

## Twitter Thread by [Iseult White](#)



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**My great grandmother Maud Gonne was English, the daughter of a Captain of the British Army. She adopted Ireland as her home country and was an activist for people's rights her entire life. She never stopped. To the end she called out injustice where she saw it.**

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My great grandfather Major John MacBride was executed in 1916 by the British Army for fighting to create an Irish Republic. He wanted to look the British firing squad that executed him in the eye.

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"I have looked down the muzzles of too many guns in the South African war to fear death and now please carry out your sentence." They wouldn't look him in the eye. They blindfolded him. They shot him.

3/

The ideal my great grandfather died for was "religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens".

4/

Their son Sean MacBride co founded Amnesty international in 1961 to protect prisoners of conscience defined as people who were imprisoned for an opinion honestly held that did not advocate or condone personal violence. He won a Nobel peace prize for his commitment to peace.

5/

I felt betrayed when [@Amnesty](#) published a letter to deny legitimate representation to some. I was hurt and confused. Then I saw this exchange. Colm O' Gorman CEO of [@AmnestyIreland](#) shooting the breeze with a UK man. Dismissing people who spoke up from their conscience.

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Then women stood up to say they were Irish. Not anonymous accounts. People with livelihoods who take a risk when they speak up. People who speak up because they care. But Colm didn't engage with them. They should not have to expose their pain to have a voice.

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It made me white hot with rage. Yes, I have Irish credentials. But Maud Gonne was ostracised by the great Irish Republican men for wanting to divorce her husband. So she raised her son in France.

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People made snide remarks about Sean MacBride for his french accent. They still do. "We often wondered if he put it on". No he didn't. French was his first language. Though respected he was an outsider in Ireland in many ways.

<https://t.co/2XBKfSHqeV>

9/

Irish people come from all over the world. They choose our country. So when Colm O'Gorman dismisses people as UK because he doesn't like what they say he is doing our country a disservice. He is using lazy tropes that seek to other. To diminish. To make them easy to bully.

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So I spoke up. I did not anticipate the response. Not at all. People felt that my speaking up gave them a space to have a voice. I don't agree with all their views. How could I? But I am continuing to speak up. I am overwhelmed but determined.

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#IReadTheLetter

I wrote my first ever letter to the papers.

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<https://t.co/aISwKA9bKF>

Colm O'Gorman and [@amnesty](#) are on a slippery slope. I do not want to be on that slippery slope with them so that is why I am calling [@Amnesty](#) out. I am starting a campaign.

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I am not blindfolded. I am looking you in the eye. Everyone of you. I am standing up for the Ireland that my family and all our families helped to create and continue to create every day.

My great grandmother was a lifetime activist. I am an accidental activist.

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I am not alone. One of a motley crew and glad to be part of it. Because I know that we all deserve legitimate representation from our politicians and in the media.

#IReadTheLetter

#ChillingEffect

15/

#IReadTheLetter

You can too. It has a #ChillingEffect, even more so when it is signed and promoted by a global human rights organisation such as @amnesty

End

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