, Hitler spoke of saving industrialists and bankers from Bolshevism. This was even though the left in both Italy and Germany was not powerful enough to seize power. Progressive forces, were however, strong enough to interfere in the accumulation process, frustrating capitalism's attempts to shift increasing amounts of its costs onto the backs of the working-class. Democratic working-class forces were therefore contradictory to the interests of capital.

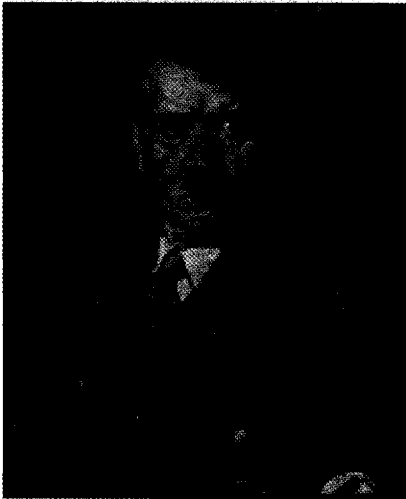
In Italy in the 20's and Germany in the 30's, in the name of defending society from the reds, trade unions and strikes were outlawed

Also, union property and farm co-operatives were confiscated, the latter being handed over to landowners. Those who complained of unsafe or inhumane conditions could be dismissed or indeed arrested. Workers increasingly had to work longer hours for less pay. In Italy, child labour was reintroduced and wages in general were cut by 50%. In Germany wages were cut by 25-40%.

Hitler and Mussolini further showed their gratitude to their big business patrons by privatising highly profitable state-owned steel mills, steamship companies, banks and power plants. Heavy industry was reloaded and subsidised with large amounts of public money and both states guaranteed a return on capital invested by giant corporations while taking on the risks and losses on all investments. Agribusiness farming was expanded and heavily subsidised, public capital was raided by private capital and, to sustain such policies, taxes were increased for the general population while big-business had their taxes either severely cut or eliminated.

As Italy went into recession in the 1930's, it brought with it a vast public debt and widespread corruption. Industrial profits including those in the arms industry, which had caused the halving of the unemployed ranks, rose significantly. In the years 1935-43, poverty increased overall due to the wage cuts while industrial profits increased substantially, corporate leaders finding their net incomes rising by 46%.

This allegiance between capital and fascism is true of all countries where fascists succeed in gaining a foothold. Vincent Navarro (*Monthly review* 1/96 and 4/96) points out that "major economic interests of Spain," assisted by at least one Texas oil millionaire and other elements of international capital, had financed Franco's fascist invasion and coup over the Spanish Republic.



In Japan, the fascist government itself was a coalition of the elite bureaucracy that ran the country on behalf of the emperor, the military high command and the zaibatsu (financial cliques). The zaibatsu, was made up of large cartels such as Mitsubishi, Mitsui, Okura and Nissan, among others that dominated the country's economic sector. As Japanese industry grew, its need for raw materials became urgent. A regional imperialist power, Japan came under threat from Europe's return to Asian markets after WWI, bringing it into contradiction with Western economic interests. The fact that most of Japan's foreign investment was based in China, suggested expansion into the mainland as necessary to the prosperity of industry. With the full backing of zaibatsu boardrooms, Japan's Kwantung army set out to bring south-east Asia under Tokyo's direct control.

In Britain, Oswald Mosley, the leader of the British Union of Fascists was the recipient himself of a vast inherited fortune. True to form, he found powerful industrial backers including the car manufacturer, Sir William Morris. The BUF also received overt support from Lord Rothermere through his newspaper, *The Daily Mail*. The newspaper itself had at one point run the headline, 'Hurrah for the Blackshirts'.

Although frequently portrayed as comic-book villains fanatical to their cause, fascist leaders served their own needs, their greed complimenting fierce class loyalties. Declaring that, "Our State is not a capitalist, but a corporate state", Mussolini and his cohorts lived lavish lives among the upper echelons of Italian capital and aristocracy.

Under the slogan, "The general welfare is higher than the welfare of the individual" Nazi officials made vast profits through the plunder of occupied territories and expropriation from concentration camp victims and other political enemies. Nazi officials secretly owned well-connected businesses that they ensured yielded huge profits. Slave labour was also contracted out from the concentration camps to such industrial firms as BMW, Siemens, IG Farben and Krupp producing major financial rewards. The pesticide manufacturing company Degesch supplied Zyklon B for the gas chambers and the firm Topf & Son designed the cremation ovens in which death camp inmates were incinerated (taking a patent out on its system in 1953). As in Italy, the vast armaments projects that the Nazis launched further ensured the healthy rise of German industry. In Britain, the US and Scandinavia, the upper-income sections of these societies during the 20s and 30s experienced a decline in their incomes, while in Germany the top 5% enjoyed a 15% gain. Haider's praising of Hitler's employment policies therefore tells us all we need to know about the Freedom Party's views on freedom and the working-class.

