

P-1039

IRELAND:

THE FINAL STRUGGLE

New Political Ballads by the Men of No Property



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The struggle against British Imperialism in the North of Ireland begun in 1968 still goes on. The cost in terms of lives and suffering has increased as the repression has been stepped up in a last desperate attempt to turn the tide. There are now 2,000 political prisoners in Northern Ireland. The British Army murder squads (Special Air Service known as S.A.S.) have murdered and bombed at will but still the people of the North have refused to return to the corrupt Six County State they rose to smash in 1909. Our struggle is not an easy one nor is the solution simple, but we refuse to be dragged down the deadly cul-de-sac of sectarianism. We refuse to accept the war in Ireland as a religious one, although the mighty propaganda machine of the British press attempts to convey that impression to the world. Internment without trial has failed, Bloody Sunday has failed, and the concentration camps of Long Kesh and Magilligan cannot crush the people's resistance. We find ourselves in a most difficult period of the struggle, with a right-wing puppet government in Dublin and the people wary of long years of war. But let there be no mistake. British Imperialism will be defeated. This is the final struggle. We have paid too dearly, suffered too much, to climb back into the gutter again.

—The Men of No Property

Singers:

Brian Whorsky

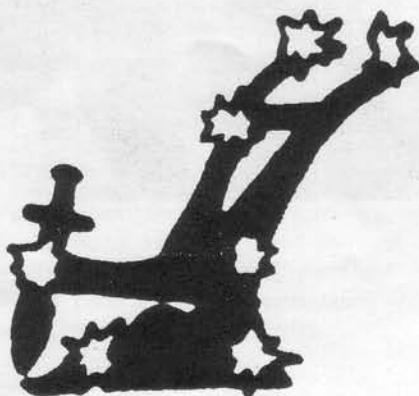
Macilvogue

Wylde

Frank Trick

Betsy Gray

The 800-year long struggle of the Irish people for freedom continues. Bruised by the British Army, exploited by Anglo-American imperialism, terrorized by paramilitary sectarianism in the North, threatened with legalized fascism in the South, still the Irish people persevere. Today they demand Protestant-Catholic working class unity, democratic and civil rights, full employment, control of their natural resources, and an end to senseless violenceso that tomorrow, in unity and confidence, they may join the other oppressed nations of the world in full independence and prosperity. In this perseverance the people of Ireland are an inspiration to us all.





In 1971, we were proud to publish the first recording of *The Men of No Property*, and it helped the world to realize that all Irish rebel songs were not born 50 years ago. On that record, every song was tied to a specific event or symbol of the current struggle, such as the "Burntollet Bridge Ambush" or "Hughes' Bakery Van" (which played an important part in the defense of Falls Road), "Cry Murder" dedicated to a child killed in his bed by stray bullets, and "Ballymurphy" named for the famous street battle of the same name.

When the record was made, all the singers had to use noms-de-guerre because of their daily involvement in struggle, and the group had no real name. Taking from the words of Irish revolutionary Wolfe Tone (1763-1798), who characterized the peasantry (and a large majority of the rest of his fellow citizens) as "that large and respectable class of the community—the men of no property," we decided to call them by this phrase. At the same time, we commented on the group's makeup not reflecting the considerable participation of women in the current struggle in Belfast.

They have kept the name, using it well in spite of the fact that happily the present record does incorporate the presence of women. In the years since the first record they have also continued to develop their musical abilities and deepened their studies of Celtic culture. This doesn't mean that they have been any the less busy making their contributions to other aspects of the Irish independence struggle.

The liberation movement in Ireland stretches back into the mists of antiquity, but this doesn't make it any the less real or urgent today. Perhaps this is why some have come to see it as England's Vietnam, since that historic struggle also traces its roots back many generations. Labelled a sectarian squabble by

the British press, belittled as a quaint leftover from a bygone day by others, what is now taking place in Ireland is a part of the struggles going on all over the globe to end colonialism and neocolonialism forever. Although it will take a great variety of forms, it can clearly be called the final struggle, because the hour is far too late to turn back.

Perhaps the material base of this long war can best be understood through the rich literature of song in Ireland emanating from the class which otherwise has had very little access to the tools of communication. You might say that the very plenty of expressive and detailed songs still alive and well is a testimony to the absence of access to other means of chronicling events so important to the lives of the poor, the peasants and the working class even today. Some excellent sources of these songs and their backgrounds are:

SONGS OF IRISH REBELLION: Political Street Ballads and Rebel Songs (1780-1900) by Georges-Denis Zimmerman; 1967 Folk Associates, Inc. Hatboro, Pennsylvania.

IRISH SONGS OF RESISTANCE: by Patrick Galvin; The Folklore Press, 509 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y.

IRELAND SINGS: An Anthology of Modern and Ancient Irish Songs and Ballads; by Dominic Behan; pub. 1965, Essex Music, Ltd. London, England.

One can also write to the National Publications Committee, 56 Grand Parade, Cork, Republic of Ireland and ask for a list of pamphlets on the subject.

