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**UNITED IRELAND**

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## The Cause of Labor...

### A letter from Ireland

a Chara,

I am still on the road and leaving Las Vegas for the Irish Unity People's Assembly for the Diaspora in San Francisco and Vancouver.

Vegas is a strange, disorienting place, and not one I had ever planned to visit. But here I was attending the Transport Workers Union of America conference at the invitation of their President, John Samuelson.

I was fresh off the plane, having attended the Irish Echo Irish-American Labor Awards in New York, and had the opportunity to meet with Sean O'Brien, President of the Teamsters Union.

Sharing time with both leaders was truly inspiring and refreshing. There was a shared passion for doing the right thing for workers and their families, a healthy disregard for "bosses", and a contagious passion for change. Both are supporters of Irish Unity.

Over the two days in Vegas, I listened as union organizers, from leadership to the shop floor, spoke of the daily battles for respect and safety on the job—the need for a living wage and benefits. The TWU calls itself the "Fightback Union", and when they fight, they win.

It would be a foolish boss who gets in the way of these workers. They are informed, energised, strategic, and active. Their demands were reasonable: the reshoring of airplane maintenance to ensure safety standards, opposition to driverless vehicles, or as one speaker asked, "Can an algorithm do CPR on a passenger!?"

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deemed essential workers, and once the crisis was over, they became disposable.

Again and again at the conference, speakers and videos invoked Mike Quill, one of the founders of the Union. Mike was an IRA volunteer in the War of Independence. He fought against the British in his native County Kerry, and he opposed the treaty and partition of Ireland. After the Civil War, effectively blacklisted, he immigrated to America.

As a follower of the executed 1916 rebel leader and trade unionist James Connolly, he witnessed the appalling conditions in the New York subway and set about creating a union for the workers. He even named it after Connolly's Transport and General Workers Union. Connolly had also been a labor organiser in the US.

Today, under the leadership of John Samuelson, the TWU embodies the fighting spirit of Quill and Connolly.

Connolly famously said, "The cause of labour is the cause of Ireland and the cause of Ireland is the cause of labour." That remains true to this day. The building of a new and united Ireland is the opportunity to build a prosperous home for workers.

The same could be said of the labour movement in the US. At a time of division and inequality, the labour movement stands for unity and opportunity. Almost six hundred delegates, representing one hundred and sixty thousand workers, spoke as one, determined to stand up for their rights and their future. What I found in Las Vegas was not fear and loathing, but hope and respect with labor leaders and their members in lockstep, and ready for the fight ahead.

Have a great weekend, and I hope to see you along the road.

Is mise,

Ciarán

**Ciarán Quinn is the Sinn Féin Representative to North America**

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## Irish-American Labor Awards

