

Look at the poor boys, God help them.
WHO'D EVER THINK IT WOULD COME TO THIS

(Ernie O'Malley quoting crowds watching captured defenders of the Four Courts –
- after seizure by government forces - marched through the streets of Dublin)

**A Cantata in Commemoration of the Irish Civil War - Its Fallen,
Bereaved and Survivors - on the Occasion of the Centennial, 2022**

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PART ONE: 'INTROIT'

Chorus: near darkness or half-lit – *pp*, as if from a distance in time)

Imagination can scarcely conceive the state of our poor;

Even in Ireland of the plagues...

At almost every step one meets on the roads the hideous spectacle

Of human beings in the agony of hunger, walking in a living death

And that, oh! That in a land of plenty...

(Letter from Fr. Mathias MacMahon to The Nation, 9 April 1848. Cited in Bryan
MacMahon: 'The Great Famine in Tralee and North Kerry', Mercier Press, Dublin,
2017.)

EITHNE COYLE

(Soprano/Alto: near darkness or half-lit, *p* as if from a distance in time)

Colonel Olphert... the landlord of a huge area of Donegal,

Had terrified the native population...

Alchert issued a proclamation forbidding the people to cut turf

As the bogs were the property of the landlord.

They could not take seaweed to fertilise their land from their own shores

As that also belonged to Colonel Olphert.

The next stage was set for the famous and infamous battering ram

Which his bailiff and the emergency men used to knock down the houses

After dragging the unfortunate tenants out

Some of them had to be carried out on their mattresses

Like the poor woman with a baby, one day old...

The bailiff had a list of over a thousand houses on that day

Listed for demolition.

(Eithne Coyle P61/1/C11 p.1)

**(Chorus: perhaps suddenly *ff*? near darkness or half-lit, or remain *p* as if from a
distance in time)**

We declare the right of the people of Ireland

To the ownership of Ireland and to the unfettered control

Of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible.

LIAM DE RÓISTE

(chorus)

Last night in Cork was such a night of destruction and terror
As we have not yet had.

An orgy of destruction and ruin.

The calm sky frosty red –

Red as blood with the burning city,

And the pale cold stars looking down on the scene

Of desolation and fearfulness...

[\(From the Diary of Liam de Róiste, cited by Thomas McCarthy: 'Rising from the Ashes, The burning of Cork's Carnegie Library and the Rebuilding of its collections' Cork City Libraries, 2010, P.6-7\)](#)

MABEL FITZGERALD

(Soprano/Alto (near darkness, or half-lit – p as if from a distance in time))

Several girls arrested in various parts of this country

Have been forced to spend a week in Black and Tan Barracks

Alone with those men...

A thing abhorrent to the Southern Irish women, unrealisable...

[\(Report 'About the Treatment of Women in Ireland', sent to Gladys Hynes, 1918. Librettist's collection\)](#)

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PART 2: TREATY & FOUR COURTS

GENERAL MULCAHY

(chorus)

For Centuries England strove to reduce Ireland to an English province.

Irish civilisation was to be blotted out...

Ireland has never been a British colony.

She has been a separate nation kept subject by a more powerful neighbour...

But she has never ceased to fight for her freedom...

The problem now is to define some sort of provincial autonomy for Ireland...

Ireland, as a separation, would be also restive under any control from the
neighbouring nation,

But equally willing to cooperate in free association on all matters

Which would be naturally the common concern of two nations living so closely
together.

[\(P7/A/73 p. 137-138\)](#)

(chorus)

CONFERENCE ON IRELAND

MEMORANDUM OF HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

SECRET

His Majesty's government... must know,

If the conference is to proceed,

Whether or not the Irish delegates

Are prepared to make a definite understanding upon these vital questions.

THE CROWN

The first question of imperial importance is allegiance to the Crown.

(P7/A/73 p. 3)

TADG KENNEDY [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY*]

(tenor/baritone 1) When Collins was going, he was told

Under no circumstances was he to sign anything

Until he would first come back home...

Michael Collins said when I asked him,

'Why didn't you come back to Ireland?'

(tenor/baritone 2) 'God blast you, why didn't you go across with me?'

(P17b/102/83R)

(chorus)

THEIR CONDITIONS

IRISH NAVAL FORCES

MR. CHURCHILL... SAID THAT CLEARLY WE COULD BUILD NO FIGHTING NAVY.

MR COLLINS said he did not see what the necessity for these conditions was. You have force and therefore you have security.

Mr. Churchill:

(tenor/baritone1): But we want to restrain force and replace it by an agreement which will be law

(chorus) Mr. Collins:

(tenor/baritone2) The suggestion that we should bind ourselves to place ports and inlets at your disposal puts us really in the position of tenants.

(chorus) Mr. Churchill:

(tenor/baritone1): But the Dominions do so.

(chorus) Mr. Collins

(tenor/baritone2) The document appears to mean that you are at liberty to take over any site in any part of Ireland... That would be a rather hopeless sort of business, would it not.

(chorus) Mr. Churchill:

(tenor/baritone1): We must deal with realities.

(P7/A/73 p. 18)

(chorus)

DRAFT FORUMULA

(W. Churchill Oct. 19)

The Irish government confides the responsibility for the naval defence
Of Irish interests on the high seas to the Royal Navy
And for this purpose as well as for those of general Imperial defence
Places its ports, harbours and inlets at the disposal of the Imperial
Government in peace or war
(P7/A/73 p. 25)

ERNIE O'MALLEY

(tenor/baritone)

The five Irish delegates had signed the articles and returned to Ireland
To recommend them to the Irish people.
They had signed under Lloyd George's threat of
'Immediate and terrible war' on the Irish people...

*(Ernie O'Malley: The Singing Flame. Anvil, Prestatyn, 1978. Mercier Press, Dublin,
©Cormac K. H. O'Malley, 2012. P.55)*

TOM O'CONNOR [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone)

I was sworn in under Collins' orders.
Things were going wrong over in England, so we understood...
In the Split, the active men of the Tan war remained staunch
But some of the local companies in Killorglin especially
And a few in Gencar went Free State

(P17b/132/31R)

(chorus)

INSTRUCTIONS TO DELEGATES

ARD FHEIS Feb. 7

1. To support any practical scheme to achieve unity.
2. Failing this, to support any scheme which may be agreed on
Between Messrs. De Valera Griffith and other leaders...
Which may be necessary to endorse the attitude
Of the majority of Dail Éireann in approving the Treaty signed in London

(P/235/3)

EITHNE COYLE

(soprano/alto)

A lot of bitterness was created between those who remained loyal
To the Republican ideal,
And the other section who took the path of expediency.

(P61/2 p.21)

TOM CARNEY [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone)

When the Treaty came, the unofficial crowd
Were ninety per cent Treatyite in our Battalion...
The majority of people accepted the Treaty,
And the priests were ninety-eight per cent against us.
(P17b/109/44L)

MARY RICE SPRING

(soprano/alto)

Fr. Hayes & Fr. Wall all pro-Treaty & afraid of chaos
If the Provisional Government does not make a start now.
It is a wretched business altogether.
(P235/6 p. 1)

GENERAL MULCAHY

(chorus)

We feel that on this basis alone can the situation be best faced:- Viz:-
(1) Acceptance of the fact – admitted by all sides –
That the majority of people of Ireland are willing to accept the Treaty...
(4) Army unification on above basis
(P7/B/192 p. 27)

TOM MAGUIRE [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone)

Our army was being constantly undermined.
If we held a council one night there might be a man who was on it
With the Free State the next night.
In the beginning our fellows would not kill the Staters...
The Free State in Roscommon tried to establish posts.
At first we did not realise that men could be so bitter against us.
(P17b/100/155L)

ERNIE O'MALLEY

(tenor/baritone)

The coward cheering you today would cut your throat tomorrow
If they had the pluck.
(P80/1642 p. 1)

SEAMAS McCANN

(tenor/baritone)

When I arrive in Drumboe some of the Free State soldiers
I knew in the old days
Would have done anything for me
If I'd been there long enough.

(P0226/46/73)

MARY RICE SPRING

(soprano/alto)

A doirín dílit.

The split in C. na mBan has crystallised now...

I have after much anxious thought joined the organisation

That Miss Mulcahy, Miss Duffy are starting to support the Treaty.

You will be disgusted at me.

Indeed, I have spent miserable days thinking it over.

I see so much good in De Valera's side

And no one can be enthusiastic for the Treaty

But on the whole I believe it will get us independence

With less bloodshed and quicker than the other way.

I am quite well, but feeling rather miserable at having left De Valera

Mary Rice

(P235/11 p. 1-2)

JACK FEEHAN [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone)

We got orders from GHQ to start training camps...

When I was appointed Quartermaster, I was brought to Dublin

To get fixed up...

They were very anxious for us to get a munitions factory going in the West...

We made a lot of explosives through Bertie Mason of Kilineen, a chemist,

Married to Fr. Griffin's sister.

(P17b/113/24R-24L)

(chorus)

GENERAL MULCAHY

Within one week alone of the Signing of the Treaty (4 May 1921)

The following breaches of same by the Irregulars were reported.

Twelve Protestant farmers and householders ordered out of homes

On few hours notice and forceable possession taken.

Two Protestants kidnapped.

Four banks raided.

Eight Post Offices raided.

Mail Train held up and mails seized.

Dungannon barracks occupied by Irregulars, entrance mined.

(P7/B/192 p. 30)

MARY RICE SPRING

(soprano/alto)

I fear there is no chance of raising any further money

For the Brigade Fund now,

As I am out of Cuman na mBan

(P235/16)

EITHNE COYLE

(soprano/alto)

I was appointed to organise Cumann na mBan after the Treaty...
Part of my task was to intensify the boycott of Northern goods...
If any more pogroms against our Catholic people took place...
We were to take immediate action.
I got up at 5am the next morning which happened to be a Sunday.
I waylaid my man... and asked him to hand over all the Northern papers.
He made a swipe at me with his driving whip and used some choice language.
I said TUT TUT you naughty old man using such language on a Sunday morning
And produced an old revolver that had no trigger
Immediately all the Sunday papers were thrown at my feet
And the language following them quite polite.
I had paraffin oil and matches attached to my bicycle and I soon had a blaze.
(P61/2 p. 16-17)

(chorus)

SECRET

IRISH PEACE CONFERENCE

SIXTH SESSION at 10, DOWNING STREET.

FRIDAY October 21st 1921. 12 0'clock noon.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE

(tenor/baritone) I have two or three preliminary questions of the gravest character to raise.
The fact is that we have unmistakable proof that during the period of the Truce in Ireland
Advantage has been taken of the Truce to accumulate destructive stores
For the manufacture of bombs and arms.
The German police have seized a ship with arms on board for your people.
(P7/A/73 p. 79)

ERNIE O'MALLEY

(tenor/baritone)

We stored the explosives and equipment in warehouses in London
And arranged for cross-channel transport,
Giving fancy names to our heavy crates: 'Glass, with care'...
We visited greasy shops in the East End and met professional gun-runners...
We slipped money into receptive palms and received promises until our money was exhausted.
(Ernie O'Malley: *The Singing Flame. Op. Cit. p.40*)

(chorus)

IRISH REPUBLICAN ARMY

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE SUB-COMMITTEE

That this Executive Council of the I.R.A.

Hereby decide that as in our opinion the only means

Of maintaining the Republic is by giving the English

72 hours notice to evacuate the country.

[\(P7/B/86 p. 35\)](#)

ERNIE O'MALLEY

(tenor/baritone)

I was in the Orange hall one night, selecting tins of Marsh of Belfast's biscuits...

When Liam Mellows came in by the back yard.

'We're going to take over the Four Courts tonight', he said.

[\(O'Malley: The Singing Flame. Op. Cit. p.89\)](#)

(male chorus)

WINSTON CHURCHILL

(tenor/baritone)

The presence in Dublin, in violent occupation of the Four Courts,
Of a band of men styling themselves the Headquarters of the Republican
Executive

Is a gross breach and defiance of the Treaty...

If it does not end, and a speedy end, then it is my duty,

On behalf of His Majesty's Government, to say that the Treaty

Has been formally violated.

[\(P7/A/73\)](#)

ERNIE O'MALLEY

(tenor/baritone)

We looked down at the defences and laughed.

The barristers and gowned notables from the Inns of Court

Never dreamed that one day their heavy legal tomes

Might defy the law and stop a bullet...

The records office was converted into a munitions factory.

[\(Ernie O'Malley: The Singing Flame Op. Cit. p 92-3\)](#)

(tenor/baritone1)

ON THURSDAY 15th JUNE 1922

The following was handed to Minister of Defence

By Messrs. Rory O'Connor and Ernest O'Malley from the Four Courts...

(tenor/baritone2)

'We are taking whatever action may be necessary

To maintain the Republic against British aggression...

