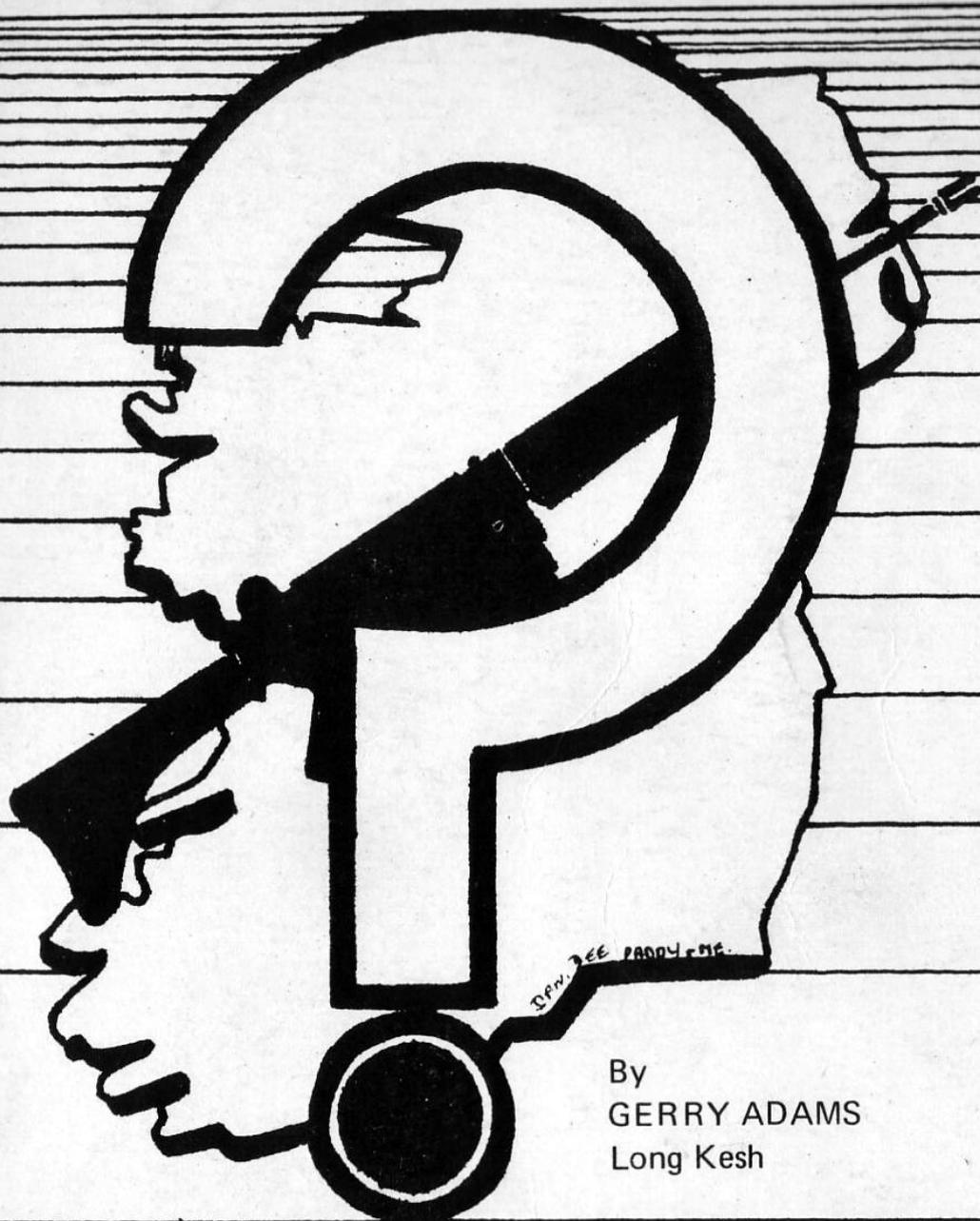


Peace in Ireland



By
GERRY ADAMS
Long Kesh

A BROAD ANALYSIS OF
THE PRESENT SITUATION

**FOR DANNY LENNON, who died for peace, and for
the Maguire children who were killed with him.**

**GERRY ADAMS, Faoi Ghlas ag Gallabh, Long
Kesh Concentration Camp, 18th September 1971**

THE LONG WAR

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The present war in Ireland has stretched into its seventh year, and the death toll continues to rise. Any student of Irish history could have penned my opening sentence at any time, or period of time, this century or, indeed, many centuries before this. Our long war has baffled, puzzled and dismayed observers and confusion has arisen through ignorance of the nature of the conflict in Ireland among many people who would genuinely be interested in helping to bring violence in Ireland to an end.

