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Que Ondee Sola- July-August 1997

Eduardo Arocho

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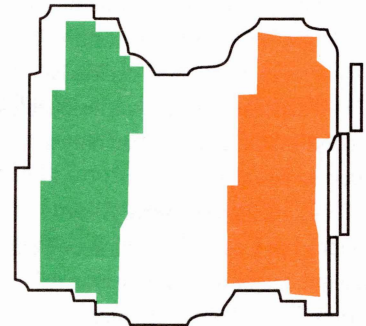
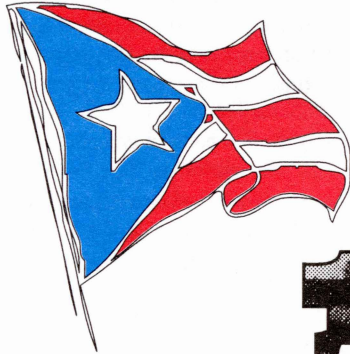
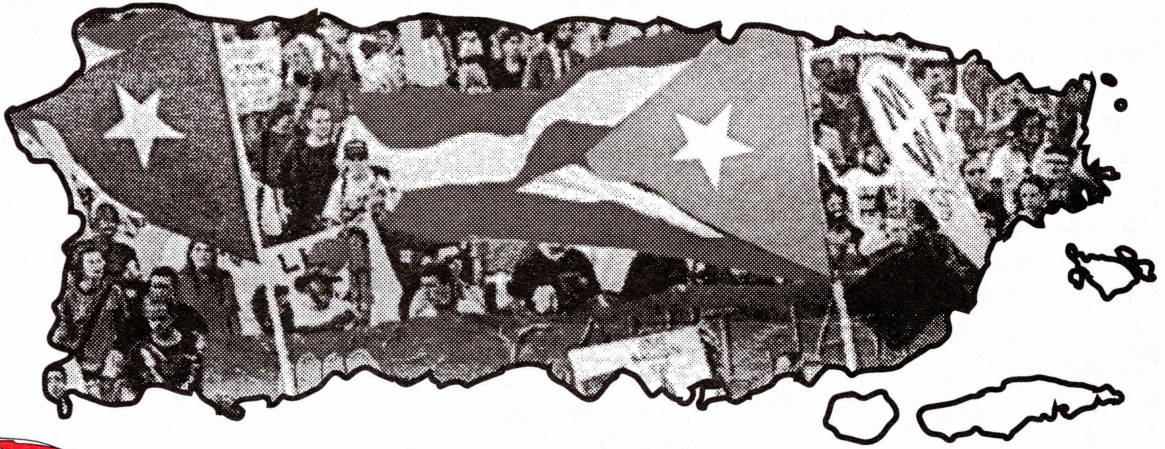
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Que Ondee Sola

Vol. 25, No. 6 • July-August 1997

Ireland and Puerto Rico: The Crisis of Colonialism



SOLO NOSOTROS...
(viene de la página 11)

Marín afirmó que no se tolerarían nuevos actos de violencia y numerosos nacionalistas fueron arrestados y encarcelados por segunda vez. El jefe de la policía, coronel Salvador T. Roig, facilitó unas listas viejas de nombres de nacionalistas que se tenían en el Cuartel General y cuando éstas se examinaron se pudo comprobar que eran de tiempos del gobernador Blanton Winship. De allí en adelante, se comenzó con nuevas listas de todos aquellos de quiénes el gobernador Muñoz Marín acababa de ordenar su arresto. Así que las listas se depuraron y se siguió sumando nuevos nombres hasta que se descubrió este fenómeno en las vistas sobre el caso del Cerro Maravilla. Se descubrió que mucha gente participó en la creación de estas listas de nacionalistas. Hasta el ex-jefe de la Corte Suprema de Puerto Rico, Don José Trías Monge, admitió tener conocimiento de la creación de listas con nombres de ciudadanos, con lo cual se violaron los más elementales principios de privacidad y, por ende, se ofendió a la moral y los derechos civiles de muchísimos ciudadanos buenos, honrados y decentes.

Ninguno de sus detractores o de sus críticos ha podido superar la grandeza de Pedro Albizu Campos. El pueblo que se desbordó a rendirle homenaje, expresó en su acción la palabra superior con la cual los pueblos reconocen al líder de la Nación y al Héroe de la Patria

Para reconocer lo que Albizu Campos fue y es en la historia de Puerto Rico que mejor que las palabras del escritor Cesar Andreu Iglesias en su columna "Cosas de Aquí" (El

Imparcial, 24 de abril de 1965):

Don Pedro Albizu Campos entró en la historia antes de morir. Ahora se inicia la leyenda. Y es ésta, mas que aquélla, la que inmortaliza a los hombres.

... Para definir a Albizu Campos basta una palabra: Albizu fue la conciencia de Puerto Rico. Lo fue para los que lo siguieron. Lo fue todavía más para los muchos que lo negaron.

En las hondas crisis, una conciencia sola puede salvar a un pueblo. A los puertorriqueños nos tocó en suerte contar con Albizu. . . ¿Qué hubiera sido de nosotros de no haberlo tenido?

Albizu aceptó su papel como destino inexorable. Nada tan terrible como hacer de conciencia de un pueblo. Habló cuando había que hablar. Denunció cuando había que denunciar. Acusó cuando había que acusar. Y estuvo siempre presto a arrostrar las consecuencias.

Su acción no conoció de compromisos, de concesiones, de rendimientos. Actuó como lo que fue: una conciencia inapelable, absoluta.

Y ahora como dirían los irlandeses - Sinn é, Sinead.

Tomado de *Nosotros Solos* por Juan Angel Silen.

