

TAOBHISTIGH

MAKING HISTORY - A FIRST MINISTER FOR ALL **PAGES 4-5**

A NEW IRELAND FOR ALL: ENDING SECTARIAN SEGREGATION **PAGES 9-15**

IRISH UNITY SUMMIT IN NEW YORK **PAGES 30-32**

**NEW
IRELAND**

EARRAIGH
2024
SPRING
EAGRÁN ISSUE 7



**ÉIRE
NUA**



Change starts here

Several weeks ago Uachtarán Shinn Féin Mary Lou McDonald addressed Sinn Féin's largest ever panel of candidates for the local government and European elections in the 26 counties and for the first ever directly elected Mayor for Limerick.

[See Page 2](#)

**KEEP TALKING
ABOUT
PALESTINE**



**CEASEFIRE
NOW**

Clár an Abhair

EARRAIGH 2024 SPRING
EAGRÁN ISSUE 7



- 2 **CHANGE STARTS HERE**
- 4 **MAKING HISTORY - A FIRST MINISTER FOR ALL**
- 6 **RIGHTS IN A NEW IRELAND**
- 9 **A NEW IRELAND FOR ALL: ENDING SECTARIAN SEGREGATION**
- 16 **POBAIL TUAITHE IN ÉIRINN NUA, SEÓ BHAILE MHOIREIL**
- 18 **ACADEMIC RESEARCH ON REUNIFICATION**
- 20 **DÚIRT SIAD**
- 21 **COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF IRELAND UPDATE**
- 22 **SOCIAL PROTECTION, PENSIONS AND THE NEW IRELAND**
- 26 **HISTORY IS ON OUR SIDE - TARIQ ALI INTERVIEW**
- 28 **LÁ NÁISIÚNTA STRÁITÉISE ÓGRA SHINN FÉIN**
- 29 **QUIZ ON PRISON LITERATURE**
- 30 **MAJOR IRISH UNITY CONFERENCE IN NEW YORK**
- 33 **IRISH UNITY FRONT AND CENTRE IN DC**
- 34 **ÉIRE NUA- CAD É A BHEAS I GCEIST?**

Change starts here

The opportunity to achieve real change and advance the demands for constitutional change and Irish Unity have been significantly enhanced by the three major elections now scheduled to take place in June and July.

On 7 June local government and European Parliament elections will take place in the South. Four weeks later on 4 July voters in the North will go to the polls.

Commenting on the Westminster election Leas Uachtarán Shinn Féin and First Minister Michelle O'Neill said: "The Conservative government had been a disaster. It has been bad for the economy, bad for public services and bad for workers and families as the cost of living soared putting them under pressure. The Westminster election provides an opportunity to send a clear message; that the people of the North want decisions about their lives and their future to be made here in Ireland, and not in London. A shared future, where all our people and communities work together as one. On 4 July let's seize the opportunity to return the strongest Sinn Féin team."

Several weeks ago Uachtarán Shinn Féin Mary Lou McDonald addressing Sinn Féin's largest ever panel of candidates for the local government and European elections in the 26 counties and for the first ever directly elected Mayor for Limerick, said:

"On 7 June republicans face a big challenge and a big opportunity in the local government and European elections. While nothing can be taken for granted, all of the soundings, despite the ups and downs of opinion polls, are good.

Citizens have witnessed first-hand in recent

years the hard work of the party, our activists and elected representatives. After 13 years of Fine Gael in Government and 8 years of Fianna Fáil in partnership with them people are looking for a real change.

They won't get that with Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael or the Greens. That's why Sinn Féin is running our largest number of candidates and we are standing in every electoral area. That's a big commitment and we need every party activist and supporter joining with us in turning that commitment into seats on Councils and in Europe.

Every republican activist can make that happen. They can make a real difference in people's lives. This election is the first step in getting this failed government out of office. We know that change is possible and we know that change is essential and, my friends, we know that change starts here."

In a message that is equally applicable to the three election campaigns now underway Mary Lou McDonald said:

"We are the party that puts workers, families, and community first. We're on the side of ordinary people – today, tomorrow, always, and forever. We're the party of equality, of fairness, of social and economic justice – no one left out, no one left behind. No community or small town forgotten. We do not accept second class citizenship for anyone.

We are the party of Irish freedom. Our objective is to unite our country, to end partition, to build an Ireland that's home to all our people. Our mission statement is the Proclamation of the Irish Republic.

Together, we dream the big dream and we hold tightly to it – a new Ireland of equality, opportunity, and prosperity.

We are the party of change.

- ➔ Change that means a roof over your head, a secure affordable home.
- ➔ Change that means being able to see a doctor when you're sick, getting the right care, in the right place, at the right time.
- ➔ Change that means the life is affordable, where a job provides a decent living, and where you can retire at sixty-five with your pension.

➔ Change that means safe communities, strong communities built from the grassroots up, protected by resourcing An Garda Síochána fully, and by ambitiously investing in community development, in youth work, in the amazing talent and potential of our young people.

➔ Change means a government, a society that has the backs of ordinary people. Citizens with disabilities, those crying out for mental health care, our carers, and parents needing support for their children have to battle the system for services every single day.

All too often ordinary people don't matter to those in power.

It's now time to turn the tide. We want, we need, our young people here in Ireland, our young people living abroad to have the opportunity to come back and pursue happiness at home. We want our economy to thrive, our society to blossom.

In the South key to this is fixing housing. That means delivering the biggest housing programme in the history of the state. A vote for Sinn Féin in this election is a vote for affordable housing, to rent or buy. A vote for Sinn Féin is a vote for more council housing. A vote for Sinn Féin is a vote to end the housing crisis. North and South Sinn Féin has the plan.

if citizen's want change – they have the opportunity to make their voices heard loud and clearly on 7 June and 4 July.

Vótáil Shinn Féin.

We will work hard. We won't let people down."



Making History – A First Minister for All



It took over one hundred years of unbroken resistance to end many of the injustices arising from partition and the institutional system of discrimination and inequality that shored up the one-party sectarian unionist state.



By Jim Gibney

The election of Sinn Féin's Michelle O'Neill as the North's First Minister was a dramatic and far-reaching public manifestation of the end of unionist domination - a domination supported by successive British governments for over a century.

And although Michelle's election as First Minister had been expected since the last Assembly election in 2022, it was seismic

when it occurred in terms of its impact on partition and the grip unionist parties had on all aspects of life: security, political, economic, social and cultural.

It was the most profound event in the state's one hundred year existence - a political earthquake at the heart of unionism and British government policy.

Michelle's election 'turbo-charged' the united Ireland campaign and as Mary Lou McDonald

The media, locally and nationally caught the significance of the election. It was a world-wide story.

correctly said placed its achievement ‘within touching distance’.

The media, locally and nationally caught the significance of the election. It was a world-wide story.

The media’s focus explored the election in terms of whether it brought a united Ireland closer or not.

In her acceptance speech to the Assembly on appointment to office Michelle reflected on the deep historical meaning of her election, particularly for northern nationalists - “That such a day would come was unimaginable to my parents and grandparents generation but because of the Good Friday Agreement that old state that they were born into is gone and a more democratic and equal society now exists”.

The peace process, the Good Friday Agreement, the political process and the steady growth of Sinn Féin nationally, were the main mechanisms for dismantling the ‘old state’. It withered on the vine of change brought about by the struggle for a new united Ireland.

The all-Ireland framework of the Good Friday Agreement is intrinsic to day-to-day politics in Ireland. The north’s Executive and Assembly only function as part of the all-Ireland arrangements. If those all-Ireland arrangements did not exist then Sinn Féin would not be part of the Executive and the Assembly.

And the same is true of the east-west arrangements - the British/Irish connection.

The Good Friday Agreement addresses the totality of relationships that are at the heart of the conflict and crucially it provides a peaceful pathway to a united Ireland through referendums, North and South to bring about a united Ireland if that’s what the people want and vote for it.

There were other changes, equally important

alongside the GFA which helped to bring about the circumstances that led to the election of Michelle as First Minister.

Demographic changes led to a natural decline in the unionist population and an increase in the nationalist population. At the same time there has been a decline in electoral support for the DUP and the UUP over a number of elections and an increase in support for Sinn Féin. Consequently, with the growth of support in the South Sinn Féin is now the largest and most popular party across the island of Ireland.

Today the constitutional debate and the popular campaign for a new united Ireland have never been stronger.

Today the constitutional debate and the popular campaign for a new united Ireland have never been stronger.

Since the formation of the new Executive Sinn Féin ministers have used their offices to advocate for an all-Ireland approach to the economy, to health, to infrastructure and finance.

And Michelle has also emphasised her role as First Minister for all and has repeated the sentiment in her acceptance speech many times: “To all of you who are British and unionist, I say this: your national identity, your cultures, your traditions are important to me. Our allegiances are equally legitimate”.

Unionist ministers in the Executive have also played a positive part in creating a positive mood among nationalists by attending

an Irish language school and playing Gaelic games.

Michelle’s election and a fully functioning Good Friday Agreement allows for those who want to see a united Ireland to campaign for it while ensuring the full implementation of power sharing and working with unionists in a common cause to deliver change and improve the quality of people’s lives in the north.

So, well done Michelle.

Rights

in a New Ireland

Do we live in a rights based society? How can rights be protected in a new Ireland? What are the rights that need to be prioritised and how can we move forward together?



By Emma McArdle

At the beginning of May the British government's Legacy Act took effect and a group of international human rights experts published a major report accusing the British state of operating a "systematic" practice of impunity to protect state forces. In the same week over 120 people from diverse backgrounds gathered in St Comgall's/Ionad Eileen Howell on 3rd May to discuss these matters and to listen to each other's contributions and thoughts.

The event was hosted by the Sinn Féin Commission on the Future of Ireland as part of a wider series of public meetings aimed at supporting the ongoing conversation on the future of constitutional change to bring about Irish unity.

Rights in a New Ireland was chaired by long time rights champion and all round powerhouse Ailbhe Smyth. Ailbhe's enthusiasm for this work and meeting the people on the ground was evident and the significance of having Ailbhe participate in this event in Belfast was not lost on the attendees with many thanking her for the work that she has done, particularly her leadership role in the marriage equality and Repeal referendums in the 26 counties.

