

1798

*Liberty,
Equality &
Fraternity*



Produced by



JOHN MURPHY
LORD EDWARD FITZGERALD
MARY ANN NICHTHAKEN
FATHER JOHN MURPHY
SUZY TOOLEY MARY DOYLE
HENRY JOY MCCrackEN

REQUIEM FOR THE IRISH REBELS

(Wexford, 1798)

The pockets of our great-coats full of barley
(No kitchens on the run, no striking camp)
We moved quick and sudden in our own country.
The priest lay behind ditches with the tramp.
A people, hardly marching - on the hike -
We found new tactics happening each day:
Horsemen and horse fell to the twelve foot pike,
We'd stampede cattle into infantry,
Retreat through hedges where cavalry must be
thrown
Until, on Vinegar Hill, the fatal conclave:
Twenty thousand died; shaking scythes at cannon.
The hillside blushed, soaked in our broken wave.
They buried us without shroud or coffin
And in August barley grew up out of the grave.

— Seamus Heaney



Our proud republican tradition

Bodenstown is a very special place for Irish republicans. We gather here every year to honour Wolfe Tone and the United Irishmen and to rededicate ourselves to the principles they espoused.

We remember that it was the actions of the 1916 leaders and their comrades, inspired by such patriot revolutionaries as Tone and Emmett, that lit the flame that eventually destroyed the British Empire and reawakened the republicanism of the Irish people.

The first article of the constitution of the Society of United Irishmen stated as its purpose, the 'forwarding a brotherhood of affection, a communion of rights, and an union of power among Irishmen of every religious persuasion'.

James Connolly said of Wolfe Tone that he united "the hopes of the new revolutionary faith and the ancient aspirations of an oppressed people". Today's Irish republicanism must perform a similar task.

We need to identify the best in the republican tradition that we have inherited and develop republicanism to meet the needs of our own time. To paraphrase Connolly, we must unite 'the hopes of our children with the aspirations and ideals of the men and women of 1916 as defined in the Proclamation'.

The ideals of Irish republicanism since the time of Tone were not just to break the yoke of colonialism but to build social and economic democracy as well as national political democracy on our island. It was and still is our objective to build a society of equals through freedom and justice.

We are working to replace, as Tone said, 'Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter' with the common identity of 'Irishman and Irishwoman', where sectarianism will be just as the Empire is - a thing of the past.

Sinn Féin believes that we are now approaching the attainment of our historic goal. Our recent electoral successes are a mark of our achievement in building our own 'union of power'.

We are inspired by the ideas and the courage of Wolfe Tone and his republican successors and we are confident now, more than ever, that we will achieve a united Ireland, an Ireland of equals, an Ireland of which all its children can be proud.

Martin Spain

Editor *An Phoblacht/Republican News*

Introduction

As we Republicans gather here in Bodinstown every June to commemorate the life of Theobald Wolfe Tone and the beliefs he fought for, we cast our minds back to the times and causes that motivated him and many of his fellow revolutionaries of that generation. We must also ask ourselves what bearing Tone's ideology has on our struggle in the 21st century, as most of the issues of his day are still unresolved; the British presence in our country and the unequal class structure of our society, amongst others.

Wolfe Tone was born in June 1763, a decade that churned out many revolutionaries of the 1790's. This generation rejected the magic and superstition that kept people passive, impotent and obedient to their "natural" masters. Rather they questioned the status quo as they became imbued with a new way of thinking. They were inspired by the revolutions in France and America, particularly the latter with its watchwords of liberty, equality and fraternity and the promise of a government of the people, by the people and for the people. For the incumbents in power, these were horrifying concepts, for them democracy was a dirty word.

The ascendancy class of aristocratic landlords in tandem with their British imperial masters sought to maintain the status quo and maintain the subjugated state of the vast majority of Irish people- be they Gael or Gall, Catholic, Protestant or Dissenter. Tone more than anyone else sought to bring all these sections of Irish people together and very briefly succeeded.

It is ironic that today's incumbents of power pay homage and lip service to "democracy" and to the ideals of Tone, but yet strive to defuse the possibility of that vision being realised. Can the concepts of liberty, equality and fraternity really apply to the Ireland of today? Is an election every 5 years, in 26 of our counties, the realisation of a true will of a people- a government of, by and for the people.