Fascist propaganda, supported by the bourgeois interpretation of history, portrayed Hitler as an ideologically driven ascetic and a man of simple pleasures. Hitler however, accumulated a vast personal fortune, actually stealing large sums from party coffers, expropriating art works from the public domain and inventing the new concept of "personality right" that enabled him to charge a small fee for stamps bearing his likeness. This latter initiative alone made him hundreds of millions of marks. His greatest source of wealth however was a secret slush fund to which leading German industrialists made regular contributions. As long as German industry was making money, the fuhrer expected his fee. On top of this, Hitler himself was able, due to special rulings, to avoid paying income and property taxes, further swelling his considerable personal fortune. He retained numerous private apartments and country homes, was served by large numbers of servants and maintained a large estate in the Alps. Hitler also owned an impressive motor pool of limousines. One of the many anonymous pamphlets, circulated among the increasingly disaffected SA (Brown-shirt) ranks in 1930 showed some of the grassroots dismay when it stated sarcastically: "We are quite happy to starve in order that our dear 'leaders' can enjoy themselves on their salaries of 2,000-5,000 marks a month. We were also overjoyed to hear that at the Berlin Motor Show our Adolf Hitler had spent 40,000 marks on a large new Mercedes."

Fascist dictatorships however are invariably unstable in spite of their attempts to overcome the inherent antagonisms within the bourgeoisie. Such contradictions are exacerbated by the fascist power itself that often establishes a political monopoly by destroying all other parties. More important however, is the fact that the fascist party in power cannot carry out its stated aim of abolishing classes and their contradictions. The nature of the capitalist system, the existence of classes and the unavoidable accentuation of class contradictions expose the true class nature of fascism.

The proletariat however, in its opposition to fascist power, must be able to take advantage of antagonisms and conflicts that emerge within the ruling class. The emergence of fascism forced the progressive opposition at that time, to re-evaluate how it dealt with the bourgeoisie. It was in their opposition to fascism that these progressive forces committed their direst errors leading inexorably to a final showdown in WWII.

Since the war's end, frequent attempts have been made to reappraise fascist leaders, primarily the likes of Mussolini and Franco. The all too visible atrocities of the death camps made bad PR for Hitler however, forcing his apologists to concoct an elaborate 'Jewish conspiracy' denying that there had been any mass genocide. In the aftermath of 1945, finance capital, recognising a falling investment dropped the fascist razor that had served it so well, and many thousands of liberals stepped forward alongside conservative forces to deny it had ever been used.

Claims were now made, that business was a victim and not a beneficiary of fascism. A conservative writer of the Hoover Institute, Angelo Codevilla, was to write, "If fascism means anything, it means government ownership and control of business". (*Commentary*, 8/94). In the face of undeniable evidence to the contrary, fascism in retrospect, was presented as an enemy of capital.

Some today now try to define fascist parties as exclusively those that rose to prominence between WWI and the end of WWII. Using chronology as a means to gloss over concrete reality, we are encouraged to look upon the fascist era as a historical aberration. Such propaganda serves a class-driven agenda that attempts to deny and indeed ignore the nuts and bolts of fascist ideology itself.

Like Hitler and Mussolini in days gone by, fascists are now portrayed as ignorant working class thugs. The powerful supporters of fascism however, will not be found on the football terraces but within 'respectable society', in the judiciary, the police, the military, in finance and in industry. In spite of this reality, the class-bias in the media was conspicuous recently with Haider being referred to, apparently with some irony, as a "yuppie fascist".

While the enduring slogan of "never again" conveys to militants, a determination to do what is necessary to prevent the return of fascism, liberal opponents of fascism attempt to gain the same result by irrational means. With one eye on the sieg heil-ing bonehead, the middle class liberal does tend to shy away from reality, making the point that fascism as an ideology is intellectually bankrupt and so, therefore provides a reservoir of negativity for a semi-criminal minority, and consequently is no real threat. It is no surprise therefore, that the self-styled meritocracies that run student philosophical departments show their class origins when they insist on allowing free speech to the likes of Haider. Without the class-based reasons to fear or hate the ideological reality, fascism without reference to death camps does not guarantee a passionately held negative response.

If one doesn't understand, or indeed want to understand the actions of one's opponents, it is often most useful to label them mad. Despite Hitler's persecution of communists, socialists, trade unionists and Jews, among others, the Nazi hit list, in retrospect has been whittled down to a supposed maniacal race war against Jews. The problem here is that if one demonises the fascists, then when these same fascists advocate a message that refuses to conform to liberal hysteria, listeners can of course often be expected to be somewhat intrigued by the resurrected 'new philosophy'.

