

# Racism

## Moving Beyond Denial?

A major conference examining the present acknowledgement of racism, its manifestations and what should be done to tackle it.

Wednesday 30 April 2008  
Dungannon Campus: South West  
(nee East Tyrone) College



Picture published by Boston Public Library and displayed by Centre for Migration Studies, Omagh.

Themed Under:



Funded by:



Project supported by the  
**EU Programme  
for Peace and Reconciliation**



COMMUNITY RELATIONS WEEK 2008  
26th April – Saturday 3rd May

# Racism: Moving Beyond Denial?

In the context of the duty local government has in tackling racism (promoting good relations) and as part of its Anti-Racism and Racial Equality Action Plan, Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council has put together the following conference to engage specialist perspectives and Northern Ireland politicians on the issue of racism and what should be done to tackle it.

## Background:

Racism has been experienced by ethnic minorities in Northern Ireland throughout the length of history yet was largely unacknowledged. It was not until 1997 that government passed legislation outlawing racial discrimination— 30 years after its counterpart in Great Britain. More recently in the 2008-11 Programme for Government recognises the problem of racism and commits to bringing forward a programme of work to achieve measurable reductions.

Until relatively recently there was still a level of popular denial that racism was a problem. The well publicised incidents of racist violence across Northern Ireland in recent years have largely ended this perception. This in itself does not highlight the range of other forms racism can take. There remains considerable discussion and varied perspectives on what the scope, form and manifestations racism takes are, and crucially what should be done to tackle them.

## Conference Format and Aims:

This conference aims to provide keynote independent perspectives on contemporary racism and engagement with Northern Ireland's main political parties as to strategic direction in addressing racism. Through afternoon workshops further discussion will be facilitated on the topics of: models for the public sector, racism in the workplace, racism faced by Travellers and on the role of the Assembly. A spokesperson from OFMDFM will provide government input.

The keynote panel consists of Arun Kundnani of the London-based Institute of Race Relations and two home-grown Co Tyrone specialists, the Independent researcher Dr Robbie McVeigh and Bernadette McAliskey of the community based-NGO S.T.E.P. Biographies and a synopsis of their inputs is on the enclosed sheet.

The spokespersons on racial equality from the main political parties have been invited to address the conference in the format of a questions and answers panel enabling engagement on political leadership against racism and strategic direction on the format of anti-racism work at Assembly and Local Government level. Questions can be submitted through the booking form.

## Target Audience:

This conference is specifically targeted all persons with an interest in this area of work in all sectors including local government, community and voluntary sector NGOs, statutory agencies, Trade Unions, government departments, researchers and others with an interest in anti-racism.

## Logistics:

There is no charge for the conference. We would anticipate considerable demand and would urge early booking, full details are on the back cover.

# Running Order

**9:30 Registration**

**10:15 Welcome and Opening**

Cllr Barry Monteith, Mayor of Dungannon & South Tyrone

**10:30 Keynote Speakers: Examining Racism**

Arun Kundnani, Institute of Race Relations  
Bernadette McAliskey, South Tyrone Empowerment Programme  
Dr Robbie McVeigh, Independent Researcher  
Q&A

**11:40 Comfort Break**

**12:00 Political Parties Q&A Panel:**

Chair: Benedicta Attoh (independent practitioner)

Dolores Kelly MLA (SDLP)  
Richard Watson (UUP)  
DUP rep TBC  
Alex Maskey MLA (Sinn Féin)  
Naomi Long MLA (Alliance party)

**1pm Buffet Lunch**

**2:00-3:30 Workshops**

**The Anti-Racism Officer: a model for local government and public services?**

Chair: Justyna McCabe, Newry and Mourne Council  
Inputs: Ligia Parrizzi, Anti Racism Officer, Dungannon Council  
Alfred Abolarin, Northern Ireland Housing Executive  
Reporter: Leish Cox, Good Relations Officer, Belfast City Council

**What should the Northern Ireland Assembly do about racism?**

Chair: Charo Lanao, Rural Communities Network  
Inputs: Aidan McGarry, University of Ulster  
Reporter: David White, Anti Racism Trainer and member of Civic Forum

**Racism and Travellers**

Chair: Philip Clarke, Dungannon South Tyrone Borough Council  
Inputs/Reporter: Seamus Donnelly, An Tearmann Coalisland Traveller Support Group

**Racism in the Workplace**

Chair: Kasia Garbal, Irish Congress of Trade Unions  
Inputs: Mel Corry, Trademark & Representative from Migrant Rights Centre Ireland  
Reporter: Tayra McKee, Unite

**3:30 Closing Plenary**

Input from Government: Colin Jack, Head of Good Relations and Reconciliation Division  
OFMDFM  
Workshop Reporters Feedback

**4pm Close**

## Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council:

The Borough has been the local government district that has proportionately most benefited from new migration in recent years. Migrant Workers, mostly Portuguese and Tetum speakers, and nationals of Lithuania and Poland have joined the community. This has grown the size of the minority ethnic population of the Borough which includes Travellers, the Chinese community and others.

The Council has been active in tackling the issue of racism setting up an Independent Reporting Scheme for Racist Incidents and running anti-racism campaigns and other initiatives. This has been undertaken as part of a broader programme of Anti-Racism and Racial Equality work of which this initiative forms part.

The Council gratefully acknowledges funding support from the Peace II extension programme through the South Tyrone Area Partnership for its anti racism programme and the support of OFMDFM for its racial equality work.

## BOOKING DETAILS:

Please fill in the details on the enclosed form and forward it to:

Ligia Parrizzi, Anti Racism Officer, Dungannon Council

A return envelope is provided alternatively the details can be e-mailed: to [ligia.parrizzi@dungannon.gov.uk](mailto:ligia.parrizzi@dungannon.gov.uk) or call (028) 87728603.

Remember to include your name, job title and organisation where applicable, any specific requirements you may have (e.g. interpreting), and (optionally) any questions you would like to submit for the political parties panel.

## Please Note:

- There is no charge for the conference.  
A limited number of bursaries will be available to facilitate the attendance of persons in a voluntary capacity who would otherwise not be able to attend.
- The Dungannon Campus of South West College is located on Circular Road Dungannon next to the Council Offices.
- If there is sufficient interest link transport may be provided from Portadown Railway station to facilitate those travelling on the Dublin-Belfast line. Please indicate on form.

## Funded By:



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