The history of Ireland as expressed in its songs is peopled with soldiers on one side and the other, heroes and tyrants, martyrs and traitors, and an uncommonly resourceful and resilient population. The landscape of the songs is paved with the ruins of battles, memorials to the fallen, littered with barbed wire and machine guns, and fenced with high walls to keep people either in or out depending on ones perspective. The songs on this record reach back into that history in order to give strength to the present. They reach out for solidarity and understanding. They build a place in future history for the victories of the present. And they prove how very much alive is the spirit of Kevin Barry, hung in 1920 by the British crown for rebellion at the tender age of 18, and whose bravery in the face of the hangman has made of his name a slogan and a legend. The last person to speak with him was a chaplain, who reported that his final words were, "Hold on and stick to the Republic!"

Side 1, Band 1: (1:30)

HAVE YOU GOT A PENNY, MISTER?

sung by Wylde

tune: traditional

lyrics by Wylde

A new ballad expressing the frustration of the working class people of Belfast bowed by 25% unemployment, job discrimination, and the continual harassment of the "Brits" on the street. People are aware of the "set up" and this struggle is about changing all that.

Have you got a penny, Mister, have you got a dime?

Have you got the inclination, or have you got the time?

To listen to my story, and the truth I mean to tell,

How the politician's main intent's to con us all like hell!

Well they say the world took six days and six nights to complete,

And the seventh was a resting day, and sure it was a feat.

Of incredible ingenuity, resourcefulness and skill,

With the Lagan River flowin' down beneath Belfast Cave Hill.

Ay, the people they came later on to fill up Belfast town,

Ay and some were orange, some were green, and some were even brown.

They were browned off with (unintelligible) that keeps us color-blind.

To the colors fed to their big machine to crush and squeeze and grind.

Aye, they'll squeeze you for a penny and they'll crush you for a dime,

Aye, they'll build a movin' ghetto, to keep athwart the time.

The times they are a-changin' style, the politicians rant,

And roarin' lies and tales of hypocritic lyin' cant,

Aye, well have you got a penny, mister, have you got a dime?

Have you got the inclination, or have you got the time?

To quietly demolish the ghettoes, one by one, The truth will come to light, me boys, just like the mornin' sun.

Aye, well have you got a penny, mister, have you got a dime?

Side 1, Band 2: (4:18)

THE CARMAGNOLES

sung by Betsy Gray

tune: traditional French

collected and arranged by Wylde

During the French Revolution residents of the little village in the south of France called Carmagnole wrote words about "Madame Veto" (Marie Antoinette) who was the wife of Louis XVI, and whose veto caused the suspension of the constitution of 1791. The tune also served as a vehicle for both singing and dancing of the Paris Communards, and in this way they came also to be called "Carmagnoles."

The present words are attributed at times to the great Scottish poet Robert Burns, but this is not certain. We have included it in our program to show that while the color of the uniform may change, the enemy of the people remains unchanged throughout history...and it can and will be overthrown. "Church and state in deep embrace; the burden of the human race."

'Twas in the year of '93, the French did plant an olive tree,

An emblem of great liberty, and patriots danced around it.

The tools of murder near and far the sons of freedom sought to scar,

But Gallia taught new modes of war, the tocsin it was sounded.

For was not I a-tellin' ye, the French could fight right heartily,

That Carmagnoles would make you flee? But you would never mind me.

In '94 a new campaign the tools of darkness did maintain,

But fame's bright sun soon formed in train and soon their foes confounded.

They gave to Flanders liberty, they dealt their shots so frank and free,

The Dutch and the Austrians home they did flee, and left the Duke surrounded.

On June the first, two fleets at sea did drub each other heartily,

And each side claimed a victory, and gloried in the slaughter.

James Vaughn St. Andre was the boy who fought and saved the French convoy.

John Bull rang all his bells for joy, which caused the French much laughter.

Now see the great Batavian line emancipate
with French combine.
May laurels green all London shine, and may
their sons long wear them.
May every tyrant shake with dread, and
tremble for his guilty head,
May foolish toys in dust be left, and man no
longer bear them.

Oh church and king in close embrace, the
burden of the human race.
The people tell you to your face that soon you
will repent it.
For kings and tyrants preach and drones, the
source of all our heavy groans.
Down from your pulpits and your thrones you
will tumble unlamented.
For was not I a-tellin' ye the French could
fight right heartily,
That Carmagnoles would make you flee? But
you would never mind me!

Side 1, Band 3: (3:08)

**DOWN THE BROOM/NAVY ON THE
SHORE/ROLLING IN THE RYE GRASS**

Three Irish reels learned from older traditional musicians in the North. They are played on the Uilleann Pipes, the button row accordion, the flute, mandolin and bodhrán.

Side 1, Band 4: (2:15)

BRIAN BOY MAGEE

recited by Macilvogue
poem by Ethna Carbery

This poem was written by Ethna Carbery, a well-known 19th century poet and song writer who composed among other songs "Rodey McCorley". The poem describes a massacre that took place in 1641 in a village 20 miles north of Belfast. As contemporary song writers we are often accused of being extremists, and of exaggerating British repression in this country. This poem aptly illustrates that we are merely following a long tradition of total opposition to those who would be our masters.

