

Tíocfaidh Ár Lá

For Celtic & Ireland

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Aye, that's what you think laddie

But ref there is no such card as an Orange Card!!

CONSPIRACY OR INCOMPETENCE?

The dust has now settled after the match against rangers but still the controversy rages on about refereeing decisions in matches involving the two Glasgow clubs this season. There is deep unease about the competency and professionalism of referees in Scotland. Celtic FC made representations to the SFA in advance of the match asking for clarification on a number of points with regard to what the club perceives to be unfair advantage given to our opponents not only in matches against Celtic, but also in matches against other SPL clubs which have seen rangers favoured by poor match officials.

As might have been expected the Scottish football press have rallied round the SFA and rangers, but no-one has been able to explain away or justify some of the blatantly biased decisions

that have been given against Celtic this season. It is apparent that something is amiss in Scottish football and that the standard of refereeing is at the centre of it. As long as we have a football hierarchy that is blind to its own bias and a craven press that indulges their every whim, there will be no change. It is time now for outside bodies like UEFA and FIFA to thoroughly investigate the SFA and the SPL. If nothing else such an investigation would at least assuage fears among our supporters of institutionalised bigotry at the SFA and among the refereeing 'brethren' in particular.

Celtic have a right to know whether we are simply the victims of incompetent refereeing, or of a wider conspiracy against the club. If it is the former then the training of referees must be overhauled and in the meantime match officials from outside of Scotland should officiate at Celtic v rangers matches. If the latter is the case then Scottish football needs to change, root and branch.

(see inside for more)

INGLORIOUS CHEATING BASTARDS

The leak to the press in the days leading up to the recent rangers v Celtic match that Celtic PLC had made official representations to the SFA with regard to the standard of refereeing in the SPL was enough to resurrect all the old accusations of Celtic Paranoia from assorted rangers fans working in the Scottish media. Sunday's match against rangers did nothing to allay our fears that at the very least the standard of refereeing in Scotland is poor, if not verging on the corrupt. On two occasions in Old Firm matches this season Kyle Lafferty has been involved in controversial incidents; he should have been sent off for a malicious challenge on Andreas Hinkel in the last "OF" match, and last Sunday he conspired to get Celtic's captain Scott Brown red-carded. Leaving aside Lafferty's involvement in these incidents, there is a common theme to all of this... It is the good fortune of rangers over almost every other team in the SPL when it comes to the big refereeing decisions.

A debate on this matter took place recently on Real Radio. The usual accusations of 'paranoia' were levelled against complaining Celtic supporters. Such was the scorn poured on it that one Celtic-supporting listener called 'Keith' decided to make his research public. Here are some of his controversial findings:

Decisions that have gone against Celtic have cost Celtic 9 points this season. Rangers have gained 6 points from dodgy decisions and have stayed in the Scottish Cup due to a dodgy decision. A potential 15 point swing based on poor refereeing decisions.

3 opposing SPL managers make admission to the poor decisions against Celtic and a ref admits to error.

8 stonewall penalties denied for Celtic and 4 valid goals chopped off.

Brian McLean tangled with Fortune - in the 1-1 draw with Falkirk on Saturday. Hinkel was also unhappy about Celtic keeper Artur Boruc being penalised for apparently stepping out of his area late on. "It's not really my thing to say

something about referees but, once again, we had some very strange decisions," said Hinkel. Not even just the penalty - look at the situation when Artur had a free-kick given against him.

TWO points dropped. Opposing manager admits Celtic should have had penalty.

10 January 2010 -

Hamilton v Rangers

3-2 down and a very very doubtful penalty given to Rangers, Hamilton player lying on ground while trying to move his hand away hand ball penalty given.

Referee - Charlie Richmond

Scotsman - "They needed a touch of good fortune to equalise when referee Charlie Richmond rather harshly penalised Hamilton debutant Stuart Elliott for handball, awarding the spot-kick from which Kenny Miller converted."

A gift given to Rangers by ref to keep them in the Cup. It's okay saying Richmond denied Miller a penalty in the replay but if it was not for the ludicrous decision in first game there would have been no replay.

3 January 2010 - Celtic v Rangers

2 shocking decisions cost Celtic the 3 points (regardless of the poor finishing) Fortune scores a goal - chopped off incorrectly.

