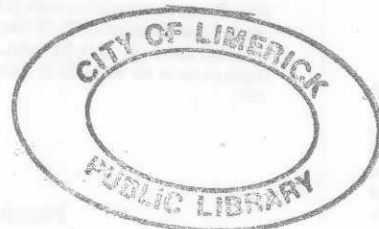


FRANK RYAN

# THE FIELD DAY ANTHOLOGY OF IRISH WRITING

VOLUME III



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81); J. M. Feehan,  
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The Letters of  
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Man Who Won the  
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policy towards Hitler, and produced a new Constitution in 1937. In 1938, the Economic War with Britain came to an end and the Treaty ports were returned to Ireland. Despite severe pressures from the allied powers, de Valera successfully pursued a policy of neutrality during World War II. In 1948 his party was defeated in the general election; de Valera returned to power in 1951, lost the election of 1954 and returned to power in 1957 for the last time. He retired from the office of Taoiseach in 1959 and won the Presidential election in that year. He was again elected President in 1966 and retired from office in 1973. He died in Dublin in 1975.

CHIEF WRITINGS. M. Moynihan (ed.) *Speeches and Statements of Eamon de Valera 1917-73* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1980).

BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. S. O'Faoláin, *The Life Story of Eamon de Valera* (Dublin: The Talbot Press, 1953); F. A. Pakenham, the Earl of Longford, and T. P. O'Neill, *Eamon de Valera* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1970); B. Severn, *Irish Statesman and Rebel: The Two Lives of Eamon de Valera* (Folkestone: Bailey Bros and Swinfen, 1971); S. Cronin (ed.), *The McGarrity Papers: Revelations of the Irish Revolutionary Movement in Ireland and America 1900-1940* (Tralee: Brandon Books, 1972); T. R. Dwyer, *Eamon de Valera* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1980); *De Valera's Darkest Hour: In Search of National Independence 1919-1932*, *De Valera's Finest Hour: In Search of National Independence 1932-1959* (Dublin and Cork: Mercier Press, 1982); J. Lee and G. O. Tuathaigh (eds), *The Age of de Valera* (Dublin: Ward River Press, in association with RTE, 1982); J. Bowman, *De Valera and the Ulster Question 1917-73* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982); J. P. O'Carroll and J. A. Murphy (eds), *De Valera and his Times: Political Development in the Republic of Ireland* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1983).

## Frank Ryan

LIFE. Born near Elton, Co. Limerick in 1902, Ryan was educated at University College, Dublin and interrupted his studies there to fight on the republican side in the Civil War. In 1925 he graduated in Celtic Studies and worked as a teacher and for the Irish Tourist Association. He became a member of the IRA executive and editor of the movement's newspaper, *An Phoblacht*. He was arrested for his activities. In 1931 he helped found and organize Saor Éire, a left-wing movement within the IRA, and in 1934 broke with the IRA in an effort to build a united front against fascism. In 1936 Ryan led 200 Irishmen to fight in Spain in the International Brigade. He reached the rank of major, was wounded at the battle of Jarama, returned home to convalesce, stood, unsuccessfully, as a republican candidate in the general election of 1937, and returned to Spain to become brigade adjutant to General Maija, the commander of the Spanish Republican Army. Ryan edited the history of the brigade. In 1938, he was captured by Italian forces and sentenced to death. de Valera appealed to General Franco for clemency and a nationwide campaign was launched on his behalf. After 13 months in prison under sentence of death, the judgment was commuted to 30 years. One year later, as a result of an arrangement between the Irish, Spanish and German governments, Ryan was released and taken to Berlin. There, in 1940, he met Seán Russell, chief-of-staff of the IRA, and left for Ireland with him in a German submarine. Russell died suddenly on the journey, Ryan returned to Berlin where he was treated by German intelligence as a non-party neutral. He died in a sanatorium in Dresden in 1944.

CHIEF WRITINGS. *The Book of the XV Brigade: Records of British, Canadian and Irish Volunteers in the XV International Brigade in Spain 1936-1938* (Madrid: Commissariat of War, 1938; reprinted Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Graham, 1975).

BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. S. Cronin, *Frank Ryan: The Search for the Republic* (Dublin: Repsol, 1980).