Ailbhe is currently Chair of Women's Aid and also of Ballyfermot STAR Addiction services. She is a director of Age Action and of the Women's Global Health Network Ireland, and Patron of the Women's Collective Ireland (WCI). Among other campaigning activities she

is a founding member of Le Cheile: Diversity not Division, a cross-sectoral alliance challenging far right extremism.

The panel consisted of Daniel Holder - Director of the Belfast based Committee on the Administration of Justice and Co-Convener of the Equality Coalition; Dr Shannonbrooke Murphy - Endowed Chair and Associate Professor in Human Rights at St Thomas University in New Brunswick, Canada; and Coin Harvey - Professor of Human Rights Law in the School of Law, QUB and member of the management board of Ireland's Future. Each of the panellists is involved in multiple rights groups and agencies and can speak very authoritatively on the subject.

With such an impressive panel it is not surprising that many



took time out of their day to attend. Numerous attendees came long distances to join in the conversation with people from Derry and Dublin in the audience.

The contribution of panellists and audience members clearly identified the need to put in place strategies that promote understanding and defend rights. These must include a robust, internationally compliant human rights system of laws and governance that incorporate rights, freedoms and responsibilities; that guarantee civil and political rights; democratic, social, economic and cultural rights; children's rights; language and cultural rights; environmental and developmental rights. I find it challenging to marry lofty discussions on constitutional reform and rights thresholds with people's lived experiences on the ground. The link between discrimination and the constitution can be opaque to those of us who aren't trained in legal matters or experienced in this sector. I certainly don't have the



vocabulary needed to navigate the terrain of rights protections and guarantees and I think my own working class background and personality leans to the practical over the conceptual.

One contributor from the audience at the event spoke about the need to start educating young people on these matters in school. It's a fundamental point, how

can an individual exercise their claim to rights if they don't know what their rights are, how they are guaranteed or what avenues they have to recourse in the event of a denial of rights.

If there is one thing children understand it's the concept of fairness. They're untainted by the material considerations of adults so they see things in very uncluttered terms.

Exploring rights through the prism of fairness at a young age would resonate with children and set them up well for becoming civic minded, altruistic adults.

Coupling this with providing our next generation with the basics of how our political systems work, how they can exercise their own agency through voting in elections, how laws are made and so on would result in a much more politically engaged and empowered citizenry.

It would also help people to understand the limitations of the northern Assembly in terms of really making a difference despite the best efforts and intentions of those elected to it. Without power over fiscal matters, foreign policy and the welfare system, the Executive operates at all times with one hand tied behind its back, only cosmetic changes are permitted with Westminster retaining all of the sovereign control.

Socio-economic issues were raised numerous times at the event – one contributor remarked that community organisations spend most their time helping people access the most basic rights of food, housing, education and basic income protection.

The failure of governments North and South to meet these most essential rights has many effects. For those who struggle everyday to meet their basic needs it is impossible to think beyond ensuring these basic provisions are met. It's very difficult for citizens with empty fridges to think about anything beyond that.

That's why for some people

Claims to rights is not delivery of rights.

discussions on constitutional change can seem little more than a vanity project. Time and again we hear people saying 'now isn't the time' to discuss unity, or 'let's sort out the most important things first.' I'm not naïve – I understand that there are lots of issues in our society that need to be addressed and that many of them have an immediate impact on people's lives.

But the opportunity that we collectively now have, to redefine the future is too important to miss. There will always be issues that need to be dealt with; there will always be problems and differences of opinion on political decisions; that cannot be used to block reunification and the opportunity to create, for the first time, a national democracy on our island. Irish unity alone is not the answer to society's ills, it will take a government of the people and for the people to undo years of bad governance

north and south, but it is the necessary foundation required to begin to build a real republic that citizens deserve. The British government will never govern in the interests of Ireland, why should it? It will govern in its own interests always and these matters were discussed at the Rights in a New Ireland event with many contributors referencing Brexit and the Legacy Bill as just the most recent examples of British policy having a negative and destabilising effect on Ireland.

The Tories have spent 13 years eroding the protections of the Good Friday Agreement. As a result there is No Bill of Rights; No Civic Forum in the North; No all-Ireland Civic Forum; and No all-Ireland Charter of Rights. Clearly, there are many challenges ahead to undo these decisions. Claims to rights is not delivery of rights. People's ability to access necessary services without a battle a day is fundamental to building the new Ireland, that is what will differentiate the real republic and that is what society should be aiming for as we transition to a new united Ireland. Be part of this conversation. Reach out to others. The people of this island deserve a citizen centred, rights based society. London won't give us this. Self-determination will, if those of us who want real change plan for it.

A video of the conference is available at <https://youtu.be/wT4lj94yHjE>



A NEW IRELAND FOR ALL:

Ending Sectarian Segregation



In a further contribution to the conversation around the future shape of a united Ireland Sinn Féin recently published its latest policy document aimed at tackling division and segregation in society. 'A New Ireland for all: Ending Sectarian Segregation'. Its objective is a shared society in which all citizens are cherished, respected and protected in a new national constitutional democracy. The paper was launched on 10 April by First Minister Michelle O'Neill.

In this edition of Éire Nua Peter Osborne who is currently an independent member of the Policing Board, and a Board member of the International Fund for Ireland, examines the challenges of tackling sectarianism.

We also include the insightful contribution made by Denzil McDaniel, former editor of the Impartial Reporter in Fermanagh and political commentator and a column by Sinn Féin National Party Chairperson Declan Kearney MLA who has led on this issue for many years. The policy is about ending sectarianism and segregation which is vital in building a better society. Small conversations about the kind of shared society we want to live in and pass on to our children and grandchildren, are important.

Conversations about breaking down barriers, building trust, building relationships are crucial.



The new policy document is available at: <https://vote.sinnfein.ie/need-for-step-change-to-tackle-sectarianism-and-build-better-future-oneill/>





Celebrating our Differences

By Denzil
McDaniel

Denzil McDaniel is a former editor of the *Impartial Reporter* in Fermanagh and political commentator. He addressed the audience at the launch of the Sinn Féin policy paper *A New Ireland for All*. This is a slightly edited version.

The 1916 Proclamation of the Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the “happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts.”

These two principles of inclusion and equality have remained the bedrock in guiding Ireland through various changes and amendments to the Irish Constitution. Indeed, after the Good Friday Agreement, the southern Constitution’s Article 3 was amended in 1999 to include the requirement to “unite people in harmony and friendship.”

Has it been achieved after all these years?

Where’s the harmony among our divided people? Over time, not only have we stayed in the silos of our own communities, but we have also tended to view other with suspicion and mistrust.

Just a few years after 1916 the schism of Partition didn’t just split the island geographically but for over a century it embedded division which has seen the cancer of sectarianism and bigotry grow. On both sides of the Border but particularly in the North we still have a huge percentage of social housing in which people live alongside people of the same religion. And our children are still largely educated separately, though that is

changing.

I wonder how many of you grew up knowing someone from the other side; I suspect it remains something of a rarity in urban areas like Belfast and Derry and even in some rural areas.

My own experience of being born and reared in Enniskillen is that the community of my town was more integrated than most, and as a result community relations are much better because of those human connections.

I was born in a housing estate in Enniskillen called Cornagrade which was mixed, and still is even if there are majority Catholics now. And the soccer team I played in was about 50/50 Protestant and Catholic. In small towns like Lisnaskea, the two communities went to their own side’s chemist shop, newsagent and so on. And even though Enniskillen was well mixed as a town, I attended a different school than my Catholic mates.

I was reminded of this division recently by a television programme about the poet Michael Longley, who attended a Protestant grammar school in Belfast and had no contact with Catholics at all growing up until at Queen’s he met Seamus Heaney and the two men and their wives became firm friends.

Michael Longley said this:

“Sectarianism at my school was not apparent, it was invisible. At grammar school I was taught nothing about Irish history, Irish music, Irish Art. I wasn’t even taught about Orange Art. I was brought up in an offshoot of England which seems to me extraordinary since I was walking around on an island which called itself Ireland. None of us knew any Catholics.” That resonated with me as I attended a similar school.

So I commend your policy of “ending sectarian segregation” and you’ve rightly identified inclusion and reconciliation as key to building a better Ireland.

I welcome your aim of having a deeper engagement with those from Protestant, Unionist and British backgrounds. I’m Protestant, Irish and in favour of a new Ireland and more of us are finding our voice in the North. In a

sense it may be easier for you to accommodate me. But listening to the views of others may be uncomfortable in hearing things that may challenge you.

Some will talk about still feeling raw about the hurt they experienced in the past and feel that hurt isn’t recognised by Republicans partaking in commemorations. Everyone should remember their dead, but how do we on both sides balance in holding firm to our own beliefs while recognising the impact it had on the other community?

What can be done to convince Unionists that they won’t be subsumed into an extension of the 26 counties, where as losers of a referendum their identity will disappear; that in fact, in a new Ireland they will be valued and play an important role? Your policy document is important, but following through in convincing people in the Unionist community who don’t want to hear will be difficult and crucial.

The disparate views of Protestants and Unionists range from those hostile to even a conversation taking place to those now accepting that a united Ireland is not only inevitable but an opportunity to build something exciting and new.

In the middle, a large part of the Protestant

community has thinking about what a new Ireland might look like. Brexit was a game changer, and English Nationalism imposing it has meant many Protestants are pondering their identity and where their place is going forward. Also, younger people are thinking very differently to my generation.

There is a momentum building in the discourse about a new Ireland, about the economy, what a health service or the education system would look like.

And would a federal system appeal, with regional parliaments especially in the north?

These are all important conversations, and I’m not ignoring them; nor indeed the new Taoiseach Simon Harris’s disappointing start in continuing the Southern Government’s failure to embrace the conversation.

But, today your specific policy launch is about

ending sectarianism and segregation and that is vital in building a better society. Small conversations about the kind of shared society we want to live in and pass on to our children, and grandchildren, are important. Conversations about breaking down barriers, building trust, building relationships are crucial.