Lafferty assaults Hinkel - a red card offence but only yellow given.

Referee - Steve Conroy

Scotsman - "Following the controversial decision by Conroy to disallow what looked like a perfectly good Fortune goal after 19 minutes. Moments later, Rangers striker Kyle Lafferty was perhaps fortunate only to be booked for a late challenge on Celtic right-back Andreas Hinkel."

TWO points dropped. ONE point gained for Rangers. 2 derbies in a row that multiple decisions go against Celtic.



Here are just some examples and quotes from media.

10 February 2010 - Motherwell 1 Rangers 1

Motherwell denied a goal which was 2 yards outside that would have put them 2-0 up. Linesman flagged incorrectly for offside.

Craig Brown was livid after seeing TV evidence showing goal was well outside, TV pundits Hendry and Butcher both agree goal should have stood. Ray Stubbs on ESPN said that point could make all the difference at end of season.

ONE point gained for Rangers

16 January 2010 - Celtic v Falkirk 3 major decisions go against Celtic

1. Hand ball by Falkirk defender - no penalty
2. Fortune pulled down in box - no penalty
3. Arthur handles ball 17 yards from goal 1 yard inside his box and a free kick is given to Falkirk 20 yards from goal. This could have given Falkirk the winning goal

Referee - Alan Muir

Mail on Sunday - 'Falkirk manager Eddie May said: "Overall, I thought it was a fair result. But I think they should have had a penalty."

Daily Mail - 'Alan Muir denied the Park-head club a late penalty claim - when

12 December 2009 - Motherwell v Celtic

Celtic denied TWO stonewall penalties.

Samaras chopped in box in 1st half - No penalty.

Hand ball by Motherwell defender - No penalty.

Referee - Charlie Richmond

Celtic do get penalty but only after having 3 claims for a penalty, two of which were stonewallers.

Guardian - "Even if Celtic did have a legitimate claim for a penalty when Samaras was tripped by Reynolds. Another two poor decisions from referee Charlie Richmond denied them penalties after McGeady had equalised. When Celtic were finally awarded a penalty for Saunders's foul on Samaras, Robson gave the goalkeeper an easy save with a weak shot close to his left side."

8 November 2009 - Falkirk v Celtic

At 3-3 in last minute Celtic had a goal disallowed when TV showed it was ON-SIDE.

Flag goes up for offside when Samaras clearly onside right through on goal.

Referee - Brian Winter

Daily Record - "Celtic fans yelped in frustration - and their mood would not have improved when television replays showed assistant Lawrence Kerrigan was wrong to flag for offside when Samaras was played in behind the Bairns defence in injury time."

His shot may have been blocked by Olejnik but it dropped to McDonald who poked the ball into the net only to see the flag fluttering along his line of vision. To be fair, Celtic players kept their protests to a minimum.

TWO points dropped

4 October 2009 - Rangers v Celtic

Celtic denied TWO stonewall penalties. Maloney booked for diving. Referee later apologises for getting one penalty decision wrong.

Lafferty assaults Zhig Zhi and Weir recklessly follows through on McDonald. Neither booked.

Referee - Craig Thomson

STV website and various media - "Old Firm referee Craig Thomson has admitted he's 'disappointed' at getting his decision wrong when he decided not to award Celtic a penalty in the 12th minute. Hugh Dallas said: 'Craig and I have had our post match de-brief.

Whilst I would compliment Craig for his overall handling of yesterday's encounter, he is disappointed at his error of judgement when he decided against awarding a penalty to the visiting team in the 12th minute."

Motherwell manager Jim Gannon later said: "Right now there is a question mark over the standard of our refereeing, and it affects the SPL table. After the last Old Firm game Hugh Dallas had to defend the referee [Craig Thomson]. But the result of that match might have been different had the ref got the big decisions correct.

"At the end of the season Celtic could look back and say, 'That result cost us the title.' The fact is, if no one speaks up, then nothing will change."

Assuming the worst Celtic would have gained a draw with 2 or 3 penalties being awarded.

ONE point dropped. TWO gained by Rangers.

26 September 2009 - Rangers v Aberdeen

McCulloch elbows Aberdeen player deliberately. No card and No TV evidence case by SPL.

Referee - Iain Brines

Daily Record - "Rangers midfielder Lee McCulloch, however, was fortunate not to pick up a red card from Brines for an elbow on McGuire."