[\(P7/B/192 p. 45\)](#)

ERNIE O'MALLEY

(tenor/baritone)

From the Four Courts. We want to talk to you.
We see no way out of the present situation but to attack the British.
That would reunite both forces...
If we don't fight before the British leave the country,
We will be left to face each other.

(O'Malley: The Singing Flame. Op. Cit.. p.107-8)

GENERAL MULCAHY

(tenor/baritone)

The politicians who saw reason,
But who for lack of moral courage
Dropped their hands by their sides
And who now take the attitude that they were driven by reason
Into a Pact that was a national disaster, perhaps.
That the men of faith stepped forth,
And these are the Four Courts men,
And launched themselves on the road of ruin
That is to be looked upon as an inspiration to coming generations of Irishmen
And as long as the men of faith lead on,
The politicians with no moral courage will follow.

(P7/B/192 p.12)

ERNIE O'MALLEY

(tenor/baritone)

I turned over another undamaged volume of Vasari,
Old garrulous Vasari, and sitting on my bed read his remarks
On Andrea del Sarto...
A volume of Montaigne had escaped shell and bullet.
He would have been a good man to have had here with us;
He could have joined in our philosophic discussions under the dome.
I put him in my pocket where he lay
Beside a thin copy of Shakespeare's Sonnets, which I had been reading last night.

(O'Malley: The Singing Flame. Op. Cit.. p.138)

(male chorus)

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE

(tenor/baritone)

I do not want to use the language of menace,
But it is essential that that should be brought to an end, and speedily.

(O'Malley: The Singing Flame. Op. Cit.. p. 119)

ERNIE O'MALLEY

(tenor/baritone)

We were told by a Franciscan friar from Church Street
That the Four Courts would be attacked after midnight;
Free State troops were on their way to Dublin from the Curragh of Kildare...
'We're like rats in a trap, Paddy', I said to O'Brien
(O'Malley: The Singing Flame. Op. Cit. pp.120-123)

GENERAL MULCAHY

(tenor/baritone)

The two British gunners and officer...
Took over the working of the Field pieces
Which now began to tell
With deadly effect on the building.
(P7/B/238 p. 9)

ERNIE O'MALLEY

(tenor/baritone)

When flames ate through the houses, it was decided to evacuate O'Connell Street
And a rearguard under Brugha was left to cover the retreat of the others.
The girls had refused to leave...

(female chorus)

Why, if men remained, should women leave?

(tenor/baritone)

The question was debated with heat in rooms of burning buildings...
During the Tan war the girls had always helped but they had never sufficient
status.
Now there were our comrades, loyal, willing and incorruptible comrades.
(O'Malley: The Singing Flame. Op. Cit. p.169-70, 191)

ERNIE O'MALLEY

(tenor/baritone)

In fours we marched along by the river,
Then up the side streets, surrounded soon by a crowd;
Some curious, some cheered us, others muttered words of sympathy.

(chorus)

'Look at the poor boys, God help them.
Who'd ever think it would come to this'.

(O'Malley: The Singing Flame. Op. Cit. p.160)

(chorus)

THE NATION

War issue No. 13. 2d.

THE REAL TRUTH ABOUT THE FOUR COURTS

If the free State had told us the truth long ago
We might have been saved some trouble...

The lie that England did not force the attack on the Four Courts

[\(P7/B/238 p. 8\)](#)

(Male chorus)

Enactment of the Constitution of the Free State of Ireland:

“I will be faithful to His Majesty King George V,
His heirs and successors by law in virtue of
The common citizenship of Ireland and the United Kingdom”.

ERNIE O'MALLEY

(tenor/baritone)

Orders were sent out to the brigades to stand-to,
Columns were ordered to mobilise and operation plans revised.
At last a decision had been arrived at. We sang and whistled as we worked.
The uncertainty was at an end.
War again, and a ruthless one.

[\(O'Malley: *The Singing Flame. Op. Cit.* p.55, 54\)](#)

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PART 3: FIGHTING

SEAMUS McCANN

(tenor/baritone)

I.R.A. had the first man to fall in the fight for the Republic.
James Marten of New Mills. He was a great little fellow and was a good volunteer,
His home was a great home During the Trouble for all men on the run...

[\(P0226/44/73\)](#)

MARY RICE SPRING

(soprano/alto)

They've been firing on the station here since 6 o'clock.
An awful cannonade.

I can't see anyone, the streets are empty.

But I think the Republicans have taken the post office...

The station blazing and crackling, the people on their way to Mass watching it...

The rumour went round there were bombs in it, it was dangerous to go near it.

I went to the barracks.
A group of IRA was at the gate in angry convers.
Some of them the defeated Free State, some of them the victorious Republicans.
They were so busy abusing one another they would hardly listen to my appeal
To them to do something about the station.
They all looked downcast and miserable.
(P235/25 p. 3)

BRODIE MALONE [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone)

Everyone was then mad for action...
Carty decided to attack Collooney for there was a shop in town
In which the Staters were,
And a fellow named McCann was in charge.
We crept in, put a charge of gelignite underneath the place
And it went up.
They came out very shaken as prisoners;
So we had the town by Saturday evening...
(P17b/109/pp. 77R-77L)

MARY RICE SPRING

(soprano/alto)

Sunday 9 July.
After church I went to see Anne.
She tells me that the looting of clothes
At Mrs. Kennedy's in Shanagolden by the I.R.A.
Was against orders and they are due to be given back...
The Republicans apparently occupy the Western end of town
And the Free State troops surround the other three sides.
One can hardly believe either side will give in...
(P235/25 p. 9)

TOM CARNEY [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone)

Carty had read a lot about guerrilla warfare but he took no chances.
He was particular about his dress and personal appearance.
I think it was Carty who discovered that their spies were communicating
With the garrison in Moylough,
Two married farmers with large families.
Carty brought them out, blindfolded them and went in [to town] for a priest.
Then he shot the two of them.
(P17b/109/47L-48R)

EITHNE COYLE

(soprano/alto)

On one occasion, on my return from Avonmore Island in West Donegal...
I found that gallant and fearless Commandant Plunkett Boyle,
Who was afterwards shot dead by a Free State bullet,
Waiting for me with his ass and cart ...
Plunkett told me that a group of Staters were waiting to shoot me
On my way back from the island.
Driving along towards Dungoe [?] three heads appeared from behind the
Shelter of a wall. Plunkett saw their guns.
He then raised his shotgun and before he had time to open fire
The three heroes who had been sent out to shoot an unarmed woman
Scampered like rabbits.

(P61/2 p.21)

TOMMY HEAVEY [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone1)

Plunkett said that he would go outside to surrender to save the women,
And then the firing stopped when he said so.
He opened the door, and he went out with his hands above his head,
And at a stile in the wall that surrounded the house,
He was shot through the head twice.
He had announced that he was Plunkett...

(tenor/baritone2) 'Are you Plunkett?' McCorley asked.

(tenor/baritone1) 'I am'

(tenor/baritone2) 'You're not coming in alive',

(tenor/baritone1) And he fired twice.

(P17b/120/pp. 59L-59R)

MARY RICE SPRING

(soprano/alto)

5/7/22

There being no sign of post or telegraph working again,
I chance a line by coal boat...
Two Foynes girl biked into Lk. yesterday
And found all shops closed
Streets barricaded and nearly empty,
Bit shops seized by one side or other
And goods commandeered...
No news from Dublin, no trains in or out of Limerick.

(P235/33 p.1)

SOUTH WEST GALWAY BRIGADE

(chorus)

Duggan's flying column has been broken up
And Duggan is in a City Hospital very seriously wounded.
LIMERICK CITY BRIGADE
Our intelligence being highly organised,
We have been able to arrest a large number of the most active irregulars
(P7/B/71 p. 7)

ERNIE O'MALLEY

(tenor/baritone)

News came in from Dublin that Cathal Brugha was dead.
Brugha, we thought, the man we most needed now.
We had many memories of him:
1916, badly wounded, fighting on after the retreat of his men,
The grey look of pain in his face in later years.
(*Ernie O'Malley: The Singing Flame. Op. Cit. p.177*)

MARY RICE SPRING

(soprano/alto)

I do so wonder if you have got all our letters
Posted by various steamers, coal-boats...
Poor Cathal Brugha – he died a brave death.
(P235/23)

(tenor/baritone)

STATEMENT OF SGT. WILLIAM O'NEILL OF CALLAN GARRISON
I was discussing the general situation, in the canteen.
I asked Lt. Kerwick who, in his opinion, were the men who were right.
Lt. Kerwick said the men in the hills.
Lt. Kerwick had stood quite a lot of drink...
I said I would never betray my comrades in the National Army.
I had no idea that Lt. Kerwick meant to betray Garrison.
(P7/B/64 p. 26)

MAY DÁLAIGH [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(soprano/alto)

The bombing that night woke us in our house here,
For we thought it was thunder.
It was awful, at about 3 o'clock.
The children going to school saw it
(The dead splattered on the road)
As they cycled into school.
They had coffins filled and put out on the street
But they didn't know anyone who had been left alive.

(P17b/132/23L-24R)

SEAMUS McCANN

(tenor/baritone)

Gallagher and Gordon escaped from the hut
Were captured by F. State soldiers again
Under Tom Glenning.
Gordon and Gallagher were then Riddled with bullets
And then thrown into the lorry.

(P0226/60/73)

MARY RICE SPRING

(soprano/alto)

The IRA in Foyne have started commandeering food...
It was rather hard on the store, having been almost ruined by the Tans
To have the I.R.A. commandeering their goods.

(P235/25 p. 6)

JACK FEEHAN [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone)

Like carrion birds following a beaten army,
The IRA hung on to the convoys, looting quietly until,
I suppose, the convoys reached Birr or Dublin...

(P17b/113/29L)

SEAMUS McCANN

(tenor/baritone)

I.R.A. hold up and capture all goods coming from the 6 Counties.
26 Lorries filled with Bread Butter Eggs passed through Letterkenny
Pedar in the front with his little grey ford 2-seater.
It was a fair day in town.

(P0226/32/73)

MARY RICE SPRING

(soprano/alto)

Wednesday 12th July
Spent the morning at the store...
Got down all the women's from the top shelf...
It does not seem to display the men's boots
Just in case the I.R.A. takes to commandeering boots!

(P235/25 p. 12)

JACK FEEHAN [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone)

We decided that instead of attacking Westport,
We would attack Clifden where the Staters had three posts...
I showed the soldier the three mines before he went in to O'Malley
And I told him we didn't want any loss of life and he was to explain
The position to the men inside...
He stood at the door and he shouted in my words.
'They're lighting the mines and if you don't want to go up, come down'.
(P17b/113/30L-39L-41R)

(chorus)

27th JULY

CHIEF OF GENERAL STAFF

1. It is necessary to have a Report prepared for GOVERNMENT
On the MILITARY SITUATION as follows.
(a) Our entire strength in OFFICERS and MEN and equipment...
(b) Report on CASUALTIES INCURRED by us.
(c) PRISONERS taken by us and disposal of the person
(d) An appreciation to some extent
Of the decisions we have to deal with yet,
(P7/B/1 p. 68)

JOHN JOE RICE [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone)

Poteen.
It was never made in our area but hundreds of gallons of it were distributed...
Seán Hegarty stamped it out. He stamped it out with terror,
By going to houses and smashing up supplies and the way of making it.
It came in all the same to our side.
(P17b/102/105L-106R)

SEAMUS McCANN

(tenor/baritone1)

We go across the Tully Hills and arrive at James Sean More's
Well you may talk of a welcome why we forgot there was a war on
Frank was very glad to see his father and mother But Bidy was always on Guard
She was taking no chances. For the house was watched night and day.
Frank whispered to me
(tenor/baritone1) Seamus tell me father to take down the fiddle.
(tenor/baritone1) I was always the man that old Jimmy would play the fiddle for

So James started play (*sic*) and Frank sang...
Until we left again as Frank's home was not safe to sleep in.
(P0226/60-61/73)

(chorus)

August 1st 1922

REPORT FROM 3RD BATTALION AREA (KENMARE)

2ND KERRY BRIGADE

Owing to the present trouble
Our Battalion is cut away from Brigade Headquarters,,,
The irregulars are in full control of the area...
All private motor cars and lorries are taken over by them...
The civil population is in a terrible state
Especially when the irregulars come in and take
What goods they have in their houses
(P7/B/70 p. 148)

MARY RICE SPRING

(soprano/alto)

The latest crisis is the commandeering of horses, harness traps
By the Republicans.
I can't manage to hide four horses, the pony, 2 traps,
The side car and all the harness...
John Nolan had also heard of a visit by the I.R.A. to the garden
And was much mystified.
Perhaps the explanation is that they came to eat gooseberries.
(P235/25 p. 227-28)

(chorus)

12th August 1922

A/503 Phone message

We occupy Cork City.