I talk all the time to Protestants about the need for them to open up and build trust and was talking to a Protestant friend recently about what reconciliation really means and he later sent me this definition.

At its simplest, it means finding a way to live alongside former enemies - not necessarily to love them, or forgive them, or forget the past in any way, but to coexist with them, to develop the degree of cooperation necessary to share our society with them, so that we all have better lives together than we have had separately.

Together we can build a great new Ireland, and I’ll finish with another quotation, this time from black feminist writer Audre Lord:

“It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognise, accept and celebrate those differences.”

Your policy can make a real contribution in that regard.





Tackling segregation is the key challenge

By Peter Osborne

Peter Osborne is a current independent member of the Policing Board and a Board member of the International Fund for Ireland.

His voluntary commitments include being chair of the Integrated Education Fund and chair of the Centre for Cross Border Studies. Peter has chaired the Community Relations Council and was a Commissioner and chair of the Parades Commission for a combined period of over ten years.

While chairing the Community Relations Council I talked about a 50-year plus reconciliation process. Given the tumult of the 1970s, '80s and '90s I couldn't believe it would take any fewer years. After all, it has already taken a generation since the Good Friday Agreement to start some of the honest conversations that are needed.

The plus in 50-year plus is deliberately used because for each year that this society fails to tackle segregation – in legislation, with policy and in practice – it will tick over to 51-years plus, then 52 plus, and more.

At the Community Relations Council I also often referenced Martin Luther King including the famous quote that true compassion isn't tossing a few coins to a beggar on the street but asking

why there is a need for beggars and changing the system that has led to them.

Here, true wisdom isn't funding a few community relations projects, important as they are in building relationship and trust. True wisdom is asking why there is a need for community relations projects and changing the system that has led to that need.

Segregation is the catalyst and cause of sectarianism and division. Catholics and Protestants are not born with prejudice, but the politics, narratives and space in which people live, how people are educated or play sport and socialise, shape attitudes.

Segregation is not normal, nor should it be normalised.

Given peace barriers were often constructed over 50 years ago they have become a new normal for too many people in middle age who know nothing else; too little diversity in most schools means many students leave from 16 experiencing little substantial contact, if any, with a Protestant or Catholic. Protestants rarely play Gaelic games while Catholics rarely play cricket; there is even an Irish Scouts and a British Scouts.

Relationship dismantles prejudice and when those relationships often have to wait because of systemic segregation until people are adults, when their life

patterns are already set, tackling prejudice can become an afterthought – or worse the need isn't even acknowledged. We have lived parallel lives for too long.

In recent years inward migration has enriched this place socially, culturally and economically. The irony is that some of us from the traditional, different religious backgrounds may understand and accept newcomers more quickly than we understand and accept each other.

The last 25 years has seen other huge change. The ancestral voices seem to have less resonance in the minds of younger people who better understand other issues including the mental health and climate change challenges.

Bit by bit, change has happened so slowly it can be under appreciated. Everyone deserves credit, within nationalism and unionism, loyalism and republicanism, and those who identify as something else. Civil society deserves credit, delivering courageous and ground-breaking work often despite the political backdrop rather than because of it.

But there are times when bit by bit needs a leap and bound.

That is why tackling segregation is the key challenge for the next 25 years.



There will be resistance from those who can't let go of the status quo and who find comfort in what they know. But we can't let ignorance or complacency set the tone and limit the ambition for what this place looks and feels like.

The Sinn Fein policy document, Ending Sectarian Segregation, therefore is a welcome development recognising the need to tackle sectarianism and segregation in the same breath. The passing of the Integrated Education Act, and the ending of the fair employment exemption in schools, meaning teacher recruitment has

equality protections, are significant steps forward. However, as any activist will tell you while new policies and important legislation are welcome, actions to support delivery and change for the better matter just as much.

So, when the Department of Education decides an additional £50,000 is enough to implement the Integrated Education Act, it raises concerns as does the sudden withdrawal of £150 million of Fresh Start funding from integrated schools.

When there are just as many peace barriers in Belfast, Portadown and

Derry/Londonderry now compared to 1998 it is worth asking why. When segregated housing is as prevalent today as 1998 the same question applies.

If we are genuine about ending segregation, and with it doing away with sectarianism, as the priority of the next 25 years then policy needs matched with actions, resourcing, determination and a boldness that takes managed and reasonable risk.

Civil society has proved it is up for the challenge, prepared for the risks, and capable of delivering if properly supported. The real question is whether everyone else in government and outside it, is up for the challenge too?

If it is, that 50-year plus reconciliation process may not need the plus in the line after all.



We must not give up on reconciliation

By Declan Kearney
Sinn Féin National Party Chairperson

Sinn Féin's latest policy document, 'A New Ireland for All: Ending Sectarian Segregation' was launched in Ionad Eileen Howell in April. It is Sinn Féin's fourth policy contribution to addressing how the scourge of sectarianism is tackled, and reconciliation is achieved in Ireland.

This new policy builds on the previous policy frameworks and reaffirms Sinn Féin's commitment to the development of a reconciliation process. However, it also focuses on the challenges of ending sectarian segregation, healing the legacy of the past, and achieving reconciliation into the context of shaping and implementing public policy, and the role of democratic political institutions. The legacy of the historic and recent past casts a very long shadow. Over 100 years after Ireland's civil war, no effective reconciliation process was ever undertaken by the southern state to deal with that catharsis in our country's history.

The coming into effect of the British government's obscene 'Amnesty Law' on 1 May has made the challenge of dealing with our unresolved past even more toxic.

This new law is a cynical attempt to deflect away from Britain's dirty war in Ireland. It is clearly designed to derail the many campaigns for truth and justice led particularly, but not exclusively, by families whose loved ones were killed by British state forces, or their agents.

The denial of truth and justice in multiple cases for over 50 years has caused deep distress and grievance. It is incontestable that the suffering in pain caused in the past is now intergenerational.

Some suggest that our society should simply accept that the legacy of the past is intractable and will only be resolved with the passage of time: That truth and justice, and resolution are elusive.

Sinn Féin refutes that contention.

It is a political and moral imperative to deal with the past. It is fundamental to achieving reconciliation and creating a society at peace with itself.

We must not give up on reconciliation. Hope must be kept alive.

The party's new policy reiterates Sinn Féin's call for an initiative of common acknowledgement, which recognises all past injustices, hurt, and loss.

It pledges our commitment to continue seeking support for a National Reconciliation Day, which remembers all victims, from all sides, of the conflict in Ireland.

Other places have lived through the darkness of genocide in the modern world and have managed to create pathways to reconciliation and healing.

What has happened in the past cannot now be undone, but with committed leadership, new futures are possible.

Twenty-six years on from the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, it is time to open up a new phase of the Irish peace process.

We may never agree about the past, but we

can resolve to ensure it is not repeated. Any reconciliation process will need to be concrete, not abstract. It will need to be mainstreamed with widespread support and made relevant to the realities of our society in the present time. That will not mean having to forget, or necessarily even having to forgive; that is an individual decision. However, it should include a willingness to agree to disagree well; embracing both cooperation and coexistence, and, managing difference with equality and respect. Political and civic leadership must be paramount. That is why 'A New Ireland for All' contends that the democratic political institutions throughout Ireland should play a central role in promoting both reconciliation and healing. In moving forward, our shared challenge must be to make the political process work, and to plan for the next 25 years. That means preparing for and winning a unity referendum in this decade, while at the same tackling sectarianism and advancing reconciliation.

There is no contradiction. National reconciliation and national reunification are interdependent.

'A New Ireland for All' provides a framework of realistic and deliverable measures, and points a way forward to the achievement of a new rights based, inclusive national democracy.

I would urge everyone to read, share and discuss its ideas.



Pobail Tuaithe in Éirinn Nua, Seó Bhaile Mhoireil

Reáchtáladh plé ar Phobail Tuaithe in Éirinn Nua ag Seó Bhaile Mhoireil Déardaoin an 16 Bealtaine.

Labhair Urlabhraí Talmhaíochta Shinn Féin Declan McAleer CTR ag an chruinniú agus bhí an Feisire Parlaiminte Michelle Gildernew ina cathaoirleach air. Ar an phainéal don ócáid bhí John McCallister (Feirmeoir Mairteola & Déiríochta), Louise Coyle (Stiúrthóir- Lónra Ban Tuaithe TÉ) agus Elaine Houlihan (Uachtarán- Macra na Feirme)

Tá físeán de Phobail Tuaithe in Éirinn Nua ar fáil ar YouTube: New Ireland debate and discussion at Balmoral Show (youtube.com) Chuir Declan McAleer fáilte roimh gach duine chuig an 14ú imeacht poiblí a reáchtáil Coimisiún Shinn Féin um Thodhchaí na hÉireann. Dúirt sé go raibh sé suntasach gurb é seo an chéad imeacht den chineál seo a bheidh ar siúl ag Seó Bhaile Mhoireil.

“Ó cuireadh an Chríochdheighilt i bhfeidhm, cuireadh iallach ar ár n-oileán oibriú le lámh amháin ceangailte taobh thiar dár ndroim agus tá pobail tuaithe thíos go mór leis.

“Tá gá le hinfheistíocht sa ghréasán bóithre, leathanbhanda níos fearr, rochtain ar thithíocht, cúram sláinte, cúram leanaí agus tacaíocht do ghnólachtaí beaga, lena n-áirítear talmhaíocht, ar fud na hÉireann chun cur ar chumas na gceantar tuaithe a bheith rathúil.

“Tá taithí againn ar fad ar an chrá croí a bhaineann le daoine óga a bheith ag dul ar imirce mar gheall ar easpa post, deiseanna agus tithíochta inár gcontae.

“In go leor ceantar tuaithe ar fud na hÉireann, tá an Breatimeacht ag bagairt ar ár gcaighdeáin náisiúnta den scoth maidir le táirgí feirme, déanann sé dochar dár gcáil mar phríomhsholáthraí táirgí talmhaíochta ar fud an domhain agus gearrann sé feirmeoirí ó thuaidh amach as Comhbheartas Talmhaíochta an AE.