*I am Brian Boy Magee —
My father was Eoin Ban —
I was wakened from happy dreams
By the shouts of my startled clan;
And I saw through the leaping glare
That marked where our homestead stood,
My mother swing by her hair —
And my brothers lie in their blood.*

*In the creepy cold of the night
The pitiless wolves came down —
Red troops from that Castle grim
Guarding Knockfergus Town;
And they hacked and lashed and hewed
With musket and rope and sword,
Till my murdered kin lay thick
In pools by the Slaughter Ford.*

*I fought by my father's side,
And when we were fighting sore
We saw a line of their steel
With our shrieking women before;
The red-coats drove them on
to the verge of the Gobbins gray,
Hurried them — God, the sight!
As the sea foamed up for its prey.*

*Oh, tall were the Gobbins cliffs,
And sharp were the rocks, my woe!
And tender the limbs that met
Such terrible death below;
Mother and babe and maid
They clutched at the empty air,
With eyeballs widened in fright,
That hour of despair.*

*I have vowed by pride of my sires —
By my mother's wandering ghost —
By my kinsfolk's shattered bones
Hurled on the cruel coast —
By the sweet dead face of my love,
And the wound in her gentle breast —
To follow that murderous band,
A sleuth-hound who knows no rest.*

*I shall go to Phelim O'Neill
With my sorrowful tale, and crave
A blue-bright blade of Spain,
In the ranks of his soldiers brave.
And God grant me the strength to wield
That shining avenger well
When the Gael shall sweep his foe
Through the yawning gates of Hell.*

*I am Brian Boy Magee!
And my creed is a creed of hate;
Love, Peace, I have cast aside —
But Vengeance, Vengeance I wait!
Till I pay back the four-fold debt
For the horrors I witnessed there,
When my brothers moaned in their blood,
And my mother swung by her hair.*

Side 1, Band 5: (2:45)
BLARNEY PILGRIM
WHINNY HILLS OF LEITRIM
PADDY O'BRIEN'S JIG
Three Irish Jigs



Side 1, Band 6: (2:45)
CORMAC MACILVOGUE
sung by Wylde
tune: traditional [A Man's Life in the Army]
words: MacIlvogue

Belfast lies between a range of low hills and the sea. Local folk tales tell of how these hills were inhabited in the early 18th century by bands of guerrillas called "Raparees," fighters who refused to surrender after William the Conqueror's victory at Boyne. Many stories about this exist in the oral tradition, but few songs, so we decided to compose our own.

*My name is Cormac MacIlvogue, the truth to you I'll tell.
There was a girl from Lisburn town, ach, sure I loved her well.
Her name it was fair Annie Doyle, and married we would be.
But for some reason of his own, her brother slighted me.*

*It was down in yonder valley we used to sport and play.
Her brother John came on us one evening as we lay.
He pulled a pistol from his side, he tried to shoot me dead.
His aim untrue, I tell to you, fair Annie fell instead.*

*The soldiers came that very night, up to my father's farm.
They read aloud a warrant, which filled me with alarm.
For the murder of young Annie Doyle they dragged me off to jail,
Which left me father for to mourn, me mother there to wail.*

*The old judge turned around to me, the black cloth on his head,
Saying "God have mercy on your soul. You'll hang until you're dead."
"I'm innocent, I'm innocent, oh God, this can't be so."
But the turnkeys there on either side, they dragged me down below.*

*They threw me in a cold dark cell, and I lay on the floor.
Another man locked up with me at first I did ignore.
The turnkey brought me supper in, foul water and black bread.
Says he, "Now get acquainted with your cellmate Rebel Ned."*

*He bade me tell my story, and I told him of my fear
That I could hang for another man's crime, the execution near.
He'd been captured in the mountains, a gallant Raparee,
And gently whispered in my ear, "Tonight we'll both be free!"*

*At dead of night a scuffle, and down went both our guards.
The men that Sarsfield left behind tied ropes around the bars.
They whipped their horses into flight, the timber frames gave way.
"The hangman's rope will have to wait," said Ned, "another day."*

*In search of Annie's brother John I rode, as dawn (rose) in the sky.
I ordered him to come and face a man condemned to die.
"If not for you she'd be alive, not in a cold grave laid.
Oh they can't hang me a second time." I shot the bastard dead.*

*Then to the Belfast mountains in haste I did repair.
With Rebel Ned's bold Raparees I'll take me chances there.
They've placed a reward on my head, called me a murdering rogue.
Judge for yourself, you've heard the tale of Cormack MacIlvogue.*

Side 1, Band 7: (2:18)

THE WEE WHITE TURBAN

sung by Whorsky

tune: traditional

lyrics: MacIlvogue

The tune is from a popular "rebel" song called "The Broad Black Brimmer," and if the people of Belfast weren't tired of singing it they'd be tired of listening to it. The parody is a light-hearted dig at the kind of Irish Rebel song which seems to have more sentiment than politics. At the same time, it relates the class struggles of another people to our own. The author is in complete sympathy with the PLO and its aims, and by no means takes the Palestinian situation lightly.