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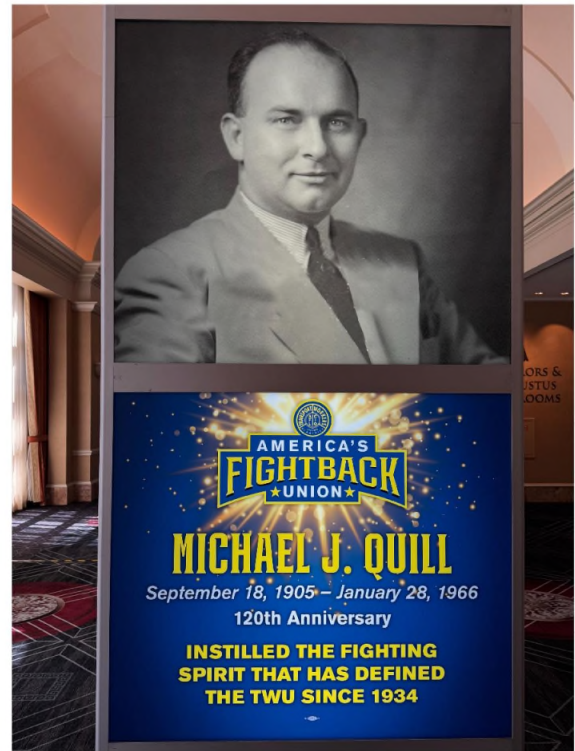
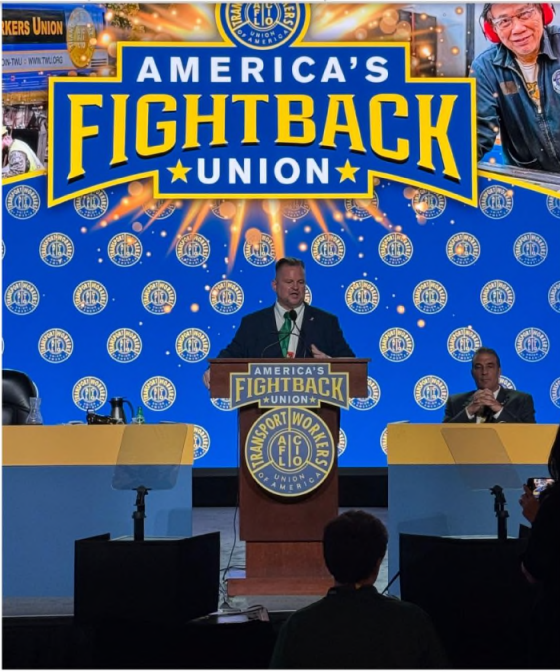


# Transport Workers Union Constitutional Convention

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# Mobilizing Trade Unionists for Irish Unity

By Anne Speed

It was 66 years ago that trade unions organising on the island of Ireland reunited after almost 15 years apart. Economic prospects for workers across the island were dismal, both North and South, living standards were poor and expectations of a better life were rising. The 1950s was truly a dreadful decade, with emigration and poverty at record levels. British administration of the 6 Counties, delivered through the political consolidation of unionism, meant deepening discrimination and unemployment for catholic workers. Trade unionists, influenced by the role of syndicalist James Larkin or socialist James Connolly, recognised the need to galvanise the trade union organisation. There was common cause in fighting for the needs of working people. There was however no common cause in challenging partition.

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions was reborn in 1959, but this time with a Northern Ireland Committee (NIC) constituted to engage with the political administration of the 6 Counties. Over the 66 years since, this has meant enduring periods of direct rule, unionist dominated local governance and, currently, a devolved power sharing government. When the demand for civil rights erupted in the 1960s, strong instincts to challenge Partition were constrained by the imperative to maintain the corporate unity of trade union structures. Many would argue that this was the only path to take. However, it could equally be argued that it was the time to put the democratic demand, the right of the Irish people to accept or reject partition. That question, never put before the people across the island, remains a key question and a key democratic demand.

In the North, years of nationalist exclusion through employment and other forms of sectarian discrimination have been diluted or removed by fair employment legislation and the Good Friday Agreement. Trade unions have adapted to the changing political environment. But our ability to influence economic resilience across the 6 Counties remains intractably constrained by the overarching fact of the political-economic union within the British system. In the South while development of state infrastructure and resources began seriously during the Lemass government, subsequent governments have followed strategies of reliance on foreign direct investment and a turn to acceptance of the predominant interests of European capitalism. This is how we have

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So what now for trade unions?

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**A Trade Union Vision for a  
New and United Ireland**



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**Biggest crowd yet for the NYC Martin  
McGuinness Peace Foundation**

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# Irish Unity Education Webinar Series September Guest: Colin Harvey

Join us on **Saturday, September 20** at 12:00 noon ET for the second in our Irish Unity Educational Webinar Series. We will be joined by special guest Professor Colin Harvey, a professor of Human Rights Law in the Queen's University Belfast School of Law, a Fellow of the Senator George J Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice, an Associate Fellow of the Institute of Irish Studies and a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. He is a Commissioner on the Irish Human Rights and

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on the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, has been involved in an extensive range of advisory roles, and has provided expert evidence to parliamentary committees in Ireland and the UK, including the Oireachtas Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, and the Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for the Executive Office.