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

As both the 20th Century and as the Decade to End Colonialism (the United Nations proclaimed it as such) draw to an end, two of the most dramatic colonial questions remained unresolved. Puerto Rico and Ireland share some interesting historical parallels: both are islands; both lost nearly 40% of their population as a result of imperial plans (the Irish Potato Famine of the 1840s, the false industrialization process in Puerto Rico during the 1940s; both are predominantly Catholic countries dominated by Protestant metropolises; both have faced similar colonial policies of cultural genocide; and both have had a similar history of resistance.

Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos, the Harvard educated Puerto Rican nationalist, learned those and many other parallels as a result of his involvement in the Irish struggle while a student at Harvard. But, before Albizu, many other Puerto Rican political figures had been inspired by the Irish response to the British colonial system; the secret revolutionary societies of Puerto Rico were among the first political groupings outside Ireland who implemented the use of the boycott as a political instrument (the boycott has its origin in the Irish land struggle against British landlords); the 19th Century Puerto Rico autonomist Roman Baldorioty de Castro, was deeply influenced by Charles Parnell's Irish Home Rule Movement at the beginning of the century, José de Diego drew many connections between the Gaelic cultural renaissance in Ireland and Puerto Rico's cultural situation, and even today, one of the most important political questions to be resolved by the Irish and the Puerto Ricans is the lot of their imprisoned patriots.

This issue of QOS is dedicated to a discussion of these two very important colonial questions. We hope our readers use these articles as a stepping stone to pursue more deeply the Puerto Rico and Irish questions, and more importantly, to study the crisis of colonialism itself.

¡LIBERTAD!

FOR EIRE FOR BORIQUEN

The problem with our children is they are so full of self-hate but they don't know it, you see. We've been colonized for so long, so many hundreds of years really, and the young folk grow up brainwashed, like. They look to Europe to find out what's good, instead of looking at their own culture.

Who said this? Lolita Lebrón? Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos? Or is it older than that? Was it cried out at Lares in 1868? The words could describe Puerto Rico, but the flavor does not. They were not spoken by a revolutionary but an old man named Patrick Connor, speaking what is common sense to him, in 1997, late one night in a town called Santry, just outside Dublin. They were spoken about Ireland.

I'm Jesse Mumm. I am one of the American Irish, yet I teach high school at the Puerto Rican Cultural Center of Chicago. I had the great good fortune of returning *home*, as my cousins say, for one week this spring. I could see America better from a couple thousand miles away, in my native land, a *landlike the world never before had: all her wars are happy, all her songs are sad.*

I saw a lush, vibrant bright green growing land crisscrossed by stone fences overgrown with time, covered in flocks of sheep, rolling hills of purple and gold wildflowers and boulders, crisp cool air, light rains and warm sun, small towns of low clustered houses on winding streets, the great cities of Dublin and Belfast, 700 foot cliffs above a sea dotted with rocky islands, tiny ancient stone churches everywhere, ruined castles, Celtic crosses and



In a 13th century churchyard near Casleigh an Barragh, Celtic crosses—symbol of the continuity of death within life—stand above graves from last year, 500 years ago, and mass grave pits for dozens of Famine victims from the 1840s.

monuments, the smell of burning peat moss, strangers and family full of welcomes and help and stories and open doors, endless gracious cups of tea and porter, and in the North, troops. And helicopters, armored cars, M16s, checkpoints on the road. And more British troops. In other words, I saw a colonized nation, and in honor of the readers of *Que Ondee Sola*, I will try to carry Puerto Rico with me while I deliver to you Eire.

Eire, or sometimes Erin, is the island's name in our original language, just as

Puerto Ricans keep alive the original name *Borinquén*. In Puerto Rico, massive opposition defeated the United States when it tried to make English the official language. People understand that language is at the very center of identity. The Irish were not so fortunate 200 years ago, and many, many tongues were literally cut off for daring to speak Irish to British officials. Today only 25% of the people speak Irish, but the number is growing.

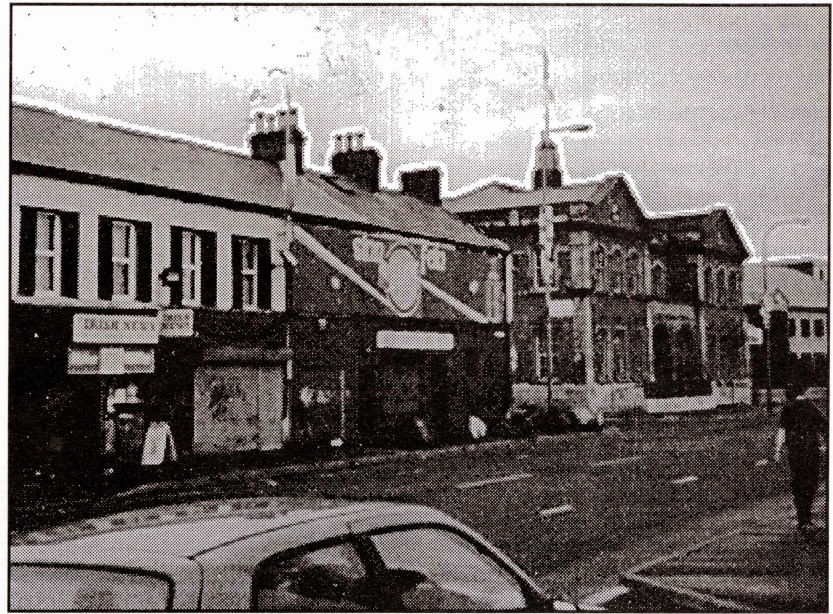
Puerto Rico is a colony of the United States, which calls it a commonwealth.