“Ba chóir cinntí a dhéanamh a théann i bhfeidhm ar ár dtionscail talmhaíochta ar oileán na hÉireann, agus ní ag rialtais na dTóraithe in Westminster.

“Sa chás go n-éireodh le reifreann aontachta bheadh an t-oileán ar fad ina bhall

den Aontas Eorpach agus d’fhéadfaí leas a bhaint as ár lánacmhainneacht eacnamaíoch.

“Tá an-chuid taighde agus samhaltú acadúil agus staidéir agus leabhair nua ar gach gné den athaontú á dtáirgeadh go rialta.

“Tá go leor daoine, Sinn Féin ina measc, ag tathant ar Rialtas na hÉireann tús a chur le planáil agus ullmhú d’athrú bunreachtúil agus tá géarghá anois go mbunódh an rialtas Tionól Saoránach chun an bhunobair a ullmhú roimh reifreann aontachta.

“Tá comhráite ag tarlú ar fud na tíre – ar ár bhfeirmeacha, ag an mhargadh, ag ár gclubanna áitiúla CLG agus ag boird na cistine.

“Is am spreagúil é seo dúinn go léir; lán le deiseanna agus dóchas do thodhchaí níos fearr.

“Tá sé fíorthábhachtach do theaghlaigh feirmeoireachta agus do phobail tuaithe páirt a ghlacadh sa chomhrá faoi aontacht na hÉireann chun a chinntiú go mbainfidh siad an leas is fearr is féidir as na buntáistí a d’fhéadfadh a bheith ag athaontú dá bpobail.”

I ndiaidh do Declan McAleer an méid sin rá, labhair an



mar uachtarán ar Macra na Feirme agus gur labhair sí ina n-éadan seo sna meáin. Maidir le haontacht na hÉireann, dúirt Elaine go bhfuil sí chun smaoineamh air mar go bhfuil sí chomh fada sin ó dheas, ach is ionann na dúshláin i bpobail tuaithe ó thaobh féinmharaithe, comharbais agus meabhairshláinte de agus go bhfuil sí ag iarraidh oibriú ar réitigh a rachaidh chun tairbhe an dá thaobh den teorainn.

Ag deireadh na hócáide dúirt Michelle Gildernew “Tá sé ríthábhachtach go gcruthóidh na daoine sin againne atá ag iarraidh Éire aontaithe an spás dóibh siúd atá ina choinne nó dóibh siúd nach bhfuil cinneadh acu agus a d’fhéadfadh iad a mhealladh ina leith.”

“Tá Éire nua, aontaithe agus aontaithe á lorg ag Sinn Féin. Is mian linn Éire chóir, chothrom agus a thógáil, Éire atá rathúil ó thaobh an gheilleagair de agus atá cuimsitheach ó thaobh na sochaí agus an chultúir de. “Bhí ár dtuairimí againn agus anois ní mór dúinn bogadh sa chéim pleanála agus ullmhúcháin san Éirinn nua. Tá sé fíorthábhachtach go mbunódh rialtas na hÉireann Tionól Saoránach ar Aontacht na hÉireann agus go gcloisfear glórtha tuaithe.

“Tá súil agam nach bhfuil anseo ach an chéad cheann de shraith rannpháirtíochta agus go leanfar leis na comhráite seo ar fud phobail tuaithe in Éirinn. “Impím ar shaoránaigh a bhfuil suim acu sa fhéidearthacht agus san acmhainneacht atá ag Aontacht na hÉireann a bheith gníomhach ar an cheist seo. Bí páirteach sa chomhrá.”



Cathaoirleach, Michelle Gildernew.

Chuir Michelle roinnt ceisteanna ar an phainéal a chuimsigh Cad é mar a thiocfadh le teaghlach feirmeoireachta & pobail tuaithe leas a bhaint as aontacht na hÉireann?, Cad é mar a bheidh an saol amach anseo, dar leat?? agus Cé chomh tábhachtach is atá rochtain ar mhargadh an AE? D’fhreagair John McCallister ag rá go raibh áthas air páirt a ghlacadh ann, nach dtacaíonn sé le hÉirinn aontaithe ach go bhfuil sé tábhachtach go mbeadh an plé agus breathnú ar an chlár oibre beartais maidir le haontacht. Thagair sé don Bhreitheacht ag rá go raibh sé ‘díchobhsaithe agus míshocair’ dó mar fheirmeoir agus go ndeachaigh sé i bhfeidhm ar

an chaidreamh pobail ar fud na Ríochta Aontaithe.

Dúirt Louise Coyle go gcuireann a heagraíocht guth ar fáil do mhná tuaithe ina bpobail féin, gur cheart luach a chur ar mhná na tuaithe agus a bheith mar chuid de na comhráite ar fad. Feiceann sí ardáin ar nós an lae inniu mar dheis do mhná an méid atá tábhachtach dóibh a chur in iúl, rudaí praiticiúla ar nós na Straitéise Cúram Leanaí. Síleann Louise go gcaithfear guthanna sibhialta, ní hamháin guthanna na bpolaiteoirí, a chloisteáil sa phlé faoin todhchaí.

Dúirt Elaine Houlihan, a chuaigh go Baile Mhoireil as Luimneach, gur mhinic a tugadh a dúshlán agus a léiríodh diúltacht ina leith agus í mar an dara bean riamh

Academic Research on Reunification

By Rosa McLaughlin.
a member of Sinn Féin's UI Committee

Getting Ready: The Need to Prepare for a Referendum on Reunification was the first and is, in essence, the introductory paper to the ARINS research project. The ARINS (Analysing and Researching Ireland North & South) Project is a substantial piece of work being carried by the Royal Institute of Ireland and Notre Dame University in the USA.

It was launched in 2021 and brings together a wide range of academics and experts with a view to providing evidence based research on the substantial issues and policy areas surrounding the future of the island, North and South.

The author of this paper is Professor Brendan O'Leary from the University of Pennsylvania. O'Leary is an established academic and former policy advisor to shadow Secretaries of State in the British Labour Party. He has written widely about Ireland and conflict resolution in the Middle East and beyond. He also has significant experience as a constitutional consultant and advisor to the EU and the UN. His book 'Making Sense of a United Ireland' (2021) is also well known. O'Leary is a member of the ARINS Advisory Group and Steering Group.

Released in 2021, it is a lengthy paper but a very worthwhile and important document dealing with many of the issues pertaining to the preparation for a referendum on reunification. The other reason that this paper is so important is that it deals with the fact that many things have changed since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998.

Both the political and cultural landscape for people living in the North has significantly shifted - the fact that many who live in the North now consider themselves neither Unionist or Nationalist creates issues that the GFA did not account for. Brexit and the complications that it created for the people of Ireland North and South has propelled the issue of reunification to the fore in Irish politics. The many twists and turns in the road since 1998 around the implementation of the GFA, across all of its strands and 'the Brexit effect' being experienced by the British establishment that views anybody from outside their own shores with suspicion, means that much needs to be discussed

in advance of a referendum on reunification. This paper attempts to discuss or analyse some of these issues. You might think then, that based on the current political landscape which can range from a refusal to discuss reunification to an uninterested and even confused debate, that one might despair. Quite the opposite, the author argues that ... "A positive and open attitude toward developing a strategic national plan for reunification is politically imperative." He argues that to plan is not to harass or to presume that a referendum can only go one way. He suggests that those in favour of reunification should concentrate their efforts on persuading what he classes as 'cultural protestants' and 'the others'. He also quite rightly states that there is little point trying to persuade or change Unionists, who by their very definition, represent the antithesis of reunification.

O'Leary goes on to discuss the definition of what is an acceptable majority in favour of reunification. He argues that the existing simple majority rule, i.e. 50% + 1 should be the only definition of a majority. He examines the suggestions for forms of qualified majorities made by Bertie Ahern, Leo Varadkar and the late Seamus Mallon. He very eloquently and scientifically shows how their definitions cannot and would not work out in reality. Firstly, the existence of 'the others' means there is no way to distinguish between nationalist and unionist voters, but secondly and more importantly, any attempt to categorise voters would ensure that only a super majority of voters could bring about reunification with a very small unionist minority vetoing the wishes of everyone else.

The paper then looks at what needs to happen in advance of a referendum, which really hasn't been thought out in any strategic detail up until now. He suggests that there are three steps that need to happen in order to prepare both the people and the two governments for a referendum.

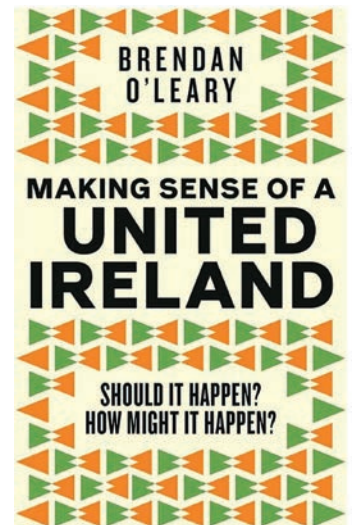
The first step is the rejuvenation of the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference. He quite rightly states that its failure to meet and its demotion in recent years was a mistake which became evident both before and after the Brexit vote. He argues that it is the only vehicle through which both governments can discuss, plan and agree on the transfer of powers in the event of a yes vote in a referendum. But he goes further and states that this body is the only formal body that exists, where discussions can happen at a governmental level and which should be happening long before any referendum, without any assumption of the result.

The second step is that fundamental clarity is required on what a united Ireland would mean. He suggests that there are two approaches. The first is to lay out the model for a new united Ireland, which would be fully explained in advance of a referendum. The second approach is to wait until after a vote



Professor
Brendan
O'Leary

in favour of reunification and then convene a democratic all-island constitutional convention that will decide. He advocates for the model approach in advance of a vote, and suggests four models that could be considered. The models are firstly; The full transfer of the GFA model whereby the Northern Assembly continues to exist with Westminster powers being transferred to the Dáil. The second model is The Integrated model which is in essence a 32 county Irish republic. The third model is what is called The Federation model which could be based on the four provinces or city regions and the fourth model is the least likely and problematic; Confederation of Ireland and Northern Ireland which is best explained as two states coming together much like the member states of the EU.



