



MANCHESTER  
MARTYRS  
SPEECHES FROM  
THE DOCK

# MANCHESTER MARTYRS: SPEECHES FROM THE DOCK



28 October 1867.

Published by An Chartlann



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# WILLIAM ALLEN'S SPEECH FROM THE DOCK

My Lords and Gentlemen, – it is not my intention to occupy much of your time in answering your question. Your question is one that can be easily asked, but requires an answer which I am ignorant of. Abler and more eloquent men could not answer it. Where were the men who have stood in the dock – Burke, Emmet and others, who have stood in the dock in defence of their country? When the question was put, what was their answer? Their answer was null and void. Now, with your permission, I will review a portion of the evidence that has been brought against me.

*Here Mr. Justice Blackburne interrupted: “It was too late to criticise the evidence, and the Court had neither the right nor the power to alter or review it. If, you have any reason to give why, either upon technical or moral grounds, the sentence should not be passed upon you, we will hear it, but it is too late for you to review the evidence to show that it was wrong.” “Cannot that be done in the morning, Sir?”, asked Allen, but the Judge said not. “No one could alter or review the evidence in any way after the verdict had been passed by the jury. We can only take the verdict as right; and the only question for you is, why judgement should not follow.” The prisoner proceeded to deliver the following address:*

No man in this court regrets the death of Sargeant Brett more than I do, and I positively say, in the presence of the Almighty and ever-living God, that I am innocent, aye, as innocent as any man in this court. I don't say this for the sake of mercy; I want no mercy – I'll have no mercy. I'll die, as many thousands have died, for the sake of their beloved land, and in defence of it. I will die proudly and triumphantly in defence of republican principles and the liberty of an oppressed and enslaved people. Is it possible we are asked why sentence should not be passed upon us, on the evidence of prostitutes off the streets of Manchester, fellows out of work, convicted felons – aye, an Irishman sentenced to be hanged when an English dog would have got off. I say positively and defiantly, justice has not been done me since I was arrested. If justice had been done me, I would not have been handcuffed at the preliminary investigation in Bridge Street; and in this court justice has not been done me in any shape or form. I was

brought up here, and all the prisoners by my side were allowed to wear overcoats, and I was told to take mine off. What is the principle of that? There was an obvious object in that; and so I say positively that justice has not been done me. As for the other prisoners, they can speak for themselves with regard to that matter.

And now with regard to the other means by which I have been identified. I have to say that my clothes were kept for four hours by the policemen in Fairfield station, and shown to parties to identify me as being one of the perpetrators of this affair on Hyde Road. Also in Albert station a handkerchief was kept on my head the whole night, so that I could be identified the next morning in the corridor by the witnesses. I was ordered to leave on the handkerchief so that the witnesses could more plainly see I was one of the parties alleged to have committed the outrage. As for myself, I feel the righteousness of my every act with regard to what I have done in defence of my country. I have no fear. I am fearless of any punishment that can be inflicted on me. One remark more. I return Mr. Seymour and Mr. Jones my sincere and heartfelt thanks for their eloquent and able advocacy regarding my part in this affray. I wish also to return to Mr. Roberts the very same. My name, Sir, might be wished to be known. It is not William O'Meara Allen. My name is William Phillip Allen. I was reared in Bandon, in the county of Cork, and from that place I take my name. I am proud of my country, and proud of my parentage. My Lords, I have done.

# MICHAEL LARKIN'S SPEECH FROM THE DOCK

I have only got a word or two to say concerning Sergeant Brett. As my friend here said, no one could regret the man's death as much as I do. With regard to the charge of pistols and revolvers, and my using them, I call my God as a witness that I used neither pistols, revolvers, nor any instrument that day that would take the life of a child, let alone a man. Nor did I go there on purpose to take life away. Certainly, my lords, I do not want to deny that I did go to give aid and assistance to those two noble heroes that were confined in that van – Kelly and Deasey. I did go to do as much as lay in my power to extricate them from their confinement; but I did not go to take life, nor, my lord, did anyone else. It is a misfortune that life was taken; but if it was taken it was not done intentionally, and the man who has taken life, ye have not got. I was at the scene of action when there was over, I dare say, 150 people standing by. I thought, my lord, I had some respectable people to come up as witnesses against me. I am sorry to have to say, but as my friend said, – I will make no further remarks concerning that.