Rangers would have been playing 45 mins with 10 men if Brines had done his job. Next match for Rangers was Old Firm game. McCulloch escapes ban which could have been a 3 match ban for violent conduct.

21 September 2009 - Celtic v Hearts

McGinn chopped in box. Stonewall penalty denied with 5 mins to go.

Referee - Dougie McDonald

Daily Record - "The Northern Irish international was brought down inside the box by Lee Wallace with five minutes to go of Sunday's SPL clash at Parkhead, only for referee Dougie McDonald to award a corner to the bemusement of everyone inside the stadium."

Belfast Telegraph - "Five minutes from the end of normal time, the Irishman was denied what looked a clear-cut penalty by referee Dougie McDonald when he appeared to be chopped down by Jambos' left-back Lee Wallace as he burst into the Hearts penalty area. "

Celtic scored in 93rd minute and got the 3 points.

13 September - 2009 - Celtic v Dundee Utd

Celtic had a Samaras goal incorrectly chopped off for offside. Also denied stonewall penalty when Dodds handled ball in last minute. Dodds admitted to hand ball. Levein said he was surprised he never caught it.

Referee - Steve Conroy

Scotland on Sunday - "Levein left the field quietly at the end and there was probably a reason for that. His side appeared to come out the right side of two highly contentious calls in the second half; a Georgios Samaras "goal" chalked off and a Celtic penalty claim waved away by referee Steve Conroy. The "goal" was put away by Samaras just before the hour mark and only a couple of minutes after he came on for Landry N'Guemo."

Tony Mowbray, in his understated way, challenged us to look at the incident on video, the comment of a man who is convinced that Samaras' effort should have stood. Much later, a couple of minutes into injury time in fact, an Andreas Hinkel cross hit Darren Dodds on the arm and many a spot-kick has been given in such circumstances. Asked about it later, Levein offered a cheeky response: "I've spoken to Darren about it and he said he was really disappointed he never held it. Dodds said: "The ball hit my head and then hit my thumb." That's that, then. It should have been a penalty."

TWO points dropped.

30 August 2009 - Hibs v Celtic

McGeady sent off for diving 45 yards from goal after riding a few tackles after going on a run.

Referee - Dougie McDonald

24 August 2009 - Hearts v Rangers

Rangers heading for a draw, awarded penalty in last minute for tackle which looked soft and looked outside box.

Referee - Craig Thomson

Daily Mail - "The Tynecastle side thought the penalty was harsh, arguing that the foul by Ismael Bouzid on Steven Naismith was committed outside the penalty box, while Rangers considered Thomson unlucky to be red-carded."

TWO points gained for Rangers

To be continued ad nauseam...

Divisive 'Anti-Fascism'

TAL explores the fundamental political weaknesses, opportunism and dilettantism of the Alerta network of supporters groups, which proclaims itself to be an 'anti-fascist movement'

Alerta, the 'antifascist network' of supporters groups is proclaiming itself to be an 'anti-fascist movement'. The truth, however, is that Alerta is an anti-nationalist organisation dominated by a politically dogmatic clique who are influenced by the ideas of anarchism, anti-nationalism (for all but Israel), Zionism and 'anti-Germanism'.

The 'Anti-Germans' are a weird cult among German leftists who are guilt-ridden with regard to the war crimes committed by the Nazis in the name of Germany during World War 2. They believe that in order to atone for the Holocaust the German left (*and by default the rest of the European left*) must support the state of Israel in all that it does, without criticism.

Those on the left who do choose to criticise the Israeli regime's actions in Gaza and in developing new settlements in East Jerusalem, are denounced as being 'anti-semites' and ' Hamas supporters'.

The most obvious exponents of the Anti-German/pro-Zionist position are to be found among some of the Alerta Network's leadership, who hide their pro-Israeli politics under the guise of anti-nationalism. The slogan of this group is laughable - '**No Nations - No Borders**'. Try telling that to the Palestinians in Gaza who have been collectively punished by Israel for having the audacity to elect a leadership of their choice in democratic elections. They are now trapped in Gaza by the Israeli siege!