The reception of our troops passed imagination.
The enemy evacuated the city before our arrival...
We had a heavy fight for Youghal.
(P7/B/70 p. 126)

PADDY CANNON [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone)

Then an old fellow came in down the road...
We asked him his name and we said we would hold him responsible.
He told us not to move and we were doubtful then,
But after an hour he came back with a basket and can of tea

And cooked rashers and two eggs each, and we ate them all.
He asked us if there were any more men and told us
That we could move up to his house in the evening.
(P17b/136/57L)

(chorus)

Southwestern 17th August 1922.

THE TAKING OF CLIFDEN

TROOPS IN MARCONI STATION

Clifden is free of the irregulars.

The Marconi station a few miles from the town

Has been rescued...

Mr. Mathias the chief engineer declares that the wireless

May be working again very soon,

And communications through Ireland to the outside world restored.

(P7/B/70 p. 79)

MARY RICE SPRING

(soprano/alto)

The first news this morning is that the Free State troops had arrived

And taken possession of the school.

Not very good for the school I fear,

But I'm glad they have come.

(P235/25 p. 43)

(chorus 1)

Southwestern. 21. Aug. 1922

THE DASH OF THE GUARDS

General Murphy, who commanded a battalion of regular soldiers

During the European war, and who is by no means east to satisfy,

Tells me that the dash and élan of the guards in the attack

Was equal to that of any troops he had ever seen in action

(P7/B/70 p. 52)

(chorus 2)

Oglaig na hÉireann. Field General Headquarters.

South Western Command...

Arms were handed over wholesale to the enemy.

Sentries were drunk at their posts.

And when a whole garrison was put in clink owing to insubordination etc.,

The garrison sent to replace them turned out to be worse.

(P7/B/71 p. 43)

GREG ASHE [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone 1)

We were hauled out of Tintown 2...

And there was Doherty, a sly devil from Dundalk,

A line officer in the Free State...

And I heard him say, pointing to Jim Hurley:

(tenor/baritone 2) 'That's so and so who shot Mick Collins'

(p17b/132/43R2)

(chorus)

Received from Cork at 9.10pm on 23.8.22

TO GENERAL STAFF, DUBLIN

Commander-in-Chief shot dead in ambush

At Bealnalath near Brandon 6.30 Tuesday evening with me.

Also one man wounded...

Remains leaving by Classic to Dublin today Wednesday noon.

Arrange to meet. Reply

Signed DALTON.

(P7/B/70 p. 47)

(chorus)

Oglaigh na h-Éireann

HEADQUARTERS 1ST SOUTHERN DIVISION

24/8/1922

1. On Tuesday 22nd inst. At 8.35am a party of Free Staters about 30 strong
Passed near Beal na Blaith on the road to Bandon.

They were preceded by a motorcyclist and travelled in a touring car,
Lorry and armoured car.

Mr. Collins was one of the party.

2. A picked column of 32 in number was mobilized
And took up a position about ¼ of a mile from Beal na Blaith
To await their return...

5. Fortunately 6 of our men had not left their position
And three more managed to get back.

Fire was immediately opened on this enemy by this section...

6. The firing was terrific. The enemy relied on his machine guns.
Now and again you could hear the crack of a rifle from our battle party,
Who never budged one inch from their position.

7. The engagement lasted one hour...

8. I have since learned that Mr. Collins was shot dead during the engagement.
Our casualties were nil.

(P69/93)

ERNIE O'MALLEY

(tenor/baritone)

In mid-August Arthur Griffith died of a cerebral haemorrhage...
Then in late August Michael Collins was killed in an ambush...
The two men more than any others responsible for the Treaty were dead.
Religious ladies nodded their heads in significance,

(female chorus)

'Yes, it was a judgement of God'.

(tenor/baritone)

He was now on our side.

(Ernie O'Malley: The Singing Flame. Op. Cit. p. 196)

TOM CARNEY [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone)

Then we had a brain wave.
We arrested fifteen of the richest pro-Treaty shopkeepers in Swinford,
All well-conditioned men...
And we put we put a white flag on top of a hay fork...
Our ultimatum was that in the event of a barracks attack,
We would shoot every member of the garrison
If the prisoners were shot.
And he [Campbell] came back to say that the Free State would release the
prisoners
If we withdrew from the town.
They agreed and we paraded them.
Then we sent the Brigade Engineer for mines
So that we could open an attack...
(P17b/109/49L-49R)

JOHNNY GREALY [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone)

A priest asked for a truce;
And we granted it provided that no reinforcements
Were brought in and no fresh positions occupied.
They broke both of these undertakings.
Ten lorry loads of troops came in,
And they occupied fresh positions.
There was a fight on then in Collooney
(P17b/113/6R)

BRODIE MALONE [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone)

Out of Collooney comes a Republican, running
And the Free State were firing at him, and he headed towards us.
The Staters... ringed us round, but we let them have it

Whenever we saw them, and so the fight went on.
The Staters had fresh men, the disbanded British Army men...
Their tracer bullets came right in. It was a bright night,
And we fought on.
(P17b/109/pp. 78R)

(chorus)

Southwestern. 23 Aug. 1922.

Dying Officer in Burning Car.

A detachment of seven men under Lieutenant Commandant F. Cregan...
Were ambushed at 7.30 pm by sixty irregulars.
Lieutenant Commandant Cregan was seriously wounded.
The driver of the car remained with the wounded officer...
The irregulars then proceeded to set the car on fire
While the wounded officer was still in it.
The driver, however, made good his escape,
And returned to find the dying officer in the burning car.
He carried his officer from the car,
And Lieutenant Cregan died immediately on the roadside.
(P7/B/70 p. 31)

SEAMUS McCANN

(tenor/baritone1)

There were two dogs inside But they were Friendly
As all the dogs were friendly to men on the run.
I asked Frank O'Donnell what he thought of the dogs

(tenor/baritone2)

Well Seamus they are like ourselves they are on the run.
(P0226/57/73)

(chorus)

17th January 1923

To President Cosgrave. Dublin.

The troubled area in Kilkenny County...
Is raided occasionally from South East Tipperary by Irregular Columns...
The remedies I suggest are:

1. More troops for Kilkenny, Waterford and South Tipperary,
Preferably outsiders...

2. The organisation of an efficient Intelligence System.

The present methods are most saddening.

Nothing that could be dignified with the name of a system
Can be said to exist.

The local clergy and local leader would in most cases be delighted to help
But they seem completely ignored,
And are abandoning in despair the virtual forcing of information

Down Rip-Van-Winkle throats.
(P7/B/64 pp. 40-41)

(chorus)

DUBLIN

Having successfully crushed the masses resistance of the Republicans
The P.G. Troops now find themselves face with a guerrilla campaign
Which day by day becomes more effective...

COUNTRY

The country is rapidly becoming complete chaos.
Ambushes occur in greater numbers and casualties become heavier
(P7/B/86 p. 276)

JACK FEEHAN [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone)

A fellow named McDonagh, a bad pill from that area,
Was in charge of the station. And when he escaped, didn't he run into
Morisson and James from Ballina who were having their lunch.
Didn't he shout 'Hands Up', and shot one of their fingers
As they put up their hands
And then shot them dead anyway...
We erected a stone to the dead lads,
But it was knocked down and smashed in pieces...
The Ballina lads got another stone which they put up
And they said that if anything happened to this stone
That we'd deal with McDonagh

(P17b/113/42R)

JOHNNY O'CONNOR [TO O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone)

On St. Patricks Day, the Major and a bunch went out in a Lancia car.
He jumped out and he kicked the stuffing out of 3 or 4 lads there.
Moss Hogan he picked and tied a rope to his legs
And there was a colt in the fields.
He tied the rope to the colt's legs, then drove the colt along the road,
And poor Moss was in a devil of a way as a result of the battering
He got by being dragged with the colt.

(P17b/102/56)

GREG ASHE [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone)

This Griffin came in and he knew us all.
He had a terrible grudge against me...
Tom O'Sullivan, he wounded him with a blast out of a Thompson,
Tied him to the tail end of a motor car and pulled him behind for 3 miles.
Bob McCarthy, himself and Hancock... spent 3 days killing him,
And no one since Noah's Ark was treated in such a way.
They caught him west of the town of Dingle and they gave him an awful death.
The torture began then.
He was in the old workhouse and they put him in a corner
And they pegged stones at him...
In Ballymullen Barracks, they thought he was dead and they put him in a coffin.
Paddy O'Shea heard him stirring
And he told an officer there was something stirring inside
And the officer fired a couple of shots through the coffin.
(P17/132/43L2)

(chorus)

IRISH REPUBLICAN ARMY
FIELD HEADQUARTERS
To: The Secretary, Irish Engineering Union...
Workers actively cooperating with Free State forces...
Will in future be deemed to be participants in the war
Between Republican and Free State forces,
And will be treated as such...
Will you therefore notify the members of your Trade Union
That any of them who assist enemy forces in any such operations
As repairing or railways, transporting or handling of munitions
And transportation of troops, repairing telephone or telegraph lines
Will be combatants in the war.
T. O'S. Adjutant
(P7/B/86 p. 15)

JOHNNY O'CONNOR [TO O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone)

Michael Hogan was a terrible murderer. He was a devil.
Jack Galvin was murdered at Ballyseedy, near the Protestant church,
He was thrown inside the wall, where his body wasn't found for three days.
Both of his arms had been broken.
(P17b/102/64)

(tenor/baritone)

HEADQUARTERS SOUTHERN DIVISION
10.10.22

My Dear C.D.

I don't know whether or not I am still entitled to call myself your friend,
And to take the liberty of writing to you
As I am fighting with your enemies in Cork and Kerry,
But there are some "irregularities" happening which I think might be put right...
Recently we attacked Killorghlin, unsuccessfully...
The next day all the prisoners were taken to Tralee, including Galvin,
But shortly after they passed... Galvin's body was found with arms broken
And riddled with bullets near a wood called Ballyseedy...
I cannot believe that Mulcahy would tolerate it for a moment
But I wonder would he take the trouble to find out the real truth.
You may imagine what the result will be if this goes on...

[\(p7/B/86 p. 110\)](#)

DAVID ROBINSON

(tenor/baritone)

We captured a lot of ammunition in Kenmare.
It was all of English make.
We are now using that ammunition against the Free State Army.
I don't suppose the Free State Army knows anything about this ammunition,
And it is a devilish plot on the part of the English...
I hope you are well and like me you pray for a finish to this dog fight.
Very sincerely,

David L. Robinson.

[\(p7/B/86 p. 111\)](#)

ANON

(tenor/baritone)

A younger brother of mine (Brian)
Was serving in our army at Kenmare...
He was captured by the Irregulars and while a prisoner
Saw a good deal of Captain David Robinson
Who seemed to have a liking for him,
And discussed things very freely

[\(p7/B/86 p. 112\)](#)

(chorus)

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS RECEIVED...

From a Post Office employee in Ballingary [?]

No law and order anywhere.

An ex-soldier of the British Army called James Dowey

Came here demanding payment...

He used filthy language, pulled down some goods,

Hit mother and cut her face.

When I ordered him out, he spat into my face,
And smashed the glass door saying he would get the boys
To raid and burn us out tonight.
This is what we get for trying to carry on P.O. [Post Office] work
And no police in the place.
(P7/B/64 p. 35)

MARY RICE SPRING

(soprano/alto)

Saturday 5th.

One of the I.R.A. brought over the telephone instruments
Taken from Curragh last year...

To Little's joy, they gave back the typewriter & all the bedding,
Except one mattress they mysteriously said they wanted to keep.

I found out later they had soaked it in petrol.

This is the end of the first phase, what will the second be?

(P235/25 p. 35)

--

PART 4: JAIL, HUNGER STRIKE & ESCAPE

ERNIE O'MALLEY

(tenor/baritone 1)

I heard men shout

(tenor/baritone 2:) 'Surrender!'

(tenor/baritone 1) As I fired I shouted, 'No surrender here!'

This was not going to be another Four Courts...

Something struck the rifle and my back at the same time

I saw flashes before my eyes as I fell against the wall...

I could see green uniforms around me.

One soldier took up the rifle which lay beside me...

It was as though I was looking at a carp through a glass...

'That's O'Malley', he said.