In the struggle to resolve this status, some people push for US statehood, and others seek real independence. Ireland is a nation that got both. Six counties in the northeast officially belong to the United Kingdom of Britain. They use British money and laws and elect people to the British Parliament. The remaining 26 counties form the Republic Of Ireland, an independent nation. Plenty of the Irish never say "Northern Ireland" because the border is a British creation, which ignores even the historical boundaries of Ulster. Besides, one of the "southern" counties, Donegal, is even further north! Imagine the parallel: the US grants full independence to Puerto Rico but takes San Juan, Santurce, Río Piedras, and Carolina, and renames them: *Conga*, the 51st southern state. Wouldn't YOU join the resistance?

Well, many did, and over the past 30 years over 4000 people have died in an ongoing war known in Ireland as "The Troubles." On the Republican side the largely Catholic Irish resistance is led by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) along with the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) and all the community groups and political parties which support them, including the political wing of the IRA, known as Sinn Féin. (Say it like "shin fain.") On the Unionist side stands the British army, backed up by Protestant paramilitary groups loyal to England. The war takes on a religious character, since the British made it illegal to be Catholic in Ireland for hundreds of years. But anyone who thinks this is a religious war is just not looking at Irish history.

The British first came to take us over in

the year 1152. After 845 years of resistance, there is a *tremendous* weariness about the armed struggle.



In the Catholic ghetto of Belfast, the Falls Road is a longtime center of resistance work, including the offices of Sinn Féin, the political party allied with the Irish Republican Army.

One of my uncles expressed a common sense of fatalism about the North: "Let them keep it then" if they're willing to kill so many people. As people try to be humanistic about an inhuman situation, contradiction takes its natural place in the heart. No one speaks well of the British. Everyone knows what they've done. My uncle Michael Murray recounts how his own uncle blew up the statue of Queen Victoria that stood in Phoenix Park, the main square in Dublin. Yet he is against the IRA because "we can't support violence."

When you ask, people say they want a united Ireland, especially after a pint of Guinness. *Después de una cerveza cada*

puertorriqueña es independentista. But it was 1920 when the North was partitioned, before 70 years of isolation

and British propaganda. Many Irish in the Republic don't keep up with the Troubles. They're encouraged to see the Northern Catholics as an added welfare burden in a united Republic, and to see the Protestants as basically British. *I'm Irish, but I'm British as well*, the teenager was saying on a Belfast talk show. As for the South, the biggest trading partner of the Republic is England. The humblest farmers I met in the West understood that from an economic standpoint "we're still a dependency of the Crown." Does this sound familiar?

You have to understand that Ireland was *depopulated*. There are 6 million

people living on an island ten times the size of Puerto Rico. So where did they go? There are 150 million people of Irish descent living wherever else the British put them—England itself, Australia, Argentina, Latin America, Canada, and the United States. There are more people of Irish descent in the Chicago area than in all of Dublin and Belfast put together. Out of the Irish families who became part of the *mestizaje* in Puerto Rico, names remain like Soliván (from Sullivan), Ocasio (from O’Casey), and O’Neill—as in Sandra O’Neill, one righteous *morena puertorriqueña* who takes classes here at the Puerto Rican Cultural Center.

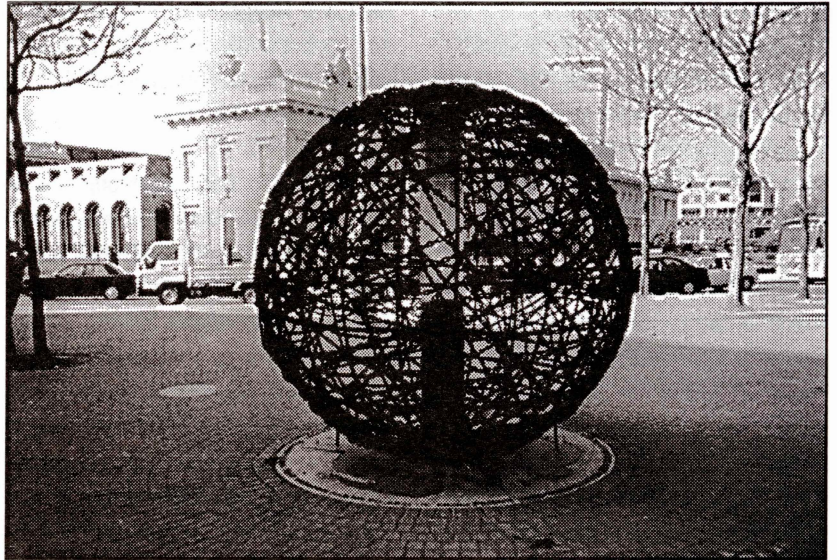
You have to also understand that *these people did not want to go*. It became common custom to hold a wake—the traditional Irish funeral gathering—for those departing, known as the “lost ones,” *an debeairtach*. Only Puerto Ricans have a higher rate of return to their island. In one decade in the 1800s in Boston, fully half the new Irish immigrants returned to Ireland. Better to starve among people you love than among Americans. Contrary to the fantasies we see in movies, to leave Ireland was seen as a kind of death, brought on by the threat of death. The Irish were starved, bribed, evicted, deceived, or forced at gunpoint to leave the country. My own ancestors, Martin Barrett and Annie Gaughan, had their voyage paid for by the British government in 1893. That’s why I’m here.

The British knew exactly what they were doing. In those days colonialism was much more honest—and stupider. England used Ireland to practice the imperialism it finally took to the rest of

the world, but in doing so it made every conceivable mistake. By trying to outlaw everything from language to religion to assembly to self-rule, they

And she sent us to heaven in her own good time.