*'Twas a bundle that was hanging in what's
known as fathers tent,
A bundle of striped material black and red,
And when I asked me mother now just what it
did contain,
"Its your father's bedouin uniform," she said.
And after much persuasion she let me try it on
In memory of Mohammed, now," she said.
And as I put the kaftan on, she was smiling
through her veil
As she wrapped the wee white turban round
me head.*

(Chorus:)

*Its just a wee white turban he wrapped around
his head,
Forty yards of good material there and more.
An old kaftan that he stole in Marrakesh,
A pair of boots belonging to the camel corps.
An old curved sword in its sheath of camel
hide,
A wavy dagger he used against the foe.
When it comes to blood and snatters, sure the
man that really matters
Must wear the wee white turban of the P.L.O.*

*'Twas the turban that me father wore, in the
desert long ago,
When he left me mother's harem on the run.
'Twas the turban that he wore when he stood
by Nasser's side,
When he put the British army on the run.
He dived into the water and he swam that
broad canal,
Reached a tanker and he climbed up on its
side.
When it reached the middle it was there he
made her scuttle,
And that was how me brave father died.*

Its just a wee white turban

Side 2, Band 1: (3:25)

ERIN'S LOVELY HOME

sung by Betsy Gray

music and words traditional

A rare emigration ballad from the famine time. In 1847, a famine decimated the population of Ireland when four million people either left or died in three horrific years. Many who sailed for America perished on the journey, since they travelled in crowded and unsanitary conditions. Not nature, but capitalism was the cause of the famine, as can be learned from these passages from "Songs of Irish Rebellion: Political Street Ballads and Rebel Songs 1780-1900" by Georges-Denis Zimmerman (published in 1967 by Folklore Associates, Inc., Hatboro, Penn.):

"Apart from short periods of relative prosperity, the Irish peasants were reduced to misery, living almost permanently on the verge of famine. The great majority were either labourers or tenant farmers who held their land on short leases. The landlords would often leave their estates in the hands of agents, many of whom extorted the utmost profits. A street ballad of 1830 summarized the situation accurately:

*Our absentee landlords have left us,
In London they cut a great dash,
While their tenants at home in poor Ireland
Must pay them the rent in hard cash.*

"Tenants whose leases had expired were compelled to bid again for their holdings, and, in a country where the population was rapidly increasing, the rents, fixed by competition, were constantly rising. When a cottier was evicted, either because he could not pay or because the landlord wanted to consolidate his estate, his only choice was between starvation and emigration.... From 1850 to 1870, the lot of the Irish peasant was miserable. The price of agricultural produce fell steadily. It was more and more difficult to pay the rent, and ballads kept commenting upon economic difficulties:

*Since the prices are so low and the taxes they
are so high,
The farmers of this country to America they
must fly,
They cannot keep a cow or horse but is
posted up for sale,
And with the money they have got they must
buy the Indian meal.*

*The landlords they are waiting to seize upon
their crops;*

*The taxman comes next morning and at your
door he raps,*

*On your pigs and sheep is sure to seize,
the poor-rates for to clear.*

And the third penny of the price goes to the auctioneer."

When in 1845 the potato blight, which had appeared about a year before in Europe, reached Ireland, it turned what was already a desperate situation into a calamity. It is sufficient to sum up the official British attitude toward this disaster by pointing out that Queen Victoria donated the "princely" sum of five pounds to the Famine Relief Fund on the same day as she gave a similar amount to the Chelsea Dog Home.

*Come true-born sons of Paddy's land, come
listen unto me,
'til I relate and communicate of a mournful
tragedy.
For want of trade, ten thousand sailed to
wander far, to roam,
And leave the land where they were reared,
called Erin's lovely home.*

*My father being a farmin' man, reared too in
Ulstery.
He had two sons of tender age and lovely
daughters three.
Our land too small to maintain us all, some of
us had to roam
And leave the land where we were reared,
called Erin's lovely home.*

*My father sold his second cow, and borrowed
twenty pounds.
It being in the merry month of June, we sailed
from Derry town.
There were thousands more all on the shore, all
anxious for to roam,
And leave the land where they were reared,
called Erin's lovely home.*

*We were scarcely seven days sailing 'til a fever
rent our crew.
They were falling like the autumn leaves,
bidding friends and life adieu.
We raise a prayer to him on high: why did we
ever roam,
And leave the land where we were reared,
called Erin's lovely home.*

*Alas, my sister, she fell sick. Her life it was
taken away.
It grieved me ten times more to see her body
thrown into the sea.
Down in the deep her body lies, and rolls in a
terrible form.
Though friends may mourn, but she'll never
return to Erin's lovely home.*

Side 2, Band 2: (1:22)
WISHING THE BRITS WOULD GO HOME
sung by Frank Trick
tune: traditional
lyrics: Macilvogue

A humorous but barbed little song in support of the growing demand for a withdrawal of British troops from Ireland. The song describes how when the British troops were first drafted to the North many saw them as protectors from the pogroms rampant at the time. Disillusion soon set in as their real role became clear, that of maintaining British imperialism in Ireland.