Fascists do tend to see themselves as advocating a "spiritual" doctrine in contrast to Marxist materialism, their ideology having no faith in the ability of human reason. The fascist vision is that of happy workers and peasants slaving for the national interest, tightening their belts to make the country great. The calls by the working class for better pay and conditions, in the eyes of the fascists, are lacking in 'lofty ideals' of 'empire' and 'national pride'. Workers, living on low wages, are encouraged by the party of finance capital to 'look to the stars'. Previously, 'National Socialism' was a label behind which the fascists took refuge. Now, tailoring their images to fit in with the times, words like 'Freedom' and 'People's' are once again added to the names of contemporary European fascist organisations. As big business seeks new super-profits in a 'unified' Europe, the divisions that this has created within the ranks of the bourgeoisie, has drawn many fascists to adopt the mantle of 'euro-scepticism' and in some cases 'anti-globalisation'.

It is of course tempting to become bogged down in liberal attempts to psychoanalyse fascists as though their ideology were a mental illness. There is also a tendency to engage in fanciful theories concerning the occult, demonic influence or anything else that avoids the central class issues. Now as then, fascists are, in their early stages, ignored and underestimated, as they grow stronger. Later, these emergent forces will strike fear into the hearts of liberals and flabby democrats that look, in the latter stages, for means by which to find conciliation and appeasement of fascism. As Dimitrov has pointed out, liberal elements, "...try to persuade us that a "middle" policy can be adopted whereby "the wolves would be satisfied and the sheep go unharmed." *But concessions will not sate the fascist wolves. This kind of policy will not check them. Actually it only leads to demobilising the forces and the will of the working masses.*"

It is further tempting to view the armchair liberals of student philosophy societies as intellectual 'lambs to the slaughter', failing to recognise "what big teeth" the likes of Haider actually has. However, the class backgrounds of many such students, and the true nature of Haider's ideology suggests, that when the pseudo-intellectual phase ends, class interest may reassert itself. As the idealist young students grow up, entering the real world, it is not beyond the realms of reason that Haider and his kind's economic policies will find some appeal among those that strike out into Ireland's business world.

Slaying the Myths

A short while ago I was in a small internet café in a provincial town. It was so small there were just two computers, and while I used one an African man typed away on the other. After a while he got up and left. Behind us were two young women, having a coffee after shopping. Totally divorced from any previous conversation one glanced at the departing African and commented to the other "Of course they get socialising money, you know". It wasn't said in any particularly hostile way, just as a sort of 'explanation' as to why the man was using a computer.

Back in Dublin the idea of asylum seekers getting 'socialising money', free phone credits, special grants for cars, etc is so widespread that it is almost hopeless to even challenge it any more. Some well meaning anti-racists have even been heard trying to justify the 'free cars and credit' story on the basis of the special needs of some communities.

A story about 'free hairdressing vouchers' for African women did the rounds last year in a large midlands town. To be fair to the local paper it reported on an investigation into the tale by a town councillor. The man involved contacted every ladies salon in the town asking if they had ever accepted Health Board vouchers for such hair-styling. None of them had, but undoubtedly there are some Irish people who will continue to believe in a huge welfare slush fund devoted to dreadlocks for non-nationals.

'Free Cars'

The 'free cars' tale is the most widespread. On the madder reaches of the far-right internet bulletin boards we are informed that the grants only apply to the Mazda 323 model. The stories are however common currency in the pubs. Tales are told of the cousin who advertised a second-hand car in the 'Evening Herald' or 'Buy and Sell' and was contacted immediately by two African men who agreed to buy the car. They then ask the seller if he will take a Health Board cheque in payment. The man is doubtful and stalls them while he calls the Health Board, where he is informed that everything is ok and to accept the cheque. So the deal goes through and he banks the cheque- which is handy as no one has ever seen these cheques first hand. But the story then continues on its rounds...much like the tales of collecting empty cigarette packets for blind charities, for example. The stories gather pace as the value and make of the car soars with each telling. There is always someone to say its true because it happened to a friend of a friend, etc.

The Health Board

If there is one thing that can be said about the Health Board it is that they are no believers in throwing away money. Claiming your entitlements is made as unpleasant, tedious, unpleasant and dehumanising as possible. Finding out what your entitlements are is even more difficult, with not enough citizens advice centres to advise claimants. Indeed many Irish people refuse to claim allowances they are entitled to out of a sense of misplaced pride. The Health Board system itself is a carry over from the old and hated 'outdoor relief' system, where the poor went only in total desperation, to beg from the 'relieving officer'.