Hundreds of years later, in my



In the plaza in front of the Customs House in Dublin, an eternal flame is wrapped in black iron chains. The inscription reads: “The candle burns not for us but for all those whom we failed to rescue from prison who were tortured, who were kidnapped, who disappeared. That is what the candle is for.”

helped to create the culture of resistance which has now moved the war to England, where daily IRA attacks and threats have all but shut down British transportation. To justify the ongoing invasion, the British were the first to use the term “white people,” meaning themselves. The Irish were the first people to be called “black” by Europeans, meaning evil or savage. Then it’s easier to kill them. The Clancy Brothers explain the racist British perception, and their love for Mother England, in the traditional satire:

Now when we were savage, fierce and wild, She came like a mother to her child, Gently raised us from the slime, And kept our hands from hellish crime,

grandmother’s kitchen in Buffalo, she tells me what her grandmother told her. *Don’t forget, Jesse, they never completely conquered us.* What made this knowledge still important 4 generations later? There was no time in Irish history when the British could move freely through every town, every county. Resistance never ended. We are a people capable of violence. The ancient Celts mounted the severed heads of their enemies on city gates and public squares. When the British first brought guns, we impaled them on 12 foot spears.

But when outright war doesn’t work, there are other ways to depopulate an island. Look again at Puerto Rico. The

US shipped out Puerto Rican workers, often lying about their destinations, and secretly sterilized thousands of Puerto Rican women. The British simply relied on starvation. Each of these campaigns is buried under historical lies and a media blackout. This is why Ireland today is a battleground not just between the IRA and the British government. It is also waging the most crucial struggle—coming to terms with its history.

My aunt Mary warns, “we have to watch for the revisionist historians” who want to rewrite the Irish history books in favor of the colonial power. Britain, and her allies, want her to be remembered as a friend, trading partner, even protector. Official history for years stated that during something called the Irish Potato Famine of 1847-1850 one third of the Irish people died, one third emigrated, and one third remained. It is true that a disease rotted most of Ireland’s potatoes for about four years, but the same blight hit England and parts of France and Germany. So why did we have a Famine? The Irish had to eat potatoes because the *vast* majority of Irish food—the bread, beef, pork, butter, milk, eggs, and porter—went to England. During the Famine 100,000 British troops were mobilized to guard and remove that food, escort the ships, and protect the landlords. You don’t usually read that. In this time massive rebellions were crushed with bullets and bayonets, while members of the British Parliament lamented *publicly* that the genocide was not complete enough to empty the land *for resettlement*.

According to new research based on England’s own records of its policies, the real death toll is more like 5 1/2

million. This is why conscious Irish teachers and cultural workers are trying to eliminate the term “Potato Famine.” It wasn’t about potatoes. The Irish Holocaust, or simply *An Gorta Mor*, The Great Hunger, was about colonialism. It’s not in the textbooks, so you have to read that on neighborhood murals in Belfast.

Or other places. I walked through the mass graves of a hundred people from one town in County Mayo. A half mile from my cousin’s farm, a 13th century church looks down on a hillside cemetery. My 8 year old cousin Laura Fahey warned me not to step near the long flat stones placed like covers over the grave pits. Rain had worn away the sides, and you could look down into a 150 year old darkness not even filled in with dirt. The deaths were that quick, that complete, the burials unmarked. I was told children sometimes slip in the hollows, into bones. There it is, simple as sunshine, duplicated in a thousand churchyards. It’s too much work to deny.

Irish and Puerto Rican Nationalists have understood their connection for at least a hundred years. The concept of the boycott, first used in Ireland against a British pig landlord, was applied elsewhere for the first time in Puerto Rico—against the Spanish. After the US invasion, the actions and writings of Charles Parnell and Wolfe Tone, among others, helped to inspire the beginning Puerto Rican nationalist movement. *El Maestro*, Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos, joined the Irish student organization at Harvard at a time when the IRA absolutely depended on overseas support. The Irish felt an incredible debt

to this man who helped organize some of the very first Irish Republican solidarity meetings in New York, before there was even an Irish Free State. Even in the late 1980s, during the deportation struggle over Joe Dougherty, an IRA member in exile, some of the strongest support came from the Puerto Rican independence movement. Political prisoners in each struggle have communicated and shared words of support.

But the connection is not forged only by a common legacy of resistance. The oppressed might support each other, but the oppressors cooperate too. Ever since the 1960s when liberation struggles swept the world, the established powers have devoted *immense* time and energy to figuring out how to control and neutralize oppressed populations. The same techniques, the blueprint of counterinsurgency developed in England by Frank Kitson and Robin Everleigh, has been studied by the CIA and the US Bureau of Prisons. That strategy was brilliantly portrayed in the recent movie *Some Mother’s Son*, the story of two families of Irish political prisoners during the hunger strike of the early 1980s. In one scene during the 1970s, a man stands before local British army commanders to outline the plan:

ISOLATION
CRIMINALIZATION
DEMORALIZATION

The idea is to ISOLATE people from each other, towns from towns, communities from communities. Raid and attack cultural institutions, schools, and community centers, to cut lines of communication and dialogue. Keep

political prisoners in isolation. Whenever possible keep mothers from children, family from family, block roads, cut phone wires. To this day, the morning news I saw sitting in a kitchen in Ballygally, Northern Ireland, included right after the weather a listing of roadblocks, closed train stations, offlimit areas. The crane lowers cement blocks onto the street. No reason why: just like rain.

The next step is CRIMINALIZE the national liberation struggle first of all by keeping up a massive denial that it exists. Refuse to recognize political prisoner status. The media on both sides began, in the 70s, at the demand of London, to use the language of gangsterism when referring to the IRA: spokespeople are called “ringleaders,” clandestine fighters are “hit men,” and the entire national liberation struggle is just “crime.” It is illegal for the press to show the face or voice of any IRA supporter on TV or radio.