Regardless of what you think about the politics of Hamas - *and you will find none at TAL who has much sympathy for the politics or the religious fundamentalism of the Hamas Movement* - the Palestinians exercised their democratic right to elect their own government, as

agreed by the United Nations and all of the participating groups and governments in the peace process, including Israel.



"THANK YOU MR. HARRIS - NO TEARS FOR KRAUTS". As shown above, the lunatic positions of the 'Anti-Germans' lead some so-called anti-fascists to carry banners heralding Bomber Harris - the architect of the carpet bombing of German cities at the end of World War 2 - as a 'hero'. Apparently some war criminals are better than others...

The Israeli government refused to recognise the newly elected Hamas Government of the Palestinian Authority and did all that it could to foment civil war in the West Bank and Gaza by basically attempting to punish, starve and bully the Palestinians into submission. Their actions in undermining the new government did indeed ignite civil conflict within the occupied territories, which effectively split the West Bank (under Fatah's control) from Gaza (under Hamas control). Once suitably divided, weakened and softened up, Israel then turned its attentions to the people of Gaza, collectively punishing them for exercising their democratic right to vote. Ultimately this led to last year's terrorist bombardment and invasion of Gaza by the Israeli Defence Force. 1400 Palestinian lives were lost (*approximately half that number were women and children*).

The pro-Israel lobby will propagandise that this was an 'eye for an eye' and that they had to strike against Hamas in order to allay the fears of bombardment by rockets of its citizens living in south-

ern Israel, but the truth is that, until that point, in the few months before the invasion, the rocket count from Gaza to Israel had decreased significantly. The facts are that around 140 Palestinians were killed for every Israeli citizen that died in the months before as a result of rockets fired from Gaza. This can hardly be viewed as a proportionate response by Israel, even if one did agree with the warped logic of the Israeli propaganda machine.

Make no mistake, Israel is a rogue state - every bit (and a bit more) dangerous to world peace as any of the so-called 'axis of evil' powers whose military capabilities are dwarfed by the resources and firepower of Israel. This is a state that wages ideological war in words and deeds. The recent 'hit' in Dubai of a senior Hamas leader by Mosad, is testament to how little importance Israel attaches to negotiating peace with the Palestinians. Israel chooses to assassinate its enemies, not to accommodate them or make peace with them.

But what does any of this have to do with an alleged 'anti-fascist movement'?

Read on...

The dominant group within Alerta is the *Ultras Sankt Pauli* (USP), who are influenced variously by the politics of anarcho anti-nationalism and an illogically pro-Zionist element. One of the Ultras groups that the USP have gone out of their way to develop relations with are the *Ultras Hapoel* (*The Red Workers*) supporters of our recent Champions League opponents Hapoel Tel Aviv. Both groups proclaim their anti-nationalism and anti-fascism, but are loathe to say anything with regard to Israel, other than to demand support for it on internet forums such as the Green Brigade's (our own ultras have ill-advisedly chosen to join Alerta, despite the fact that Alerta ideologically opposes those on the left who support anti-imperialism

and progressive national liberation movements).

In **Issue 42** of Tal Fanzine we carried an interview with the USP, with which we fundamentally disagreed politically, but which we printed with only that clarification and without reply. It is perhaps time to address ourselves to the exclusive politics of the USP...

In the interview the USP stated their view of nations and nationalism in the most puerile sense, only seeing the nation state as harmful rather than having any ability to make progressive change. If the USP were principled, revolutionary socialists we could perhaps accept their position. However, the USP do not even state their politics in left-wing terms. Instead they talk in airy-fairy, utopian language about how *'the idea of nations clashes with the idea of all humans being equal'*.

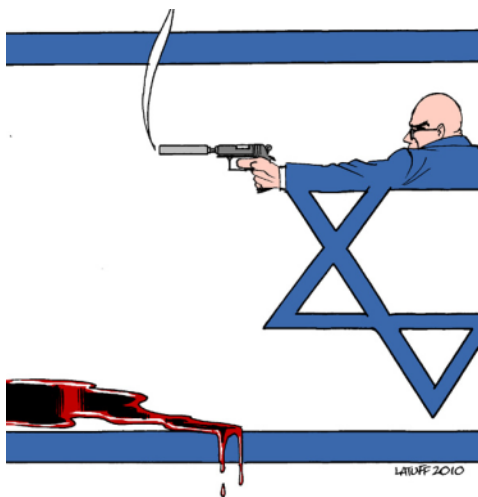
Of course, we at TAL fully endorse the internationalist politics of James Connolly whose ultimate aims became the political blueprint for for most socialists on these islands; i.e. that the working class has no nation and is bound together by common class interests which cross national borders and boundaries. This is also a common theme in the work of other great revolutionaries such as Che Guevara.