Nowadays the person in need does not claim off the Social Welfare- a familiar system- but must instead go to the completely separate Community Welfare Officer of the Health Board if they wish to get rent allowance, special needs payments for furniture, cookers or fridges, buggies, etc. A number of grants are also available, such as money for back-to-school clothing, kids shoes, books, etc.

A serious problem arises in that many Irish people are totally unaware that they are entitled to such allowances and grants if they are in need. No one tells them. However, asylum seekers, advised on arrival by social workers, do know what they can access and can hardly be blamed for claiming their legal entitlements. Irish people genuinely in need feel resentful, not knowing they have an equal chance of getting the allowance if they apply.

However, there are NO allowances or grants related to free cars, phones or credit, 'socialising money' or, indeed, hair-dressing.

Another problem with the Health Board system is that it differs from area to area, as payments are at the discretion of the individual Community Welfare Officer. Some may be suckers for hard luck stories, others cynical old gits. If approved for an allowance the applicant is given a Health Board cheque, as in most cases it is a payment for money already spent- for example most rent allowance is paid a month in arrears. Just because a person presents a Health Board cheque in payment for something does not mean they have scammed the money for that purpose. This is especially true for those on low incomes, who are less likely to have bank accounts in which to lodge a cheque.

No doubt there are some non-nationals, as there are Irish, willing to defraud the system for their own benefit. A common enough dodge among young Irish people is the 'rent allowance' scam, claiming several hundred euros for a flat they don't live in. They are equally as unentitled to this money as any foreigner. In Britain the Irish were notorious for signing on several times and also working; indeed many are proud to brag about it.

Urban Myths-v-Reality

The history of the urban myths concerning immigrants is interesting, as are the mental images Irish people retain. We are conditioned by images of extreme poverty and starvation in Africa, it is all we see of that continent on our TVs. When significant numbers of Black people first appeared in Dublin Irish people could be heard giving out about 'them' shopping in Penneys. But where else would they buy clothing other than the cheapest chain store? It was as if the Irish people expected the new arrivals to wear tribal outfits or wander around half naked. Complaints are also heard about young refugee men wearing expensive designer gear, with little reflection that working class Irish youth of the same age wear identical clothing, despite the fact that they also have low incomes.

Similar unthinking assumptions concern the background of African immigrants. Conditioned by natural disasters and charities for "Black babies" we assume all Africans to be poverty stricken victims. However simple logic dictates that anyone who can make it to Ireland to seek asylum must have had some money and education to get here. The truly wretched are among the 22 million displaced refugees living in camps in neighbouring countries as a result of war in their homelands, the ones too poor or uneducated to get out. Most of the Africans resident here are from middle class backgrounds and are college-educated, many fleeing because of involvement in political parties opposed to the ruling regimes. However Irish people are unable to ever know this as there is so little contact between the communities.

Resentment

Underlying a lot of the resentment and rumours about 'special allowances for refugees' is a belief that Irish people are somehow deprived of an entitlement because extra has been given to a foreigner. This is a potent argument used by racists to appeal to the self-interest of the native person and stories about unearned benefits, etc. feed into ideas of 'scroungers'. In fact most of this problem stems from asylum seekers not being allowed to work here. A person in employment would not be claiming those allowances, and even if only in a low-paying job, would be paying tax amounting to 500 euros per month. In a short period any money received on arrival would be paid back.

The Political Scroungers

However those who politically promote the 'scroungers' argument are, in reality, those intent on deflecting blame in a racist direction.

Some time back, the Irish Mirror printed an article repeating all the 'free car' myth. No source or names were given, apart from Fine Gael councillor Therese Ridge. When rung for a comment she said "It is a disgrace to think that sort of thing is happening when Irish people are struggling to make ends meet."

A decade back the favourite target of such parties were the 'unmarried mothers' and the 'dole scroungers', again the poorest sections of society and the ones least able to answer back. Anyone with sense know that these parties never gave a tuppenny damn for the Irish poor, so their concern is very touching now.

It is worth recalling that during the 1997 general election the Progressive Democrats- a party solely for the rich- based a lot of it's campaign on attacking lone parents. That such people in need are legally entitled to the paltry benefits they receive is ignored, as the aim is to convince working class people to seek an even poorer group to despise, for fear they might look upwards instead and identify those really ripping them off.

Tax Holidays for Immigrants?

The rumours flying around about the entitlements of immigrants are in no way new or exclusive to Ireland. In America there is a tale that the US government grants a seven-year tax holiday to certain favoured groups of immigrants and provides them with free housing, new cars, and clothing allowances as well. American stories about immigrants receiving cars, apartments and clothes date back to at least the late 1960's. Often the "while poor American kids are starving" bit is added to these tales, provoking an angry response from those who hear them.

