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UNITED STATES UNITED IRELAND

A More Perfect Union

A letter from Ireland

a Chara,

Happy July 4th weekend and 250th Anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

In advance of the drafting of the Declaration, Benjamin Franklin visited Ireland. He witnessed firsthand the cost of the British colonial project. The wealth of Ireland was exported for the good of Britain, and the vast majority of the people were impoverished, subjugated, and oppressed. In Ireland, Britain's oldest colony, Franklin saw America's future. He continued to press the British, but his view hardened that independence was the only way forward.

In the States, the same lesson was being relayed by Irish Catholic and Scots-Irish Presbyterians who had their religions suppressed in favour of the established Anglican faith. They were barred from any meaningful role in political and economic life. They fled to America in the hope that the new world would offer a new life. These groups would provide the intellectual basis of the Declaration and would take up arms to break the link with Britain. They promoted the historic Republican ideas of equal citizenship, democracy and opposition to monarchy, declaring, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." All be it that the concept of equal citizenship would, in practice, be extended only to white European men.

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generals as among his best. He marked St. Patrick's Day with a break for his soldiers from the war. In June 1776 he raised his glass to toast, "Let the generous Sons of Saint Patrick expel all the venomous reptiles of Britain."

Likewise, the revolutionary republican movement in the United States and France shaped a new generation of Irish Patriots. Wolf Tone and the United Irishmen drew on the Declaration of Independence and the French Revolution to shape a modern Irish Republicanism. One that sought to unite Protestants, Catholics, and Dissenters under the common banner of Irishmen and women to break the link with Britain.

It was to the newly independent United States that Wolfe Tone entered exile in Philadelphia, where he made contact with the French and sailed to Paris. The rest, as they say, is history as generations of Irish Republicans sought the support of Irish America and US Administrations in the cause of Irish Independence.

It is right and proper to celebrate the Declaration of Independence, to remember those patriots who gave their lives for freedom, but to also reflect on progress. The concept of "all men are created equal" was taken literally to exclude women, and it did not extend to people of colour or to native Americans.

The failure to translate revolutionary ideals into state action is neither new nor uniquely American. In Ireland, the ideals of the 1916 Proclamation have yet to be realised, and the Democratic Programme of the First Dáil gathers dust.

Eleven years after the Declaration of Independence, the US Constitution was adopted with the prologue, "We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union."

The process of building a more perfect union would continue; it was not until 1865 that slavery was formally abolished. This was over 30 years after Britain, which had brought slavery to America, abolished it in its empire.

The Constitution has been amended in numerous ways in the pursuit of building a more perfect union.

The US is a vast country of immeasurable wealth. It fought against an empire and won its right to national self-determination. Yet today we see that same right being denied to other nations.

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Ireland, and across the world. The aspirations of the Declaration remain our common values. The war of independence our shared history.

So this weekend, celebrate independence; remember the patriots and commit to the work of making a more perfect union.

Is mise,

Ciarán

Ciarán Quinn is the Sinn Féin Representative to North America éi

Date Set for Sinn Féin Irish Unity Bill

Speaking earlier this week, Sinn Féin President Mary Lou McDonald said, “The future of Ireland should be decided by the people of Ireland.

“I am calling on Taoiseach Micheál Martin to support Sinn Féin’s Irish Unity Bill on July 7th.

“We have a huge opportunity to end partition, break the link with Britain and reunite our country - to shape our own future here at home.

“The first step is passing the Bill in the Dáil, turning the page and beginning a new chapter for our future - one we shape together.

“Éire Aontaithe.”

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Mary Lou McDonald in Washington, DC

While in Washington, DC this week, Sinn Féin President Mary Lou McDonald said, “It’s inspiring to hear young Irish people and our diaspora speak about the historic opportunity that Irish unity represents for their generation.

“Sinn Féin’s Irish Unity Bill will be debated in the Dáil on the 7th of July. It is an unprecedented opportunity to begin planning for Irish Unity, and one we must seize.

Together, we are writing the next chapter of Ireland’s story.”