All I have to say, my lords and gentlemen, is that so far as my trial went, and the way it was conducted, I believe I have got a fair trial. So far as my counsel went, they have done their utmost in the protection of my life; likewise, my worthy solicitor, Mr. Roberts. But I believe the old saying is a true one; what is decreed a man in the page of life he has to fulfil, either on the gallows, by drowning, death in bed, or on the battlefield. So I look to the mercy of God. May God forgive all who have sworn my life away. As I am a dying man, I forgive them from the bottom of my heart. May God forgive them.

# MICHAEL O'BRIEN'S SPEECH FROM THE DOCK

I shall commence by saying that every witness who has sworn anything against me has sworn falsely. I have not had a stone in my possession since I was a boy. I had no pistol in my possession on the day when it is alleged this outrage was committed. You call it an outrage; I don't. My name is Michael O'Brien. I was born in the county of Cork, and have the honour to be a fellow-parishioner of Peter O'Neill Crowley, who was fighting against the British troops at Mitchelstown last March, and who fell fighting against British tyranny in Ireland, I am a citizen of the United States of America, and if Charles Francis Adams had done his duty towards me, as he ought to do in this country, I would not be in this dock answering your questions now.

Mr. Adams did not come, though I wrote to him. He did not come to see if I could not find evidence to disprove the charge, which I positively could, if he had taken the trouble of sending or coming to see what I could do. I hope the American people will notice that part of the business. The right of man is freedom. The great God has endowed him with affections that he may use, not smother them, and a world that may be enjoyed. Once a man is satisfied he is doing right, and attempts to do anything with that conviction, he must be willing to face all the consequences.

Ireland, with its beautiful scenery, its delightful climate, its rich and productive lands, is capable of supporting more than treble its population in ease and comfort. Yet no man, except a paid official of the British Government, can say there is a shadow of liberty, that there is a spark of glad life amongst its plundered and persecuted inhabitants. It is to be hoped that its imbecile and tyrannical rulers will be for ever driven from its soil, amidst the execration of the world. How beautifully the aristocrats of England moralise on the despotism of the rulers of Italy and Dahomey; in the case of Naples with what indignation did they speak of the ruin of families by the detention of its head or some loved member in a prison. Who have not heard their condemnations of the tyranny that would compel honourable and good men to spend their useful lives in hopeless banishment?

They cannot find words to express their horror of the cruelties of the King of Dahomey because he sacrificed 2,000 human beings yearly, but why don't those persons who pretend such virtuous indignation at the misgovernment of other countries look at home, and see if greater crimes than those they charge against other Governments are not committed by themselves or by their sanction? Let them look at London, and see the thousands that want bread there, while those aristocrats are rioting in luxuries and crimes. Look to Ireland; see the hundreds of thousands of its people in misery and want. See the virtuous, beautiful, industrious women who only a few years ago—aye, and yet—are obliged to look at their children dying for want of food.

Look at what is called the majesty of the law on one side, and the long deep misery of a noble people on the other. Which are the young men of Ireland to respect—the law that murders or banishes their people, or the means to resist relentless tyranny and end their miseries for ever under a home Government? I need not answer that question here. I trust the Irish people will answer it to their satisfaction soon. I am not astonished at my conviction. The Government of this country have the power of convicting any person. They appoint the judge; they choose the jury; and by means of what they call patronage (which is the means of corruption) they have the power of making the laws to suit their purposes.

I am confident that my blood will rise a hundredfold against the tyrants who think proper to commit such an outrage. In the first place, I say I was identified improperly, by having chains on my hands and feet at the time of identification, and thus the witnesses who have sworn to my throwing tones and firing a pistol have sworn to what is false; for I was, as those ladies said, at the jail gates. I thank my counsel for their able defence, and also Mr. Roberts, for his attention to my case.



# EDWARD O'MEAGHER

## CONDON'S SPEECH AT THE DOCK

My Lords, this has come upon me some what by surprise. It appeared to me rather strange that upon any amount of evidence, which, of course, was false, a man could have been convicted of wilfully murdering others he never saw or heard of before he has put in prison. I do not care to detain your lordships, but I cannot help remarking that Mr. Shaw, who has come now to gloat upon his victims, after having sworn away their lives, — that man has sworn what is altogether false; and there are contradictions in the depositions which have not been brought before your Lordships' notice. I suppose the depositions being imperfect, there was no necessity for it. As to Mr. Batty, he swore at his first examination before the magistrates that a large stone fell on me, a stone which Mr. Roberts said at the time would have killed an elephant. But not the slightest mark was found on my devoted head; and if I was to go round the country, and he with me, I exhibiting the stone as having fallen on me, and he as the man who would swear to it, I do not know which would be looked for with the most earnestness. However it has been accepted by the jury. Now he says he only thinks so.