*Now you've come to this meeting, so listen
kind people,
I'll sing you a song with an Irish refrain.
The trouble in Belfast would be over damn fast
If only the troops would go back home again.*

*It was six years in August they come here
among us.
Some brought them for supper in out of the
rain.
Oh they must have been barmy to welcome the
army,
And now wish that the troops would go back
home again.*

*Go out for a wander, they're down at the
corner.
Hands up til they search you, it's always the
same.
I've done it that often me head's goin' soft, and
I wish that the troops would go back home
again!*

*Each four months they're over, be they drunk
or sober,
On peace-keeping duties, the government's
claim.
Far better at lootin' and poor-people shootin',
I wish that the troops would go back home
again.*

*Joined up with the hope of adventure and
travel,
Black Watch and the Gloucesters, the Paras
the same.
With black dirt on their faces, the exotic places
They'll see is damn few 'til they're back home
again.*

*They go down to the border, come back a few
shorter.
No palm trees and surfing down by Cross
Maglen.*

*By each shadow haunted, and know they're not
wanted,
And all wish to be Jesus they were back home
again.*

*So come every soldier, be sure I have told you,
The people in this country hold you for to
blame.*

*If its flying or rowing, as long as you're going,
And never come back to old Ireland again!*

Side 2, Band 3: (4:04)

BRETON AIR/ANDROS

Two traditional instrumental Breton melodies

The ancient Celtic culture is flourishing once again among the young after long years of official repression and disapproval. Our group picked up these melodies during a visit to play in Brittany, France. Breton traditional music bears a marked resemblance to its Irish counterpart, which helps demonstrate how widespread the Celtic tradition and culture is.

Side 2, Band 4: (3:13)

THE BANKS OF MULROY BAY

sung by Wylde

tune: traditional

collected and arranged by MacIlvogue

Lord Leitrim, whose vast estates stretched from Donegal to County Mayo and Leitrim, was one of the most infamous landlords in Ireland at the end of the Nineteenth Century. He ordered wholesale eviction of any of his tenants who had fallen into rent arrears, but finally he pushed the people too far. Three days after obtaining a dozen eviction orders from the court in Sligo Town, he was ambushed and shot to death near the small village of Milford in County Donegal. It is no surprise that the men who did the deed were never caught. The rash of local ballads which commemorated the event were scarcely laments.

*On the second day of April, and well I mind the
date,*

*On the morning of that fateful day in 1898,
When the great Earl of Leitrim, the tyrant, I
should say,*

*He left his home in Manorvaughan, on the
banks of Mulroy Bay.*

*The landlord gave strict orders on leaving
home that day.*

*Evictions they should then take place without
undue delay.*

*His bailiffs, they should get to work, as you
may understand,*

*And banish us poor peasants from out our
native land.*

*The morning it was gentle and the birds did
sweetly sing,*

*And 'neath the woods of Cratlagh they made
the valley ring.*

*When Leitrim and his party were driving at full
trot,*

*And entering into Cratlagh wood, they got a
fearful shock.*

*The coachman named Buchanan, a lad from
Milford Town,*

*He was blown from his station and left
sprawling on the ground.*

*May the Lord have mercy on his soul, poor boy,
he suffered sore*

*'Til death did end his misery on the banks of
Mulroy shore.*

*John Makim then, the tyrant's clerk, a lad so
strong and stout,*

*He too received a fatal wound, which made him
reel about.*

*He shouts aloud into Kincaid, as on the
ground he lay,*

*"I'm shot, I'm shot, dear William, on the
banks of Mulroy Bay."*

*The Great Exterminator, the Lord of this
estate,*

*For him there was an inch of lead, too hard to
masticate.*

*His body it lay lifeless, on the road I heard
them say,*

*To feed the dogs and hungry crows on the
banks of Mulroy Bay.*

*Here's to the men who did the deed, may they
remain unknown.*

*But to that band of brothers who claim them as
their own,*

*In Donegal and Leitrim, let Irish men proclaim,
And will you raise your glasses to those that
ended Leitrim's reign!*

Side 2, Band 5: (5:50)

IF THEY COME IN THE MORNING

sung by Whorsky

words and music: Jack Warshaw

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This timely ballad was composed by an American friend of ours who has lived in England since he came there as a draft resistor. In it, Jack Warshaw tells of repression around the world, and of the way torture has come to be an accepted method of treatment for political prisoners in many so-called democracies. The song makes us see that the only way the people can win is by sticking together, by supporting each other wherever struggle is being waged.