However, both Connolly and Che were men of tactical acumen as well as being political idealists. Both were prepared to ally their revolutionary socialist views with the political objectives of what they defined as progressive national liberation movements. Connolly was perhaps the most scathing of revolutionaries towards the politics of nationalism, yet he became the military commander of the Easter Rising, an insurrectionary struggle to gain Ireland's freedom from British rule in which nationalists and socialists fought side by side.

Likewise, Guevara's involvement in anti-colonialist struggles in Africa was a recognition that the politics of national and social liberation can combine to make political progress.

It is an irony that the most used and abused symbol of the groups within the Alerta Network is the image of Che, a revolutionary of deep conviction and principle who would surely never have countenanced working with such political dilettantes.

An honest grouping with their beliefs would cease using the iconic symbol of Che Guevara on their merchandise material, because it is clear that the USP



do not stand in the tradition of Che when it comes to the issue of national liberation and self-determination.

The USP as a group do fight fascists, and they fight them very effectively and physically when the need arises. Alerta is also committed to fighting fascism in words at least, but some of its constituent groups have no political ideology whatsoever and define themselves as being 'non-political' (i.e. *Ultra groups at Standard Liege and Bohemians Prague*)

Whenever criticism is levelled at the politics of such groups we usually get a list of the do-gooding but politically futile charity work that they have carried out among refugee groups, or the number of meaningless 'anti-racist football tournaments' that they have organised.

However, political effectiveness is not measured by how *much* you do, rather it should be measured by what *difference* you make?

The danger represented by the divisive politics of the USP is in the detail of their ideology: By their own definitions of nationalism and fascism, they classify as 'fascist' and 'potentially fascist' national liberation movements and groups that are clearly not fascist. In other words, by means of their flawed political ideology, they place potential allies against fascism in the opposition camp.

When TAL made links with the St Pauli Fanladen nearly 20 years ago, it was run by people who understood and supported the national liberation movements of Ireland, Palestine and Euskadi. 1990 is not 2010 and the politics of the Fanladen appear to have radically altered where elements among its staff and the USP now support the common middle-class ideology of the German left that is a mixture of revisionist academic sociology (*'the working class is dead'*) and anti-Germanism/pro-Zionism.

We have friends at St Pauli, both within and without the USP, who understand

fully the politics of national liberation, but they are in the minority. Our friends have asked us to 'respect' the USP, but how can we show political respect for a group with whom we disagree profoundly on the issues raised by this article? The USP's dogmatic ideology means that their group can never show solidarity with progressive national liberation movements - because they do not believe that nationalism can ever have a progressive element to it. By adopting this position Alerta and the USP place themselves against anti-imperialism.

Anti-nationalism and the *'No Borders'* position in the current political epoch is utterly Utopian. It's designed to advance little, appeal to no-one and link to nothing. It renders the left's activities to little more than charity work and their actions to preserving the political status quo.

* Alerta may know who it wants to fight, but does it (and the groups that sign up to it) know what it is fighting for?

* Apart from a basic liberal anti-racist 'charitable' approach, what is Alerta about?

* Does the USP have any links to working class politics, or do they like most of the autonomous German left believe that the working class no longer exists?

* Who do they seek to influence and what effect do their actions have on the communities where they live?

* What difference do the political actions of the USP and Alerta make?



At the Champions League match against Hapoel Tel Aviv protests in favour of Palestine were left to individual Celtic supporters and the STUC. The Green Brigade chose not to mount any kind of pro-Palestinian display to avoid upsetting their Zionist friends from Ultras Hapoel.



Israeli Defence Force Tanks adorned with the flags and symbols of Ultras Hapoel

Brigata Scozzese Livorno



Q: You've started a Livorno supporters club based in Glasgow. Tell us more about Livorno and why form a group?