There is another matter to consider. I have been sworn to, I believe, by some of the witnesses who have also sworn to others, though some of them can prove they were in another city altogether — in Liverpool. Others have an overwhelming alibi, and I should by right have been tried with them; but I suppose your lordships cannot help that. We have, for instance, Thomas, the policeman, who swore to another prisoner. He identified him on a certain day, and the prisoner was not arrested for two days afterwards. As for Thomas, I do not presume that any jury could have believed him. He had heard of the blood-money, and, of course, was prepared to bid pretty high for it. My alibi has not been strong, and unfortunately I was not strong in pocket and was not able to produce more testimony to prove where I was at exactly that time.

With regard to the unfortunate man who has lost his life, I sympathise with him and his family as deeply as, do your lordships or

the jury, or anyone in the court. I deeply regret the unfortunate occurrence, but I am as perfectly innocent of his blood as any man. I never had the slightest intention of taking life. I have done nothing at all in connection with that man, and I do not desire to be accused of a murder which I have not committed. With regard to another matter, my learned counsel has no doubt for the best, expressed some opinions on the misgovernment to which my country has been subjected. I am firmly convinced there is prejudice in the minds of the people here, and it has been increased and excited by the newspapers or by some of them, and to a certain extent has influenced the minds of the jury to convict the men standing in this dock, on a charge of which — a learned gentleman remarked a few nights since — they would be acquitted if they had been charged with murdering an old woman for the sake of the money in her pocket but of a political offence of this kind they could not.

Now, sir, with regard to the opinions I hold on national matters with regard to those men who have been released from that van, in which, unfortunately life was lost, I believe that, certainly to some extent, there was an excuse. Perhaps it was unthought; but if those men had been in other countries, occupying other positions—if Jefferson Davis had been released in a northern city, there would have been a cry of applause throughout all England. If Garibaldi, whom I saw before I was shut out from the world, had been arrested, and was released, or something of that kind had taken place, they would have applauded the bravery of the act. If the captives of King Theodore had been released, that, too, would have been applauded. But, as it happened to be in England of course, it is an awful thing while yet in Ireland murders are perpetrated on unoffending men, as in the case of the riots in Waterford, where an unoffending man was murdered, and no one was punished for it. I do not desire to detain your lordships. I can only say that I leave this world without a stain on my conscience that I have been wilfully guilty of anything in connexion with the death of Sergeant Brett. I am totally guiltless. I leave this world without malice to anyone. I do not accuse the jury, but I believe they were prejudiced. I do not accuse them of wilfully wishing to convict, but prejudice has induced them to convict when they otherwise would not have done it.

With reference to the witnesses, every one of them has sworn falsely. I never threw a stone or fired a pistol; I was never at the place,

as they have said; it is all totally false. But as I have to go before my God, I forgive them. They will be able to meet me, some day, before that God Who is to judge us all, and then they and the people in this Court, and everyone, will know who tells the truth. Had I committed anything against the Crown of England, I would have scorned myself had I attempted to deny it; but with regard to these men, they have sworn what is altogether false. Had I been an Englishman, and arrested near the scene of that disturbance, I would have been brought as a witness to identify them; but, being an Irishman, it was supposed my sympathy was with them. On suspicion of that sympathy, I was arrested, and, in consequence of the arrest and the rewards which were offered, I was identified. It could not be otherwise. As I said before, my opinions on national matters do not at all relate to the case before your lordships. We have been found guilty, and, as a matter of course, we accept our death as gracefully as possible. We are not afraid to die — at least I am not.

I have no sin or stain upon me; and I leave this world at peace with all. With regard to the other prisoners who are to be tried afterwards, I hope our blood at least will satisfy the craving for it. I hope our blood will be enough; and that those men, who I honestly believe are guiltless of the blood of that man—that those other batches will get a fair, a free and more impartial trial. We view matters in a different light from what the jury do. We have been imprisoned, and have not had the advantage of understanding exactly to what this excitement has led. I can only hope and pray that this prejudice will disappear—that my oppressed country will right herself some day, and that her people, so far from being looked upon with scorn and aversion, will receive what they are entitled to, the respect not only of the civilised world, but of Englishmen.