Finally, it is crucial to DEMORALIZE prisoners, leaders, and the communities of Catholic support. Defeat cultural programs by placing informants to create internal conflict. Breed personal confusion. Above all, try to break the back of the movement by using every means of torture, isolation, deprivation and lies against the Irish Republican political prisoners.

The same kinds of “legal” sensory deprivation techniques and psychological torture being used right now in this country against Oscar López Rivera, a Puerto Rican POW, were taught to his jailors by British intelligence forces. They deliberately experimented on the

Irish, and meticulously taught these skills to our government so they could use them on Puerto Ricans. In England a pregnant woman held without charge, without interrogation, gave birth last month under custody. Roísín McAliskey’s crime is that she is dedicated to national liberation, and that her mother was a famous IRA member. Most likely her new daughter will be, too. British authorities tranquilized her as she went into labor, removed her to the hospital for a caesarean birth, then shipped her back without her baby—all without any formal charges against her. But of course *there are no political prisoners*—the same tune they play in Washington.

I see Ireland today as a race, like a child that got itself bashed in the face. On a recent album Sinéad O’Connor sings of how deep the nation’s wounds are, and that the denial we’ve kept up for survival’s sake is going to require an awakening. Decolonization is a long cultural process far beyond military action. Independent alternative Gaelic schools have multiplied, teaching real Irish culture and history in the Irish language. Support for Irish political prisoners and POWs is alive and well on the island, and also in the US with Irish Northern Aid. Right now the IRA is one of the most sophisticated, best organized, best funded armed clandestine movements in the world. But it’s stuck in a deadlock because no matter how successful its work is, the British won’t leave. Just 3 years ago, the IRA dropped a circle of bombs around London’s Heathrow airport, effectively paralyzing British air travel, without injuring anyone. Just to prove they could do it. A new era seems to be

emerging since Gerry Adams and Michael Blair, two leaders of Sinn Féin, have finally been elected to the British Parliament. I saw the election posters all over the North, and spoke to Sinn Féin members at their Dublin office. *Actually, we’re in a better position than we ever have been*, they told me.

But I had to get on that Aer Lingus plane and eventually walk down Fullerton again, and the culture shock was worse coming back. In the United States, the Irish faced the most bizarre historical contradiction, going from the most violent oppression to the most profitable form of privilege. By the second or third generation, the majority of Irish chose graduation to the white race, despite being treated as “white niggers” upon arrival. In the American myth, white immigration is something that happened a hundred years ago, when people came to work in sweatshops, made this country great, then moved to the suburbs. But to this day, the single most valuable Irish export is its own people, who still can’t find work in their country. Every year thousands of young Irish come to the US, legally and illegally, to work or to escape. And Ireland’s greatest industry is tourism. A summer seminar at an Irish university entitled “Selling Ourselves” discusses the very fact that Irish culture is the last resource that puts food on their tables.

Do the American Irish really understand that? Quite honestly, the Irish here have so few generations of serious money and power behind them, that they still retain a legacy of the values and habits of their forebears, including at times a ghetto mentality. We don’t see beyond

our families, our neighborhoods, our territory—what we got. We end up living out the worst nightmare of our historical experience, in the form of racist cops, judges, businesspeople, and politicians like our Southwest Side alderman and head of the City Finance Committee, Ed Burke. When the most racist and reactionary Chicago machine politician comes to a rally in support of the Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos statue in Humboldt Park, you know history is at work. His base of support includes membership in an old Irish nationalist group, the Brehon Society, whose members recognize their brotherhood in struggle with Puerto Ricans.

Do we? In the 1990s, more young American Irish people are developing an awareness that our own history compels us not just to act in solidarity with Ireland, but to apply that history to struggles in our adopted land, the United States Of America. This is not the first time. Thousands of immigrant Irish who were drafted into the US Army during the Mexican-American War defected to the other side and joined the Mexicans. They formed the San Patricio brigade because they recognized what colonialism was. The memory of the Great Hunger was still sharp. The Irish, like Mother Jones, have perpetually been the ones to join and form unions and groups dedicated to fundamental change in American society, and this is no accident. Why are the white teachers at Dr. Pedro Albizu Camos High School both Irish? History speaks through you whether you dare to recognize it or not.

At the turn of the century, Martin Barrett was murdered by mine owners

because he organized a strike. So what am I to do when Mexican farmworkers are sprayed with pesticides? How can I look at Martin's picture in my photobook when Chicago cops can strangle Jorge Guillén and walk away from it? If a strategy of depopulation put me here, what do I do when the FBI raids and shuts down HIMRI, a group dedicated to reducing the deaths of Puerto Rican infants? The American Irish need to wake up and live out the commandments of their history, show some respect to the bodies of their slain and starved ancestors, and use that memory to subvert a racist power structure that grants them privilege in exchange for betraying who they are

and swallowing the amnesia of whiteness.

On that plane I cried. My sad black bag, packed with stones and pressed flowers and pictures, couldn't fit what I always carry with me. I love Ireland and I love my people, and on those streets I felt again like a child. But Chicago is my home, and Chicago's problems are my problems. Let the awakening come to Eire, where I know *tíocfaigh ar lá* (our day will come). In another bright day to come to this country, which is yet to be a nation, the American Irish have a history written in their blood, and a choice to live it or not.