Wolfe Tone and his comrades were fully aware that those in power would not give up their wealth and privileges to the will of the people peacefully, and therefore they had no option but to effect a revolutionary overthrow of them. The Irish revolution of the 1790's culminated in the 1798 Rebellion, almost succeeded but failed to carry the day, due to a number of factors, not least because of the vicious reaction of the Irish Upper and Middle classes and their British cohorts.

But was Wolfe Tone's life, that of his fellow revolutionaries and the cause they espoused a failure? The fact that Republicans of yesterday and today have continued to address the injustices of their own times while drawing on the inspiration of Tone renders an emphatic answer, No. However, as we are aware, our cause has yet to reach a successful conclusion. This is the role of today's Republicans.

OTHER LEADERS OF 1798

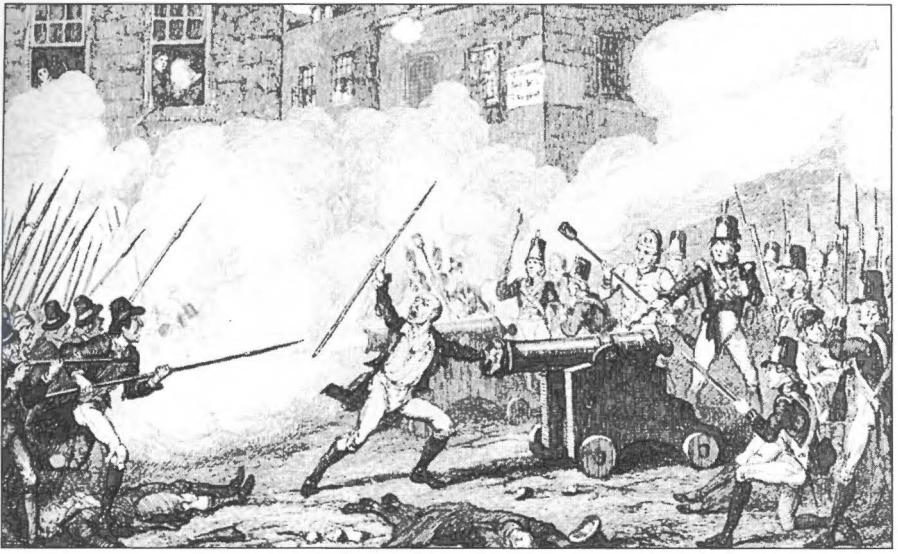
Henry Joy McCracken

*An Ulster man I am proud to be,
From the Antrim glens I come.
Although I labour by the sea,
I have followed flag and drum.
I have heard the martial tramp of men;
I've seen them fight and die.
Ah! lads I well remember when
I followed Henry Joy*



Henry Joy McCracken was born in Belfast, in 1767 into a middle-class Presbyterian commercial family. It was in Belfast that he joined the Society of United Irishmen and led the Republican forces into battle against the British garrison at Antrim town in 1798. For several months following the rebellion, McCracken remained on the run until his arrest later that year. Once captured he was court-martialed and hanged in the Cornmarket, Belfast, by the Crown forces on the evening of July 17th, 1798. His sister Mary Ann walked arm-in-arm with him to the gallows.





Father John Murphy

*At Boulavogue as the sun was setting
On the bright May meadows of Shelmalier,
A rebel hand set the heather blazing
And brought the neighbors from far and near.
Then Father Murphy from old Kilcormack
Spurred up the rocks with a warning cry;
“Arm, arm,” he cried, “for I’ve come to lead you;
For Ireland’s freedom we’ll fight or die.”*



Fr. John Murphy was born at Tincurry in the Parish of Ferns, County Wexford.

He studied in Spain, and returned to Ireland in 1785 when he became curate at Boolavogue. It is said that the free hand shown by the British government to the local recruited militias, the Yeomanry, who created havoc throughout the country, drove Fr. Murphy into the rebellion. He was one of the most notable leaders of the Rebellion in Wexford, an area in which the fighting was perhaps most intense. At one stage the entire county of Wexford, barring New Ross, was in the hands of the Republican forces.

On 27th May 1798, Fr. Murphy led a column of pike-men and defeated a party of British troops at Oulart Co. Wexford. Further successes took place at Camolin and Enniscorthy.

After defeats at Arklow and Vinegar Hill, Fr. Murphy joined a rebel group that passed through Scollagh Gap. They crossed the river Barrow and were defeated at Kilcumney. He then went on to Tullow where he was arrested. His fate was never in doubt and he was brutally executed.