## George Gilmore

LIFE. Born in Belfast in 1898, Gilmore was educated locally and in Dublin, where he spent most of his life. He opposed the Treaty after the War of Independence and was secretary to Seán Lemass during the Civil War. As a member of the army council of the IRA, he founded the left-wing splinter group, Saor Éire, along with Peadar O'Donnell and Frank Ryan. He tried to come to an arrangement with the Soviet Union for the training of IRA officers, was imprisoned several times for his activities by Free State forces, led a raid on Mountjoy jail in Dublin in 1926 and rescued nineteen republican prisoners. He was jailed for five years in 1931 and began a campaign for political status. In 1932 he was released when de Valera's Fianna Fáil party came into office and later that year was wounded in a gun battle with police in County Clare. He and Frank Ryan split with the IRA and organized a short-lived Citizens' Army. Gilmore was the leading member of the Irish Republican Congress (1933-34) and remained all his life an outright opponent of fascism and all forms of colonial and sectarian oppression. He died in Dublin in 1985.

CHIEF WRITINGS. *The Irish Republican Congress* (New York: Socialist League, 1935; reprinted Cork: Cork Workers Club, 1974); *Labour and the Republican Movement* (Dublin: Republican Publications, 1966).

## Michael Tierney

LIFE. Born in Ballymacward, Co. Galway in 1894, Tierney won a travelling studentship at University College, Dublin and studied classics at the Sorbonne, Athens and Berlin. In 1915 he joined the department of classics at University College, Dublin and became professor of Greek there in 1923. He was elected TD for North Mayo in 1925 as a member of Cumann na nGaedheal and was TD for the National University of Ireland from 1927 to 1932. He was elected to the reconstituted Senate in 1938 and was vice-chairman of the Senate 1939-44. In 1947 he was elected president of University College, Dublin, a position he held until his retirement in 1964. During his presidency he made the decision to move the university from its city centre location to Belfield, four miles away. He died in Dublin in 1975.

CHIEF WRITINGS. (ed.) *A Tribute to Newman: Essays on Aspects of his Life and Thought* (Dublin: Browne and Nolan, 1945); *Daniel O'Connell: Nine Centenary Essays* (Dublin: Browne and Nolan, 1949); (with others) *Newman's Doctrine of University Education* (Dublin: University College, Dublin, 1952); *Struggle With Fortune: A Miscellany for the Centenary of the Catholic University of Ireland 1854-1954* (Dublin: Browne and Nolan, 1954); F. X. Martin (ed.), *Eoin MacNeill: Scholar and Man of Action 1867-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980).

## John A. Costello

LIFE. Born in Dublin in 1891, Costello was educated at University College, Dublin and at King's Inns. Called to the Bar in 1914, he became Attorney General in 1926, a position he held for six years. In

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opposite benches; and why should not this goodwill show itself in exercise — by responsible people sitting down together and trying to work out a solution?

I, for one, would promise, as far as I personally am concerned — I cannot promise for anybody else — that the days that may be left to me in my life will be devoted to the duties of cementing good relations, on the basis of Irish rights being respected, as I have devoted my life up to the present time to securing Irish rights. I believe too that what I can say of myself is something that can be said for every member of our party, for every person in public life in this country and for every Irishman abroad. We are at the crossroads, in my opinion, at a point where Britain, if she is wise enough, can take the hand of friendship which is offered or spurn that hand of friendship again. If she spurns it, she will do something for which nobody but the enemies of England will be glad. We will not be glad, because it means a good deal of suffering, perhaps, ahead for us. If we were free, we would not want to see Britain's downfall, as I said somewhere else, but by doing

this, by continuing to hold a portion of our country against the will of our people, Britain is giving us an interest in her downfall. Why does she do that? Is it statesmanship on the part of her Ministers to do it? Why does she do something that will only please the people who want to see Britain's downfall? If I were one of those who believed in certain continental theories and ideologies, I would welcome this Bill because I would see one state that was going to be weakened by the fact that the Irish people were dissatisfied and inimical to it.

The people who will be pleased with this are neither the friends of Ireland nor the friends of Britain, and those who wish well to both Ireland and Britain would want to see the end of this source of antagonism and bitterness. Instead of this Bill they would want to see the opportunity taken to bring about arrangements whereby a solution of partition would be got. Perhaps, if that line were taken, out of what is at the moment an evil and a danger good may come. I pray that it may, and I pray that the animosities between the two peoples, which were dying down, may not be revived.