The versions of this rumour almost always mention a specific ethnic group; it's a backlash against one particular section of the new arrivals- usually one which is believed to have developed a sudden large presence in the area. In Ireland it is the Nigerians. In Miami it is Cubans who are said to be getting all the government 'freebies'. In Detroit it is Arabs. All over America, Asians are rumoured to be getting tax breaks, free shoes, new cars, and interest-free loans. Another detail of the rumour has the government obliged to provide each of the newcomers with a car. In an Australian version from 1986 it was said that the Vietnamese immigrants got new cars, as well as a tax exemption.

A British version of the rumour appears as "The Secret Furniture Store." According to this tale immigrants to the UK know only two words of English: "Social Security". On arrival immigrants utter these words to the immigration officers and social workers. They are taken to a secret warehouse, where they are allowed to choose colour televisions, furniture, beds, etc. which are then delivered to their new home. The immigrants are supposedly given

keys to a new council house, along with registration books for welfare benefits for all the family.

None of the above happens. No one gets tax allowances, free goods, housing, etc. based on their ethnic origin. Income benefits and accommodation provision is based on need in most countries, including Ireland, the benefits are much less than those Irish people receive.

But it is easy to see how believing the tales adds to the backlash against the newer groups making their way in an established society. Recent arrivals are viewed as a "drain on society." If there's an extra slice of cake to be had, it should be going to the native born, not to those who just waltzed in, says the rumour. The rumours are based on resentment. People look around their poor neighbourhoods and see what they perceive as too many of an identifiable group of new arrivals upsetting their apple cart. Rather than identifying their feelings as "We were here first, and we don't want you lot changing our world", they channel resentment that cannot be expressed honestly into rumours that focus their bad feelings and also provide a justification for expressing those feelings. Such a view is easier and more self-satisfying than the hard work of demanding (or taking) rights, resources and democracy from those higher up. If people have a reason to believe that another group has done something to merit displeasure, the restraints are lifted.

And so it becomes okay to resent, and even to hate.

Information regarding immigrant urban myths from
<http://www.snopes.com/business/taxes/immigrant.htm>

In Green and Red

The Lives of Frank Ryan

Adrian Hoar
Brandon Press



I'd only previously heard the name Frank Ryan mentioned in the Christy Moore song 'Viva la Quinte Brigada'. The book is aptly titled as Ryan seems to have packed enough for several lifetimes into his time on earth. He fulfilled the various roles of gaelgoir, scholar, orator, street-fighter, soldier, republican, catholic, socialist...

This book is a cracking read and while it primarily relates the story of Ryan's life, it's also a good account of Irish and European politics and conflict in the first half of the twentieth century.

Frank Ryan was born in Limerick to schoolteacher parents and at one point it seemed he might be destined for the priesthood, alas it was not to be!

He was already sneaking out at night to drill with the local I.R.A. whilst still in school in Rockwell College.

The events of 1916 had a big effect on him and on returning to his native Limerick he joined the local I.R.A. where he would've been involved in the War of Independence/Black and Tan War. Ironically considering his later politics, one of his duties at the time was to break a strike at the Knocklong Creamery and he personally removed the red flag the workers had erected.

After a truce in 1921, he took advantage of a scholarship to U.C.D. where he took Celtic Studies and transferred to the

Dublin I.R.A.

The Civil War erupted in June 1922 after a split between pro and anti-treaty forces within the IRA.

Ryan was fervently on the anti-treaty side believing the government of the day to have sold out the ideals of the men of 1916. Support from locals on the ground was sparse...

"In 1920-21 the local people would keep sentry, but in 1922 you had to do sentry yourself."

Eventually he was captured and ended up interred in the Curragh Camp. He spent nine months there until a cease-fire was called. This was to be his first, but by no means his last experience of incarceration.

Surprisingly after all that had transpired in the war, he was allowed back to continue his studies in UCD where he was an enthusiastic member of Irish speaking societies and won a gold medal for oration. He was also the Officer Commanding of the UCD IRA.

There were annual demonstrations on Armistice Day against the commemoration of World War 1, these often degenerated into brawls and riots against veterans and the police. Ryan was an enthusiastic participant and cut his teeth street fighting in 1925.

Sometimes he was criticised for simply being over-eager to fight and cause an uproar.

He was one of the instigators of a disturbance at the Plough and the Stars play which was strange as he was a good friend of 'O' Casey's.

Under the influence of Peadar 'O' Donnell he began working for An Phoblacht and also was promoted to Adjutant in the IRA.

In 1927 Ryan was sent as a delegate to the Congress of Oppressed Nationalities organised by the Comintern in Brussels. This led to the formation of the League Against Imperialism.

This conference seems to have had a major effect on Ryan's politics, previously he'd admitted to being a physical force man who claimed politics to be an "obtrusion".