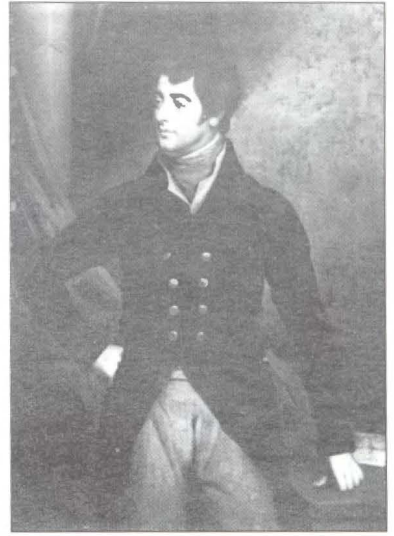
Lord Edward Fitzgerald

Born into a wealthy aristocratic family, as with a significant number of the rebel leaders, Edward was attracted to the cause of the united Irishmen due in no small part to his admiration of the French revolution. After honing his military skills abroad he returned to Ireland and sat for Athy in the Irish Parliament, eventually becoming the MP for Kildare.

He was thrown out of the British army for joining in a toast to the abolition of hereditary titles and after losing hope of constitutional reform, he joined the United Irishmen, who now openly aimed at an independent republic.

By 1796, he had committed himself to armed revolution and headed a military committee of the United Irishmen. Their plan was to co-operate with a French invasion or, failing that, to rise themselves. Delays by the French forced the committee to rise in May 1798, but the British authorities had infiltrated the movement with spies, and the members of the Leinster command were arrested in March. Fitzgerald had been warned and was not there. He was now 'on the run'. A reward of £1,000 was offered, an informer came forward, and Fitzgerald was tracked to a house in Thomas Street, Dublin.

In the fierce struggle he killed one of his attackers and was himself shot in the arm. Lord Edward Fitzgerald died of his wounds in Newgate prison, 4 June. Light-hearted, courageous, and skilled in arms, his death was a heavy blow to the United Irishmen.



ORIGINAL DECLARATION OF THE UNITED IRISHMEN

IN THE PRESENT GREAT ERA OF REFORM, when unjust Governments are falling in every quarter of Europe; when religious persecution is compelled to abjure her tyranny over conscience; when the rights of man are ascertained in theory, and that theory substantiated by practice; when antiquity can no longer defend absurd and oppressive forms against the common sense and common interests of mankind; when all Government is acknowledged to originate from the people, and to be so far only obligatory as it protects their rights and promotes their welfare; we think it our duty, as Irishmen, to come forward, and state what we feel to be our heavy grievance, and what we know to be its effectual remedy. We have no national Government — we are ruled by Englishmen, and the servants of Englishmen whose object is the interest of another country, whose instrument is corruption, and whose strength is the weakness of Ireland; and these men have the whole of the power and patronage of the country as means to seduce and subdue the honesty and spirit of her representatives in the legislature.

Such an extrinsic power, acting with uniform force, in a direction too frequently opposite to the true line of our obvious interests, can be resisted with effect solely by unanimity, decision and spirit in the people — qualities which may be exerted most legally, constitutionally, and efficaciously by that great measure essential to the prosperity, and freedom of Ireland — an equal representation of all the people in Parliament. We do not here mention as grievances the rejection of a place-bill, of a pension bill, of a responsibility-bill,, the sale of peerages in one house, the corruption publicly avowed in the other, nor the notorious infamy of borough traffic between both, not that we are insensible to their enormity, but that we consider them as but symptoms of that mortal disease which corrodes the vitals of our constitution, and leaves to the people in their own government but the shadow of a name.