## FRANK RYAN and GEORGE GILMORE

(1902-44)

(1898-1985)

### from: THE IRISH REPUBLICAN CONGRESS (1934-35)

[Frank Ryan, George Gilmore and Peadar O'Donnell led a socialist-republican splinter group of the Irish Republican Army. In 1931 they founded Saor Éire, and appealed for working-class support against the urban middle classes and the big farmers who, in their view, had hijacked the republican ideal. Saor Éire was proscribed in 1931 and the catholic hierarchy condemned it as communist and as a 'sinful and irreligious' organization. The movement was reconstituted as the Republican Congress in 1934. Its charter was the 'Athlone Manifesto' of that year, largely the work of George Gilmore.

The text given here is the foreword to the second

edition (1935) of the charter document, co-written by Gilmore and Frank Ryan.]

The first session of the Republican Congress held at Rathmines in the autumn of 1934 had to overcome some mistakes which were being made by a section of the delegates as to the stage of struggle in which the independence movement finds itself. There was a section which held the opinion that the Congress ought to differentiate its policy from those of the Fianna Fail and I. R. A. leaderships according to the kind of Republic they wished to establish. That section wished to adopt the slogan of 'The Workers' Republic' as opposed to 'The Republic.' It wished to form a new party instead of working for a united front movement.

The Congress decided that that was an incorrect approach to the present political situation. It held that the correct line of approach for Republicans, no



matter what form of Republic they visualized as their ultimate objective, was a united front of Republican and Labor organizations for the breaking of the connection with the British Empire and the re-establishment of an independent Republic for a united Ireland. It realized that only that association of forces could raise the Republican struggle clear of the dwarfed formulae in which it was being stated and mobilize sufficient revolutionary power to sever the connection with the Empire. And it realized that only that association of forces could set the masses on the march for their emancipation by breaking them clear of the middle-class leaders who were blocking the road to the Republic.

The best proof of how correct the Congress decisions were is to be found in the process of clarification which has gone on within the different political bodies since that session.

It is becoming every day more apparent that the middle class leadership of Fianna Fail, in pursuance of its policy of protecting Capitalism in Ireland, is not attempting to sever the connection with the British Empire but is negotiating with a view to altering the form of association. And it is worthy of note that the principal advocates of the 'Workers' Republic' slogan who broke with the Republican Congress on that issue have merged into the reformist Labor Party which, while claiming to be actuated by the ideals of James Connolly, supported the Free State against the Republic in 1922.

It is no exaggeration to say that the Rathmines meeting raised the Republican struggle on to a new high plane. It will be agreed that the demand for complete national independence does now, in the words of the Athlone Manifesto, dominate the whole political field.

The Congress declared the necessity for the workers and small farmers of Ireland winning to the leadership of the national struggle. And here again considerable success was effected. Through the team work made possible within the Congress the working class was able to take the lead in anti-fascist, anti-imperialist demonstrations. But we have not done all that we ought to have done. We talk of the working class coming into the leadership of the Republican movement without realizing that the way to do that is just to do it. Republican demonstrations organized around militant workers rousing all the Republican passion in an area have not been carried out as they should.

This must now be remedied. There is really no unsurmountable obstacle preventing us from getting up meetings where workers who are pivotal in Fianna Fail, I. R. A. and Trades Union bodies would be present and where the demand would be raised and enthusiastically backed to have British overlordship completely uprooted.

We need now the campaign for the Republic to rally the working-class factors within the Republican organizations behind their own militants. And this will only be done by doing it!

We have weaknesses to overcome in other parts of the Congress work, too. The Agricultural Resolution adopted by the Congress in Rathmines expressed the view that 'The heaviest share of today's bad times falls on the agricultural community,' and that 'The heaviest share of the agricultural crisis falls on the agricultural wage earners and small farmers.'

It demanded, amongst other things, 'That ranch lands be distributed, without compensation to the ranchers, to landless and small farmer youth, with the State provision of the necessary credits, machinery and housing.' . . . 'That agricultural wage earners be guaranteed a wage which, in cash and perquisites, shall not be less than 40s. per week, out of work benefit; and adequate housing.' . . . 'That, as an immediate relief, all holdings under twenty-five acres be relieved of land annuities.'

Here is sketched a view of a tremendously important section of Irish life; and behind these demands a tremendous campaign can be waged. This is work upon which the Congress has only made a beginning.