(Ernie O'Malley: The Singing Flame. Op. cit. pp. 233, 235-6, 239)

EITHNE COYLE

(soprano/alto)

I was the first woman to be arrested during the Civil War

I had been arrested so often and released that I thought
The Staters did not intend to jail a woman.
I discovered my error on September 25th 1922
When a bunch of Staters arrested me as soon as I arrived
By boat outside Donegal Town.
I was bundled into a lorry and driven like the hammers of Hades
To the barracks in Ballyshannon...
They sang bawdy songs night and day...
I did not sleep during my six weeks in that awful barracks...
If I was left there much longer I would be a fit subject
For the next lunatic asylum.
I was about seven days on hunger strike...
Until I would be sent to some civilised place
And given political treatment.
(P61/2 pp. 22, 24)

ERNIE O'MALLEY/CASEY

(tenor/baritone 2) 'You will be tried in three day's time
I am to act as prosecuting counsel'...
(tenor/baritone 1) I looked at Casey. I could remember him now
In the fifth form at the Christian Brothers...
(tenor/baritone 2) 'Do you want a solicitor to act for you?'
(tenor/baritone 1) 'No I don't recognise the jurisdiction of your court martial
And the trial is a farce
You're in a hell of a hurry to shoot me.
You have already given me the sentence...
'Sit down', I said. 'Let's forget all this and talk about school'.
He sat down on a chair at the end of the bed and we chatted
Of teachers, of boys we had once known, some dead:
Others scattered all over the world.
(O'Malley: *The Singing Flame. Op. cit. P 268-9*)

(chorus)

INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT

Translation of cipher message.
From Commander-in-Chief.
4.10 pm Limerick
MESSAGE: INFORM ADJUTANT GENERAL PRISONERS HERE MUCH
OVERCROWDED
HEALTH IN DANGER. DEFENCE BAD.
ESSENTIAL FIRST REMOVAL FROM HERE.
(P7/B/70 P. 62)

JACK COMER [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

There was depression and mastis.
The scabies at first, and in Tintown 2 ninety per cent
Of the men had scabies, then there was lice...

[\(P17b/103/22R\)](#)

There were five men in my cell.
Some cells had seven or eight men.
Men slept in reliefs for there was neither space nor blankets.

[\(P17b/103/12\)](#)

(chorus)

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

19th September 1922

To: Government.

There is a growing clamour
For the arresting of women.
What has been done since KILMAINHAM?

[\(P7/B/258 p. 44\)](#)

EITHNE COYLE

Kilmainham has brought in women searchers
Who had fortified themselves with what produces
DUTCH courage
Their helpers, soldiers and C.I.D. had their faces blackened
In order to avoid recognition.
It was a dreadful night
Which echoed with the screams of our women and girls
As they were dragged, some by the hair,
Others had their arms broken
Some of the women searchers took off their high-heeled shoes
In order to beat our prisoners on the head
And Maura Lomesford was shot in the side of the head
Una Stock was battered and bruised

[\(P61/2 p. 29\)](#)

(chorus)

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 21ST MARCH 1923. 1PM

WOMEN PRISONER ACCOMODATION

It was reported that the accommodation of prisoners in Kilmainham Prison
Was now taxed to its utmost
And the Minister of Home Affairs undertook to ascertain whether increased
accommodation

Could be provided in Mountjoy Prison.

[\(P7/B/247 p. 33\)](#)

EITHNE COYLE

(soprano/alto)

When I got back to my cell
The wall behind the spot where I sat a few minutes before
Was ripped up in the middle by a bullet...
My mattress was covered with lime and mortar
If I had remained a few seconds longer
I would not be able to tell my tale of woe today.
(P61/2 p. 27)

SEAMUS McCANN

(tenor/baritone 1:) Prisoners could run around the camp all day until 8pm at night...
Then the Sentries (*sic*) could be heard shouting (tenor/baritone 2:) 'Put Out the Light'
Bang Bang Bang.
(tenor/baritone 1) If you were in a room that a light was in after 9pm
You would have to take cover.
(P0226/48/73)

ERNIE O'MALLEY

(tenor/baritone 1) Some men darkened their windows with paper...
Others were indifferent and did not trouble themselves to hide their lights.
One could hear a shout,
(tenor/baritone 2:) 'PUT OUT THAT LIGHT'
(tenor/baritone 1:) The awful noise of a cartridge being rammed into a rifle breach, the irritated
(tenor/baritone 2:) 'DID YOU HEAR, PUT OUT THAT LIGHT'
(tenor/baritone 1:) Perhaps a reply from the wing:
(voice 3:) 'Sockko'.
(tenor/baritone 1:)
Then a shot. Another bolt ramming, a shot – silence.
(Ernie O'Malley: *The Singing Flame. Op Cit. p.288*)

JACK COMER [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone)
Éamon Enright then became Camp O/C...
The Staters asked him for the names of all the hut leaders
But he refused to supply them with the information,
So he was hung up in the Glass House**
And he was driven mad by this treatment.
He got an awful milling in the Glass House...
Guiney was in charge of the Glass House
And the only time he ever got drunk was at the exhumation

Of the remains of the executed men...
A few of our lads had been shot in the Curragh,
So he must have had something to do with it,
Or he must have done something to the men who were shot.
(P17b/104/8-9)

(chorus)

Dáil Éireann

Department of Defence. 15th August 1922.

To: Minister of Defence.

The 'Lady Willow' left for Limerick

At 5.45am on the 15th Inst.

Beir Beannacht.

RONAIDE

(P7/B/70 p. 99)

EITHNE COYLE

(soprano/alto)

The subhuman treatment of our officers and men

In that infamous "Lady Willow"

An old cattle boat where one hundred and fifty men

Were crammed like sardines in Dublin Bay.

They were compelled to go down to the hold in this awful boat,

The hatches were closed, they were left without air,

Sanitary facilities, food or water.

They were all sick, with no place to relieve that sickness

Except on top of each other.

(P61/2 p. 29)

JACK FEEHAN [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone)

The old lad with the shit-cart would bring in and out our messages.

(P17b/113/36L)

GREG ASHE [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone)

The man who used to clean the latrines took everything out.

He took letters out of my hand himself and he delivered them.

Message were thrown down the closets in bottles.

(P17b/132/44L)

JACK COMER [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone)

Communications.

The old lad with the shit bucket.

He offered to take out a man a day in his cart...

This old lad used to take out our dispatches

Which were put in Bovril bottles covered in oiled silk...

They were thrown into the officers' lavatory.

He then would empty the cart away from the Camp,

Poke out the bottle, take out the dispatches

And send them to covering addresses.

Always he posted them without fail. I don't even know his name.

He said he'd take a man a day in his cart...

Keogh tried to get into it one day but he couldn't,

For his legs were too long, and his body too big.

(P17b/104/1)

EITHNE COYLE

(soprano/alto)

Effie Taffe and the rest of the prisoners refused to go to their cells

Until the Deputy Governor would collect enough courage

To face a crowd of angry women

Paudeen appeared with a tough old wardress who said

"It was a pity Eithne Coyle was not shot".

This charitable remark goes to show how popular I must have been

With some of the prison officials.

(P61/2 p. 43)

TOMMY HEAVEY [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone)

Poteen.

We found the urn and the stuff in the dump in 'B' Wing in the loft...

We brought down a big Dixie [pot].

We used flake meal which we got through a convict

With sugar and yeast which a Military Police brought in to us.

It was allowed to ferment for a fortnight in one cell...

We drank the wash and quite potent it was, but a bit too sweet.

There was almost five gallons of it.

One night there was a raid on the wing.

(P17b/120/p. 60L)

JACK COMER [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone)

Whiskey.

Coffee bottles were nearly filled with whiskey
But on top was a spoonful of coffee to hide the smell.
Jelly Poteen.
Jelly to which hot water was added but there was no smell
Until the hot water was added.
(P17b/89/49R)

JACK FEEHAN [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone)

The Party.
The camp o/c was changed, and after that the priest.
They came at first to get in whiskey for a concert
And a bit of a hooley afterwards.
They wouldn't sing unless they got a drink.
MacGuill was an old comallya singer
And Billy Walsh, the bookie, was at the back of it.
The military were to come in to the concert...
It was kept a secret between a certain crowd
And the drinking began during the concert.
An awful lot of military came in the next day
And there was a terrible lot of searching in the camp...
I think it was a sort of show search for the O/C camp
Had allowed the drink to come in and he wanted to cover himself up.
(P17b/113/33L)

JACK COMER [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone)

Every Sunday in the compound there was a Salvation Army Band,
With a harmonica and hymns.
Fr. Hughes brought the harmonica into the church,
And Barney used to play it in the church, and outside also.
We had nigger minstrels and a dance band which played music on combs.
There was a fancy dress dance on St. Patrick's Day at mid-day.
We had a drink that night...
We had twenty lovely girls. Jim Donovan, Barney Mellows, Paul Bofin
Made the costumes. Cow's heads and lions heads they made
And they were very good at it...
We had a Fancy Dress football match at which we broke the rules,
Then the teams began to fight and a crowd of tinkers
Came in and broke up the game.
(P17b/89/81L-19R)

JACK COMER [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone)

Fr. Hughes was very nice, but prisoners from other camps refused the sacraments from him...

He refused to give confession in Tintown.

There you were asked to give up arms, or give an undertaking
That you would give up arms.

Dominicans.

Fr. Fogarty, Tintown 2, was tough

He was very strict in his questions,

And he had a locum, Fr Dunne,

Who thought we were all mad.

(P17b/103/20R)

JACK FEEHAN [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone)

Hunger Strike.

Orders came in...we were to go on [strike] in sympathy with the lads in the 'Joy...

We communicated with the next camp by a stone

Which was hurled well over the wires with a message in it...

After we were on the strike for ten days... it was thought better,

As the me were breaking... that all should break the strike...

Eventually there would be a civil war in the camp,

For a man who really wanted to break the strike

Had to go out quietly...

(P17b/113/36R-36L)

(chorus)

PORTOBELLO

24TH JULY 22

CHIEF OF GENERAL STAFF

1. PRISONERS ON HUNGER STRIKE

It was the unanimous decision of the Meeting

That Prisoners on Hunger Strike

Should not be released

And that no exception can be admitted to this rule.

GENERAL COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

(P7/B/1 p. 83)

EITHNE COYLE

(soprano/alto)

The hunger strike in Mountjoy jail

Took place in he autumn of 1923
The men prisoners including my late brother Doinall [?]
Were tortured, hosed and beaten
And left to sleep in their soaking clothes and mattresses...
We held a council meeting and by a large majority decided
To help our fellow prisoners, secure political treatment
Or secure their release...
Our strike lasted about sixteen days.
(P61/2 p. 33)

JOHNNY O'CONNOR [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone 1) The morale was very good then, but during the hunger strike,
The fellows lost confidence in one another.

Gary Houlihan's wife brought in a specialist and he was carried out on the
stretcher.

Frank Barrett signed the form or broke down quickly.

Poor Seán Russell then took over.

(tenor/baritone 2) 'I'm assuming control'

(tenor/baritone 1) He said

(tenor/baritone 2) 'But it's throwing water on a drowned rat'

(P17b/102/62-63)

(chorus)

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

1. President Mr. Cosgrave
2. Vice-President and Home Affairs Mr. O'Higgins
3. External Affairs Mr. Fitzgerald.
4. Legal Government Mr. Blyth
5. Defence General Mulcahy

SATURDAY 14TH APRIL. 12 Noon

PRISONERS ON HUNGER STRIKE

It was reported that the condition of Dr. Con Murphy

Who had been on Hunger Strike since the 20th was very serious.

A charge sheet has been served on him on the 11th instant.

Arising out of this case and those other prisoners in similar circumstances,

It was decided that no prisoner can be permitted

To secure his release by Hunger Strike.

(P7/b/247 p.63)

TOMMY HEAVEY [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone 1)

Who put the Camps on to the hunger strike? Was it our GHQ? Frank Aitken:

(tenor/baritone 2)

'It's all right, but I'm doing the bloody aching'

(tenor/baritone 1)

This is what a Kerryman said who was on hunger strike,
And who had just read out a dispatch from the Chief of Staff.
(tenor/baritone 3)
'Stick it out lads, and I'm with you'.
(P17b/120/p. 62L)

LILY BRENNAN

(chorus)
Saturday 17 March.
(soprano/alto)
St. Patrick's Day. I have a cold and stop in bed
Fr. Roy comes to see me and the Galway girls came to my cell.
(chorus)
Friday 23 March.
(soprano/alto)
Hunger strike...
(chorus)
Tuesday 29 March.
(soprano/alto)
Hunger strike over 10pm.
(chorus)
Monday 7 May
(soprano/alto)
I went over the wall with M.S. 10.30
Arrived in waiting room Broadslloe [? – cannot find this place]
3 o'clock high tea
(P013/01)

ERNIE O'MALLEY

(tenor/baritone1)
I read to Jimmy. *Don Quixote* in a huge volume with Doré illustrations,
His own book; a special reading-rest was made for it.
There was Sancho's advice, which I had underlined in my pocket edition:
(tenor/baritone2)
'Let's run away now, for there is no one to see us running'
(O'Malley: *The Singing Flame. Op. Cit. p. 295*)

JOHNNY GREALY [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone)
The tunnel was propped, it had electric light
And there were names on parts of the tunnel, on the turns...