Four Green Fields
by the Clancy Brothers

*What did I have? said the fine old woman.
What did I have? this proud old woman did say.
I had four green fields. Each one was a jewel.
But strangers came and tried to take them from me.
I had fine strong sons. They fought to save my jewels.
They fought and died, and that was my grief, said she.*

*Long time ago, said the fine old woman.
Long time ago, this proud old woman did say.
There was war and death, plundering and pillage.
My children starved by mountain, valley and sea.
And their wailing cries, they shook the very heavens.
My four green fields ran red with their blood, said she.*

*What have I now? said the fine old woman.
What have I now? this proud old woman did say.
I have four green fields. One of them's in bondage
In strangers' hands, that tried to take it from me.
But my sons have sons, as brave as were their fathers.
My fourth green field will bloom once again, said she.*

IRLANDA

De La insurrección al Tratado de Paz

Por Raymond Soto Dávila
Especial para Claridad

La Caída de la insurrección irlandesa de 1916 en Dublin, trajo una dura represión contra los luchadores por la independencia de Irlanda, con 90 sentenciados a muerte y poco más de 3 mil 500 insurrectos detenidos en campos de internación ingleses. De estos sentenciados a muerte, en su mayoría los ajusticiados eran líderes de la insurrección. A los restantes sentenciados términos se les conmutó la sentencia a diversos términos de servidumbre penal.

La ejecución de la mayoría de los líderes de la insurrección tuvo el efecto de que amplios sectores del pueblo se volcaran a favor del nacionalismo. Entre otras cosas, ello llevó a que se realizara una vigorosa campaña a favor de la excarcelación de prisioneros políticos irlandeses. Como consecuencia de la campaña y de otras consideraciones políticas, el gobierno inglés excarceló a un grupo de luchadores, entre los que se encontraba Michael Collins, en diciembre de 1916.

Collins estuvo encarcelado por unos meses tanto en Inglaterra como en Gales, manteniéndose activo durante este periodo, organizando miembros para el Irish Republican Brotherhood entre los propios compañeros de prisión. Collins, junto con otros prisioneros, analizó críticamente las tácticas y estrategias que habían sido utilizadas por

el movimiento independentista irlandés. De ese análisis crítico surgirían nuevas formulaciones de tácticas, estrategias y formas organizativas que tendrían notable éxito en la lucha por la independencia. Collins pasó a ocupar el puesto de secretario de la Asociación de Ayuda Nacional Irlandesa, una vez fue excarcelado. Desde esta organización mantuvo vínculos con diversos exprisioneros políticos y con aquellos que salían de las prisiones y campos de interacción ingleses. Collins laboró arduamente en diversas campañas a favor de los prisioneros políticos, en la organización de militantes y en la creación de cuadros organizativos para la lucha.

Collins llegó a ocupar diversos puestos de mucha responsabilidad en un número de organizaciones. Entre otros, destacamos el de director de organización en el Ejército de Voluntarios, más tarde conocido como el "Irish Republican Army" (IRA). Fue intensa y multifacética la actividad de Collins en la agitada situación de Irlanda, tras la insurrección de 1916 de Irlandés. El apoyo de sectores del pueblo hacia los nacionalistas fue evidente cada vez que regresaba a Irlanda un grupo de recién excarcelados. Prueba de ellos fue el impresionante recibimiento que el pueblo dio en Dublin a un grupo de exprisioneros políticos el 18 de junio de 1917. Entre estos exprisioneros estaba Eamon de Valera, uno de los líderes más connotados de la sublevación del 1916.

En el plano político, resultó bien significativo que el pueblo diera apoyo a Sinn Fein en los comicios parlamentarios del 1917. El Sinn Fein había sido creado desde el 1905 por diversas organizaciones pero no había incursionado en el proceso eleccionario hasta el 1917, con excepción de un intento anterior. A través de un trabajo coordinado con el "Irish Republican Brotherhood", el Ejército de Voluntarios y otras organizaciones, el cual resultó en una estrategia de propaganda muy exitosa, el Sinn Fein comenzó a disputar el dominio electoral del partido Parlamentario Irlandés. Dicho partido defendía el concepto del "Home Rule", una fórmula política autonomista. En la participación del Sinn Fein en las elecciones del 1917, curiosamente, debido a que se podía nominar prisioneros políticos, resultaron electos luchadores en la cárcel. Estos prisioneros ganaron varios escaños, táctica sumamente efectiva.

En el 1918, el Partido Parlamentario Irlandés recuperó terreno nuevamente pero su concepto del "Home Rule" ya había sufrido considerable erosión ya que no correspondía a las aspiraciones del pueblo irlandés. El Sinn Fein presentó una alternativa al pueblo de verdadera independencia, avalada por un trabajo muy intenso. El Sinn Fein mantuvo una campaña vigorosa contra la participación de irlandeses en la Primera Guerra Mundial, participación que Inglaterra necesitaba urgentemente ante las terribles

bajas que su ejército estaba sufriendo en los campos de batalla europeos.

Hay dos hechos significativos que logran detener el avance del Partido Parlamentario Irlandés. En marzo de 1918, muere Redmond, el líder máximo de dicho partido, dejando a ese partido sin ningún liderato alterno que lo relevara. Luego, en mayo del mismo año, el gobierno inglés estableció la conscripción en Irlanda, a lo cual el Sinn Fein ripostó intensificando su campaña de oposición a la participación irlandesa en el ejército inglés. Tal fue la oposición del pueblo a la conscripción que incluso el Partido Parlamentario y la Iglesia Católica se pronunciaron en contra de dicha imposición. El gobierno inglés tomó represalias duras, arrestó y encarceló a sobre 100 líderes del Sinn Fein. Estos fueron acusados de estar involucrados en un presunto complot con los alemanes. El efecto político fue que prácticamente nadie lo creyó, quedando el Sinn Fein como el auténtico defensor del pueblo irlandés y provocando esto la marginación del Partido Parlamentario Irlandés y provocando esto la marginación del Partido Parlamentario Irlandés y su condena a la extinción.