In the carrying out of the tasks visualized in the Congress Industrial Resolution there is also a vast field for effort. It was a long resolution. A few of its most important points dealt with: 'Development of workers' councils in every town as fighting organs to co-ordinate and direct the struggles of the different Unions; these councils to include representatives of the unemployed.' . . . 'Struggle to organize the presently unorganized workers; to minimize the falling away from Unions due to inter-Union disputes.' . . . 'To favor and agitate for the reorganization of the Trades Unions on the basis of one Union for each industry, to be formed, with the consent of the Unions concerned, by the amalgamation of members in several Unions catering for the industry; such Union to be organized on an All-Irish basis, with headquarters in Ireland, North or South.' . . . 'Wages for women workers in industry

to be equal to that of men employed in similar capacities.'

The need for effort on the lines of all of those clauses of the resolution has been demonstrated in the various strikes and lockouts that have taken place since its adoption by the Congress. The urgency of the last has been made especially apparent by the attack upon the status of women workers in the 'Conditions of Employment Bill' sponsored by the Fianna Fail Government.

Unemployment is increasing both in Northern and Southern Ireland, but still the Unemployed are largely unorganized.

Included in the Unemployed Resolution of the Congress is the clause 'That the Unemployed should be aided by all Congress supporters and Trades Unionists to develop a nation-wide organization, and that they be given representation on the Workers' Councils in every town'; and a demand for 'Abolition of all task work; all work done under relief schemes to be at Trades Union rates of pay and under Trades Union conditions.' It cannot be claimed that in this work we have done more than make a good beginning.

The resistance to the Congress idea from the leaders of organizations — Fianna Fail, I. R. A., and Labor Party — is being weakened under the pressure of a rising appreciation of the need for team work — for united action. In this connection it would be impossible to overestimate the value of the Call from the different Republican organizations in America for unified action in Ireland for the re-establishment of the Republic.

'We believe that Ireland has reached the critical stage when the Republican enthusiasm of the people can be used to re-establish the Republic or may be dissipated in civil strife. In this serious situation we urge the Irish people to insist that representatives of all Republican thought in Ireland must meet in conference to find a means of reconciling their various differences, uniting on unswerving principle, presenting a solid front to the common enemy and re-establishing the independence of the country as a Republic.' This appeal, issued jointly by the A. A. R. I. R., the Clan na Gael<sup>1</sup> and

I. R. A., and the Irish Republican Congress League of America, expresses so truly — both in its warning against the danger of the present situation, and in its recognition of the one basis upon which unity can be achieved — the fears and hopes of the Irish people that the response to it must be immense.

Already it has been endorsed by several of the County Councils, and in the voting upon it it is noticeable that the only opposition has come from members — Cosgrave<sup>2</sup> and Unionist — who are definitely opposed to the Republic.

Old I. R. A. associations in various parts of the country are also beginning to speak in support of the Call, and the fact that it has struck a deep note amongst the Republican population generally is proved by the many letters which have appeared in the press in support of it from people of various different Republican groupings as well as from people of no Republican affiliations. One of the most interesting was from Capt. Denis Ireland<sup>3</sup> of Belfast, suggesting that the proposed conferences should include representatives of sections of the Protestant population of the North of Ireland who, while still unwilling to commit themselves to a campaign for the re-establishment of the Republic for all Ireland, are sufficiently interested in the proposal to wish to explore its possibilities.

Our exiles have done their part in creating a situation pregnant with wonderful possibilities for the development of an irresistible Republican movement. The next step remains with the leaders of Republican organizations at home. So far they have hesitated about assuming the responsibilities pertaining to a great forward movement such as the exiles have called for. Surely they will see that the time is ripe for it now!

FRANK RYAN  
GEORGE GILMORE,

Hon. Secs.

Republican Congress,  
57 Middle Abbey St.,  
Dublin, Ireland.

2. W. T. Cosgrave (1880-1965), first president of the executive council of the Irish Free State 1922-32 and founder of the Cumann na nGaedheal political party.
3. Denis Ireland (1894-1974) was a freelance writer and broadcaster. Much of his writing set forth his ideal of a united and sovereign Ireland. In 1948, when he was appointed to the Irish Senate, he became the first resident of Northern Ireland to become a member of one of the Houses of the Oireachtas.

<sup>1</sup> The American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic was founded by de Valera in 1920. Clan na Gael (Family of the Gael) was an Irish-American republican revolutionary organization, founded in 1867. The organization split over the War of Independence and the Treaty.