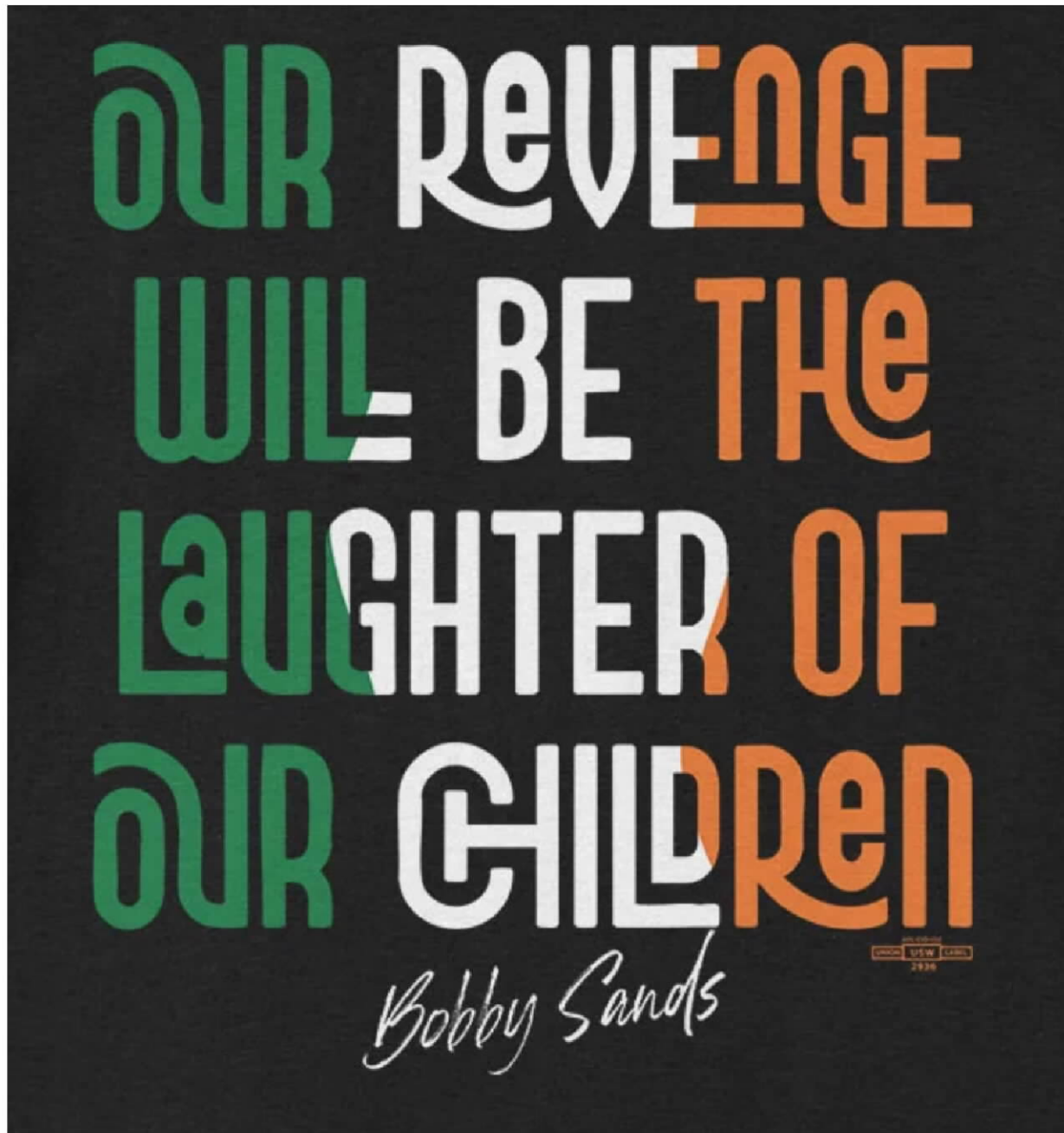
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Ireland's Presidency of the EU comes at defining time for Europe and for Ireland

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attended the ceremony in Dublin Castle to mark the commencement of Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Speaking ahead of the event, Mary Lou McDonald said, "Ireland's Presidency of the European Union comes at a defining moment for Europe and for Ireland. It provides an opportunity to show leadership, advance Ireland's national interests and help shape the future direction of the European Union.

"For Sinn Féin, there are three clear priorities.

"First, preparing for Irish unity. The European Union has already recognised that, following reunification, the whole island of Ireland would seamlessly remain within the European Union. The Irish Government should use this Presidency to initiate structured engagement with European partners on the practical preparations required for constitutional change. Responsible governments prepare for foreseeable constitutional change. The time to begin that work is now.

"As the only all-Ireland party represented in the European Parliament, the Oireachtas, the Assembly and councils across this island, Sinn Féin will work with partners across Europe to ensure that preparations for Irish unity move from aspiration to practical planning.

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