Now he began to realise the need for a more internationalist outlook and solidarity with other oppressed peoples.

He rose to Editor of An Phoblacht and was elected to the army council of the IRA.

He was talented at rabble-rousing and propaganda and under his pen sales of the paper thrived.

Like thousands, he'd been excommunicated during the Civil War, but he always remained loyal to his faith. It was said that he possessed "the Irish capacity for opposing the clergy in politics while considering oneself a loyal son of the church".

Ryan's talents lay in propaganda as opposed to journalism. At the time copies of An Phoblacht were routinely seized and printing blocks smashed. He was assaulted in the street and on one occasion shots were fired in the office window. Constant police harassment and surveillance were overseen by the then police commissioner Eoin O' Duffy.

Saor Eire was an attempt to foster left wing thinking in Republican circles under the auspices of Peadar O' Donnell the republican socialist.

It was publicly unveiled in Sept. 1931 and 120 delegates attended.

Ireland at the time safely tied in a religious and conservative straitjacket and of course Saor Eire was condemned by the men in the funny hats.

Prompted by O' Duffy, martial law was declared and the 'Coercion Bill' was passed in the Dail. Ryan's inflammatory writings were quoted extensively in the house.

Saor Eire, the IRA, Cumann na mBan and Fianna Eireann were all banned and amidst this repression An Phoblacht died a death.

Frank Ryan was beaten, arrested and charged with seditious libel. He was holed up in Arbour Hill and got three months for contempt.

When DeValera won the election all prisoners were released.

A.C.A. (Army Comrades Association) was the militant wing of Cumann na Gael, they were anti-communist and were involved in skirmishes with the IRA around the country.

Ryan argued for class solidarity over sectarianism and in the General Worker's Strike of 1932 "Catholics and Protestants, the IRA and the United Protestant Association did unite. They literally built and stood behind barricades together."

Saor Eire was eventually shelved as the IRA grew tired of flirting with socialism and Ryan was demoted at An Phoblacht.

At the 1933 Army Convention, dismayed at the total rejection of a socialist programme, he withdrew his candidacy from the executive.

The church was at the forefront of a hysterical anti-communist witch-hunt and after a scathing denunciation from the pulpit, the headquarters of the Revolutionary Workers Group was laid siege to. Singing of hymns gave way to stone throwing and after three days the building was burnt down. The ACA or 'Animal Gang' was heavily involved. The IRA barred its members from taking part, but Ryan, Charlie Gilmore and others defied the orders and went down to try and defend the building.

Gilmore was arrested for possession of a gun and disowned by the IRA.

In April '33 Ryan resigned from An Phoblacht. He attended the Bodenstown commemoration where he witnessed IRA harassment of Communist Party members.

De Valera sacked O' Duffy, who now took control of the

ACA and renamed it the National Guard or Blueshirts. Jews and Atheists were not allowed to join.

That Autumn saw riots, brawls and shootings between Blueshirts and Republicans.

At the '34 army convention, Ryan, O' Donnell, Gilmore and others quit after winning the floor vote, but being overruled by the army council on a motion to adopt a socialist programme.

They announced the holding of a Republican Congress in Athlone in three weeks time. There were 200 delegates present at the reading of the Athlone Manifesto. The Irish Citizen Army was re-formed and 300 men and women, including Kit Conway began drilling.

A newspaper was launched featuring the Connolly quote "We cannot conceive of a free Ireland with a subject working class, we cannot conceive of a subject Ireland with a free working class". The paper featured bread and butter issues; naming and shaming slum landlords, rent strikes, labour news.

There were six branches of Congress in Dublin alone, tenant groups and from protestant workers in the North who formed themselves into Connolly clubs.

At Bodenstown that year, 300 members from Belfast laid wreaths at Connolly's grave before joining the 2,000 strong Congress contingent, unfortunately this was too much for some and the Northerners were attacked by Tipperary IRA men who ripped up their banners.

It was intended for "Congress to be the parliament of the plain people and would plan their campaign and direct it towards its goal- a Worker's Republic".

186 delegates gathered at Rathmines Town Hall to a protest by 36 Blueshirts. After arguments between the idea of an informal United Front strategy and a stricter political party and programme, there was a split and thus Congress was finished before it had even started.

With the decline of the Blueshirts, Congress' biggest target was gone.

The Armistice Day March that year was organised by Captain Jack White. Over 2000 veterans of WW1 marched against war and poverty. Frank Ryan could never have envisaged the day he would march alongside be-medalled ex-soldiers of the British Empire!

The Congress newspaper only lasted for 3 issues. The Tram Workers Strike of 1935 saw a brief alliance of Congress, the Communist Party of Ireland and the IRA. But at the Bodenstown March that year there were only 40 something marchers.