A: A.S Livorno Calcio were formed in 1915 initially as Unione Sportivo Livorno but changing to A.S Livorno slightly later. Their best-ever placement in Serie A was second place in the 1942/1943 season pushing the famous Grande Torino team hard for the championship. Livorno is a port town in Tuscany not far from Pisa who are their main football rivals. It is a ferry terminal to Sardinia, Corsica and Elba as well as providing berth to cruise ships visiting Florence and Tuscany. Livorno spent 55 years in lower leagues until they signed boyhood hero Cristiano Lucarelli who helped them gain promotion in 2003-2004. Livorno were relegated in 2007-2008 but this summer won the Play-offs to return to Serie A in 2009-2010.



Over a number of years now I have followed the fortunes of Livorno as have a few others from English-speaking countries. The first task was actually just to form the first-ever English-language Livorno Calcio forum so fans who don't understand Italian can learn more about the club and it's fans. For years we had struggled with Italian, Turkish, French and Scandinavian sites and its good now to keep people up to date quicker in English, though I regularly keep in touch with some of the other boards and constantly try to improve my Italian or Livornese to be more correct!



Q: Have you travelled over to the city before, how did you find the people and the city?

En route to a Milan v Celtic match in 2007 I went via Livorno for their match v Inter. I was extremely lucky to get into the stadium because all away fans and non-season ticket holders were banned because of the trouble in Sicily that year. But contacts there

helped me get in. I was back again last summer for a few days to help plan ahead for the match we attended again against Inter.

Three of us travelled and met folk connected with supporters forums and ultras groups. We also met fans from West Belfast, Osasuna, Vallecas and Barcelona.

The fans were very welcoming and allowed us to place our banner on the plexi-glass in the Curva Nord which was a massive honour for us. There isn't much English spoken here as it isn't a tourist town so you have to try and learn some Italian so the evening classes are paying off.



In the summer the temperature was 30 deg and even last week was 21 deg, and though it's a few miles down the Tuscan coast to the nearest beach you can take a train 45 minutes north to Viareggio a lovely seaside resort. Inland there is the town of Lucca which one day I will need to visit. Florence isn't far by train either and the Eurostar Italia takes you to Rome in 2.5hrs. To get over to Livorno from Scotland or Ireland the best airport is Pisa which is only 20minutes by train from Livorno.

Q: What are the politics of the Livorno supporters and Ultras? Is that important to the B.S.L?

It was politics to be honest which got me into Livorno I guess in a similar way to how the relationship started between Celtic Anti-Fascists and St. Pauli and Athletic Bilbao?

Livorno was the birthplace to the PCI (Italian Communist Party) in 1921 and is still very left-wing to this day, being a real dockers and fishing port city.

This is reflected on the Curva Nord. For many years since 1999 the Brigata Autonome Livornesi were notorious and had displays of Che Guevara, Cuban, Palestinian and Soviet flags. They make no apologies for being mostly marxist-leninist and occasionally displaying banners of Joseph Stalin. However there is a strong autonomist cur-

rent among the fans and it is good to see the various leftist elements working together.

All we ask is that members of the BSL respect the communist traditions of the Livornesi and are working class anti-fascists themselves. The occasional support of Stalin in the Curva Nord may be controversial to some but not to us, we believe that to be a matter for the Livornesi themselves. I guess for that we may not be overundated with applications but that's the way it goes.

Politics aside, we actually do care about the club and were riveted to the play-offs on the Internet, but we were set up before we knew whether promotion was on the cards or not.

Q: What are your hopes for the BSL and A.S Livorno this year?

A: Firstly for the club to consolidate its Serie A position and hopefully push for a Europa Cup spot in a year or two. It's only a couple of seasons since Lucarelli finished top scorer in Serie A and Livorno were playing Espanyol beyond the group stages of the UEFA Cup.

For ourselves growth isn't too important, we'd rather have 4 or 5 lads over there with the right attitude, and manage another home game before the end of the season. To establish more contacts and make more friendships with the Livornesi and gain a greater understanding of society there and maybe giving a donation or two to local causes.



Rebel Reviews

Conor Kelly - That Men Might Be Free

Track List: *Loughall Ambush, Patriot Game, Viva La Quince Brigada, Smoke & Strong Whiskey, Scapegoats, Banks of Marble, Connolly Was There, Your Daughters & Your Sons, Sean South, Willie & Danny, Dirty Old Town/Tiocfaidh Ár Lá, Van Diemens Land/Fields of Athenry.*



Connor Kelly is the latest young ballad singer to emerge from the vibrant West of Scotland rebel music scene. A native of Paisley, and only 18 years old, he has produced a very impressive debut CD that includes some of the usual rebel favourites, as well as featuring one or two less well-known ballads.