I, too, am an American citizen, and on English territory I have committed no crime which makes me amenable to the Crown of England. I have done nothing; and, as a matter of course, I did expect protection — as this gentleman (pointing to O'Brien) has said, the protection of the Ambassador of my Government. I am a citizen of the State of Ohio; and I have to say my name is not Shore. My name is Edward O'Meagher Condon. I belong to Ohio, and there are loving hearts there that will be sorry for this. I have nothing but my best wishes to send them, and my warmest feelings, and to assure them I can die as a Christian and an Irishman, and am not ashamed or afraid

of anything I have done, or the consequences, before God or man. They would be ashamed of me if I was in the slightest degree a coward, or concealed my opinions.

The unfortunate divisions of our countrymen in America have, to a certain extent, neutralised the efforts that we have made either in one direction or another for the liberation of our country. All these things have thwarted us, and as a matter of course we must only submit to our fate. I only trust again that those who are to be tried after us will have a fair trial, and that our blood will satisfy the cravings which I understand exist. You will soon send us before God, and I am perfectly prepared to go. I have nothing to regret, or to retract, or take back. I shall only say, **GOD SAVE IRELAND.**

I wish to add a word or two. There is nothing in the close of my political career which I regret. I don't know of one act which could bring the blush of shame to my face, or make me afraid to meet my God or fellow man. I would be most happy, and nothing would give me greater pleasure, than to die on the field for my country in defence of her liberty. As it is, I cannot die on the field, but I can die on the scaffold, I hope as a soldier, a man and a Christian.

# JOHN MARTIN'S ORATION AT GLASNEVIN CEMETERY

**23 November 1867.**

Fellow-countrymen — This is a strange kind of funeral procession in which we are engaged to-day. We are here, a vast multitude of men, women, and children in a very inclement season of the year, under rain and through mud. We are here escorting three empty hearses to the consecrated last resting place of those who die in the Lord (cheers). The three bodies that we would tenderly bear to the churchyard, and would bury in consecrated ground with all the solemn rites of religion, are not here. They are away in a foreign and hostile land, where they have been thrown into unconsecrated ground, branded by the triumphant hatred of our enemies as the vile remains of murderers.

Those three men whose memories we are here to-day to honour — Allen, O'Brien, and Larkin — they were not murderers. These men were pious men, virtuous men — they were men who feared God and loved their country. They sorrowed for the sorrows of the dear old native land of their love. They wished, if possible, to save her, and for that love and for that wish they were doomed to an ignominious death at the hands of the British hangman. It was as Irish patriots that these men were doomed to death. And it was as Irish patriots that they met their death. For these reasons, my countrymen, we here to-day have joined in this solemn procession to honour their memories. For that reason we say from our hearts, 'May their souls rest in peace'. For that reason, my countrymen, we join in their last prayer, 'God save Ireland'. The death of these three men was an act of English policy.

I say the death of these men was a legal murder, and that legal murder was an act of English policy — of the policy of that nation which through jealousy and hatred of our nation, destroyed by fraud and force our just government sixty-seven years ago. They have been sixty-seven sad years of insult and robbery — of impoverishment — of extermination — of suffering beyond what any other subject people but ours have ever endured from the malignity of foreign masters. Nearly through all these years the Irish people continued to pray for the restoration of their Irish national rule. They offered their

forgiveness to England. They offered even their friendship to England if she would only give up her usurped power to tyrannise over us, and leave us to live in peace, and as honourable neighbours. But in vain. England felt herself strong enough to continue to insult and rob us, and she was too greedy and too insolent to cease from robbing and insulting us. Now it has come to pass as a consequence of that malignant policy pursued for so many long years — it has come to pass that the great body of the Irish people despair of obtaining peaceful restitution of our national rights.