Impressed with these sentiments, we have agreed to form an association to be called “The Society of United Irishmen”, ~~and we do~~ pledge ourselves to our country, and mutually to each other, that we will steadily support and endeavour, by all due means, to carry into effect the following resolutions:

1. - That the weight of English influence on the Government of this country is so great as to require a cordial union among all the people of Ireland, to maintain that balance which is essential to the preservation of our liberties and the extension of our commerce.
2. - That the sole constitutional mode by which this influence can be opposed is by a complete and radical reform of the representation of the people in Parliament.
3. - That no reform is practicable, efficacious, or just, which shall not include Irishmen of every religious persuasion. Satisfied, as we are, that the intestine divisions among Irishmen have too often given encouragement and impunity to profligate, audacious and corrupt administrations, in measure which, but for these divisions, they durst not have attempted, we submit our resolutions to the nation as the basis of our political faith. We have gone to what we conceive to be the root of the evil. We have stated what we conceive to be the remedy. With a Parliament thus reformed, everything is easy; without it, nothing can be done. And we do call on, and most earnestly exhort, our countrymen in general to follow our example, and to form similar societies in every quarter of the kingdom for the promotion of constitutional knowledge, the abolition of bigotry in religion and politics, and the equal distribution of the rights of men through all sects and denominations of Irishmen. The people, when thus collected, will feel their own weight, and secure that power which theory has already admitted to be their portion, and to which, if they be not aroused by their present provocation to vindicate it, they deserve to forfeit their pretensions for ever.



The Women of '98

The title United Irishmen, did not represent an entirely accurate portrayal of the make up of the republican forces during the 1798 rising. Although there was no organized effort to form any individual female grouping, such as the Cumann na mBan of later years, the rebels were accompanied by large numbers of women as they moved about. There is ample evidence that women were active not just in 'traditional roles' of medical aid and the like during the rebellion, but in intelligence gathering and combat.

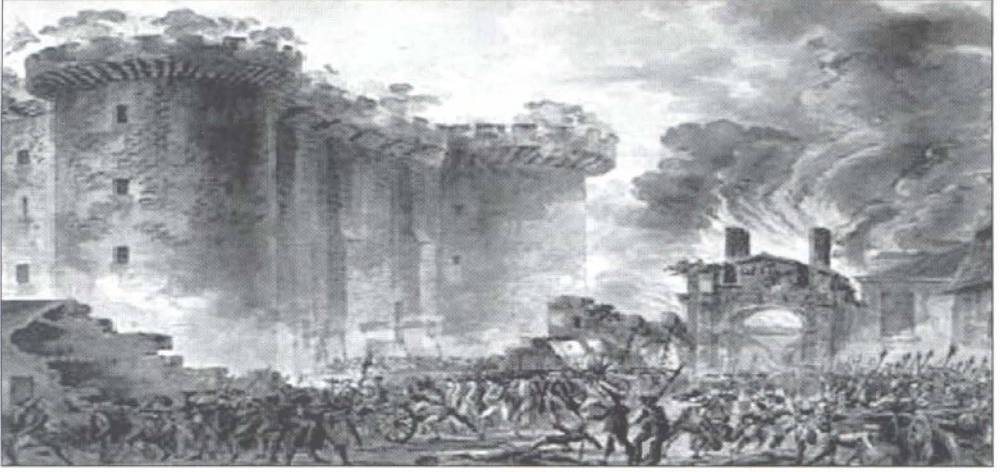
During the 18th century women did not have a vote or could not hold property in their own right and had as strong a reason as any section of society to rise against the injustices perpetrated against them. At the time many women were used to hard, manual labour working, as hard as that of their male counterparts, in fields ploughing, reaping and toiling, carding and spinning.

- **MARY ANN McCracken** (right) played an important role from an early period in promoting the organisation.
- **MARY DOYLE** fought with great courage at the Battle of New Ross, cutting off the ammunition belts of the fallen enemy with a bill hook and handing them together with any captured weapons to her comrades.
- **SUZY TOOLE**, of County Wicklow, participated in her capacity as a "moving magazine" She secured ball cartridges and ammunition from disaffected soldiers. She hid the ammunition in her clothing and she brought intelligence on the movements of the King's troops along with securing provisions of food and fruit for the insurgents.



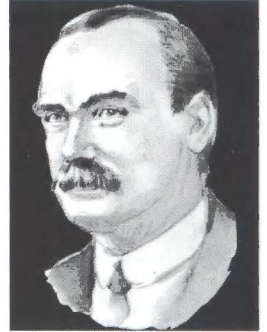
It was in Wexford in particular where many women took leading roles in the fighting. At the battles of Tuberneering, New Ross, Bunclody and Ballyminaun Hill many fought side by side with their male comrades. During the struggle for control of Arklow town too, both sexes were represented. In perhaps the most decisive of battles during the struggle, that of Vinegar Hill, when the Irish forces fell 'shaking scythes at cannon', the women volunteers joined in, courageously, in the final efforts.