The last bit of the tunnel was named 'The Run Home'.
We had everything ready for an escape on Christmas Eve,
But the night before the Staters came in and we were all brought out...
Handcuffed together in twos...

(P17b/113/7R-7L)

TOMMY HEAVEY [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone1) We were out into a passageway that ran around the big square block...

We crossed the main road near the boathouse
And we waded on and we got a boat from its moorings...
Eight of us escaped. We went to this house.
Frank O'Bierne approached it first and he said

(tenor/baritone2)

'I know you don't agree with us, but can we get in to dry ourselves?'

(soprano/alto)

'Come in',

(tenor/baritone1)

She said,

(soprano/alto)

'Ye the fellows who have escaped,
And ye have the welcome of the world'.

(P17b/120/pp.53L, 53R, 54L)

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PART 5: EXECUTION

(chorus)

26th November 1922

To: Col. Comdt. G.O.C.

2nd Southern Command

Train wrecking again on the 23rd November

At Nicholstown, between Cahir and Clonmel.

The work of this train wrecking must be made

At once a special objective of your authority.

Some of them must be taken redhanded on this work

And brought at once - that is, inside not less than, say, three days

And if the charge there is sustained against them

The death penalty imposed.

(P7/B/64 p.3)

DAN FLAVIN [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone)

Paddy Daly issued a proclamation that he would take 4 men from each part,
If Humphrey Murphy didn't stop fighting, and he would shoot them;
And H. Murphy issued another proclamation that if Daly shot the 4,
He would pick out the most prominent members of Tralee
And he would shoot them.

Daly executed 4 in January, including Hanlon, son of the man of the house
In which Hathaway was arrested and Hathaway took that execution badly.

(P17b/102/95L)

JOHNNY O'CONNOR [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone)

The F/S were getting information from young lads
From remote corners of areas.

When you were being 'interrogated' you never came out the same door
But you saw a body carried out covered with a white sheet
On which red ink had been spilt.

Griffin, from Keel, was with Brosnan and Jack Clifford.

He was brought in with them for they were caught in the one dugout.

He gave information and they were executed.

(P17b/102/67-68)

(chorus)

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

1. President Mr. Cosgrave
2. Vice-President and Home Affairs Mr. O'Higgins
3. External Affairs Mr. Fitzgerald.
4. Legal Government Mr. Blyth
5. Defence General Mulcahy

WEDNESDAY 14TH MARCH. 8PM

EXECUTIONS IN TIRCONNELL

The Minister of Defence reported that he had received a number of letters
From Tiraconnell with reference to certain executions impending
Asking that these not be carried out.

It was decided that he should reply to the effect that the decision already made
In connection with these matters could not be altered.

(P7/13/247 p. 21)

KEVIN O'HIGGINS ***

(tenor/baritone)

Is there no alternative?...

Take them out and shoot them...

(chorus)

You are hereby notified that being a person taken in arms
Against the government, you will be executed
At 8am 8th December
(Quoted in Seán Enright, *The Irish Civil War: Law, Execution and Atrocity*.
Merrion Press/Irish Academic Press, Kildare, 2019. p.52)

(chorus)

7th Nov. '22

YOU___

Roderick O'Connor, Joseph McKelvey, Leon Mellows___

A hereby given notice that being a person taken in arms against the government,

You shall be executed at 8am on Friday 6th December,

As a reprisal for the assassination of Brigadier Séan Hales in Dublin...

And as a solemn warning to those associated.

You are engaged in a conspiracy or assassination against representatives

Of the Irish People.

Signed on behalf of the Army Council...

COMMANDER GENERAL-IN-CHIEF

(P7/B/85 p. 5)

RORY O'CONNOR

(tenor/baritone)

My dearest mother, Time is short

And much I would like to say must go unsaid.

But you will understand;

In such times, heart speaks to heart.

(percussion 'shots')

Give me another.

(percussion 'shots')

And another.

(Enright op. cit. p.53)

(chorus)

A party of troops proceeding from Tralee to Killorglin last night

Came across a barricade of stones built on the roadway at Ballyseedy Bridge.

The troops returned to Tralee and brought out a number of prisoners to clear the obstruction.

While engaged in this work a trigger mine (which was concealed in the structure) exploded,

Wounding Captain Edward Breslin, Lieutenant Joseph Murragh and Sergeant Ennis

And killing eight of the prisoners.

(Army Press Release quoted in Enright Op. Cit. p.91, from N. Harrington:

Kerry Landing, Anvil Books, Dublin, 1992)

(tenor/baritone)

STATEMENT OF THE SURVIVOR.

"I was a prisoner in Tralee Workhouse having been arrested in February. On Tuesday night the 6th of March, I, with two companions were brought From the workhouse to the road.

Five other prisoners were left in the room after us.

We were brought to Ballyseedy X. or thereabouts.

We were all placed around a log of timber on the road and tied together with a big rope.

Our hands were then tied together and our ankles and another rope was tied around our knees.

We were then told we were to be blown to atoms as a reprisal for the deaths of the Free State officers killed in Castleisland the previous day.

The soldiers then withdrew to a distance and we all wished each other goodbye.

Then the explosion occurred and I remember no more.

I was blown away to some distance and my clothes were blown off me.

I escaped through the fields.

Signed.

STEPHEN FULLER

(P69/95 p.15)

(tenor/baritone)

The 9 prisoners were... placed in lorries

With a guard of about 20 members of the Colonial forces and driven to Ballyseedy X.

They were then ordered out of the lorries

And the binding for the slaughter began.

Each prisoner's hands were tied behind his back

With a strong cord about a doot (*sic*) long.

Their feet were bound above the ankles with a strong rope

And to make sure their legs were bound above the knees.

The individual binding being over all the prisoners were bound

Securely one to the other with a strong rope.

They were then informed they were to be blown to fragments smaller than (*sic*) the officers in Castleisland.

They were dragged along to a pint (*sic*) between Ballyseedy X. and the Bog Road X,

And placed in a circle round a mine which had been placed there previously by the Colonials.

A log of wood was also in the circle probably to stand for the barricade mentioned in the Press.

The prisoners backs were to the mine and the majority of the guard moved away Leaving two of their number covering the prisoners with rifles.

At a given signal the remainder of the guard ran and the mine was exploded electrically
(No fuse had been seen lighted by the prisoner who escaped.)
The explosion was a deafening one and when the survivor came to his senses
He crawled away as far as he could.
It looks like providential that this prisoner escaped to tell the dreadful tale.
While crawling away he heard rending cries and moans;
Evidently the remaining 8 were not yet dead, but then the sound of rifle fire
And exploding bomb was heard and those that were left alive were finished by
the rifle and bomb...

The scene of the massacre presented a shocking sight on the following morning.
The road was covered with blood, pieces of flesh and bones;
Boots and clothing were scattered about.
Evidently they had escaped the eyes of the ghouls in the moonlight
When they were gathering up the remains of their unfortunate victims.
People on their way to Tralee had to turn back sickened at the ghastly sight.
Later some of the colonials came and laughed and jeered
As they threw the pieces of flesh, boots and clothes over the edge on either side...
(P69/95 p.14)

P.J. RUTTLEDGE [TO ERNE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone)

Headford shooting.

Four fellows picked out from a bunch who paraded,
[Including] Tom Maguire's brother.

They were put in a lorry, brought to Headford
And were executed when they arrived.

(P17b/90/62L)

TOM MAGUIRE [TO ERNE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone)

Headford Barracks, 8 April 1923.

There was a fight there.

Christie Macken was in charge.

Following that fight they executed my brother
And the Tuam lands as a reprisal.

(P17b/100/156L)

P.J. RUTTLEDGE [TO ERNE O'MALLEY]

(chorus? ... or tenor/baritone)

The Secret courts of O'Higgins and Cosgrave condemned
James Fisher, Peter Cassidy, Richard Twohig and John Gaffrey to death.
Mulcahy sanctioned it.

People of Ireland, Have you given your authority to these murderers

To execute our boys by Secret Trial without allowing them to say goodbye
To their fathers and mothers, without seeing a priest.
Even the English did not deny Kevin Barry this consolation.
How long will you allow this to happen in your name?
(p7/B/86 p. 258)

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PART 6: ERSKINE CHILDERS ****

JOHN JOE RICE [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone 1) I turned into Quills at about 2 in the morning
And who did I see but Childers on a settle in the corner...
The boys all cleared out and the pair of them there discussing the Treaty
And the Treaty negotiations in detail.
I was out first thing in the morning and at 6 I came down stairs
And there below the in the kitchen were my two men in the same positions,
Still talking, but they had allowed the fire to go out.
Old Quill always afterwards put up his hand
When certain things were being discussed.

(tenor/baritone 2)
'Erskine Childers told me such and such a thing
Sitting at my own fireside'.
(P17b/102/102R-102L)

MARY RICE SPRING

(soprano/alto)
I got home yesterday after a rather hectic two days in Dublin.
I dined with the Childers Tues...
We began cautiously discussing whether one feed raw potatoes to pigs &
Gradually edged into politics & then discussed the situation the whole evening.
In many ways, I go with their position,
Except as regards opposing Provisional Government &
Upsetting the Treaty now that it has been signed.
(P235/2 p. 1-2)

ERSKINE CHILDERS

(tenor/baritone)
I was bound by honour, conscience and principle
To oppose the Treaty by speech, writing and action,
Both in peace and, when it came to the disastrous point, in war.
(P/0150/1659 p. 101-2)

BERTIE SCULLY [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone)

We had a meeting in Lyons in Kilmallock the evening before
And Childers was there...

Childers had this little Derringer in his waistcoat pocket,
So that if captured, he would be taken in arms...

(P17b/132/123R-124R)

MICHAEL COMYN [TO EAMONN DE VALERA]

(tenor/baritone)

To the President.

Erskine Childers sent for me yesterday to defend him...

He is to be tried before military committee for being in possession of a pistol
Without lawful authority.

My idea is that they mean to shoot him.

(P/0150/1659 p.3-4)

MOLLY CHILDERS [TO EAMON DE VALERA]

(soprano/alto)

12.11.22

A Chara,

Your letter moved me deeply.

It brought me strength and comfort

From information that I have had, and which he knows,

We know that we may have to face his hardest hour..

(P/0150/1659 p. 7)

(chorus)

IRISH REPUBLICAN ARMY

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS

November 13th 1922

To: Staff Capt. Childers.

I have noted the fact of your arrest.

As an officer you are entitled,

In accordance of the recognised rules of warfare

To demand and to be accorded treatment

As a prisoner-of-war suitable to your rank.

Is Mise,

LIAM LYNCH

CHIEF OF STAFF

(P/0150/1659 p. 8)

MOLLY CHILDERS

(soprano/alto)

A Chara,

You know that E will not... recognise the court,
Or defence himself against charges brought
By an authority which we dismiss...
To him I know that the Republican issue
Is the only one that counts;
I stand beside him in this...

M.A. Childers

(P/0150/1659 p. 19)

EAMON DE VALERA

(tenor/baritone)

DAIL ÉIREANN

November 16th 1922. No.2

Memo to Counsellor Comyn

From President.

A Chara,

The Army Chiefs are very anxious that Capt. Childers
Should not recognise this illegal court,
But simply state that he is a soldier
Of the Irish Republic

Mise,

PRESIDENT

(P/0150/1659 p. 22)

(chorus)

STATEMENT OF OBJECTION BY STAFF-CAPTAIN ERSKINE CHILDERS

Captain Childers does not recognise the legality of the Provisional Government

And consequently does not recognise the legality of this court...

Patrick Lynch. Michael Comyn. 17/11/22

(P/0150/1659 p. 45)

MOLLY CHILDERS

(soprano/alto)

16.11.22

From the time we were married, January 1904,
My husband devoted his time to the study of social science,
Politics, history, etc...
He wrote and spoke in favour of Home Rule...
When the great war broke out, we were deeply moved

By the invasion of Belgium by the Germans.
The avowed purpose of Great Britain in entering the war
Was to win for oppressed nationalities.
My husband joined up in 1914.
He was always... trying to find the meaning of things,
To discover where true righteousness lay, and to work for that.
But... our eyes were not open finally
To the terrible reality of what imperialism means
Until the war taught us by its tragic horrors...
He talked to me of the indignity of what the British Government
Was doing to Ireland...
And of the many things that were abhorrent to him during the war...
(P/0150/1659 p. 37)

(soprano/alto)

Even before the Great War ended, his mind was made up...
He must sever all connection with England and...
Live henceforth as an Irishman,
To devote himself to the Republican cause...
(P/0150/1659 p. 38)

(soprano/alto)

When Mr. De Valera went to London after the Truce...
He advocated the Republican claim that no agreement should be made
Which did not recognise the Republic...
When Civil War was declared by the 'Provisional Government',
My husband went South and joined our Army...
He is still a staff officer of the I.R.A.
(P/0150/1659 p. 39)

MICHAEL COMYN

(tenor/baritone)

Very Urgent.
Erskine Childers is to be tried on a charge
Of having possession without proper authority of an automatic pistol...
He is described on charge sheet as a civilian...
Mise, M.J.C.
(P/0150/1659 p. 40)

ERSKINE CHILDERS

(chorus)

Statement by Staff Captain Erskine Childers at the close of his trial by a Military
Court on Nov. 17th 1922.
(P/0150/1659 p. 96)

(tenor/baritone)

My father was English, born in England.

