

Boris Johnson's Irish racism is no more acceptable than...

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From [the Guardian this morning](#):

Over the years a range of individuals and organisations have worked positively in London to tackle myths, ignorance and prejudice about the Irish community. Yet in this week's [New Statesman](#), Boris Johnson attacks a major, mainstream, Irish community event, the annual St Patrick's Day dinner, as "lefty crap", falsely claiming it was £20,000 on a dinner at the Dorchester for Sinn Féin". The fact is that the annual St Patrick's Day event was a self-financing community event attended by a wide range of Irish actors, politicians from many parties, community figures and celebrities, including Bob Geldof, the Irish ambassador, TV and radio presenter Dermot O'Leary and actress Pauline McLynn.

When Boris Johnson cancelled the annual St Patrick's Day dinner in 2009 there was widespread disbelief about his decision. His remarks this week reveal what lay behind that decision. Many Londoners will be disturbed by the mayor of London's contemptuous remarks about a community which has given, and continues to give, so much to our capital city.

These views belong to a time we all hoped had been consigned to the long and distant past.

Richard Corrigan Restaurateur and chef, Adrian Dunbar Actor, Vernon Coaker MP Shadow secretary of state for Northern Ireland, Stephen Pound MP Shadow Northern Ireland minister, Conor McGinn Chair, Labour party Irish Society, Gerry Ryan Chair, London Irish Labour councillors, Shelagh O'Connor Irish community activist, Siobhan McDonagh MP, Emily Thornberry MP, Billy Hayes General secretary, CWU, Richard Murphy Chartered accountant, Tax Justice Network, Christine Quigley London Labour assembly list candidate

It's often assumed that if a person is white and sounds British (and there's no doubt that describes me) they can have no idea about what racism really is.

Oh yes they can: my name gives clear indication of my origins and it's one I'm proud of. I'm proud as a result to have an Irish passport. And I know too well from

my experience and the experience of my wife's family, for she's Irish too, just how powerful and destructive Irish racism was in the UK until very recently. Johnson makes clear it still simmers just below the surface in his world. And it's as unacceptable to be racist about the Irish as anyone else. Johnson, please take note.