He's been gigging solidly for the last year in places as far flung as his hometown bar - the Wig 'n Pen in Paisley - to more exotic locations like Hamburg, Dublin, Manchester and Fife. The CD is selling well so far and should open more doors for him in terms of venues to perform.

The Patriot Game stands out among this group of songs and Conor's interpretation is as good as any other than I can think of on the Glasgow-Irish scene. I was also pleased to see one of my favourite Christy Moore tracks **Smoke and Strong Whiskey** included and Conor's rendition did not disappoint. A revisit to the the Birmingham 6 Campaign with **Scapegoats** was also included and a welcome reminder of how the British criminalized the Irish

in Britain during the period of war in Ireland. **Banks of Marble** is another great song that Conor interprets very well. **Connolly Was There** is another good foot-tapper delivered with enthusiasm and skill. I especially like **Your Daughters and Your Sons**, an excellently arranged and put together track on this compilation. The remainder of the CD is taken up with old favourites like **Sean South, Willie and Danny, Tiocfaidh Ár Lá** and **The Fields of Athenry** - all of these have been covered before and, to an extent, they are essential inclusions on any CD that hopes to appeal to

Celtic supporters and republicans in Scotland. Young Kelly delivers them well and shows that he has the necessary fire in the belly when it comes to the big numbers. It is the potential of what may come in the future that I liked about this CD, because I am convinced that this is a young man with a future on the rebel music scene and someone who, at 18 years of age, can only get better.

Conor, who cites his dad Colin as his inspiration in all that he does, plays guitar, as well as supplying vocals. Eamonn Maguire provides the Bodhran accompaniment on some of the tracks. Special mention should also be made of The Wakes' Chris who plays flute, whistle and bass guitar on the album, as well as co-producing it with Conor. Chris is an accomplished musician and performer whose presence on the CD adds a welcome bit of polish.

Conor Kelly's singing voice is very good, with a bit more range than most, but one thing I would point out is that he appears so be singing almost within himself. This is a voice full of potential, which I think can be further developed. My advice to Conor would be to listen less to the arrangements and delivery of others and allow your own style to develop, because if you push that voice a bit further you could become one of the very best on the Irish circuit. Don't limit yourself to copying what is already there, allow your own personality and talent to shine.

www.myspace.com/conorkelly92

www.bebo.com/ConorKelly92

Reviewed by Talman



TAL EDITOR'S COLUMN

The Irregular Regulars

I hope that this new regular monthly Ezine version of TAL will help to satisfy our readers in the long intervals between hard copy issues of the fanzine.

Rest assured that we still have plenty to say about football and politics and this format will give us an opportunity of reaching the Celtic community on a more regular basis.

Anti-Fascist, Pro-Republican

Anti-fascism and support for Irish republican ideals continue to be the two pronged feature of our political attitude at TAL. In a general sense we have endorsed the quest for peace and political progress in Ireland, but we still maintain the the right of the Irish people to choose their own means of achieving the ultimate goal of a United Ireland. By that statement we do not necessarily mean by violence. We accept the peaceful democratic road to a United Ireland. However there is still much to do with regard to the social question as well as the national question in Ireland and we at TAL have always set out our stall as left-republicans with a commitment to a 32 County Socialist Republic. That remains our goal.

SDL - Don't believe the hype!

The latest phantom army organised by fascists in Scotland is, as usual, a straight copy from their English counterparts.

Going by the misnomer of the Scottish Defence League (SDL) this motley collection of football hooligans, racists and fascists is without doubt a very British affair, involving in the main hooligans from rangers, Hearts and Airdrie.

The SDL has yet to even muster what could be described as a half-decent football firm. The last two SDL 'protests' in Glasgow and Edinburgh attracted less than 100 people to each.

Its message is that it stands against militant Islam, but its real agenda is somewhat murkier and may involve the state using this loose alliance of thugs as a means of drawing anti-fascists and Muslim youth into street warfare in order to criminalise and gather intelligence on all sides. Like C18 before it, the SDL smells like a state honeytrap... And if it smells like a honeytrap, the odds are that it is a honeytrap.