My mother was Irish, born in Ireland...
(P/0150/1659 p. 97)

(tenor/baritone)

With the formal establishment of the Republic in 1919
It became necessary for people like myself of mixed birth
To choose our citizenship once and for all.
I chose that of the Irish Republic, like hundreds of others...
I threw myself into the work of the Republican movement...
(P/0150/1659 p. 99-100)

(tenor/baritone)

I took a strong line at first against the British Dominion scheme,
In so doing came for the first time in conflict with Republican colleagues and
comrades.
Until then not a shadow of a cloud had disturbed the absolute harmony of our
relationships.
For myself, I had passed through the Dominion phase years before, discarded it
And sworn allegiance to the established Republic.
The slow growth of moral and intellectual conviction had brought me to where I
stand
And it was & is impossible and unthinkable to go back.
(P/0150/1659 p. 101-2)

MICHAEL COMYN

(tenor/baritone)

TO THE PRESIDENT

The M.R. decided against us today...
Capt. Childers has got his death sentence.
In my opinion he will be shot tomorrow morning...
(P/0150/1659 p. 86)

ERSKINE CHILDERS

(tenor/baritone)

Beggars Bush. 20/11/22

Father Albert,

Thank you lovingly for your letter and the beautiful crucifix
And the exquisite little "imitation clarinet"...
I was touched by the tenderness and affection
Witnessed to by your gift.
I am to die tomorrow at 7.
I die happy and undefeated,
And at peace with God.
God bless you and your great work,

Erskine Childers.
(P/0150/1659 p. 67)

ERSKINE CHILDERS

(tenor/baritone)

November 20th 1922

I have been told that I am to be shot tomorrow.

I am fully prepared. I think it is best so...

To have followed those brave lads is such a great thing

For a great cause.

I have a belief in the beneficent shaping of our destiny,

And I believe God means this for the best, for Ireland and for humanity.

(P/0150/1659 p. 91)

ERSKINE CHILDERS

(tenor/baritone)

November 20th 10pm

My execution is postponed. That is all I know.

It may be only a postponement for a day,

When I would far rather it come at once.

How strange it all seems,

I think of those four lads,

And of the eight unknown linked with me

In this postponing business...

(P/0150/1659 p. 92)

ERSKINE CHILDERS

(tenor/baritone)

Another day of waiting and meditation.

(P/0150/1659 p. 92)

(tenor/baritone)

November 22nd

Another day before the fact of the four executions was known...

Then like a thunderbolt came the four executions

And the knowledge that more were pending,

Names unknown.

(P/0150/1659 p. 92-3)

(tenor/baritone)

November 23rd.

Another day, and the last...

(P/0150/1659 p. 93-94)

(tenor/baritone)

November 24th

Morning hours before execution...

My beloved country, God send you courage, victory and rest,
And to all our people harmony and love.

It is 6 "a.m." ...

It all seems simple and inevitable,

Like lying down, after a long day's work.

(P/0150/1659 p. 94)

ERSKINE CHILDERS

(tenor/baritone)

Take a step forward lads

It'll be easier that way.

(percussion 'shots')

*(Quoted in Seán Enright, The Irish Civil War: Law, Execution and Atrocity.
Merrion Press, Kildare, 2019. p. 42)*

(chorus)

OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

G.H.Q. 24/11/22

Madam,

I beg to inform you that Mr. Erskine Childers

Of 12, Busby Road, Terenure, has been tried by the military court...

Was found guilty and sentenced to death.

The finding and sentence were duly confirmed a

And the execution was carried out this morning at 7.am.

I am, Madam, your grateful servant,

Gearoid O'Sullevan

ADJUTANT GENERAL

(P/0150/1659 p. 90)

MOLLY CHILDERS [TO EAMON DE VALERA]

(soprano/alto)

24.11.22

A Chara,

Erskine was executed this morning at 7 o'clock...

And [I] once again kept vigil with him

And was with him in love & prayer...

This is my great comfort...

I know he was right.

Is Mise,

Do not be anxious about me.
(P/0150/1659 p. 87)

(chorus)

THE SUPREME CRIME

THE MURDER OF ERSKINE CHILDERS

Silence befits it best, were silence possible...

But THIS MAN was, in a sense, the GUEST of our people,

And our guest has been slain, beneath our roof:

The primal law of hospitality commands that we cry out,

To disclaim responsibility in the name of the Irish Republic.

THIS MAN by his intrepidity and intellectual abundance

Displayed a force of personality worthy of Italy at the Renaissance period...

He passes from the REPUBLICAN MILITANT to the mystical REPUBLIC

TRIUMPHANT.

There, witnesses to the IRISH NATION rise from their individual seats,

In the vast, spiritual Senate-house.

The manly shade of TONE; the slim, boyish ghost of EMMET;

The pale and angry wrath of PARNELL; the lonely spirit of PEARSE;

The Soldier-Saint McSWINEY; the unpurchasable BRUGHHA;

These and many more arise and cry: HAIL BROTHER!

And we of the REPUBLIC SUFFERING To their *Ave* answer *Vale*.

To their hail reply Farewell!

(P7/B/ p.4 Mulcahy papers)

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PART 7: DESMOND & MABEL FITZGERALD, ERNIE O'MALLEY *****

DESMOND FITZGERALD

(tenor/baritone)

Alas I have seen your friend Davies...

Unfortunately... he seemed to expect us to give all sorts of guarantees

And to agree to accept Dominion Home Rule

If Ll. George would be good enough to get it...

I took him to a picture show where I think he met many of our Dublin Art people.

Unfortunately I wasn't there most of the time as the great W.B. Yeats hauled me out to tea,

And of course you know my feeling towards Yeats...

Always,

D. Fitzgerald

(Letter to Gladys Hynes, Sept. 1918. Librettist's collection).

ERNIE O'MALLEY

(tenor/baritone)

25/8/21

Dear Mabel,

Parcels etc. arrived, also your note.

I agree with you that they will postpone the opening of hostilities

As long as possible.

I mean our side; some would compromise,

I'm sure if they got half the chance,

However they know we have still some stuff left

And only too anxious to use it on them.

Truce is much worse than war;

I'm anxiously looking forward to war...

The I.R.A are popular and popularity is harder to face than contempt;

The crowd cheering you to-day would cut your throat to-morrow,

If they had the pluck.

Please, remember me to Des and all the others.

I wonder could Louise get French or American Army books;

Both are good much better than the British.

Do Chara

Earnán

(P80/1642 p. 1)

(tenor/baritone)

Could you get any Potassium Chlorate:

It will only be sold in small lots, but every little helps.

Anyone crossing the Channel could obtain quite a respectable amount of it;

And if they were "tipped" it would be of great assistance to me.

Do chara

(P80/1642 p. 2)

GLADYS HYNES

43 Belsize Park Gdns. N.W.3.

Jan 5th 1922

Dear Desmond,

Are you nearly destroyed trying to keep the I.R.A.

From kidnapping your little lambkins of the Press?

I would have loved to have seen that scene when the poor fellow was marched off.

It would have amused me mightily...

I wonder whether you were expecting this uproar and division of opinion.

The debates in the Dail make sad reading.

One feels an almost personal animosity between Griffith and De Valera.

That confounded Treaty is like the Apple of Discord,

I can see Lloyd George with his fox face twisted into a smile...

(p80/257 pp1-2)

DESMOND FITZGERALD

(tenor/baritone)

Govern't Bldgs, Dublin.

8/2/23

My dear Gladys...

Have you finished that Madonna you were doing?

I wonder if you realise what a good time you have.

It seems damned unfair that you people – holding aloft the great ideal of the Republic –

And refusing to falter, should have such a good time while I, a poor evil-doer
Subverting the Republic, earning the contempt and loathing of the right-minded,
Should be stuck here morning noon and night slaving away like a machine
without alleviation.

Well, not quite without alleviation. There has been a bright spot.

I wonder if I told you about the beautiful spy?

If I didn't remind me of it when I see you next time...

Quite exciting for me...

Gratifying that our country can produce a type among others

That would make Southern Slavs look up and rub their eyes...

Really if you Irregulars had a few more of these you would win.

[\(P0295-0001 p.1-3\)](#)

ERNIE O'MALLEY

(tenor/baritone)

Dear Mabel...

Received from Mrs. Desmond Fitzgerald

1 Pair Glasses for O.C. 2nd SOUTHERN COMMAND...

I would be indebted if you would try to procure the following

Military Books for me at your earliest convenience:-

MANUAL OF FIELD ENGINEERING, 1911 (50 Copies)...

PRACTICAL ELEMENTARY ELETRICITY for Signallers and others (30 Copies)

INTRODUCTION TO TRAINING (6 Copies)

FIELD MESSAGE BOOK 153 (2 doz, books and 4 doz. Refills)

If you could get in touch with any Military Publisher in London

Or Second-hand store, we would require copies of

TEXT BOOK SMALL ARMS

MINING and DEMOLITION.

Will you please order the following...

Rifle Shooting For War...

Lewis Gun Mechanism...

Elements of Discipline...

How to Shoot with a Revolver ...

Handbook of Artillery Instruction...

Bayonet Fighting, 1919...

Do chara

(P80/1643 pp. 1-8)

GLADYS HYNES

(soprano/alto)

43 Belsize Park Gdns. N.W.3.

January 6th 1923...

What a picture Ireland is now, enough to break one's heart...

You see Desmond is following Griffith – I thought he would.

I wonder how his wife feels she is more of the die-hard type.

Desmond always was a Conservative – God help him!

My mind (such as it is!) tells me that one ought to support Griffith, Collins & Co.

My emotions and sentiments are all on the other side – A horrible state to be in!

(Gladys Hynes to Barbara Carter, held by National Library, Dublin)

GLADYS HYNES

(soprano/alto)

43 Belsize Park Gdns. N.W.3.

Jan. 22nd 1923

Desmond blew in here last week and dropped a loaded revolver on my toe!

He was carrying it swinging loose in his pocket!

He is as charming and mad as ever, but I feel bitter towards the Free State now

And things cannot be quite the same between us – though I am sure he is honest.

Fancy the shame of an Irish Minister having to go about armed

And with an armed guard – even in London.

(Gladys Hynes to Barbara Carter, held by the National Library, Dublin)

ERNIE O'MALLEY

(tenor/baritone)

24/11/23

Dear Mabel

I was starting to write to you when your parcel of books arrived...

I asked mother to tell you to write to me via the "underground" also, on their paper.

For the past two hours I have had sudden spasm of strength

So I am utilising my time in writing notes.

I hope you are well; how is Desmond these times?

I do not know what condition I am in as yet.

I am very weak but it will be nearly a week I am sure before I know whether I am badly weakened or not;

Anyhow it was worth it even though the finish was rather tame...

I wonder could anything be done about the 'Joy
So the men who came off hunger-strike receive decent treatment.
The tradition of the place is a particularly rotten one and an O.C to fit it has
always been provided.
Macmanus is directly responsible for the cruellest portion of the ill-treatment
Ordered by the now Governor Fitzpatrick.
He is an ignorant bully and I know that conditions there during the strike were
horrible
And they will be more so now.
Could any move be made to have him removed and a decent man replace him.
I am worried about the men there and if I knew that they were being properly
looked after my mind would be at rest.
Men need to be looked after just now as the week subsequent to such a strike
tells heavily even on the strongest...
I do not look forward to a return to the 'Joy,
But there is a certain amount of pleasure even in suffering.
How are the boys; I suppose they are quite grown up now?
Please remember me to my friends,
Yours very sincerely,
Ernie
(P80/1649 p.1-2)

ERNIE O'MALLEY

(tenor/baritone)

6 A.M. 1/12/23

Dear Mabel...

If writing through the post, please tell me how well my friends are
When writing "underground", please write at length and "booky" ...
I have thought of you often during the past year
And sympathized with you in your very difficult position;
It must have been very trying for you indeed.
The last year has been pretty "tough" on me;
I did not expect to live beyond Feb as I was dying slowly in the 'Joy
Though I never told anyone,
But I felt it only too well and unconsciously
Always keep a grip on life, was not eager to live;
I would have had been very glad to die.
I thought I would have been one of the first to die on strike
And was so happy and thankful that I had at last the opportunity
Of saving my comrades' lives by dying,
But I was denied that and now I am "crocked",
But God's wonderful equity has balanced my loss of bodily
With an increase of spiritual force.
Whatever the result to me personally I am glad I went on strike;
It was a wonderful experience and some day *le cúnamh Dé*
I will tell you of it...

