

## AFFAIRS OF THE NATION

PATRIOT GAMES  
IN DONEGAL

DONEGAL MAN Niall McConnell has been central to anti-immigration protests in Monaghan and Donegal over the last two months. His links to loyalists and British fascists may help explain why much of his online content in relation to these protests targets Sinn Féin.

A sheep farmer from Castletfin, Donegal, McConnell has been active on Ireland's right-wing scene for over five years. He has a website and an irregularly published newspaper, the *Irish Patriot*, both of which publicise his political party Siol na hÉireann (SÉ). Recent years have seen SÉ colour party photo ops on Croagh Patrick and at Béal na Bláth, as well as footage of SÉ members parading statues of the Virgin Mary in Mayo and Down.

McConnell ran unsuccessfully in the Donegal constituency in general elections in 2020 and 2024 as well as in Lifford–Stranorlar in the 2024 local elections.

McConnell attended the national anti-immigration demonstration in April but his well-rehearsed schtick as a traditional Catholic and folksy farmer did not gain much traction on Dublin's streets. He has, however, been central to recent anti-immigration protests in Carrickmacross, Castleblaney, Letterkenny and Bundoran. He livestreamed the protests on YouTube and also posted clips of speeches made at the rallies on his channel.

McConnell's videos particularly target SF, claiming to expose SF in relation to immigration and "THE TRUTH about Matt Carthy & Sinn Féin Lies", and he regularly makes disparaging comments regarding SF on his livestreams.

McConnell is linked to prominent figures on the far right of British politics. Not only has he worked closely with loyalists Jim Dowson and Jolene Bunting, he is also particularly close to Nick Griffin. As a teenager in the 1970s, Griffin was active

in the National Front before he formed the International Third Position along with Italian fascist Roberto Fiore and Derek Holland from Ireland. Griffin joined the British National Party in the early 1990s and became leader at the end of the decade but was later expelled from the party.

Griffin has appeared on five livestreams that McConnell has broadcast on his SÉ channel on YouTube and Purged TV. He also shared a large amount of content on his Telegram account relating to both McConnell and SÉ. He has been effusive in his praise of SÉ, describing it as the most "effective real nationalist party in Ireland" and "as

Ireland's leading ethno-nationalist movement". Last June, in the build up to the local elections, Griffin even posted a surreal video of McConnell playing an anti-immigration ballad on his guitar outside SF's Letterkenny office.

Griffin is still closely associated with Fiore, who has also appeared on one of McConnell's livestream. It was evident on the stream that McConnell and Fiore share a conservative Catholic worldview.

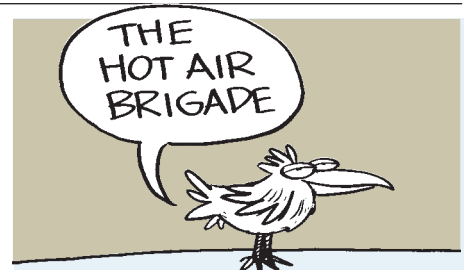
Griffin has claimed that this is a major advantage for McConnell, posting on Telegram: "Siol na hÉirann [sic] is trad Catholic, so the pencil-necked atheists hate it, as do the fags, & the sad victims of sex-abuse by liberal homosexual priests."

While promoting McConnell and SÉ, Griffin was also posting a large amount of loyalist content on social media. In recent years he has posted multiple videos of loyalist marches he attended in the north. He described in one post how he helped distribute 1,000 newspapers to those in attendance and claimed there was no way that "these people will be railroaded into a 'united Ireland' ruled by Communists obsessed with LGBTQ+, abortion & replacement immigration". He also claimed on another post there was no prospect of what he described as "Westminster traitors" forcing loyalists into a united Ireland.

Griffin has also repeatedly condemned the prosecution of British soldiers over Troubles-related killings. Like his acolyte McConnell, he is also forthright in his condemnation of SF, claiming British soldiers were being hounded, "while old IRA operatives rule Northern Ireland". In other posts he described Irish republicans as being "Marxist traitors of Sinn Féin" and "the cowardly Marxist scum of the IRA".

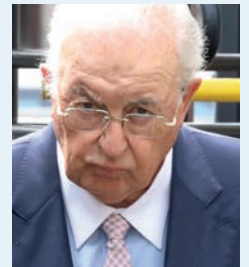


Niall McConnell



"Money doesn't mean much to me. It's just to keep the score, that's all." Asked if he was a billionaire and not a millionaire, Magnier said: "I hope so."

**John Magnier giving evidence in the High Court, Sunday Independent**



John Magnier

The racehorse breeder said he had people to advise him. Asked if he was resident in Switzerland, Magnier said: "Honestly, I don't understand it myself like I should." **John Magnier explains to the court the challenges of offshore tax residency, Sunday Independent**

Maureen is truly of the arts. For her, the role of Director was a vocation, not merely a job. Her commitment and passion were evident every day, and are widely acknowledged across the sector.

**Arts Council chairwoman Maura McGrath on outgoing director Maureen Kennelly**

I believe that dishy Dave, as he was known in the old AIB Bankcentre, even grew a beard for the trek. **Nick Webb on former bank boss David Duffy's Camino trip, Sunday Times**

Unlike most other Irish journalists, I was given a copy of the letter and it was harsh: comparing the proposed legislation to the speech laws in the likes of China and Iran. **Ian O'Doherty on his 'special' access to JD Vance's letter to the Irish ambassador to the US, Irish Independent**

Like any political symbolism, nails provide a jumping off point to open conversations and build community around complex concepts that may feel too big to approach without a supportive prompt. **Andrea Horn of Tropical Popical on fingernail art, Irish Examiner**

The recent action just copper-fastened what I pointed out in last week's column. **Pat Spillane lauds his clairvoyance, Sunday World**

The maqluba he ate in Palestine in 2013. This was a marrying of the timely (the politics of the West Bank at the beginning of the 2010s) and the universal (the falafel made by everyone in the greater region)... Forget the pre-Socratics, Bourdain more than anyone understood this organising feature of the universe. **Finn McRedmond on Anthony Bourdain, Irish Times**

She sings with the whispered intimacy that comes only after midnight at a sleepover. **Catherine Prasifka on Taylor Swift, Irish Independent**

Having finally decided to tell her story, Miriam approached it with characteristic wholeheartedness, and she writes with such candour, intelligence and generosity that readers will be totally captivated. **Publisher Patricia Deevy on Miriam O'Callaghan's upcoming autobiography**



Please send suitable contributions to: The Hot Air Brigade, The Phoenix, 44 Lr Baggot St, Dublin 2 or email: hotair@thephoenix.ie