Los años que siguieron entre 1918 al 1922- se caracterizaron por una combinación de tareas políticas y militares bien sincronizadas. Se convocó la primera sesión del {Dail Eireann}, asamblea nacional irlandés, el 21 de enero de 1919. Este organismo lo articuló el Sinn Fein, y proveyó un foro independentista para el pueblo irlandés. El Sinn Fein mantuvo su participación en las elecciones parlamentarias y, pese a la represión que desatara Inglaterra, logró

copar la mayoría de los escaños en 1918. Se estableció un gobierno paralelo que administro pueblos, comarcas, provincias, etc. A través de la creación de cortes de arbitraje, se logró ejercer un control administrativo-judicial bastante notable. En el plano militar, el IRA, bajo la dirección de Michael Collins, libró una guerra de guerrillas, urbano y rural, que por dos años (1919-1921) puso en jaque a Inglaterra.

La parte diplomática no fue descuidada. Tras la primera sesión que celebrara el Dail Eireann, en Dublin, en el año 1919, se nombraron delegados para la conferencia de paz en Versalles, Francia, organizada para tratar el mundo post guerra de aquella época. Tras múltiples gestiones diplomáticas, realizadas por los representantes irlandeses ante diversos países europeos, tan solo la Russia soviética le dio reconocimiento diplomático a la República irlandesa. La escalada militar del IRA, su efectividad en proveer el poder coercitivo necesario para hacer valer las sentencias de las cortes de arbitraje, terminaron por dejar sin litigantes a las cortes inglesas. Ante la incapacidad de aniquilar la lucha nacionalista irlandesa, Inglaterra recurrió desesperadamente a sus tropas más represivas, los Auxiliares y los "Black and Tans". Ni aún con el terror desatado por estas tropas, pudo Inglaterra sofocar la lucha nacional irlandesa. Con la opinión doméstica e internacional en su contra, el gobierno inglés se vio obligado a firmar un tratado de Paz con los nacionalistas irlandeses en 1921.

El tratado de Paz de 1921 otorgó a Irlanda un estatus constitucional de dominio, igual a Canadá, Australia, Nueva Zelandia y Africa del Sur, dentro de la Mancomunidad Británica de aquella época. Irlanda podía tener un parlamento para legislar leyes por la paz, el orden y el buen gobierno. Podía también tener un ejecutivo responsable ante dicho parlamento. Se le dio el título de "Estado Libre Irlandés". El único vínculo político visible a Inglaterra era un juramento de lealtad a la Corona Británica. Las restricciones a la soberanía irlandesa estaban centradas en la defensa aeronaval y a la concesión de ciertos puertos y facilidades navales para el gobierno inglés. Otras áreas de interés económico estaban sujetos a negociación.

Se pudo haber esperado que el Estado Libre Irlandés prepararse a Inglaterra para reorganizarse como metrópoli y fortalecerse como poder imperial. El curso histórico, sin embargo, sería otro. El curso histórico, sin embargo, sería otro. La capacidad de lucha y el fervor nacionalista irlandés, por un lado, y la renuencia de Inglaterra a ceder su poder sobre su colonia, por el otro, traería que años más tarde se escenificara un desenlace de una Irlanda dividida: la total independencia de la parte sur del territorio y la sujeción al poder colonial inglés en la parte norteña. El tratado, de hecho, ya sentaba las bases para esta división. Los procesos políticos particulares a esta nueva etapa ameritan otra discusión.

Albizu Campos quería crearle al Imperio norteamericano con el "Puerto Rican Question" lo que los irlandeses le crearon al Imperio británico con el "Irish Question"...

Juan Mari Bras citando a Paulino Castro en su Historia Sinóptica del Partido Nacionalista (1947), nos señala lo que en Albizu Campos sería su estrategia independizadora: Puerto Rico tiene que plantearle una crisis grave a la administración colonial para poder ser atendido en su demanda. Hasta ahora la colonia ha formulando solicitud para cosas de poca monta. En Washington ha desconocido a sus comisionados estos se han resignado a volver hacer otra genuflexión. Una nación como la norteamericana, con enormes problemas nacionales e internacionales, no tiene tiempo para atender a hombre sumisos y serviles. Se requiere la formación de una organización rebelde que abarque todo el pueblo de Puerto Rico y que rompa definitivamente con el régimen de la colonia y solicite de las naciones libres el reconocimiento de nuestra independencia para poder lograr la reconcentración de la mente norteamericana sobre nuestra situación.

Las declaraciones de 1926 tienen dos aspectos de gran importancia: el de la crisis que como elemento básico tenga la reconcentración de la mente norteamericana sobre el caso puertorriqueño. Al igual que los irlandeses de su tiempo, Albizu Campos quería crearle al Imperio norteamericano con el "Puerto Rican Question" lo que los irlandeses le crearon al Imperio británico con el "Irish Question".

Todavía para 1993, Juan Mari Bras en su libro Patria y Universo nos devuelve a la siempre presencia de la influencia de Irlanda en el espectro político puertorriqueño cuando nos presenta el problema de la siguiente manera: (. . .)

Algunos llegaron a visualizar el futuro patrio como el de Irlanda del Norte, Y frente a ese hecho inevitable, unos se disponían anímicamente a convertirse en el IRA de aquí y otros en los parlamentarios irlandeses que tiene escaños en la Cámara de los Comunes de Londres y desde allí hacen lo que pueden por la independencia o siquiera la autonomía de Irlanda del Norte.