*They call it the law, apartheid, internment,
conscription, partition and silence.*

*Its a law that they made to keep you and me
where they think we belong.*

*They live behind steel and bullet-proof glass,
machine guns and spies,*

*And tell us who suffer their tear-gas and
torture that we're in the wrong.*

(Chorus:)

*No time for love if they come in the morning,
No time to show fear or for tears in the
morning.*

*No time for goodbyes, no time to ask why,
And the wail of the siren is the cry of the
morning.*

*The trade union leaders, the writers, the
rebels, the fighters and all,*

*The strikers who fought with the cops at their
factory gates,*

*The sons and the daughters of unnumbered
heroes who paid with their lives,*

*And the poor folk whose color or class or belief
was their only mistake,*

(Chorus)

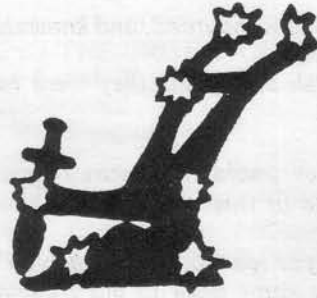
*They suffered the torture, they rotted in cells,
wrote letters, went crazy and died.*

*The limits of pain they endured, but the
loneliness got them instead.*

*And the courts gave them justice, as justice is
given by well-mannered thugs.*

*Sometimes they fought for the will to survive,
and sometimes they wished they were
dead.*

(Chorus:)



*They took away Sacco, Vanzetti, Connelly and
Pearse in their time.*

*They came for Newton and Seale, and the
Panthers and some of their friends.*

*In Boston, Chicago, Saigon, Santiago,
Capetown and Belfast,*

*And places that never make headlines, the list
never ends.*

(Chorus)

*They tell you that here you are free to live and
to say what you please,*

*To march and to write and to sing—as long as
you do it alone.*

*But say it and do it with comrades united and
strong,*

*And they'll send you for a long rest with walls
and barbed wire for a home.*

(Chorus)

*The boys in blue are only a few of the everyday
cops on their beat.*

*The CID, Branch men and spies, and informers
do their job as well.*

*Behind them the men to tap phones and take
pictures, and program computers and file,*

*And men who give orders which tell them just
when to take you to a cell.*

(Chorus:)

*So come all you people who give to your
brothers and sisters the will to fight on.*

*They say you get used to a war, but that
doesn't mean that the war isn't on.*

*The fish need the sea to survive, just like your
comrades do,*

*And the death squad can only get to them if
first they can get through to you.*

(Chorus:)

"We will free ourselves by the aid of that large and respectable class of the community . . . the men of no property."

Wolfe Tone (1763-1798)



If you remove the English army tomorrow and hoist the green flag over Dublin Castle, unless you set about the organization of the Socialist Republic, your efforts would be in vain. England would still rule you. She would rule you through her capitalists, through her landlords, through her financiers, through her whole array of commercial and individualist institutions she has placed in this country . . .

James Connolly, 1897



What is the I.R.A. and Where Is It Going?

This article is excerpted from "Inside the I.R.A." by Bob Whalen, which appeared in the January, 1975 issue of RECON magazine (Box 14602, Philadelphia, Pa. 19134). Whalen's article, in turn, was based on interviews with Cathal Goulding, Chief of Staff of the Irish Republican Army and a respected leader of the Irish Republican Movement.

Interned at an early age. Goulding was held in the Curragh Camp by the Fianna Fail-De Valera government from 1940-45. He spent another year in jail after being arrested when he and a handful of others tried to regroup the shattered organization. From 1947-53 he played a leading role in laying the basis for the I.R.A.'s campaigns of the '50s. Arrested again in 1953 for his part in a raid on a British Army Training School, Goulding spent another six years in prison. He became active again immediately upon his release in 1959, and is one of the principle architects of the drive to assess and learn from the past, and to develop a political, social and economic program as well as a military one. Now in his forties, Goulding has helped to lead the I.R.A. from a narrow nationalist and militaristic ideology to a consciously socialist and revolutionary one.

Since its beginnings in the Easter Rising of 1916, the I.R.A. has fought a continual struggle to free Ireland from foreign control. Such a struggle, especially in view of the cherished myths about the Irish national character, has generated a rich tradition about the I.R.A. that has often obscured its true history and development from outsiders--and sometimes from itself.

In 1962 the Irish Republican Army (I.R.A.) ended its last purely military campaign against British military occupation of the Six Counties of north-east Ulster. At that time, the I.R.A. had held to the same strategy for almost 50 years:

purely military actions aimed solely at British occupation of the Six Counties. The I.R.A. traditions of non-involvement in political and economic struggles, complete avoidance of any revolutionary activity in the southern 26 Counties, and the lack of a clear ideology still persisted.

But today the I.R.A. strategy calls for combined political, economic and cultural struggle against all manifestations of imperialism, whether British or American or in the form of multi-national corporations, throughout all 32 Counties of Ireland. And the I.R.A. has declared for a United, Democratic, Socialist Republic of Ireland.

The important changes that the Irish Republican Movement has gone through in the last eleven years cannot clearly be understood if not viewed within the framework of I.R.A. tradition and history. In 1962-63, following the 1956-62 campaign, the I.R.A. leadership held a long series of meetings. Their purpose was twofold: first, to analyze the recently concluded military campaign in the Six counties and seek out the reasons for its failure; second, to decide what the I.R.A. should do in the future. The discussions actually covered far more than the Six-Counties campaign. They delved far back into the I.R.A.'s history to discover a common fault in each of their campaigns and to bring each one's common failure to light.