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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20 - 12 NOON ET

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**Irish Unity People's Assemblies in  
Hartford, Boston, and Philadelphia in  
October - with Mairéad Farrell TD**

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**Hartford, CT, Boston, MA, and Philadelphia, PA in October.**

This is a historic moment in the history of Ireland, and we want you to you join us as we hear from Mairéad Farrell TD, and dive into the work of planning and preparing for the creation of a new and united Ireland!

Join us for a conversation with special guest speakers, Irish diaspora, descendants of Ireland, and all those who support Irish unity.

**Click the image of the event you want to attend below to register.**

<b>THE COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF IRELAND</b>	<b>THE COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF IRELAND</b>	<b>THE COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF IRELAND</b>
 <p><b>Saturday, October 25, 2025</b>  <b>Hartford, CT</b>                      Irish American Home Society                      2:00 - 4:30pm</p> <p><b>Featuring Mairéad Farrell TD</b>                      A conversation with the diaspora, the descendants of Ireland, and all those who support Irish unity.</p>  <p>AN COIMISIÚN UM THODHCHAÍ NA hÉIREANN</p>	 <p><b>Tuesday, October 28, 2025</b>  <b>Boston, MA</b>                      Florian Hall                      7:00 - 9:30pm</p> <p><b>Featuring Mairéad Farrell TD</b>                      A conversation with the diaspora, the descendants of Ireland, and all those who support Irish unity.</p>  <p>AN COIMISIÚN UM THODHCHAÍ NA hÉIREANN</p>	 <p><b>Thursday, October 30, 2025</b>  <b>Philadelphia, PA</b>                      The Irish Center                      6:00 - 8:30pm</p> <p><b>Featuring Mairéad Farrell TD</b>                      A conversation with the diaspora, the descendants of Ireland, and all those who support Irish unity.</p>  <p>AN COIMISIÚN UM THODHCHAÍ NA hÉIREANN</p>

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## Catalpa Anniversary Event in New Bedford, MA - October 27, 2025

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**CATALPA 150<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**





### THE GREATEST ESCAPE IN IRISH HISTORY

**7:00 PM**  
**MONDAY - OCTOBER 27<sup>TH</sup>**  
**SEAMEN'S BETHEL NEW BEDFORD**

CELEBRATING



ANNIVERSARY

**NEW BEDFORD CONNECTION**

The Catalpa rescue refers to a famous mission where the American whaling ship Catalpa, sailing out of New Bedford, Massachusetts, in 1875, rescued six Irish Fenian prisoners from Fremantle Prison in Western Australia in 1876. The mission was a culmination of secret planning by Irish exiles in America and was led by Captain George Anthony, a New Bedford native. The daring escape was a major propaganda victory for the Fenians, ultimately securing the freedom of the six men and symbolizing the fight for Irish independence.



**SPECIAL GUESTS**



**Sinn Fein TD Mairead Farrell**  
Represents Galway West and South Mayo, and serves as the party's spokesperson on Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform, and Digitalisation.



**Marcus Howard**  
The Independent Historian and Filmmaker  
"The Greatest Escape in Irish History: Voices From The Tomb" Catalpa Rescue - 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Talk

Sponsored by The Friendly Sons of Saint Patrick New Bedford

**INQUIRIES:**  
**CHRISTOPHER DONNELLY**  
**+508 320 8388**

# San Francisco Irish Famine Memorial Plaza site revealed

While in San Francisco, we visited the site of the newly approved San Francisco Irish Famine Memorial Plaza. With a stunning view of the Golden Gate Bridge and bay, it is

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## New Issue of Éire Nua

[Download the latest issue of Éire Nua for free now!](#)

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**T**he visit on 20 June by former Fine Gael Taoiseach Leo Varadkar to west Belfast was a timely reminder that the issue of a new Ireland remains for many the political priority of our time. The packed event in St. Mary's University College was organised by Féile an Phobail and Ireland's Future and it was chaired by the Rev. Karen Sethuraman.

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