En su ensayo Algunas ideas tentativas de pensamiento social cristiano en Pedro Albizu Campos que se recoge en La Nación Puertorriqueña, Ernesto Sánchez Huertas categóricamente afirma: (...) Nuestro Albizu Campos identificó la causa de la independencia de Puerto Rico con la experiencia irlandesa y aplicó a Puerto Rico aquellas cosas que le parecieron útiles a nuestro país. (. . .) De qué otro modo podía movilizarse militarmente a un pueblo débil para confrontar a Estados Unidos? Cómo darle un carácter sagrado a la independencia de Puerto Rico si no era identificándose principalmente con el elemento católico de civilización y la cultura hispánica? (realce del autor)

Es bueno señalar que el último indulto que se le concediera al líder nacionalista antes de su muerte, fue la consecuencia de toda una campaña por su liberación que se llevara a cabo nacional e internacionalmente. La misma fue dirigida por el entonces Movimiento Pro Independencia (MPI) y por la Federación de Universitarios Pro Independencia (FUPI); incluyendo a artistas, profesionales y grupos y asociaciones de todo tipo. Los gobiernos de Argentina, Chile, Brasil y España escribieron a Luis Muñoz Marín su carcelero solicitándole el indulto. El 15 de noviembre de 1964 se obtiene por la presión solidaria de un pueblo que se emita el perdón ejecutivo. Seis meses después, el 21 de abril de 1965, Pedro Albizu Campos entraba en la inmortalidad y en la memoria de su pueblo. Su entierro ha de ser la manifestación más grande de solidaridad expresada por la nación puertorriqueña.

Desde su último encierro al día de su liberación y con posterioridad a su muerte se continuará la persecución de los independentistas. El historiador de la policía, José E. Martínez Valentín en su libro La presencia de la policía en la historia de Puerto Rico (1955), nos refiere el siguiente dato: En el 1954 cuatro nacionalistas tirotearon la Cámara de Representantes de los Estados Unidos y el gobernador Muñoz

(Véase la página 2)

Another Country's Colony

by Annette Fuentes

The Irish are riding the crest of an enormous wave of popularity and public fascination with things Gaelic. Everywhere you turn, there is book, film or tourist attraction in Dublin being touted. Irish songs and singers are hot. So are the Irish stepdancers, whose stiff-armed, mechanical movements inspire reams of press coverage. It is, in short, a great day for the Irish - for as long as it lasts.

I started thinking about this explosion in things Gaelic after seeing the film "The Devil's Own," a big-budget Hollywood flick that is equal parts blood and phony sentimentality. It's the story of an Irish Republican Army soldier who comes to New York to buy missiles and stays with a city cop under an assumed identity. The cop, of course, is Irish, too, and he gets a literal crash course on The Troubles and IRA guerilla warfare. Before he comes to New York, the IRA leader is seen wiping out a dozen or so British soldiers who are out to get him. But despite its bloody portrayal of the IRA, the film romanticizes the group and certainly casts the leader as a hero, whose own course as an IRA soldier was set, we're told, when he saw his father shot to death as the family ate dinner. (His father was an IRA sympathizer.) The film's villain is plainly the robotic British intelligence officer who pursues the hero with a vengeance. When the hero dies at the end at the hands of the city cop, there is no real victory, and the cop is clearly sympathetic to the young Belfast warrior, who knows that the killing is bad but also understands that it won't stop until the British get out of Ireland.

Imagine, if you will, that this same movie was made with Puerto Rico as the occupied country and members of the FALN and Los Macheteros were waging the same kind of war against the United States that the IRA has waged against Britain for generations. Instead of Harrison Ford as the cop, there's Jimmy Smits. And in Brad Pitt's role of the IRA hero, how about Esai Morales? The parallels between Ireland and Puerto Rico as two occupied nations, each with a history of struggle for independence, have been made many times by many historians and activists. Even if the history of relations between Irish immigrants to the United States and Puerto Rican migrants has been characterized more by hostility and prejudice from the white ethnics, the two groups have more in common than what separates them. The potato famine of 1847, Black '47 as it's known, was caused by British colonial policies that sent Irish food and produce out of the country. Puerto Rico saw its rich agricultural base perverted and distorted the same way by U.S. agribusiness and export policies. The same forces that drove the Irish by the millions - to U.S. shores have been at work in Puerto Rican migration.

But for the U.S. audience, a movie romanticizing the Puerto Rican struggle for independence, complete with the FALN bombing of Fraunces Tavern and the nationalists' firing on Congress, would be a hard sell, to put it mildly. There are 15 Puerto Rican nationalists still in prison for doing less than what Brad Pitt did in the first five minutes of the IRA movie. And yet, the IRA leader Gerry Adams has been welcomed in the White House. The group that still uses

awesome violence against British control in Northern Ireland has been rehabilitated in the U.S. public's perception. After years of persistent lobbying and support by Irish American politicians and officials, the IRA and the struggle for Irish autonomy has gained a legitimacy and public sympathy that Puerto Rican independentistas can only dream of. Remember when then-NYC Mayor David Dinkins backed IRA member Joe Doherty's attempt to avoid extradition to Britain? The same Dinkins caused an uproar in the Puerto Rican community when he called Lolita Lébron a terrorist.

So why is that? Is it just gross prejudice against Puerto Ricans, whom most U.S. residents perceive as Spanish speaking, darker skinned foreigners? Sadly, most people in this country are totally in the dark when it comes to Puerto Rico on any subject, including the independence movement. Out in Des Moines, Iowa, it's more likely people will know about the IRA and Gerry Adams than they will about Lolita Lébron or Alejandrina Torres. We can thank the mass media for that. There has always been extensive coverage in the print and broadcast media about the struggles in Northern Ireland, coverage that has usually betrayed some sympathy for the IRA.

No, the truth is that Puerto Rican independence fighters will never get the good press, the sympathetic film portrayals or public support from more than a handful of Puerto Rican politicians. The Irish have an edge in this country that Puerto Ricans will never have. For the United States, it's far easier to shed a tear for Northern Ireland because it's another country's colony.