In conclusion, the author does not suggest any model although he admits models 3 and 4 are not likely to be popular or viable. But he does state that regardless, a model must be agreed in advance with its full benefits and costs clarified through the inputs of both domestic and international experts.

The third step is simply referred to by the author as “open not fearful contingent planning” and concludes this paper. He advocates for a full inclusive, informed debate whereby all those involved North and South are consulted and listened to. He also points out that a planned approach can deter crisis management in the future and inform the debate. The following paragraph sums it up perfectly:

“Rather, what Ireland requires is a developed national reunification strategic plan that is as all-party as possible. Not a rigid plan, with a single critical path, or a diktat, but a plan based on large-scale and intensive consultation and research, and one capable of surviving scrutiny from friendly and ferocious fire. A strategic plan that will be published as a credible text, one that can undergo regular review and revision, but that will define a united Ireland—so that it will no longer be an abstraction.” I think any of us would find it hard to disagree with these sentiments and would relish the opportunity to be involved in such a project and process. Unfortunately, at present, there seems to be little interest or understanding by either governments as to what is needed.

O'Leary's paper is a fine example of a political scientist making a decent attempt at what we should be able to expect from both governments. The three steps make sense. Planning and discussion in advance makes sense. Why is this not happening at that governmental level? At best, this is a lack of leadership and imagination. At worst I think one would have to conclude that they have not begun the necessary strategic process needed in advance of a referendum as neither want a referendum on reunification and that, unfortunately, is the crux of the matter.

To access ARINS, go to <https://www.ria.ie/arins>



“*Dúirt Siad*”

Irish Labour Party conference, 23rd, 24th March

“Labour has outlined how we would prepare for a united Ireland. And that work must start in the next government with a dedicated department to undertake the necessary detailed work of reconciliation, integration and unity planning”.

Labour Party leader's speech Ivana Bacik.

Irish News 21st March 2024

“We have a housing crisis on top of a health crisis. Child poverty is rising alongside the cost of living. Within unionism, few are willing to admit the truth. The economic case for the union lies in tatters. Smart unionists know a border poll will be challenging if economic conditions do not improve. It's time for a does of reality”.

Sarah Creighton, solicitor, writer and political commentator.

Irish News 19th Feb 2024

“I would now consider a federal Ireland parliament holding the kind of powers which were formally reserved to Westminster under the 1920 Act together with a provincial parliament holding the powers formally held by Stormont@>

Desmond Boal, former chairperson of the DUP and former Stormont MP, 1974.

Irish News 25th March 2024

“The ‘All-Island Strategic Rail Review represents an opportunity to develop our rail networks to promote regional balance and reconnecting people and communities by strengthening Belfast-Dublin rail services, creating a new line to the International Airport, as well as services between Belfast and the north west, via Portadown and Omagh”.

Minister John O'Dowd

Irish Times December 2023

“About six in ten of all Northern voters want to see a referendum within ten years. In the South, the numbers in favour of a united Ireland remain overwhelming; two-thirds are in favour.....If nationalism, as many believe, is on the road to a demographically inevitable united Ireland, today's poll confirms that the road - whatever its ultimate destination turns out to be - will be a long one indeed. The numbers also show, however, that the journey has begun”.

Pat Leahy political editor of the Irish Times

Irish News 26th Feb 2024

“As an Irish citizen, this writer hopes to see the creation of a new Ireland which lives up to the aspirations of the national flag by uniting in peace the two main traditions on this island, orange and green, both living side by side, cheek by jowl, equal not only in rights but also in identity, culture and with reciprocal respect”.

Tom Kelly Irish News columnist

Irish News March 6th 2024

“The big headline of course was the percentage in favour of Irish reunification: 38% with 55% agreeing there will “probably” be a united Ireland plus 17% agreeing strongly. That's without any idea of what a reunified country would look like or how it would be governed”.

Brian Feeney Irish News columnist commenting on a survey of Alliance Party members

Social Protection, Pensions and the New Ireland

The question of benefits and of pensions in the New Ireland have become major issues of concern for many. It is a question frequently raised in the course of public discussions and within sections of the media.

***Mike Tomlinson** who is Emeritus Professor of Social Policy at Queen's University sets out the perimeters of this debate and addresses many of the concerns.*



Social protection is one of most important policy areas in the unity debate. It matters to the entire population both as contributors and as beneficiaries. It is a key expression of social cohesion and solidarity, and a measure of how far we have come to 'end poverty in all its forms everywhere' (UN Sustainable Development Goal no.1). Social protection policy is where the social rights set out in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights are put into practice and it is where the fulfilment of 'the right of everyone to social security, including social insurance, that is available, adequate and accessible' can be tested.

In preparing for social protection in a united Ireland, there are three major issues we need to address. First, individual expectations: people on either side of the border will want to know how any changes will affect them immediately and what the proposition is for the future. They will be looking at this both as beneficiaries and contributors, and with the eyes of employees, employers and the self-employed, as workers with families and as those in retirement.

In my view, the starting point here is that the new state will comprise a unitary authority and a single regime for taxation and benefits. This is not just because the Republic is one of the most centralised countries in Europe (as is Britain). It is because even highly devolved countries retain centralised control of major taxes, social insurance and benefit systems, in the interests of fairness and national uniformity.

The immediate challenge is to bring the people in the North into a new united Ireland system of social protection and taxation. As of now, for example, this would raise the number of families receiving child benefit from 648,000 to 879,000 (a total of 1.8 million children). It would add around 870,000 workers to the pay-related social insurance system (PRSI).

Because the British and Irish benefit systems have many similar features historically, integration will feel familiar. Both systems are based on social insurance with contributory pensions, both have in-work social security supplements and child benefits, and both have moved away from subsidising the building of social housing to subsidising rents paid to private landlords.

It is only in more recent times that important differences have emerged with the British introducing US-style tax credits as direct payments and, most recently, the merger of all means-tested (assistance) benefits into a single online system of Universal Credit. Another difference is the declining support for national insurance – not only have contribution rates been slashed in the past year but the British government talks openly of getting rid of national insurance contributions altogether. In contrast, the Commission on Taxation and Welfare (2022), as well as many lobbyists on social protection issues, say social insurance should be expanded in scope, broadening both contributions and benefits.

Northerners will not be familiar with the way income tax works in the Republic, but they are used to pay-related insurance contributions. On the benefits side, there is growing awareness that the British system has fallen behind after years of austerity and insecurity. This is illustrated in the table which compares state pension and child benefit rates. Under the British system, the state pension has been one of the most protected benefits in recent years but even so, the new state pension at full rate for a year is still worth €1,077 less, in real purchasing power terms, than the Republic's full contributory pension. As it is, only a third of the North's 320,000 pensioners currently get the new state pension and the average pension payment is only worth €219.48 per week.

Benefit rates (April 2024) compared

	North ¹ €	South €	North as % of South
State Pension (nominal)(per week)	256.59	277.30	92.5
Average payment	219.48		79.2
Child Benefit² (per month)			
One child	128.68	140.00	91.9
Two children	213.89	280.00	76.4
Three children	299.08	420.00	71.2

Notes:

1. Values based on OECD purchasing power parities for December 2023.

2. Weekly Child Benefit rates under the British system have been converted to equivalent monthly rates.

So the first step in any preparatory work on social protection is to show people in the North how

their incomes would be taxed and what benefits they would be entitled to under the Irish tax and benefit systems. Through a wide range of examples, workers and families at different income levels and in different circumstances – in work and not in work for whatever reason – will be able to see how unity will potentially affect them. For example, public service workers – 28 per cent of all employees – will need to know how their occupational pension rights will look should they join the Republic's Single Public Service Pension Scheme.

This is not to say that any gains and losses will apply on day one. Part of the unity proposition will need to include a period of transition to protect against sudden and sharp changes in disposable income levels. In particular, those in the lower half of the income distribution need reassurance that unity will be on a no loss basis. But the transition proposition should also include commitments to implement potential gains, such as the timing of the harmonisation of Child Benefit rates.

My own view is that the Republic's higher rates of Child Benefit should be paid as soon as is administratively practical. The extra cost of this (over and above current costs) would be modest – €148 million per year at today's rates. But other benefits need more careful consideration and a longer timeframe.

This brings us to the second major issue: integration. Practically speaking, how will a united social protection system be brought about and over what timescale? In terms of PRSI and income tax, integration will largely depend on administrative capacity and preparation as between the Revenue and employers. Short-term insurance benefits, subject to a check of past contribution records under the British system, could be paid immediately, or as soon as the administration is in place.

Short- and long-term means-tested benefits present a bigger challenge. This population of around 255,000 includes some of the most vulnerable claimants in the North, many with long-term physical and mental health conditions that prevent them from working. Only around 38,000 are currently working while 41,000 are looking for work or preparing for work. By the time the unity referendums take place, all of these people will be on Universal Credit.

Given that the Department for Communities

already knows the circumstances of individuals in this group, it could carry out a preparatory desktop exercise to reassess claimants under the Irish social protection system. This will not only show the difference between the British and Irish systems on an individual basis but also reveal the overall cost which is likely to be 25-30 per cent higher than it is now.

Pensions

Pensions are more straightforward. Under both the Irish and British systems, state pensions are based on the history of individual contributions. This is popularly understood and is the law and practice that underpins pension rights when people move jurisdictions, providing international agreements are in place. The Irish and British governments have a history of such agreements, the latest of which came into force in 2021.

As of May 2023, the British Treasury was paying out 1.12 million pensions to people living abroad. The total cost of these pensions in 2022/23 was £4.84 billion and included £743 million to pensioners in Spain and £556 million to those in the United States. If workers retire in Ireland, having worked in both Britain and Ireland, they will be receiving part pensions from both governments. The Treasury paid out £511.3 million to pensioners in Ireland in 2022/23.

