

# On NI, flags & the 'je ne sais quoi' of leadership...

Thank you to Alan Carson for suggestion my attendance and to Stephen Gough for organising "The State of the Union; Beyond 2021" event in East Belfast this week. The impression I left with was that we are all aching for great leadership.

This is the first of two posts I will offer on my

# Empowering Change

Micháel Martin TD  
Fianna Fáil Headquarters,  
Áras De Valera,  
65-66 Lower Mount Street,  
Dublin 2

Re: Northern Ireland

Dear Mr. Martin,

I believe you can be of some assistance.

We're having another flag row here in Belfast. It seems many people believe the Union Jack flying over City Hall should be flown at half-mast to honour the Manchester terror victims.

Apparently, absent a cross-party agreement to resolve the issue, we've descended into "*Them-uns vs Us-uns*". Again.

I bring this to your attention because, in an interesting turn of events this week, Fianna Fáil was mentioned at a gathering of Unionists looking toward the future of Northern Ireland. Many in the room felt that, as Nationalist parties go, yours would make a more reasonable partner in government here.

You are likely aware, that since the retirement of Peter Robinson we have not been able to recover the mutual respect and camaraderie that had come to exist in the office of the First and Deputy First Ministers.

And shared power clearly requires trust, rigor and, if not more importantly, charm and a sense of humour.

I can't speak to Fianna Fáil's sense of humour, but there you have it. I'm just the messenger here. And an immigrant, who arrived in 2008 - 100 years after my grandparent's were forced to emigrate in search of work.

On my way in, I was passing many of the 1,000 a week leaving the 26 counties, with nearly half a million gone by April 2014. Clearly, self-governance hadn't improved things much over my grandfather's experience of British rule.

In the early days, I tried to avoid the political fray. A newcomer and an Irish-Italian-American Jew – what did I know?

Nearly a decade on, as an entrepreneur, coach and evangelist for creating economic opportunities across Ireland and as an advocate for creating a food and energy secure, economically sustainable island, I will speak my mind. I do so with a lack of passion for either a 26 or 32 county Republic.

As I am in my seventh decade, not reared here and unimpressed with the competence or maturity of either government, I'll work only to consign any decision making to the next few generations. I am committed to maintaining the status quo in Northern Ireland and the Republic, at least until one government or both establish the political maturity and economic resources to govern.

And at the rate we are maturing, it's doubtful I'll be here to vote either way.

Until then, please do what you can to keep our children and their children safe, secure and well educated.

Sincerely,

*Eve V. Earley*

The current flag row, per *The Belfast Telegraph*: <https://goo.gl/qrDkB3>  
The last flag row, per *The Blame Game*: <https://goo.gl/AVujwo>

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