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UNITED STATES
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The Words of Connolly

A Letter from Ireland

a Chara,

Greetings from Ireland. I am home after a week of events in Nashville, Cincinnati, and Chicago. While the focus was on Irish Unity, we also had the opportunity to learn more about the cities, their histories, and people.

The civil rights history of Fisk University in Nashville and the Underground Railway Museum in Cincinnati are inspiring examples of the power of people to stand against injustice.

Both Cincinnati and Chicago hosted Irish Unity Commissions in Irish Centres that had previously been schools. The halls and former classrooms had been repurposed, echoing with the sound of Irish music and dance. Their walls held the proud histories of Ireland and Irish America. Books on Ireland filled the shelves around tables at which tea, craic, and stories were shared. Both centers were a credit to the community and the role of the Irish in America.

In Chicago, we visited the site of the Haymarket Massacre from May 4th, 1886. It was to be a peaceful gathering by workers to secure an eight-hour working day. An unknown assailant threw a bomb, and the police returned fire. By the end of the day, seven police officers and four protestors were killed. Following the killing, eight anarchists were convicted of the attack, four were hanged, and one died by suicide. Subsequently, the trial was heavily criticized, leading to the Governor pardoning the three living defendants. Support for these accused came from across the world, including Irish writers Oscar Wilde and George Bernard Shaw. The May Day workers' holiday celebrated across the world marks these events in Chicago

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proud. Connolly was a labor leader in the city. He stood against injustice and on the side of workers and marginalized communities. On returning to Ireland he became the military commander of the Irish Volunteers during the Easter Rising. Although fatally wounded, days later he was tied to a chair and executed by a British firing squad.

Standing at the foot of his statue in Chicago I was thinking of Connolly and his writings. A quote came to me that I had not thought about in years, “ We believe in constitutional action in normal times; we believe in revolutionary action in exceptional times.”

The second part of the quote had been a searing call to arms during a time of conflict. But we now live in a time in which the Good Friday Agreement was passed by 72% in the North and 94% in the South. The Agreement by any measure is the will of the vast majority of the people of Ireland.

It provides for unity referendums North and South and a peaceful pathway to the republic for which Connolly gave his life. The opportunities we enjoy were denied to Connolly. Now is the time for constitutional action he recommended.

Have a great weekend

Ciarán

Ciarán Quinn is the Sinn Féin Representative to North America

Pat Cullen MP in Nashville: “There will be no united Ireland without Irish America.”

Dozens gathered at the Scarritt Bennett Center in Nashville, TN for the Irish Unity People’s Assembly for the Diaspora on Wednesday, May 28th, 2025. The event was the fifth People’s Assembly event hosted in the United States by Friends of Sinn Féin and the first in Tennessee.

Pat Cullen MP for Fermanagh & South Tyrone was the special guest and speaker for the event and she was joined by Ciarán Quinn, Sinn Féin’s Representative to the United States.

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Cravath Hall, and the Fisk Memorial Chapel was as inspirational as it was informative. The next stop was The Civil Rights Room at the Nashville Public Library where we watched videos, read accounts, and learned not only about Martin Luther King’s visits and speeches, but also about the importance of activists like AZ Kelley, Z. Alexander Looby, Diane Nash, and many other courageous leaders. The mix of art, activism, history, and engagement in present day struggles provided vital context for why Nashville was such an important place to host an Irish Unity People’s Assembly.

Then Pat was welcomed to Nashville City Hall by Councilperson Emily Benedict who provided a tour of the council chambers and introduced Pat to councilmembers from all over the city. It was a great opportunity to share experiences and stories about the work of serving constituents and working in electoral politics.

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Pat Cullen MP in Cincinnati: “We are engaged in a project of nation-building.

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peaceful transition is possible.”

Dozens gathered in the Irish Heritage Center in Cincinnati, Ohio on Thursday, May 29, 2025 for another meeting of the Irish Unity People’s Assembly for the Diaspora.

A community center that serves as a place to congregate for celebrations, meetings, sessions, classes, concerts, and more, the Irish Heritage Center also hosts an impressive collection of Irish art, historic artifacts, and a library. We received a warm welcome from the staff and volunteers who make the place the heart of the community.

Before the event, Pat Cullen MP met with Kentucky Supreme Court Justice Michelle Keller and was welcomed by women business and civic leaders from all over the region. She also visited the The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, a museum that promotes social justice for all, building on the principles of the Underground Railroad.

People’s Assembly events in the United States are designed to provide activists and supporters with an update on the political situation around Irish Unity and just as importantly, provide a clear channel for Irish America and Irish Diaspora to provide feedback directly to The Commission on the Future of Ireland.

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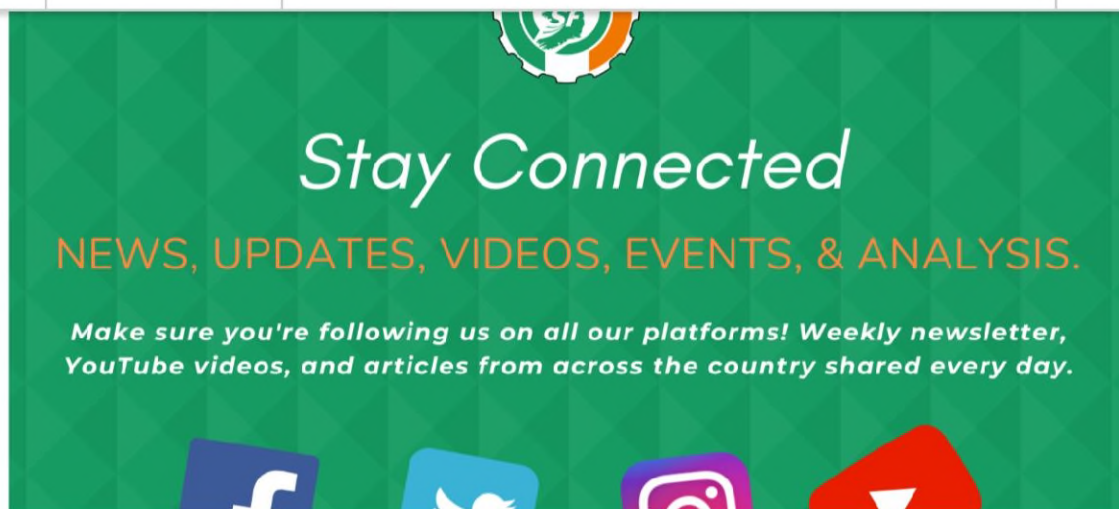


Paul Maskey MP in New York for Glór na Móna 20th Anniversary and Croí Na Carraige fundraiser

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