TAL Verdict: don't waste your time chasing these losers around the country.

TRIBUTE TO A REVOLUTIONARY

“My university was the orphanage, borstal, prison and the concentration camp” was how Bob Doyle described his political education in comparison to some of those made famous by their writings during the Spanish Civil War.

I was interviewing Bob for the newspaper **Red Action** and for me, as a relatively young activist engaged in the fight against fascism on the streets of Britain, he was enthralling company.

While I was at his home, Bob had given me a copy of a handwritten document that would later form the basis of his autobiography, *‘Brigadista’*. I have it still, twenty years later, a valued memento from an unconventional yet committed revolutionary.

In his memoirs Bob chartered his journey. Born in 1916 into an impoverished Dublin, Bob joined the IRA as a young man, aligning himself with those on the left of the Republican cause such as Frank Ryan and Peadar O’Donnell. He also became involved in the vicious street battles with O’Duffy’s fascist Blueshirts, suffering lifelong damage to one of his eyes.

As his political consciousness grew, Bob learnt that someone he admired greatly - his former flatmate and IRA volunteer Kit Conway - had died at the Battle of Jarama in Spain fighting Franco’s fascist forces. He was determined to avenge him and set out to join the **Connolly Column**, the Irish section of the International Brigades.

Much to his dismay, after finally reaching Spain (despite Nazi Germany and fascist Italy sending troops and equipment to aid Franco, western governments were still doing everything in their powers to prevent international volunteers from joining those fighting for democracy) Bob was sent, not to the front, but to a training camp where the expertise learnt during his time in the IRA made him extremely valuable as a weapons instructor.

Eventually, Bob had had enough and effectively deserted, jumping on a troop lorry heading to the front. He saw action at the battle of Belchite in 1937 and was finally captured by



Italian forces in 1938, starting an 11-month stint in one of Franco’s concentration camps where he was tortured and interrogated by the infamous German Gestapo and where execution was a daily threat.

Released under an exchange programme Bob headed to London and served in the merchant navy during WW2 - he wanted to contribute to the defeat of fascism but could not, as an Irish republican, join the British army. After the war Bob settled in London and became active in the print worker’s union SOGAT. Unbeknown to most, he was also working in support of the underground resistance movement in Spain who continued to oppose Franco’s rule.

At home Bob continued to oppose fascism wherever its raised its head. In 1947 he was part of a 2,000 strong crowd who turned out on the streets of Tottenham, North London, to oppose a march by Mosley’s post-war fascist party. He was arrested and took the decision to conduct his own defence. He told the magistrate: *“If it was good enough for me to be sent during the war to patrol the Western Atlantic to defeat fascism, it was good enough for me to take a bus from Paddington to Tottenham to do the same thing.”* He was duly fined ☒!

On another occasion he was set-upon by the militant anti-fascist **62 Group** who had mistaken him for the enemy. They were horrified when they realised their error and there was apologetic embraces all round - once they had hauled him from the ground and dusted him down!

Bob was certainly unconventional though. He was never afraid to put noses out of joint when he thought he was right - and that included many within the International Brigades Association.

While he remained committed to a united, republican Ireland his early experiences with the nuns, the bishop’s support of O’Duffy’s volunteers and Franco’s fascist catholic crusade meant he detested the church.

His bible, he told me, was always ‘Labour, Nationality and Religion’ and ‘Labour in Irish History’ by James Connolly.

He was also a big advocate of the legalisation of cannabis, which he grew in his greenhouse for his personal use and even ‘starred’ as an extra in two Monty Python films during the seventies.

On one occasion he managed to throw **Red Action** stewards into a momentary panic after he had ridden his motorbike at speed towards the doors of a hunger strike commemoration I had invited him to. Only when he had pulled up his brakes, removed his flying goggles and produced his trademark mischievous grin did we realise it was Bob!

Each time I met Bob I enjoyed his company immensely. He was someone I could identify with, someone who, despite his age had never lost his edge, who was never afraid to run against the grain, who had always remained true to his beliefs.

Twenty years ago I had entitled my interview with Bob Doyle, *‘Portrait of a Revolutionary’*. As fitting then as I hope this short piece is now.

The Celtic Hammer