The principle of a state recognising the history of contributions, and paying pensions accordingly, is the starting point for understanding pension provision at the moment of transition to a united Ireland. The already retired will continue to receive a pension from the British Treasury. The newly retired will receive part of a pension from their past contributions under the British system and part from their contributions under the Irish system, depending on how many years they have contributed in each jurisdiction.

The same principle will apply to public service occupational pensions. For the most part these schemes, like the state pension, are financed on a pay-as-you-go basis and are underpinned by the Treasury. The exception is the local government scheme which is based on contributions to an investment fund, which will remain under the ownership and control of members of the scheme.

Social Protection

The third and most debated issue we need to look at concerns the cost of social protection. There is a line of argument that the costs of unity are so great that they will cripple the economy for twenty years. The latest version of this is conceptually flawed as it treats the North's economy like a fixed debt that has to be serviced.

It seriously exaggerates the negative balance sheet – the “alleged subvention” – that will pass to the new Ireland, it ignores the North's GDP and it ignores the increase in tax/social insurance revenues that will come with unity. It is poor science with the political consequence of putting voters off the idea of unity.

Social protection expenditure, especially pensions, is caught up in this argument because of its scale. North and South social protection is the largest expenditure programme and pensions are the biggest part of this – 38 and 42 per cent respectively.

As things stand, the British government is obliged to honour the pension rights of those who have a record of contributions under the British system. Even if the British did ‘renounce’ the agreement mentioned earlier, article 67 states that “any right to benefit acquired by a person in accordance with this Convention shall be maintained” up to the point at which the agreement is broken.

While this protects the pension rights of individuals until unity occurs, the question remains as to whether this amounts to an enforceable contract between the British government and individual contributors. Those who want to inflate the costs of unity argue that the British Treasury has no obligation to pay for pension rights frozen at the moment of unity. But assuming the Treasury honours the payment of accumulated pension rights, the real cost would decline year by year. For the state pension, it would start at £2.7billion, would be under £900 million by year 11 and fall to about £120 million in year 15.

Other arguments need to come into play. The cost per head of benefits for long-term sickness, disability and injury in the North are around 1.5 times what they are in the Republic, or in Wales and Scotland. There is strong evidence that this is directly related to the 30 years of armed conflict and its impact on physical and mental health. It is also related to the intergenerational effects of labour market and public service discrimination in the decades following partition and preceding the conflict. It would make sense for such costs to be factored into financial discussions between Ireland and Britain when the time comes.

There are financial costs to unity just as there are financial costs to improving health and education. But there are clear benefits as well. In the absence of adequate social protection, poverty adds to the costs of other services (particularly health) by as much as 5 per cent of the total expenditure budget. Countries with the best social protection systems have good pensions, high levels of universal child benefits and services, extensive free travel, more equal incomes and strong social insurance schemes. They have low levels of poverty and greater gender equality. Their social protection policies are supported by comprehensive childcare provision which is often free or at minimum cost. Achieving high levels of social protection requires investment and seeing social welfare policies as complementary to economic development, health, education, childcare and fiscal policies. These are the opportunities that are central to the discussion of social rights in a new Ireland, and the North, far from being a burden, will bring new energy and expertise to the table.

The principle of a state recognising the history of contributions, and paying pensions accordingly, is the starting point for understanding pension provision at the moment of transition to a united Ireland. The already retired will continue to receive a pension from the British Treasury.

Countries with the best social protection systems have good pensions, high levels of universal child benefits and services, extensive free travel, more equal incomes and strong social insurance schemes. They have low levels of poverty and greater gender equality.

History

**is on
our
side**

An interview with
TARIQ ALI
by Joe Dwyer, Sinn Féin
representative in London



In Camden Town, a corner of North London well-known to many an Irish exile, Joe Dwyer sat down with the writer, journalist, and political activist, Tariq Ali.

A leading figure of the international left since the 1960s, Ali reflects on his earliest encounters with Ireland's freedom struggle, his friendship with John Lennon, Ireland's transition from conflict to peace, and his undiminished desire to see Irish unity.

Joe Dwyer: You came to prominence in the late-60s with the student protests and the anti-Vietnam War movement.

TARIQ ALI: The atmosphere was very radical. You had a Labour government in power in Britain, from which much had been expected but which delivered little – I mean, more than these current jokers now running the Labour Party ever will! – but we were very disappointed.

The decisive factor of the sixties was the War in Vietnam. People identified with the Vietnamese, just as today, many people do with the Palestinians. But in a very different framework. In a framework where you thought global change was possible.

I remember going to speak in Belfast in 1969, at Queen's University, and I was amazed because my Irish comrades had said 'Tariq, this is Ireland, it hasn't lit up as yet. So don't expect too much!' I went and I thought, you know, you might get 40-50 people. But to my astonishment there were about 400-500 people at Queen's University.

Joe Dwyer: It was August '69.

TARIQ ALI: Yes. In 1969 Ireland moved almost in tandem with the anti-Vietnam War movement. The group to which I belonged, the International Marxist Group (IMG), was very internationalist. We had a number of Irish comrades, and some Scottish comrades, who were obsessively – and I mean this in a good way – obsessively concerned with Ireland.

We produced pamphlets and Red Mole (the paper of the IMG). We were a political current that was focussed very strongly on civil liberties. The SWP (Socialist Workers Party) was as well. We worked together on the Anti-Internment League.

Then I did a public meeting in Dublin with Seán Mac Stíofáin. I had very good relations with Sinn Féin. Of course, they knew we disagreed on tactics and all that and the London bombings. But our line then used to be, do the deal, the bombings will stop. It's true. People never want to

know what the causes are. They don't want to know in Palestine today. I mean, the number of people who don't like what's going on but will not open their mouths it was the same in those days with Ireland.

Joe Dwyer: *Going through the old issues of Red Mole, it's staggering that the Red Mole did stake out the position on Ireland that it did. On the left there were those dismissing it as sectarian. But Red Mole saw it in an anti-imperialist frame.*

TARIQ ALI: That's how we interpreted it. I mean, that was my position. I essentially saw the Irish struggle through the anti-imperialist lens. For me, it was not a big deal. For others, it was.

God knows how many books I read on Ireland! And then I went into the cultural side of it, the poetry, and the plays. So, I got quite immersed in Irish history and culture as a result of all of that.

I always had, in later years, a real contempt for all these Irish intellectuals who became turncoats. Who were getting jobs in British universities and saying what they knew the British establishment wanted to hear. Trying to constantly underplay Irish history and the Irish struggle.

Whereas those of us who knew both Irish history and other anti-colonial, anti-British, histories from other parts of the world. We saw, you know, in retrospect, the Easter Rising as the beginning of something small which would grow very large.

Joe Dwyer: *You had John Lennon famously carrying the Red Mole, and all the furore that accompanied that image.*

TARIQ ALI: It was John's idea, really! I didn't push him at all! He himself got very interested in Ireland. Largely, I have to say, through the Red Mole and reading the British Press, which angered him.

One day he rang and said, 'Tariq, are you going to be on this demo tomorrow?' I said, 'John, I'm not going to be there. But that shouldn't stop you from going.' I said, 'It would be a tremendous boost. A real morale booster if you came on the demo. You know, on your own or with Yoko, whatever – just to join the comrades who won't be expecting you. But I will warn a few people just to make sure you're looked out for.'

And he said, 'Ok, I'll be there.' And that was that.

Joe Dwyer: *The British government banned the voice of Gerry Adams and other Sinn Féin representatives from the airwaves. What did you think of that?*

TARIQ ALI: That was amazing! You know, I remember saying once to one of the Sinn Féin leaders, I said, 'Guys, the Brits have done you a huge, big, favour! I said, 'Propaganda is doing pretty well these days!'

Can you imagine! What a dumb idea! And stupid! Did they think people were being hypnotised by Gerry Adams' voice?

Joe Dwyer: *And then there were the early invitations to Sinn Féin leaders by Ken Livingstone and Jeremy Corbyn to travel to London. Dialogue was critical.*

TARIQ ALI: A lot of my friends in Ireland, including people I would be close to were quite critical. I wasn't. My gut response was, they have to do it at some time. The Brits have done it with every genuine liberation movement, whether they like them or not. I knew there was no other way. The Brits knew the IRA could not be defeated militarily. It was virtually impossible. I knew they had to talk. I knew the republicans had to sit down and talk with them. And once you do that, it has to be a compromise.

I mean, the big problem about the (1921) talks, which de Valera didn't go to himself, was that they lacked authority. The Irish delegation was weak. Churchill and Lloyd George outmanoeuvred them. That mistake was not repeated, in my opinion, by Sinn Féin in these talks. They were reasonable in public but quite firm in what they were prepared to accept, what they needed, what they demanded. And they pulled it off!

Joe Dwyer: *Why does the British establishment maintain its false 'love' for the Union?*

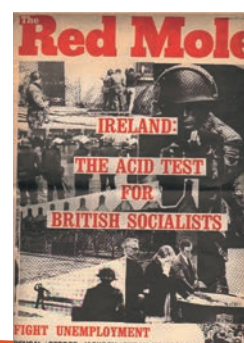
TARIQ ALI: Pure and total cynicism and opportunism. The Brits will use anything and anyone to further their own interests. And where these were furthered by using the Orange Card, and threatening the Catholic community, they did it. When it didn't, they stopped. I mean, they have no sort of loyalty. Empires, even aging empires, have only one loyalty: imperialist interest.

Look at the United States now and what the Israelis are doing in Gaza. A genocidal war to wipe out the Palestinian people! And the reaction from the United States has been total support. They could stop the war by threatening sanctions and calling on all their EU stooges to do the same. That would end it. But structurally, I think, it is that the United States still feels that they need an allied state in the Middle East. One who can act on their behalf. That's the real reason. I mean, there's no affection for Israelis or anything like that.

Joe Dwyer: *My last question; do you think you'll live to see a united Ireland?*

TARIQ ALI: I really hope I do! You know, just to see one's lifespan getting some satisfaction from something decent happening.

Whether it was on Vietnam, or Palestine, or Ireland, I don't regret any fundamental error that I've made. History has been on our side. However slowly it moves. At least it's been moving in the right direction.