An International Revolution



It is a curious thing, when reflecting on the 1798 Rebellion that the first shots of the rebellion were not fired in Wexford or Kilalla or even in Dublin but on the fields of Lexington and Concord in Massachusetts. The day chosen by the United Irishmen as the annual celebration of their organisation and philosophies was not the date of some ancient Irish battle, but Bastille Day, 14th of July, the date of a far more recent victory for republicans in France.

The 1798 Rebellion in Ireland was one element of the first truly internationalist revolution. Republican victories in America and France were the inspiration for the United Irishmen. The revolution in France was particularly important for, as James Connolly wrote, “the Protestant workers saw in it a revolution of a great Catholic nation, and hence wavered in the belief so insidiously instilled into them that Catholics were willing slaves of despotism; and the Catholics saw in it a great manifestation of popular power - a revolution of the people against the aristocracy, and, therefore, ceased to believe that aristocratic leadership was necessary for their salvation.”



This new unity across the age-old sectarian divide was the inspiration for the founding of the Society of United Irishmen, an organisation which linked itself with the Jacobin Club of Paris, the Revolutionary Society in England and the Committee for Reform in Scotland, all republican organisations. The United Irishmen believed that they were one part of an international struggle against privilege and aristocracy.

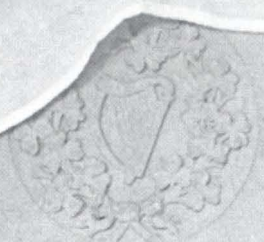
They congratulated the French revolutionary government as having “..renounced all ideas of conquest, and has published the first glorious manifesto of humanity, of union, and of peace. In return we pray to God that peace may rest in their land, and that it may never be

in the power of royalty, nobility or a priesthood to disturb the harmony of a good people.”

Long before left-wing theorists were to preach the benefits of internationalism and the need to show solidarity with struggle elsewhere in the world, Irish republicans were at the forefront of doing just that. And long before Marx laid out the fundamentals of Class War, republicans in Ireland were putting it into practice. Tone himself stated that if the revolutionary spirit was wanting in the middle and upper classes, it would be found in the ‘men of no property’, a phrase occasionally still used to refer to the republican community. Inspired by the French Revolution’s sans-cullotes or urban working class rather than the slave-owning leaders of the American Revolution it is tempting to speculate of the kind of Republic Tone and his comrades would have built had they been successful. No speculation is necessary as to whether it would bear any



GRAVES (REPAIRS) LTD. 17, ST. JOHN'S AVE.
PARADE, SAN DELEN, DUBLIN 1.
REPUBLICAN POLITICS.
CONTACT: 8300



THEOBALD WOLFE TONE
BORN 20TH JUNE 1763,
DIED 19TH NOV. 1798.
FOR IRELAND.

THIS STONE
HAS BEEN ERECTED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE
KILDARE GAEILIC ASSOCIATION.
IN MEMORY OF
THEOBALD WOLFE TONE,
TO REPLACE A FORMER MONUMENT ERECTED BY
THE WOLFE TONE BAND
WHICH AS WELL AS THE ORIGINAL STONE
HAS FALLEN INTO DECAY.



FARRELL & SON

RENOVATED BY

CLASMEVIN

THE NATIONAL GRAVES ASSOCIATION,
DUBLIN,
1945.

The Croppy Boy

It was early, early all in the spring,
The birds did whistle and sweetly sing.
Changing their notes from tree to tree,
And the song they sang was 'Old Ireland Free'.

It was early, early all in the night,
Yeomanry cavalry gave me a fright.
The Yeomanry cavalry was my down fall,
And taken was I by Lord Cornwall.

As I was marched up Wexford Street
My own first cousin I chanced to meet.
My own first cousin did me betray
And for one bare guinea sold my life away.

As I was mounted on the platform high,
My aged Father was standing by.
My aged Father did me deny,
And the name he gave me was the Croppy Boy.



The ideals of Irish republicanism since the time of Tone were not just to break the yoke of colonialism but to build social and economic democracy as well as national political democracy on our island. It was and still is our objective to build a society of equals through freedom and justice. We are inspired by the ideas and the courage of Wolfe Tone and his republican successors and we are confident now, more than ever, that we will achieve a united Ireland, an Ireland of equals, an Ireland of which all its children can be proud.