The fault the I.R.A. discovered was their isolation from the people of Ireland and their political, social, and economic struggles and hardships. The genuine respect and often admiration of the I.R.A. held by many of the Irish people had given a false picture. As Cathal Goulding, I.R.A. Chief of Staff, said in October 1973:

"The people respected the I.R.A., they stood and cheered from the sidelines, but they were definitely spectators rather than participants in the struggle against British Imperialism. The mistakes of the past had been political rather than military. The weaknesses were identified in this way:

1. The Army had no solid political base among the people.
2. It had no clearcut ideology which could define for the people what the struggle was all about.
3. The Army had concentrated its attacks on the British Military Occupation of the Six Counties, to the exclusion of direct assaults

on the British Political Administration in the Six Counties or the economic and cultural penetration of both the Six and 26 Counties.

4. Free Statism had been left free of both military, political and economic assaults. It was merely attacked for its failure to take the Six Counties and for its coercion of Republicans."

The major I.R.A. decision of 1962-63 was to become involved in the popular struggles and mass organizations of the people throughout all 32 Counties. Of that decision, Goulding said:

"It was decided not to organize for a campaign in the Six Counties against the British Occupation Forces, but to organize for a revolution in the whole country against all the forces of British Imperialism and native Gombeenism. Our objective was to be the Reconquest of Ireland. We aimed not simply to place an Irish Government in political control of the geographical entity of Ireland, but to place the mass of people in actual control of the wealth and resources of the Irish nation, and to give them a cultural identity."

With their growing involvement in political struggles, the need of the I.R.A. for a clear ideology to guide its struggles became obvious. In 1967 the I.R.A. declared for a **United, Socialist, Democratic Republic of Ireland**. Even though this declaration was in the tradition of James Connally (Irish labor leader and Republican martyr of 1916) and other Republicans throughout I.R.A. history, some elements did not accept it willingly. The commitment to socialism, along with the decision to organize for an all-Ireland revolution, laid the basis for the Provisional split of 1969. It was not, as some Provisionals claim, a split over commitment to armed struggle. The I.R.A. remained "an army, trained, disciplined and determined... accepting completely that as our enemies will resist in arms, final victory can only be accomplished by armed struggle." Rather, the split was one of strategy, with the official I.R.A. moving forward to a revolutionary, socialist class analysis while the provisionals remained behind mired in the narrow nationalism and militarism that had failed so many times before, keeping out-dated traditions alive in the name of a dead past.

How does the official Republican Movement see the relationship between political agitation and military struggle? "Our dictum is that war is an extension of politics, and that if there isn't a political reason for mounting a physical-force operation, we don't do it. We don't do it just to shoot a soldier, a policeman, or anything like that. Any military operation is, and must be, within the framework of our political strategy."

The new I.R.A. strategy has been put to a severe test in northern Ireland. The Civil Rights Campaign for Catholics of 1968-69 was given full support by the I.R.A., who saw the Civil Rights Movement as the first step in uniting Catholic and Protestant workers. Goulding explained:

Victory for the people on civil rights issues, we knew, would inspire them to further battles on the social and economic front. It was in this second stage of the struggle that Republicans saw the greatest prospect of uniting Catholic and Protestant workers. We believed that the struggle for civil rights would become a struggle for class rights, that all Irish workers would become dissenters. We set fire to the Northern Tories in the full confidence that the blaze would cross the border and burn up corruption from Belfast to Cork."

But in 1971 the Provisionals launched their bombing campaign, and the prospect of civil war in the North became very real. The official I.R.A. was drawn into the military confrontation, almost unwillingly, as British and Loyalist counter-terror escalated in response to the Provo bombs. In battles like the Falls Road Curfew Battle of 1971 and the seizure of English's Bakery by Joe McCann's I.R.A. company, the official I.R.A. exercised what it saw as a responsibility to defend the people against attack and retaliate against their oppressors. But they continually attempted to defuse the sectarian violence by word and deed toward the Ulster Volunteer Force (two of whose members were released unharmed after being picked up while in Republican areas) and the Ulster Defense Association. And in 1972, in response to the wishes of the masses of the people, the official I.R.A. ceased all aggressive military actions in the North.

This "cease-fire," later followed by every para-military group in the North except the Provisionals, was one hopeful sign. The recent

Ulster Worker's Council strike was also seen as a progressive sign by Goulding:

"One of the things we were pointing out to the Movement before '69 was that mass agitation by the working class, even the Catholic working class, didn't have to engage in any great demonstrations or military activity. All the working class had to do was to sit down and do nothing, in other words go on strike. Stop working, stop co-operating with the establishment and no government could exist. The Ulster Workers Council proved this. In a fortnight it brought a government down that the Provisionals couldn't bring down with bombs and guns for four or five years.

