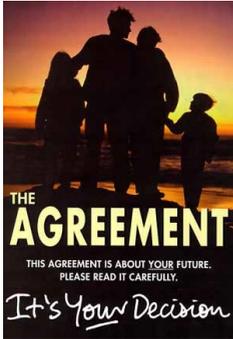


A Renaissance of the Peace Process?



What kind of society do we need?

A working conference, taking place from 9.30am to 4.30pm on Friday 27 September 2019 in the Canada Room, Queen's University Belfast

The reality of Northern Ireland life for the past two decades is that the peace settlement arrived at in the **1998 Belfast / Good Friday Agreement** and reinforced by subsequent pacts has delivered relative peace despite being imperfectly implemented. However, the Brexit process so far has undermined some of the basic assumptions of this agreement and far more serious damage will be done if the UK leaves the EU, especially if there is 'no deal'.

In any event, we are heading into a time of political turbulence and perhaps confrontation. Soon, we will have a new Prime Minister. A little further on, we may have a general election, a new referendum, or just continuing political guerrilla warfare in a febrile climate of uncertainty. To add to that, Brexit has led to a new focus on the possibility of a united Ireland.

It is urgently necessary for civil society, and particularly human rights activists, to develop a common perspective on how we move forward in these dangerous times. As a working concept, some of us from within

the sector have developed the idea of a 'Renaissance of the Peace Process'. This means a rebirth of the principles within the peace settlement, going back to basics and implementing what was neglected, while also adapting and developing solutions for the new challenges coming down the road. We need to make people feel safe and secure in their identities and ability to access protection of their rights.

This cannot be a project restricted to Northern Ireland alone. The futures of North and South are fundamentally interconnected and so, just like with the 1998 agreement, solutions must have an all-island perspective. This working conference is designed to discuss the overall concept of a Renaissance of the Peace Process and to elaborate on the policies and actions necessary moving forward. It is organised with the intention to gather views predominantly from the North, but will also welcome input from the South, and we hope will be a good starting point for further discussions.

“We, the participants in the multi-party negotiations, believe that the agreement we have negotiated offers a truly historic opportunity for a new beginning.”

Declaration of Support, Good Friday Agreement

There will be three main panels during the conference:

Implementing the peace agreements

Looking at the Bill and Charter of Rights, a rights based return to power sharing, policing, and dealing with the past.

A rights based society after Brexit

Examining immigration, citizenship, rights across the island, and the prospect of a broad based equality campaign.

Rights and constitutional change

Dealing with the Good Friday Agreement and rights in a constitutional debate, the necessary development of rights protection in the South, and prospective guarantees for Unionists in a United Ireland.

There will be Q&A at each panel but the final session will be an opportunity for open discussion on the way forward by all present.

Among confirmed **speakers and panel chairs** are:

Doireann Ansbro, Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL); Eilis Barry, Free Legal Advice Centres (FLAC); Una Boyd, Committee of the Administration of Justice (CAJ); Kieran McEvoy, Queen’s University Belfast; Susan McKay, Journalist & Broadcaster; Paul O’Connor, Pat Finucane Centre; Dawn Purvis, Activist; Peter Shirlow, University of Liverpool; and Anne Smith, Ulster University.

The full agenda will be published soon and made available via the CAJ website at www.caj.org.uk/news/events.



Please register via Eventbrite. Go to bit.ly/renaissance-conference-19.