I am very weak, weaker than the doctors or even I myself thought.
Towards the end of the strike my body was used up
And I was living on my spirit as I well know how to by this,
So that the latter has suffered a little and
I am feeling low as when the fight is over
One find it hard to keep the spirit "toned up".
The doctors could not understand my case as by right
I should have been dead.
But I received so many notes from my Chief of Staff
To exert every effort to live rather than to make the State
Shoulder the responsibility of my death...
That I did hang on and refused to die.
Last night for the first time in three weeks I had two hours sleep;
My total sleep for those three weeks having been five hours,
So I feel refreshed and am writing this while my strength lasts.
My sight was going fast and my brain was affected towards the end,
The latter now, thank God, is coming back to normal...

(tenor/baritone)

I estimate 1½ years before I am back to normal, ie bullets removed also,
But the doctors say I can never hope to be strong again.
I am quite resigned to this and quite happy about it
Though during the strike my own dread was that I would be allowed to live and
be "crocked".

(tenor/baritone.. with some chorus or variation?)

Now I think I have talked sufficiently about myself
I have read quite a bit in gaol,
Read the books I had always endeavoured to make time for.
I like Blake; on active service I generally carried "Songs of Innocence" & of
Experience" ...
Marcus Aurelius and some others in a good pocket edition round with me
And as I have not a copy of the two you sent it meant that I am again with my old
friends...
Reading has helped me to kill pain and... I worked out a course
Which would require little mental effort with refreshing variety—
Thus each day I did some philosophy, poetry, prose fiction, history and
languages.
I began Greek and Spanish;
I did not get very far with either as my head would not permit it
But I am very fond of both languages.
I will give you an idea of what I like and what I have read
As I would like you, please, to give advice and assistance.
In verse I have done Chaucer, Milton, a little of Pope, Blake,
Wordsworth (not the longer poems), Shelly, Keats, Tennyson, Coleridge...
Yeats (poems and "Later poems") and a few more; also some of W. Morris.
I have done all Shakespeare and I love him.
In criticism I have read Hazlitt, Masfield and Coleridge on him

And expect Bradley's "Shakespearean Tragedy" and Swinburn's Essays as I have ordered them...

Morte d'Arthur, Bunyan, Lamb, Montaigne... a little of Ruskin (I always loved him), and Pater, Swift...

History—Prescott, Motley, Carlyle, Roscoe, W. Irving, Sir G.O. Trevelyan, Froissart...

Classical: a little of Aristophanes, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, Sophocles and Aeschylus,

Plato (whom I love with exception of Republic which I have outside), Virgil (which I love in the original), Plutarch.

I will start Herodotus in a few days time.

Fiction: A deal of Conrad, Twain, R.L. Stevenson, some of Jane Austen, Hawthorne, Melville.

I have Turgenev, Anatole France and various odds and ends.

Foreign: Don Quixote, Dante, Schiller, Tagore, Papini, Tolstoy...

Perhaps you could forward me a catalogue of French books...

(tenor/baritone.. with some chorus or variation?)

This letter has been quite a budget and I am dreadfully tired over it

But I'm going to see it through as I came this far

And I hope it will give you anything like the pleasure it gives me...

I foresee that my body cannot be utilized as it has been in the past

As fighting is now out of the question and I wish to place at my country's service

What training I can achieve by reading or think[ing] and you will, please, help in the good work

And if I ever give you too much to do, please, tell me...

I will remember you and your intentions in Holy Communion each weekend

(Unfortunately we can only receive once per week), also all the family.

And I will remember you particularly in the present Novena of the 8th

So don't forget to ask for some favour.

I thought it best to go into detail as the "line" may break any day.

Please give my love to the boys and to yourself.

Ever yours,

Ernie

[\(P80/1650 pp1-4\)](#)

MABEL FITZGERALD

(soprano/alto)

15 Marlborough Road, Donnybrook, Dublin.

Wednesday 12th December 1923.

My dear Gladys...

Desmond told me about seeing you in London.

I hated Desmond being over there both because I was very lonely for him, a

And because I hated the humiliation of the work he was doing.

I was so happy to have him back again.

Till the Hunger Strike which was Hell.

I was simply distracted about the Hunger Strikers,

Men and women I knew and some I cared for getting weaker and weaker
And those callous brutes decreeing their deaths
Because their power was threatened.
We said little about it at home;
For a while at first I used to plead daily with Desmond
At least to inquire into the awful conditions under which
Some of the Hunger Strikers were lying ill
But it did no good as he was really indifferent.
When the first death occurred, it was as bad to me as the Executions,
Worse in one way in that Desmond was living at home.
It seemed I was letting them down every time I lit an extra fire
For his comfort or gave him things he liked to eat.
And yet I couldn't not do that.
A hellish time to look back on and though I thanked God it was over the day it
ended, it really isn't...
I hate more than ever the callous brutes who have imposed their will on this
country
And made it a cursed country.
They are passing another Bill to give themselves power to arrest and intern men
When the last act falls in February; they dare not face Republican opposition.
But there is nothing but tyranny wherever one looks in Europe:
I suppose the phase has to be got through...
I hope to see the Madonna and Child.
With love, in haste,
Yours, Mabel.
(P0295-0004 pp. 1-4)

ERNIE O'MALLEY

(tenor/baritone)

Dear Mabel

I think that you should not worry in the least.

You did the right thing and anyone who knows you would realise that.

The first thing is to keep the home from being broken up,

The second to see to the boys.

Seoirse Plunkett and I had a chat about you on Thursday night before he left

And he wishes to be very sincerely remembered to you...

I hope the boys are well and that they enjoyed the holidays.

I am allowed one letter each week that is the reason I could not reply through the
post.

Ever yours

Ernie

(P80/1648)

ERNIE O'MALLEY

(tenor/baritone1)

10/12/1923

Dear Mabel...

I cannot lie still for any length and as I must either read reviews
Or look at art mags or read a little of a history of English Lit which I have...
I am afraid you do not quite understand the position with regard to medical
treatment.

That doctor here has to look after the garrison as well as 30 prisoners...

The orderlies were hopelessly incompetent but meant well...

The doctor is young, inexperienced and lacks character—

The usual type of Free State 'Jelly Fish' Medical Officer...

It is difficult to be properly looked after.

At the end of another week, *le cúnamh Dé*,

I expect things will be better.

I have not seen the doctor for the last few days.

For the week prior to that he put his head in the door and said

(tenor/baritone2)

'Are you alright'

(tenor/baritone1)

And at once withdrew...

My floor has not been washed once in eight weeks.

This is not anyway in the nature of a complaint.

I wish to give you a rough idea of conditions in the place

Which they regard as Paradise...

Strange to say it was the same in the 'Joy.

I could get up most days for 1 hr or 1 ½ hrs

But if anyone talked to me early in the day, save someone whom I like well,

I was prostrated for the day as a result...

Please give my love to all the boys.

I will write you longer at weekend or later.

Ever yours

Ernie

(P80/1652)

MARY RICE SPRING

(soprano/alto)

Dr. Kathleen gave me some awful statements by prisoners of theirs.

One can't believe Irishmen would do that to each other.

I talked to Desmond Fitzgerald and the Siabac about it

But neither was very sympathetic...

One begins to think the Black and Tans were no worse than anyone after all!

(P235/31 p.3)

ERNIE O'MALLEY

(tenor/baritone)

Detention Ward

St Bricin's Hospital

12/2/1924

Dear Mabel...

I know a little of the work of the original Impressionists and of the moderns.

I read odd reviews in American papers.
The latter are more international than the English ones,
I suppose because they have to cater for such a number of distinct nationalities.
I am still reading the Greek dramatists—Euripides at present.
Herodotus is very interesting.
I have read a little of Thucydides but I have his Peloponnesian Wars here
And so will read it in time.
I suppose I should be reading some French authors.
I have *La Douce France*, and one of Pierre Loti's here
But I have not begun them so far but will next month, *le cúnamh Dé...*
I have a considerable number of German books on the Old Masters
And as the reproductions are extremely good.
I suppose eventually I will have to learn some German.
This is a kind of glass house existence here though one has ample time to read
Yet I think I read three times as much in the same time outside.
I think some trees look very nice in Winter
And I can always visualise my favourite ones.
Please remember me to the boys.
Ever yours
Ernie
(P80/1653)

GLADYS HYNES

(soprano/alto)

c/o H. Harvey, Mäen Cottage, Newlyn, Cornwall.

My Dear Desmond,

I believe a month ago we were arguing about "Power" & the evil effects of it!...

I never thought you were anything like "drunk with power".

But I did (& do) think the "will to power" may be more active with you

Than ever you will know...

I know if I had got a position I should fight like Hell to keep it.

You make me smile when you talk of loving peace – you moderate fighter!

But all the same I think I know what you mean –

It is a queer thing but one can be a peace-loving fighter at the same time.

(P80/516a (2) p1-2)

DESMOND FITZGERALD

(tenor/baritone) ROINN COSANTA (Department of Defence)

Baile Atha Cliath (Dublin)

Dec. 10th 1931

My dear Gladys....

Our tradition is one of action.

In our own time we had taken up arms and been successful.

When we had been, to an extent at least, successful against England -

Taking a certain amount of risk,
It seemed to others that it should be a simple matter
To be successful against us without risk.
The tradition of Robert Emmet and Wolfe Tone was there to be exploited.
England the ancient enemy.
Also well-to-do-people, employers unionists identical with England and
imperialism.
That enables confusion to be made by implying identity between nationalism
and bolshevism.
The immediate object is merely to create chaos.
That is easy compared with creating anything positive.
The unsettled state of the world, and the general slump help...
We met this by setting up a military court that could not be terrorised.
People could be punished for belonging to those organisations,
And for withholding information from the proper authorities...
We brought in that legislation because we were bound to do it...
The passing of the act is the most popular thing we have done for years.
People can breathe again.
And as a result the organisations that were daily becoming more aggressive...
Promptly went into hiding, or left the country...
It is true that the case for inactivity is based upon the promise
That as there has to be a general election.
It is pretty certain that Mr. De Valera will get into power
And that then they the gunmen are going to be bosses
(P295/5 pp 1,2 Held by Caroline O'Halloran)

MABEL FITZGERALD

(soprano/alto)

My dear Gladys...
I can't tell you what is happening here except what is in the Press as I don't
know.
There must be a General Election before August by the Constitution,
I believe, & most people seem to think that as the Free State have made
themselves so hated with all their unpopular measures they will go out.
I don't mean that's Republican opinion only, indeed of it
I can hardly speak as I am out of touch there, but all the elements in the country
not definitely Free State seem to think they will go.
I do not myself; I have heard that tale too often, & they always pull through, so I
have ceased to hope...
Republicanism has split, of course, not painfully or bitterly as yet
But still it is undoubtedly weakening, & I can't see the sense of compromising
Now after all the lives have been lost.
I am sure De Valera has good motives, but so had the Free Staters when they
took the Treaty;
It was [for] their judgement & not their integrity I blamed them.
It doesn't take long, of course, for the integrity to become affected
When people take a wrong course,

And then I fear for Republicans too as much as anyone.
I have no trust anymore, & compromise rots character.
(P80/1654)

GLADYS HYNES

(soprano/alto)

41 Haverstock Hill, N.W.3. Nov. 23rd 1931

My dear Desmond,

I have been meaning to write you for some time to ask you

If you can snatch a few moments out of your crowded life,

To tell me what in the name of Heaven is happening in Ireland!

I am tired of being poked in the ribs by triumphant Britishers ...

Is the country really on the brink of revolution?

And are those poor down and heel folk that I heard listening to Larkin a few years ago

Really metamorphosing into a dangerous Red Army?

I can almost hope that they are...

I wonder if we are all going to splash into what Lewis calls "The Melting Pot" very soon,

It really does look as though this present form of Society cannot last much longer...

(P80/516a(1) pp1-4)

DESMOND FITZGERALD

(tenor/baritone)

I see this country going to Bolshevism,

And it seems to be that the people doing most to hasten it are the priests...

Everything is calculated to depress and exasperate me.

But I must say when I look out at the bright sunny weather

And see all the signs that winter is over, I have to rejoice.

The country looks really astoundingly beautiful,

Even though the leaves of the early trees are really only beginning.

(P295/8 p.5)

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PART 8: THE END

(chorus)

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

MONDAY 16TH APRIL 1923

2. PEACE MOVEMENT

It was mentioned that... that the Government

Should negotiate with the Irregulars with a view to a settlement.