And it has also come to pass that vast numbers of Irishmen, whom the oppression of English rule forbade to live by honest industry in their own country, have in America learned to become soldiers. And those Irish soldiers seem resolved to make war against England. And England is in a panic of rage and fear in consequence of this. And being in a panic about Fenianism, she hopes to strike terror into her Irish malcontents by a legal murder. England wanted to show that she was not afraid of Fenianism — And she has only shown that she is not afraid to do injustice in the face of Heaven and of man. Many a wicked statute she has framed—many a jury she has packed, in order to dispose of her Irish political offenders — but in the case of Allen, O'Brien, and Larkin, she has committed such an outrage on justice and decency as to make even many Englishmen stand aghast. I shall not detain you with entering into details with which you are all well acquainted as to the shameful scenes of the handcuffing of the untried prisoners — as to the shameful scenes of the trial up to the last moment, when the three men — our dearly beloved Irish brethren, were forced to give up their innocent lives as a sacrifice for the cause of Ireland; and, fellow-countrymen, these three humble Irishmen who represented Ireland on that sad occasion demeaned themselves as Christians, as patriots, modestly, courageously, piously, nobly.

We need not blush for them. They bore themselves all through with a courage worthy of the greatest heroes that ever obtained glory upon earth. They behaved through all the trying scenes I referred to with Christian patience — with resignation to the will of God — with modest, yet proud and firm adherence to principle. They showed their love to Ireland and their fear of God from the first to the last. It is vain for me to attempt to detain you with many words upon this matter. I will say this, that all who are here do not approve of the schemes for the relief of Ireland that these men were supposed to have

contemplated; but all who love Ireland, all generous, Christian men, and women, and children of Ireland — all the children growing up to be men and women of Ireland — all those feel an intense sympathy, an intense love for the memories of these three men whom England has murdered in form of law by way of striking terror into her Irish subjects. Fellow-countrymen, it is idle almost for me to persist in addressing weak words of mine to you — for your presence here to-day — your demeanour all through — the solemn conduct of the vast multitude assembled directly under the terrorism of a hostile government — say more than the words of the greatest orator — more than the words of a Meagher could say for you.

You have behaved yourselves all through this day with most admirable spirit as good Irishmen and women — as good boys and girls of holy Ireland ought to be, and I am sure you will behave so to the end. This demonstration is mainly one of mourning for the fate of these three good Irishmen, but fellow-countrymen, and women, and boys, and girls, it is also one of protest and indignation against the conduct of our rulers. Your attendance here to-day is a sufficient protest. Your orderly behaviour — your good temper all through this wretched weather — your attendance here in such vast numbers for such a purpose — avowedly and in the face of the terrorism of the government, which falls most directly upon the metropolis — that is enough for protest. You in your multitudes, men, women, and children, have to-day made that protest. Your conduct has been admirable for patience, for good nature, for fine spirit, for solemn sense of that great duty you were resolved to do. You will return home with the same good order and inoffensiveness. You will join with me now in repeating the prayer of the three martyrs whom we mourn — ‘God save Ireland!’ And all of you, men, women, and boys and girls that are to be men and women of holy Ireland, will ever keep the sentiment of that prayer in your heart of hearts.

# GOD SAVE IRELAND.

By Timothy Daniel Sullivan.

High upon the gallows tree swung the noble-hearted three,  
By the vengeful tyrant stricken in their bloom;  
But they met him face to face, with the spirit of their race,  
And they went with souls undaunted to their doom.  
“God save Ireland,” said the heroes; “God save Ireland,” said they all:  
“Whether on the scaffold high, or the battle-field we die,  
O what matter, when for Erin dear we fall!”

Girt around with cruel foes, still their courage proudly rose,  
For they thought of hearts that loved them, far and near.  
Of the millions true and brave, o’er the ocean’s swelling wave,  
And the friends in holy Ireland, ever dear.  
“God save Ireland,” said they proudly; “God save Ireland,” said we  
all:  
“Whether on the scaffold high, or the battle-field we die,  
O what matter, when for Erin dear we fall!”

Climbed they up the rugged stair; rung their voices out in prayer;  
Then, with England’s fatal cord around them cast.  
Close beneath the gallows tree kissed like brother lovingly,  
True to home and faith and freedom to the last.  
“God save Ireland,” prayed they loudly; “God save Ireland,” said we  
all:  
“Whether on the scaffold high, or the battle-field we die,  
O what matter, when for Erin dear we fall!”

Never till the latest day shall the memory pass away  
Of the gallant lives thus given for our land;  
But on the cause must go, amidst joy or weal or woe,  
‘Till we’ve made our isle a nation free and grand.  
“God save Ireland,” say we proudly, “God save Ireland,” say we all:  
“If upon the scaffold high, or the battle-field we die,  
O what matter, when for Erin dear we fall!”