Then again, it has shown the development in the Protestant working class. Five years ago they depended on the British Army, the R.U.C. and their political leaders in Stormont—the middle-class leadership that they always trusted—and the political leadership of Westminster (the British government) to protect them or to provide them with the things they needed. This development and their taking the law into their own hands has shown that they no longer trust the establishment, and that they are going to rely on themselves. . . . They themselves are the power in Ireland and not the British Army, the R.U.C. or the political bosses at Stormont. . . . And I think that even though there may have been a lot of wrong reasons for them going on strike, that the strike was a fairly good exercise and demonstration of working-class solidarity and power. This was a certain demonstration to the Catholic working class. The Protestants had shown that if Protestant and Catholic workers united and made demands, those demands couldn't possibly be defeated."

Given the current situation in Northern Ireland, progressive leaders of Protestant working-class organizations who have made contact with the Republican Movement have

been under extreme pressure and in some cases have been assassinated by extreme right-wing elements in the loyalist camp. What are the prospects for building links with the Protestant working class in this situation? says Goulding:

"If you take a look at the history of the U.V.F. (Ulster Volunteer Force) for instance, it came into existence simply to murder Catholics. They did murder Catholics in 1968 and '67. And slowly but surely they developed an organization of their own. First of all, I suppose, they took their politics from the middle-class politicians. They listened to the rantings and ravings of militant clerics, both Catholic and Protestant, and opportunistic politicians. But now they are listening to themselves, and they're thinking for themselves. As a result, even if it is a kind of "village pump" socialism, they have a certain type of socialism, and once they're thinking along socialist lines, we have to think it's good. . . .

Most of the Protestant working-class organizations are now in the same position as ourselves. They have declared that they are not conducting an aggressive military campaign except for a policy of self-defense and retaliation. I think that this is a good development. And also that the newspapers and periodicals of these different organizations are spouting a kind of socialism, which they wouldn't even tolerate before. . . . I think that the organizations, and the people with them, are being affected, if you like, by socialist development. This is good."

If the official I.R.A. succeeds in lessening sectarian violence and averting civil war, they see good prospects for uniting Catholic and Protestant, Loyalist and Republican. The key issues now on which to build this unity are internment and repression. With over 600 prisoners in Long Kesh concentration camp, a widespread movement to release all internees, Loyalist and Republican, is spreading. Almost identical declarations in favor of a total end to internment have come from the Ulster Workers Council and other Loyalist working-class groups, and from Republicans.

Another important point made by Goulding was that the situation in the North has held back organizing in the South. He said,

"With mass arrests or terror mounted by the British Army, an escalation of the bombing campaign of the Provisionals, or sectarian assassinations by some other group, it means the reaction in the 26 Counties is, 'We have to do something about the Six Counties,' instead of saying to ourselves, 'The best way we can help the Six Counties is to help ourselves.' I feel that if every parish in Ireland was able to say that it had organized itself for revolution, we'd have a revolution. I think the northern people, to a great extent, look after themselves. They would need aid in different shapes from time to time, but the main concentration of revolutionaries in the 26 Counties should be on their own areas. Because of the situation in the North, it affects both the North and South, but basically our strategy is the same: to organize people to try to get them to move forward, to be involved in their own problems, and not to have the Republican Movement acting as kind of an elitist group doing things for the people. Our job is to lead the people, not to do things for them.

"The main thing at the present moment in the Six Counties is we're concentrating on organizing against repressive legislation and internment, as this affects both sides of the fence—the Catholic and Protestant working class. And we have met some Protestant leaders and have asked them to develop this kind of struggle in their own areas and also things like the redevelopment of Belfast and other cities in the Six Counties, where

Protestant communities are going to be disrupted in the same way as Catholic communities. There are other things, as I say: land agitation, agitation in relation to housing, things like that. But we most concentrate on what would be the basis of mass reaction. In other words, we see internment and repression as the main problems that will be able to bring both Protestant and Catholic working class together."

The I.R.A. has come a long way in its revolutionary development in the past 11 years. It has searched critically through its own past, and discovered strong socialist elements as well as things to be discarded. The I.R.A. has stretched its vision of revolution to include not only the political, economic, and cultural struggles to be fought in Ireland, but the world struggle for a just, peaceful, and prosperous society. Asked what kind of support the I.R.A. would like to have here in the United States, Goulding said:

"The kind of support I'd like to see develop in the United States for the Irish Republican Movement is support from the *working-class people of America*, not simply based on the fact that their grandfathers were Irish, or that they are Irish themselves, but a clear view of the political situation, the world situation, the situation that exists in the United States and in Ireland. A triumph for socialism in Ireland is a triumph for socialism in America, just as a triumph for socialism in Vietnam is a triumph for us. I'd like to see some kind of common front in America developing, not simply supporting the Irish struggle but being able to struggle in America for the same objectives that we struggle for here. And being able to give reciprocal aid both to us and us to them, at different times. That is the situation I'd like to see developing."

Ar dtroid, bhur dtroid. Bhur dtroid, ar dtroid. Beir bua.
Our fight is your fight. Your fight is our fight. Until victory.

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