Whether it was on Vietnam, or Palestine, or Ireland, I don't regret any fundamental error that I've made. History has been on our side. However slowly it moves. At least it's been moving in the right direction.



"Tariq Ali's biography of the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, 'Winston Churchill: His Times, His Crimes', is available via Verso Books and other reputable booksellers. His second volume of memoirs, 'You Can't Please All: Memoirs: 1980-2023' is anticipated to be released this coming Autumn."

LÁ NÁISIÚNTA STRÁITÉISE ÓGRA SHINN FÉIN

Oisín Ó Síocháin

Tháinig poblachtánaigh óga le chéile Dé Sathairn an 20ú Bealtaine i mBaile Átha Cliath - poblachtánaigh óga ó gach cearn den tír, tiomanta do shaoirse na hÉireann, agus d'fhóruí na Poblachta lenár linn. D'éagraigh ceannaireacht nua Ógra Shinn Féin an Lá Náisiúnta Stráitéise chun fuinneamh a chur insan eagraíocht agus sinn ag atógáil an eagrais ar fud na hÉireann.

Chualamar ó Jim Gibney ó Choiste Éireann Aontaithe an pháirtí. Tá Jim ina bhall gníomhach de ghluaiseacht na Poblachta le breis is caoga bliain, agus labhair sé maidir le héabhlóid na streachailte le linn na tréimhse sin. Mar Ghaeil óga, tuigimid an dualgas ollmhór atá orainn tógáil ar an dul chun cinn a rinne glúin Jim, agus an streachailt seo a bhuachan sna blianta beaga amach romhainn. Tuigeann Ógra Shinn Féin lár-spríoc ár ngluaiseachta



- reifreann a bhaint amach ar Éirinn Aontaithe, é a bhuachan, agus an Phoblacht a thógáil bunaithe ar aisling Fhorógra na Cásca. Aithníodh insa chomhrá seo ar Éirinn Aontaithe gur gá go mbeadh an Ghaeilge ag croílár na físe seo - i bhfocail an Phiarsaigh, “ní hamháin saor, ach Gaelach. Ní hamháin Gaelach, ach saor.”

Léirigh an lá rathúil seo go bhfuil gníomhaithe óga Shinn

Féin fuinniúil agus bríomhar, ullamh chun ár seacht ndícheall a dhéanamh ar son na gluaiseachta in 2024. Tá na toghcháin áitiúla agus Eorpacha ag tarlú i Mí an Mheithimh, agus tá gach seans go dtarlóidh olltoghchán ó dheas agus toghchán Westminster chomh maith i mbliana. Deis ollmhór is ea na toghcháin do chur chun cinn an phoblachtánachais - le Michelle O’Neill ina Céad-Aire sna

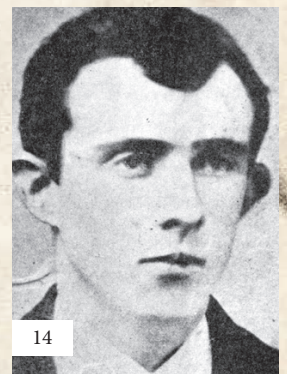
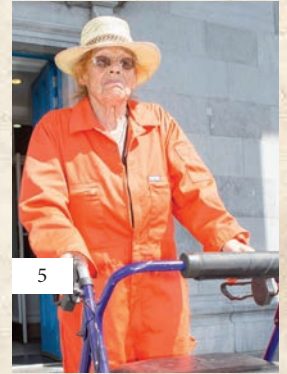
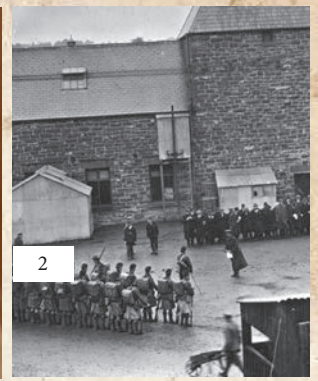
6 chontae, agus leis an seans go mbeidh Mary Lou McDonald ina Taoiseach ó dheas, cruthaíonn sé sin an comhthéacs ina mbeidh éileamh na haontachta dosháraithe. Iarraimid, mar Choiste Eagraíochta Ógra Shinn Féin, ar bhail óga an pháirtí fud fad na tíre seo, a gcuid a dhéanamh agus páirt a ghlacadh in Ógra.

Is soiléir, ársa agus cóir ár n-éileamh - níl uainn ach an Domhan.

Quiz

of Prison literature

1. Which revolutionary titled her autobiography 'Revolutionary Woman'?
2. Who wrote the Frongoch memoir 'With the Irish in Frongoch'?
3. Who's 'memoir of the Irish Revolution' was titled On Dangerous Ground?
4. This memoir of Ballykinlar 'On My Keeping and In Theirs' was written while the internment camp was still open. Who was the Maghera solicitor who wrote it?
5. This Galway playwright spent time in Armagh Jail in the 1970s and wrote her account as 'Tell Them Everything'. Who was she?
6. Who wrote the book 'One Day in My Life' posthumously published in 1983?
7. A former OC of the women prisoners on protest her book is the enigmatically titled 'John Lennon's Dead'. Who is she?
8. This ex-Blanket man and prison escaper spent 6000 Days in jail, Who is he?
9. Who wrote the book 'Women in a War Zone'?
10. The Singing Flame was the gas jet in the prison cells of Mountjoy and Kilmainham. Whose autobiography was of the same name?
11. This artist, dramatist and revolutionary gave her autobiography the ironic title of 'Servant of the Queen'. Who was she?
12. This prisoner became an accomplished writer in later life but his prison memoir is 'The Gates Flew Open'. Who was he?
13. Republican prisoner, nurse, escaper and political activist, this republican spent time in many prisons including Armagh Jail and Mountjoy. She wrote her book 'In Times of Peril, 1916-21' while on the run. Who was she?
14. Posthumously published in 1921, who's 1880s prison memoir was 'Glimpses of an Irish Felon's Prison Life'?
15. Her book was named 'Doing My Bit for Ireland', wounded in 1916 and imprisoned on a number of occasions, who was she?
16. Whose diary of a hunger strike in 1918 was published as 'Days of Fear'?
17. Who heard 'The Jangle of the Keys' and wrote a book of the same name?
18. This author of 'My Lagan Love' spent time interned in The Curragh in 1923 and his diaries were published as 'As I was among the captives'. Who was he?
19. These sisters from Donegal spent many years in prison in England in the 1970-80s and wrote their memoir as Gaeilge 'Girseacha I nGéibheann'. Who are they?
20. Who wrote 'Words from a cell' and other prison memoirs?



**For the answers
turn to the back page**



IRISH UNITY SUMMIT



MAJOR IRISH UNITY CONFERENCE IN NEW YORK

By Greg O'Loughlin,
Executive Director,
Friends of Sinn Féin USA

A new page in the push towards a united Ireland was written in New York in March when the Great Hall of Cooper Union hosted a major Irish Unity Summit. It was a day-long conference focusing on the work, design, inclusion, and conversations needed to create a new and United Ireland. Hundreds of people attended in person while hundreds more watched the event live online.



Many travelled to New York from all over the USA as well as from Canada and Ireland. Young and old, recent Irish immigrants, 4th generation Irish Americans, progressive political organizers and conservative leaders all came together to listen, contribute, and be a part of this historic moment.

It was a project born of the coordination of the seven largest Irish American organizations (Ancient Order of Hibernians, Brehon Law Society, Friends of Sinn Féin, Irish American Unity

Conference, Friendly Sons of Saint Patrick, James Connolly Irish American Labor Coalition, and Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians).

The Irish Unity Summit was the result of months of planning and work. Speakers and panellists included Professor Brendan O'Leary, author and New York Times writer Megan Stack, Peace Activist Glenn Bradley, 'Ireland's Future' Founder Niall Murphy, Foras na Gaeilge board member Ola Majekodunmi, Navigating NY Podcast host Sophie Colgan, founder of 'The Dead Rabbit'

Jack McGarry, Professor of Irish History Christine Kinealy, NY State Senator Tim Kennedy, and MA State Representative Hannah Kane.

Labor leaders like John Samuelson, international president of the Transport Workers Union and president of the 39,000-member Transport Workers Union Local 100 and John Murphy, International Representative, United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada ensured that the

central role labor plays in the work was front and center.

Board members of the African American Irish Diaspora Network, played key roles throughout the day as moderators for our panel and Q&A.

With a schedule of speakers that included politicians, professors, business leaders, community organizers, legal experts, and elected representatives, the question of how do we help achieve Irish Unity was examined from nearly every angle.

The event was kicked off by a surprise visit from New York State Governor, Kathy Hochul, who welcomed us all to New York and celebrated the coming together of such a brilliant and thoughtful schedule. Governor Hochul is the first woman to ever serve as the Governor of New York.

An inspiring keynote address by Sinn Féin President Mary Lou McDonald let everyone know that attendees were in for a groundbreaking event. She said: "Ireland – united and free – finally taking its rightful place amongst the nations of the world. This is a journey that the United States has walked with Ireland for generations."

The Sinn Féin leader added: "The bonds that tie our two countries together are not only those of friendship, they are also the bonds of family. Bonds forged by the agonies of famine and the destitution of the coffin ships, of emigrants forced across the Atlantic in search of work, opportunity, and a better life in a new world. These are the roots of Irish America.

"The connection between Ireland and the US is the story of challenge, of perseverance, of hope, of endurance and success. The US has been a sanctuary for Irish people and those Irish who came here helped to build this nation and have made defining contributions to American society across literature, politics, business, arts, music, and sports."

Mary Lou McDonald continued: "The US kept faith with Ireland and played a central role in



our national voyage that spans the struggle for independence, the pain of conflict, an emerging peace process that defied the odds, right through to the achievement of the historic Good Friday Agreement twenty-six years ago.

"When Brexit threatened Irish interests and our peace agreement, the US stepped up and stood-by Ireland. That's what friends do. That's what family does. So, I ask that you walk with us now on the final length of the journey in common cause for peace, for reconciliation, for progress and prosperity. For unity."