Dreams of a united Protestant and Catholic working class went up in smoke with the Loyalist pogroms which left 13 dead and thousands of Catholics homeless.

"When you have slaughtered enough of one another, back you will be driven to your reeking slums, back to work at decreased wages, or back to the Exchange for lesser relief. And neither King William nor the Pope will avail you".

In 1936 Ryan stood as an independent in the Corporation elections as a candidate for Dublin North East. He barely campaigned and only got 418 votes, coming 15th of 22.

In July 1936 Franco took control of the Nationalist forces in Spain. Most reports of the war to reach Ireland were unabashed accounts of atrocities committed by the Republican side. Church burnings, massacres of civilians

and nuns. Chief amongst the publishers of pro-Franco propaganda was the Irish Independent.

Cardinal McRory had been approached for support by pro-Franco agents in London and he referred them to "a chivalrous, courageous, upright man and above all a good Catholic and fine organiser", Eoin O' Duffy. A church collection raised 43,000 for Franco.

McRory condemned Republican Congress' support of the Republicans from the pulpit claiming they supported "a campaign that was being carried on to destroy belief in God and Jesus Christ, the Catholic Church and... every Catholic state in the world".

Ryan refuted him "As a Catholic I will take my religion from Rome, but as an Irish Republican I will take my politics from neither Moscow nor Maynooth".

The Spanish cause gave Congress a new lease of life. Dublin Communist Bob Doyle stated "My thoughts on the way to Spain were that every bullet I fired would be a bullet against a Dublin Landlord and Capitalist".

IRA Chief of Staff Tom Barry forbade IRA men to enlist. Many did and among them were two 14 year olds by the names of Brendan Behan and Cathal Goulding. Ryan sent them home as they were too young. They later set off by bicycle, but got punctures and had to turn back!

It was Ryan's intention to form a distinctive Irish Brigade, but this was not to be and a lot of his time was to be taken up with liason and publicity.



He spent time at the front and away from the fighting, organising the Irish and helping with propaganda.

At the Battle of Jarama, there was a total and massacre of the Ant-Fascist forces as they fought to prevent the fascist advance on Madrid.

The men were tired and done for, but out of nowhere Ryan and Jock Cunningham rallied the dishevelled and defeated men and they eventually recaptured their original positions and forced a famous fascist retreat.

In the vicious bloody battle for Pingarron Heights, which came to be known as Suicide Hill, over 10,000 Republicans and 6,000 fascists died. The hill changed hands 4 times in one day.

Ryan got a bullet in the arm and returned to Dublin in March '37.

La Borda, a Basque priest was visiting, but was prohibited from saying mass.

Ryan & Peadar O' Donnell drew up a manifesto that contested the idea of a semi-state church, one of their demands was that "Equal pay and opportunities for women in industry shall be assured".

A protest at the Coronation of King George the Fifth on the 12th of May turned into a riot and in the fighting, Frank Ryan ended up battered and broken-nosed... Ryan and the protestors marched again the next day and met with no resistance.

He briefly revived An Phoblacht, at this point he was against further recruitment for the Spanish Cause as too much blood had already been spilt. Once again he ran for election in absentia and got 914 votes.

The Blueshirts arrived home in ragged disarray having never even engaged the enemy. O'Duffy had rarely been sighted by his men and they returned home as two dis-sentencing factions.

On the 14th of June '37 he returned alone to Spain where he worked on the International Brigade's newspaper and joined the remaining Irish in Albacete. There were no more than 50 of them left.

In Calaciete on the 30th of March 1938, the men stumbled into an Italian ambush and were captured. Ryan immediately took responsibility as Officer Commanding. Defiant as a prisoner, he was sentenced to death. After being prodded with bayonets and in front of a firing squad he still refused to give the fascist salute.

He was sent to Zaragosa Prison where he was placed in solitary and beaten. Charged with directing firing squads and still under sentence of death, he made the most of his time, teaching classes to the other prisoners.

Frank ended up in court defending the first charge and additional trumped up charges from back in Ireland, including murders. One man desperate to see the end of him was an ex-Blueshirt, Captain Thomas Gunning who later wound up working for old scarface himself, Lord Haw Haw in Berlin.



In Summer 1938, the bad Paddy languished in the shadow of execution in Burgos Central Prison. His plight received international publicity and the bogus allegations were refuted. O' Duffy himself met Ryan's sister Eilis and sent a telegram to Franco asking for Ryan's release. 50 TDs signed a petition.

In February '39 the Irish government officially recognised Franco's Spain and the war ended in March. Franco referred to Ryan as "My most important prisoner" and there looked to be little hope of release, or clemency.