It was agreed that the interests of the country would not be served

By the Government entering into peace negotiations with the Irregulars

Whose power was definitely broken.

3. TERMINATION OF 'STATE OF WAR'

The Minister of Home Affairs mentioned

That as soon as the State of War in the country was definitely ended,

The Special Powers enjoyed by the military

With regard to search, arrest, trial and detention of civilians

Would have to be replaced by somewhat similar powers

Exercised for a limited period by Civil Authorities.

[\(P7/B/247 p. 68\)](#)

EITHNE COYLE

(soprano/alto) Poor Devans was very depressed. His opening remarks were:

(tenor/baritone) "Eithne we cannot win this war as we are not in earnest"

(soprano/alto) The situation was not far removed from complete demoralisation.

The decent men remained decent and fought to the last ditch.

It was the rag tag and bobtail that crept in when the (*sic*) thought all dangers over

That caused the general decay in our ranks.

It was the "trucers" as Padraig O'Keefe called them that left that stink

In the nostrils of the decent people of Ireland for many years after the Civil War ended.

[\(P61/2 p. 20\)](#)

JACK COMER [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone1)

By order of the O/C Camp, an instruction was sent round to the men:

Are you prepared to die on hunger strike?

Write "yes" or "no"...

Then we heard that Gormanstown Camp had come off hunger strike.

Then there was a rush by the rabble.

Then Mountjoy stayed on and there were only a few on strike at the end.

Men went to the wires, and the Free State Tommies threw loaves of bread at them.

There were 500 or 600 men stampeding for food.

Kit Byrne wrote to his girlfriend and signed the latter:

(tenor/baritone2)

'Your heart-broken Kit'...

(tenor/baritone1)

Morale was smashed in the 'Joy.

[\(P17b/103/12\)](#)

GENERAL MULCAHY

(chorus)

The following terms have been communicated to Major General Dalton...

(2) Members of the Republican forces who desire to civil life

Will be allowed to return to their occupations

Without molestation or penalisation.

(3) Members of the Republican forces who wish to join the National Army

Will be received therein

With due recognition of rank and service

(5) There will be a general amnesty of all political prisoners.

(P7/B/70 pp 72-3)

P.J. RUTTLEDGE [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor)

I met Dev later.

(baritone)

'Will you try to get these army fellows, IRA,

To arrive at some arrangement soon?'

(tenor)

He said to me.

(P17b/97/45R)

(chorus)

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

TUESDAY 8TH MAY 1923. 5PM.

MR. DE VALERA'S "PEACE PROPOSALS"

A document... setting out the government's terms

(a) That all political issues whether now or existing in the future arising

Shall be decided by the majority vote of the elected representatives of the people.

(b) All lethal weapons within the country in the effective custody of the

Executive Government.

It was decided that Government's terms quoted above must be accepted

Absolutely and without qualification.

(P7/B/247 p. 119-120)

P.J. RUTTLEDGE [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor)

They couldn't carry on the fight, and it was thrown back

To Dev to arrange terms...

The army were now 'passing the buck' to the politicals...

The huge majority was for pushing back the decision

To the Army Council, especially those men from the South

As they felt their position was hopeless...

Dev put up ceasefire.
Then he said,
(baritone)
'We'll wait and see what will happen'.
(P17b/97/53L-53R)

(chorus1)
MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
MONDAY 20TH MAY 1923
PEACE ESTABLISHMENT BILL
It was decided that Peace Establishment Bill
Which was in course of preparation
Should be proceeded with without delay
(P7/B/247 p. 143-144)

(chorus2)
MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
PEACE ESTABLISHMENT BILL
The Attorney General reported that a preliminary draft
Of the above Bill was now ready.
(P7/B/247 p. 158)

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PART 9: RECKONING

SEÁN IRWIN
(tenor/baritone)
Regardless of the right and wrong, the civil war is now part of our history...
The cold eye of the historian in dealing with it will record that to put down
The opposition the government were forced to execute 77 men,
Three times more than the British in the previous struggle!
But will any regard be paid to the human emotion, to the dreadful duty imposed
On the army personnel called upon to carry out these executions...
I was camp commandant in charge of Beggars Bush Barracks
And as in the other barracks it fell to our lot
To see this gruesome work carried out.
It was then that I cursed the fates, the frailty of the leaders,
The stupidity of men, or whatever it was that brought this country to this pitch of
barbarity.
It is impossible to describe the harrowing and the anguish of the soul,
Of having to see one time comrades in arms brought out
And shot to death by firing squad.

And to be aware that these men did not really know what it was all about.
(Letter to former Senator Michael Hayes, 1970. UCDA P53/396.
Cited in Anne Dolan, *Commemorating the Irish Civil War: History and Memory, 1923-2000*. Cambridge, 2003)

EITHNE COYLE

(soprano/alto)

Ernest Blythe...

About the executions of defenceless prisoners...

Whom he and his colleagues had murdered

Without even the chance of a fair trial during the Civil War...

God is patient and merciful, but

(tenor/baritone)

"Beware of the Risen People" ...

(soprano/alto)

Mr. Blythe future historians of Irishmen and women will show

No such mercy when dealing with depraved and despicable

Irishmen like you

(P61/2 p. 29)

TOMMY HEAVEY [TO ERNIE O'MALLEY]

(tenor/baritone1)

The chaplain told us to repent.

He asked us would we sign the form.

(tenor/baritone2)

'It's only asking you to give loyalty to your own government'.

(tenor/baritone1)

I didn't

(P17b/120/p.59R)

(chorus)

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS RECEIVED...

From a Post Office employee in Ballingray [?]

At present the village is free from either army...

Candidly I don't think the question can ever be solved by the gun...

Where brothers and pals are fighting each other,

You can't expect either armies [*sic*] to be fruitful.

It is not human nature and if you were down here,

You would have to laugh at some of the tricks between them.

While they are playing at war, the poor country is being ruined...

(P7/B/64 p. 35)

(chorus)

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

SATURDAY 9TH JUNE 1923

BOUNDARY COMMISSION

The Attorney General submitted an amended draft informal letter

To be sent by the President to the British Prime Minister

Relating to the setting up of the Boundary Commission.

The draft was approved.

[\(P7/B/247 p. 157\)](#)

EITHNE COYLE

(soprano/alto)

The disunion caused by the Treaty, and the general demoralisation...

Had been accentuated by the border

Which had been established by the Setting up of a puppet state

Which severed six of our Northern Counties from the rest of Ireland

And has since been responsible for all the bloodshed and all the misery

Existing there today.

[\(P61/2 p. 16\)](#)

(chorus)

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 27TH JUNE 1923

BLOCKING OF ROADS NEAR THE BORDER

Numerous reports had been received relative to the blocking of roads

Near the border by Northern Specials,

To the great inconvenience of the local residents.

[\(P7/B/247 pp 18 4-185\)](#)

(chorus)

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 2ND MAY 1923

REBUILDING OF THE GPO

The Minister for Local Government reported that the Post Office Authorities

Were anxious that the G.P.O. should be rebuilt without delay.

[\(P7/B/247 p. 173\)](#)

(chorus)

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 2ND MAY 1923

GRAVE OF THE LATE GENERAL COLLINS

It was mentioned that His Excellency the Governor General

Had offered to supply a headstone for erection

Near the grave of the late General Collins.

Before any decision with regard to the offer,

It was decided that a photograph of the headstone in question

Should be submitted to the Executive Council
(P7/B/247 p. 106)

(chorus)

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 3RD JULY 1923

It was decided that steps should be taken to commemorate in a fitting manner
The joint anniversaries of the late President Griffith and the late General Collins
(P7/B/247 p. 188)

TOM BARRY

(tenor/baritone)

It is not for us here to go into the rights and wrongs of the civil war
When Michael Collins met his tragic death.
Many of you here were on opposite sides.
Let us leave it that each of us, like I did myself,
Believed in the correctness of our choice.
I concede that those who were on the opposite side
Believed that their decision was the right one too.
But let us end all futile recriminations...
Which divided brother against brother, neighbour against neighbour...
Here at this monument [to Michael Collins] let us bury the dead past of
dissensions...
We who have grown old and are nearing the end of our road
Have this final contribution to make,
So that the young people of Ireland can march on together
To our ultimate freedom and build a better life for themselves
And for the coming generations.
(Speech at Clonakilty, reproduced in the Irish Times, 19 April 1965,
& quoted in Dolan op. cit. p. 84)

MARY RICE SPRING

(soprano/alto)

They had not wanted to fight each other these boys
What curse had pushed them into it.
(P235/25 p. 3)

GENERAL MULCAHY

(tenor/baritone)

The shooting of one Irishman by another is never going to end this business.
WHAT END OF THIS BUSINESS ARE WE LOOKING AT?
(P7/B/192 p.12)

(chorus, pp, lights fading to black)

'Look at the poor boys, God help them.
Who'd ever think it would come to this'.

(Crowds after seizure of the Four Courts by government forces, quoted by Ernie O'Malley: The Singing Flame Op. Cit. P.160)

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NOTES

General: All texts are taken from original archives, but arranged into lines/stanzas. Capital letters used at the beginning of each line are not necessarily capitals in the original.

** Ernie O'Malley - born in Castlebar, Co. Mayo - was among the foremost agents in – and recorders of – the Irish revolution, war of independence and civil war. A renaissance rebel – both an erudite intellectual and paramilitary revolutionary – he was recruited to the IRA by Desmond Fitzgerald (whose government later imprisoned him) and was a senior commander of Republican forces in both the wars against Britain and then the Treaty, from the occupation of the Four Courts onwards. Between 1921, when he escaped from prison a first time, and 1924, O'Malley commanded the IRA in Leinster and Munster – half the country. After recovering from a 41-day hunger strike in 1923, and being among the last Republican prisoners to be released, O'Malley left Ireland in 1928 for Taos, New Mexico – where he lived among Native Americans and joined the circle of Mabel Dodge Luhan – later Mexico City and New York, where he began to write his memoirs of the Irish wars, and married the sculptress Helen Hooker. He returned to Ireland in 1934, and conducted and collected interviews with fighters' in the Irish wars, to produce a definitive oral historical account.*

***The Glass House was a punishment block in the Curragh complex of internment camps, notorious for torture & ill-treatment.*

**** Provisional Government Minister of Home Affairs Kevin O'Higgins is here ordering the execution of – among others - Rory O'Connor, leader of the anti-Treaty IRA, who had been **best man at his wedding** not long beforehand, in 1921. O'Higgins was himself killed by the IRA in 1927. A wedding photograph of the two of them, which also features Eamon De Valera, might advantageously appear in the Cantata programme:*

<https://stairnaheireann.net/2020/02/11/otd-in-1923-the-father-of-government-minister-kevin-ohiggins-is-shot-dead-by-republicans-at-the-family-home-in-stradbally-co-laois-3/>

**** Erskine Childers was born in London, of mixed Irish-English blood. He became a committee clerk in the House of Commons, and agitator for Irish Home Rule during the 1890s, publishing an acclaimed espionage thriller, 'The Riddle of the Sands'. He joined the British Army to fight in World War One – as explained in his and his wife Molly's court pleadings – but, bitterly disillusioned, turned to militant Irish Republicanism in its wake. A keen sailor, Childers had already, in June 1914, famously landed a consignment of guns and ammunition at Howth, Co, Dublin, aboard his ship 'Asgard', to arm the Irish Volunteers in response to the creation of the UVF, and ultimately mount the 1916 Easter Rising. Childers became deputy to Desmond Fitzgerald in the propaganda department of the revolutionary government, and succeeded Fitzgerald as director in 1921. But Childers sided against Fitzgerald and with the anti-Treaty IRA, and was executed by Fitzgerald's government in 1922.

***** The marriage between Desmond and Mabel Fitzgerald – and Ernie O'Malley's epistolary connection to it (asking the Minister's wife to procure ingredients for bombs, then his communications while on hunger strike and support for Mabel's marriage) - is a remarkable and, for our purposes, a dramatic one. Desmond was born in London; Mabel was a Protestant from the Six Counties – both were educated, fervent nationalists and active in the GPO Easter Rising. Desmond became Director of Publicity in the revolutionary government after 1918, where – ironically - Erskine Childers and Bob Brennan were his deputies; the former replaced Fitzgerald upon his arrest in 1921. Desmond then supported the Treaty as eagerly as Mabel rejected it, serving as Minister for External Affairs and later for Defence in the Provisional Government. The Fitzgeralds remained married, though relations were strained at home – “pass the salt, traitor!” young Dem is recalled as saying to his father at table. Mabel remained throughout a confidant-correspondent of Ernie O'Malley during his hunger strike. Both Desmond and Mabel Fitzgerald corresponded over decades with my Great Aunt, Gladys Hynes, who also acted as go-between them and Ezra Pound, whose Cantos she illustrated.