The New York Ceili Band which consisted of Seagda Coyle on button accordion, Pamela Geraghty on guitar and vocals, Brenda Dowling on concertina and flute, and Erin Loughran on fiddle, provided music throughout the day.

Between panels, speeches, and tunes, the lobby was full of the sounds of friends saying hello, new connections being made, and plans for future meetings, discussions, and more.

Flyers for upcoming events in the New York area, Frederick Douglass walking tour guides generously donated by Prof Kinealy, programs, and more were handed out and made available for all attendees. In addition to the materials made available, boxes were placed all over the theatre and lobby into which attendees were asked to submit questions which would be shared with a special panel which included Mary Lou McDonald, Professor Brendan O'Leary, and Niall Murphy, founder of Ireland's future.

The Q&A panel was one of the highlights of the day. Irish American organizations, Irish diaspora, and everyone in attendance was reinvigorated by the conversations and by the opportunity made possible by the event to discuss the details of the next steps and calls to action.

The Irish Unity Summit made it clearer than ever that we are the generation that will see the project of a New and United Ireland through.



Irish Unity *front and centre in DC*

Irish Unity was at the top of the political agenda in Washington during the St. Patrick's festivities in March. Events celebrating Irish culture and the strong connections between Ireland and the United States is normally punctuated by many meetings on Capitol Hill, in the White House, and with community leaders.

While this year followed that same template, the course of events were remarkably different for a couple of reasons. The foremost of which was the historic nature of First Minister Michelle O'Neill's visit to the United States for her first official visit as First Minister. Everywhere she went, she was met by an audience who felt the importance of the moment. Regardless of the size of the venue or the position of the person with whom she was meeting, the history-making nature of the visit rang a note of hope and change, and provided tangible evidence of what is possible when political processes work.

Secondly, this year's celebration of Irish culture and connection was less convivial than in years past due to Israel's ongoing genocide in Palestine. The events were still scheduled and the meetings were still arranged, but this year the shadow cast by Israel's continued onslaught on Gaza darkened the usually celebratory week. While First Minister Michelle O'Neill followed a schedule created by the demands and obligations of her office and role, Sinn Féin President Mary Lou McDonald was able to focus her attention on the issues of Irish Unity and the need for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza.

Over the last couple of years, meetings in Washington have regularly focused on what it will take to re-establish the Executive, get the political institutions up and running again and protecting the Good Friday Agreement. From the White House to the Capitol, and all the Irish American organizations in between, the frustration at the lack of progress grew year after year. This year, that stress and angst gave way to hope and a new horizon. This year it was all about the steps needed to make progress on the road to Unity. While in previous meetings, Unity had been acknowledged as something that would likely need to be discussed in the future, this year, the topic was front and centre.

Not only was Unity at the forefront, the engagement and energy about how to make progress was high in every meeting. Mary Lou McDonald and other party leaders met with the Congressional Friends of Ireland Caucus, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer,

a number of US Senators and Representatives, and members of the State Department and National Security Council. In each of these meetings, Sinn Féin made it abundantly clear that leadership, discussions, plans, and organizing to appropriately plan for Unity were needed, and needed now.

In every meeting, Mary Lou McDonald also made it very clear that there was a dire need for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza. She spoke clearly and directly to the ways in which the Irish people disagree with the American administration's support for Israel and the emergency of the situation. She also added that there were times when the violence in Ireland seemed intractable, but that a dedication to cessations and the prioritization of peace talks proved that no situation is intractable.

The model of the Irish Peace Process stands as an example of what is possible and she missed no opportunity to reiterate the need for an immediate and permanent ceasefire. A special meeting was held with Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib, the first Palestinian American woman to serve in the United States Congress. Congresswoman Tlaib's long history of community organizing and work on the Congressional Progressive Caucus provided common ground in the conversation, as did the urgency of the need for an end to Israel's genocide in Gaza and for humanitarian aid.

As part of the visit, the Sinn Féin delegation was able to visit the James Connolly Irish American Labor Coalition's St. Patrick's Day Breakfast with New York State Comptroller, Thomas Di Napoli and many laborers and labor leaders. Following the breakfast, the Sinn Féin delegation joined the Coalition for a portion of the 263rd New York City Saint Patrick's Day Parade.

Support for Irish Unity and for the work that is needed to ensure discussion, assemblies, and referendums has never been stronger or more clear at every level of engagement. American political and community leaders stand ready to safeguard the promise of the Good Friday Agreement and its roadmap to a new and United Ireland.

By **Ciaran Quinn**
Sinn Féin representative
for North America

ÉIRE NUA

- CAD É A BHEAS I gCEIST?

Labhair Rosa McLaughlin le déanaí ag imeacht i Leitir Ceanainn a d'éagraigh an líonra áitiúil. 'Cad é a bheadh i gceist le "Éire Nua"' an teideal a bhí air agus bhí painéal iontach ann le Micheál Ó hÉanaigh, Rosa Nic Lochlainn, Jake Mac Siacais, Máire Ní Dhuarcáin, Catherine Pollock & Caolán Ó Coisneacháin.

Dúirt Rosa:

"Creidim i dtodhchaí a chruthaíonn Éire nua ina mbíonn cothrom na Féinne do chách - is cuma cad iad a ngnéas, a gcreideamh, a n-oidhreacht, a aois, a n-ioncam, nó cen cuid den tír ina gcónaíonn siad

"Tá súil agam go mbeidh córas oideachais agus córas sláinte san Éire Nua atá fíor-shaor in aisce do chách.

"Tá súil agam go mbunóidh an Éire Nua seo rath eacnamaíochta do chách, go háirithe iad siúd atá ar gcúl faoi láthair - an Tuaisceart agus an Iarthuisceart, an Iarthar, lár na tíre agus Éireann Tuaithe.

"Ba mhaith liom infreastruchtúr níos láidre a chinntíonn go bhfuil an Iarthar agus an Tuaisceart ceangailte leis an cuid eile den tír.

"Ach, an rud is tábhachtaí dom ná tír a chruthú atá aontaithe ó thaobh na polaíochta agus go sóisialta. Go mbeidh fíor teacht le chéile ar dhaoine - nach mbeimid ag caint níos mó faoin '2 phobail' agus go ndéanfimid dul chun cinn le chéile mar aon náisiún agus go ndéanfaidh ár gceannairí polaitiúla cinnte go seasann siad ar son gach duine agus a gcuid riachtanas.

"Sin an fáth go bhfuil an próiseas agus an bealach ina mbímid ag caint faoi agus ag ullmhú don aontú an chuid is tábhachtaí den phróiseas seo dom. Caithfidh daoine a bheith in ann a gcuid tuairimí a chur chun tosaigh agus caithfidh daoine a thuigmheail cad é atá siad ag vótáil ar son.

"Caithfidh na ceachtanna a fhoghlaim ó reifrinn Breátimeacht agus Neamhspleáchas na hAlban agus a chinntiú nach ligtar leis na cumhachtaí atá ag obair in éadan aontaithe, daoine a scanrú le staitisticí agus ráitis uafásacha agus bréagacha.

"Tá daoine ó thuaidh agus ó dheas a bhfuil imní orthu faoi aontú nó atá in éadan. Tá cuid mhór de phobal na hAontachtach atá in éadan aontú ar bith. Mothaíonn siad gur chuid na Breataine iad agus an bhfuil fhios agaibh, sin ceart go leor. Tá cead acu bheith agus tá cead acu mothú mar chuid na Breataine iad. Caithfidh muid éisteacht leo le meas ach ag an am céanna, caithfidh gach duine meas a léiriú do thorthaí reifrinn. Ní chreidim go mbeidh gach duine sásta má vótáláíonn formhór na ndaoine ar an oileán ar son aontaithe. Ach mar a atá sé maith go leor a bheith ina Briotanach, tá sé ceart go leor don chuid is mó de mhuintir an oileáin seo le bheith ina n-Éireannach agus maireachtáil in Éire Nua aontaithe.

"Sin an fáth go bhfuil an obair ullmhúcháin agus na comhráidí roimhe sin thábhachtach má bhíonn muid ag iarraidh daoine a thabhairt linn. Má éiríonn linn na deiseanna agus buntaistí ata ann le h-aontú a chur chun tosaigh agus, níos tábhachtaí, a dhéanamh go measúil, eolach, go cuimsitheach agus go forleathan, ansin tá deis réadúil againn saol nua, combhionannach agus cuimsitheach a chruthú do gach duine in Éirinn."

Rosa
Nic Lochlainn





Imeachtaí do theaghlach
Tacaíocht do ghnólachtaí
Tacaíocht do scoileanna
Imeachtaí sóisialta
Ranganna Gaeilge
Seanna do dhéagóirí
Focail chomhrá
Cearclanna



An Focal Beo
 Filíocht, scéalaíocht & comhrá
 An Irish Language Festival of
 Poetry, storytelling & conversation







Ireland's
Future
Todhchaí na hÉireann



IRELAND'S FUTURE
PRESENTS

PATHWAY TO CHANGE

SATURDAY 15 JUNE 2024 | DOORS OPEN 11AM STARTS 12PM

SSE ARENA BELFAST



PROF BRENDAN O'LEARY DR ADAM POSEN
CLAIRE HANNA MP IVANA BACIK TD
MARY LOU MCDONALD TD CLAIRE MITCHELL
JARLATH BURNS AND MANY MORE...

TICKETS RELEASED SOON VIA **TICKETMASTER** [ticketmaster](https://www.ticketmaster.com)

Quiz
of Prison literature

ANSWERS: 1. Kathleen Clarke 2. William Brennan-Whitmore 3. Máire Comerford 4. Louis J Walsh 5. Margaretta D'Arcy 6. Bobby Sands 7. Síle Darragh 8. Jim 'Jaz' McCann 9. Chrissie McAuley 10. Ernie O'Malley 11. Maud Gonne Mac Bride 12. Peadar O'Donnell 13. Linda Kearns 14. Tom Clarke 15. Margaret Skinnider 16. Frank Gallagher 17. Margaret Buckley 18. Joseph Campbell 19. Áine agus Eibhlín Nic Giolla Easpaigh / Ann and Eibhlín Gillespie 20. Gerry Kelly