Operation Sealion was the codename for the Nazi's secret plan to use Ireland as a launching pad to invade Britain. Ryan's lawyer just happened to be a member of Franco's secret service and was also working for the Abwehr, German Intelligence. As part of the plan, Ryan was given the opportunity to escape and took it in July 1940, this

saved face for Franco, who didn't want to be seen to release him.

He ended up in Nazi Germany, where he was re-united with Sean Russell, IRA Chief of Staff, who'd already been working with the Abwehr and was all set for Operation Dove, his return to Ireland.

Russell's antics in Germany are very controversial and he is certainly guilty of conspiring with the Nazis, according to the book, purely for Irish Republican aims, a case of the enemy of the enemy is my friend. Nazi attempts to indoctrinate Russell failed spectacularly. "I am not a Nazi, I'm not even pro-German, I am an Irishman fighting for the independence of Ireland".

In August, Ryan and Russell, code named Richard I and Richard II set sail for Ireland in a U-Boat. On only the second day of the voyage Russell began vomiting and took ill. After four days at sea, Russell died in Ryan's arms. He was buried at sea only 100 miles from the coast of Galway. Ryan, ignorant of his plans decided to return to Germany to learn the details of the plan or maybe act as a once-off go-between, between Ireland and Germany. After three years abroad, he'd been so close to home, but decided any plan that could possibly benefit Ireland was more important.

He ended up back in Nazi Germany and one of his only friends was the writer Francis Stuart, who was collaborating with the regime by writing radio broadcasts for Lord Haw Haw. Ryan was under no obligation to the regime and lived an uncharacteristically quiet life under the pseudonym Frank Richards. He grew to detest the Nazis, but kept his views to himself, knowing full well he was under the gaze of the Gestapo. Ryan still harboured hopes of getting home one day, but as the war went on this became increasingly unlikely.

There was another plan "Operation Osprey", whereby Ryan would "act as a military contact between the Irish government and Germany in the event of an Allied occupation of Ireland and to help organise guerrilla warfare against the aggressors", but in 1941, Osprey was abandoned and by '42 the Abwehr had shut up shop for good. The German's had over-estimated Ryan's influence and importance in Ireland and in the end he'd outlived his usefulness.

On the fifteenth of January 1943, he suffered a stroke and as his hopes of getting home diminished, so did his fighting spirit and will to live... During Allied bombing raids he often stayed above ground and simply watched the bombs fall around him. It was lonely, sad and so cruel to think of the man who dedicated so much to fighting fascism ending his days under the thumb of the Nazis, Stuart recalled that Ryan "Never to the day of his death, abandoned his beliefs".

His health gradually grew worse and worse and eventually one night in his sleep Ryan started raving and shouting orders in Spanish, evidently he was dreaming of the battlefields of Spain. He died the next day on the 10th of June 1944 and was buried in Loschwitz by the banks of the Elbe.

SONS OF SPARTACUS

Throughout 2004 and most of 2005, a series of anonymous threats appeared on various internet message boards promising dire consequences should the renowned anti-fascist band, the Angelic Upstarts ever set foot on a stage again. Lead singer Mensi, responded as any good anti-fascist should, he sucked in his beer-belly, reformed the band, and took them back out on the road again.

Various gigs across Europe followed, including a storming performance at the 'Wasted' festival in Morecambe, England. This event had seen sizeable numbers of boneheads turn up in the past, but for the first time ever it was fascist-free. A Praetorian Guard of anti-fascists followed Mensi's every step, but in the end they weren't needed.

More threats followed, but predictions from White Geezer, ICF, C18, and various other web-warriors that the Upstarts would "never play London again" also proved groundless. It seems the master-race preferred to stay at home and play with their computers on the evening when the Upstarts, the Oppressed, the Beggars and numerous other anti-fascist bands played in North London. The Upstarts followed this with several more gigs in various parts of the North and Midlands, including a number of places where the fash might have been expected to crawl out of the woodwork, but to no-one's great surprise, the master-race failed to put in an appearance.

The Upstarts also played an AFA benefit gig in Bolton, which had the beneficial result of bringing together anti-fascists from across the North. This should hopefully herald the start of closer co-operation between previously isolated anti-fascist groups and individuals.

Once again, fascist threats and intimidation have had the opposite effect to that intended. The fact that anti-fascists are starting to get organised in the North of England again, and that the Upstarts are back playing gigs, is purely down to the fact that the fash can't keep their big mouths shut. We should offer them our heartfelt thanks, but as someone pointed out, "that would be like thanking Hitler for the History Channel."



NAZI POSER



GIVE IT UP!
YOU FUCKIN' LOSER

Useful Contacts

Residents Against Racism,

Email: infohelp@residentsagainstracism.org
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