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UNITED STATES UNITED IRELAND

It was the right thing to do

A letter from Ireland

a Chara,

The letter this week is from somewhere over the Atlantic. I am on my way home after a series of Irish Unity Commission hearings in Hartford, Boston, and Philadelphia, as well as a lecture in New Bedford by historian Marcus Howard to mark the 150th anniversary of the Catalpa's sailing from the city.

All of the events were incredibly energising for our delegation, which included Mairead Farrell TD from Galway and Greg O'Loughlin, Executive Director of Friends of Sinn Féin USA.

The rooms were full of old and new friends, drawn together by a common pride in Ireland and a shared hope for the future. In Hartford, we paid our respects to the Hunger Strikers at the magnificent Celtic cross erected in their honour. The previous day, we had attended an Irish Unity Commission held at the Irish American Home Society. The event was bookended by a piper and an exhibition of Irish Dancing.

In Boston, the Commission was hosted in the Florian Hall in South Boston. The walls of the room have echoed for generations of labour functions and Irish American celebrations. Older activists shared their memories of previous speakers and Irish Republican events with a new generation of activists. Mairead spoke of the close bonds forged over generations of immigration between Galway and Boston.

It was then onto Philly and a packed hall in the Commodore John Barry Irish Arts and Cultural Centre. In common with Hartford and Boston, it was a sold-out event with over two hundred registered.

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But another story caught my ear. Mairead spoke at the lecture on the Catalpa about Captain Anthony. Earlier that day, we had visited his grave site.

Captain Anthony was recruited by the Fenians to skipper the boat to break out their comrades being held as prisoners in Western Australia. He had no connection with the Fenians or Ireland. But he recognised the injustice imposed on Irish patriots imprisoned by Britain. The risks were high: imprisonment or death. When asked in later years why he undertook this dangerous mission, he simply said, "It was the right thing to do."

He sailed out of New Bedford, MA, leaving his home, wife and young daughter, carrying with him the courage of his own beliefs. Recognising that some causes are bigger than ourselves. That an injustice to one is an injustice to all.

He returned with the escaped Fenian prisoners, but he would remain a wanted man for the rest of his life by the British. His seafaring days ended.

Connecting past and present, Mairead reminded us all, "Today, we remember Captain Anthony and the Fenian Prisoners. Tomorrow, we honour them by working to build a new and united Ireland."

I would like to thank all of those, too many to name, who helped make this a highly successful tour. But a special mention must go to Kathleen Savage, whose youthful enthusiasm for the cause of Irish unity has not diminished over decades of activism.

Have a great weekend.

Ciarán

Ciarán Quinn is the Sinn Féin Representative to North America

Watch: Irish Unity Education Webinar with Ben Collins

Author Ben Collins joins us for a conversation about the practical elements of planning and preparing for a new and united Ireland.

Ben is the author of "Irish Unity: Time to Prepare" and "[The Irish Unity Dividend](#)".

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Mary Lou McDonald hails election of Catherine Connolly as Uachtarán na hÉireann in historic election victory

Sinn Féin Leader Mary Lou McDonald TD has hailed the landslide election of Catherine Connolly as Uachtarán na hÉireann and said she deserves huge credit for what she has achieved.

Ms McDonald described the Connolly campaign as “an historic political effort which, for the first time, brought together the combined Opposition to present a positive alternative to the jaded politics of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, which the people rejected today. It is also an election which put Irish unity centre stage. It is likely that a referendum on Irish Unity will happen during Catherine’s Presidency and the government needs to start preparing for it now.”

The Sinn Féin Leader said, “This has been a stunning result for Catherine Connolly. A landslide victory and she deserves huge credit for what she has achieved. She has been an amazing candidate with a positive vision for the Presidency – a neutral Ireland, a united Ireland, a voice for the people, independent of government.

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those who worked tirelessly on the campaign, particularly Sinn Féin activists who gave it their all in the campaign and were instrumental in getting Catherine elected.

“This was an historic election, perhaps a watershed moment in Irish politics, in which the combined opposition came together to take on Fianna Fail and Fine Gael. We presented a real, positive alternative to the stifling politics that has failed generation after generation. It shows exactly what is possible when we work together.

“This victory today presents an opportunity to turn the page. Our job now is to harness the energy of the campaign and the hope this vote represents and use it to redouble our efforts in standing up for ordinary workers and families. It is also an opportunity to advance towards Irish Unity. It is likely that a referendum on Irish Unity will happen during Catherine’s Presidency and the government needs to start preparing for it now.

“Today’s vote represents a resounding defeat for the politics of Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil, in the aftermath of a budget that left workers and families worse off. They have also been punished for their decision to block other candidates getting on the ballot paper. And rightly so.

“I know there are those who felt unheard, unrepresented, and ignored by the system in this election and many others who were disconnected and disaffected. I want those people to know that we hear them, that we have listened, and that we will respond with engagement and action.

“This is a great day for Ireland. The arc of Irish history is long and now it bends towards a future that belongs to the people. The Presidency of Ireland is a noble office that stands as the north star for the values, ideals, and hopes of the Irish nation. In Catherine Connolly, we have an Uachtarán na hÉireann who will safeguard these values, ideals and hopes with courage, a President who represents Ireland with integrity, wisdom and honour.”

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Mairéad Farrell in Hartford, Boston, New Bedford, and Philadelphia

Mairéad Farrell, TD for Galway West and Sinn Féin's spokesperson on Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation came to the United States for a series of Irish Unity People's Assemblies and meetings. We will have more details in upcoming stories and newsletters. Below are some pictures from the events and stops. Thank you to all of the volunteers, organizers, and activists who helped make these events possible and such a success!

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Watch from Our Education Webinar with Professor Colin Harvey

Did you see our conversation with Professor Colin Harvey about how to best prepare for a new and United Ireland? You can watch it and find links to resources and ways to learn more right here:



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