This short essay does not intend to trace the history of the conflict. It is the writer's view that violence in Ireland finds its roots, regardless of which groups are involved, within the conquest by Britain of Ireland. This conquest has lasted through several stages for many centuries and, whether economic, political, territorial or cultural, it has used violence, coercion, sectarianism and terrorism as its methods, and power as its objective.

Violence in Ireland is the result of British Imperialism; of the British connection and the British presence. It has produced 'governments,' who terrorise to maintain the status quo; organisations, who fight to maintain their interests, their own privileged positions within it and organisations which fight to end Britain's interference. It has portrayed its own involvement as that of a friendly neighbour keeping the peace. It has established partition, fear, distrust, privilege and poverty, disunity and faction fighting. It has brought death to many Irish people, to its own soldiers and to English civilians.

It is the writer's view that only an Irish Republic, free from England and from imperialist influences; controlled by the Irish people on structures decided by themselves and based on socialist principles can solve the many problems besetting Ireland. It is not my intention, however, to discuss that solution here. It is intended, instead, that this essay will attempt to explain the nature of violence in Ireland and of the possibilities of peace. This is not done from a 'know-all' position but simply in an attempt to deepen any understanding the reader may have of the present war situation.

THE PEACE CAMPAIGN

At present, the desire for peace in Ireland is being articulated at public gatherings in Belfast, Derry and Dublin. Peace Rallies have been held in other centres and will, we are told, continue to be held. Plans are well advanced for similar rallies in England and confusion as to the position in Ireland has deepened and will, doubtlessly, continue to deepen as the rallies continue. Republicans are forbidden coverage of their views on radio or television and in most newspapers, while an array of establishment politicians and reactionary paramilitaries are allowed room to pontificate on the subject of peace. The leadership of the peace campaign appears to be middle-class and there is a definite anti-Republican bias in their attitudes and in their denunciations.

Despite these facts, however, we must concede that there exists, within ordinary Irish people, a genuine desire for peace, and it is this desire which is, at present, being exploited. It is easy to suggest that peace is not political and that the peace marches are not political. Sincere people involved in the peace campaign are being swept along behind a vague and emotional demand

for peace. There always has been, and there always will be, a yearning for peace among Irish people and, when it manifests itself in rallies or pray-ins, it will be exploited by the establishment and by political opportunists as propaganda against the Republican Movement. Maximum advantage has been, and always will be, bled from the bereavement and losses of sincere and genuine people involved.

The leadership of the present peace campaign tell us that they are dedicated to building a peaceful and just society in Ireland. No amount of pray-ins or liberalism can give us this. They can assist us spiritually in living without peace, but they cannot give it to us. The system which the Irish live under is not built for peace, and it is this which will defeat the desire which is being demonstrated at present. The partitionist regimes at Leinster House and Stormont are not capable of supporting, leading or developing a just or a peaceful society. Peace has not come in their time and, because they are founded within artificial statelets and maintained by coercion, state police, concentration camps and terrorism, peace cannot come whilst they remain in control. While this control is upheld by the British Government, peace cannot come to Ireland.

FASCIST TERRORISM IN THE NORTH

Ireland is partitioned, and the North, until 1972, was governed locally from Stormont Castle by a sectarian government. It ruled in its own interests and, while these lay within British interests, it was allowed to do so. It is now ruled from Stormont Castle by a British Secretary of State and the old Stormont Parliament has been prorogued, not because it transgressed British interests, but because publicity about its methods caused embarrassment to the Westminster Government.

Until the world was alerted to these methods, the British Government encouraged them and it is now a fact accepted by all that the statelet, with its gerrymandering, its discrimination, its lack of civil or human rights, was undemocratic from the beginning.

It is also a matter of historical fact that this tiny six county statelet, 'legitimised' by Westminster's 'Government of Ireland Act,' was established in Ireland by England. It is not ruled in the interests of the Irish people, in the interests of peace - it never was. It always has been ruled in the interests of the British Government and an assortment of foreign industrialists. It is so ruled today. For this reason, British soldiers are sacrificing their lives in Ireland. While this artificial statelet continues while it is maintained in British interests by British soldiers, there can never be peace. By its very existence, the state forbids it.

BALLYMURPHY

For example Ballymurphy, my home area, wants peace, but then, Ballymurphy has always wanted peace. Violence existed there long before the IRA became active and, indeed, the IRA is a symptom of that violence, not the cause of it. Six hundred families exist in an area from which the political regime demands high and indecent rents. The area is without any provision, by the system, of facilities for young people, for the aged, for mothers or for schoolchildren.

A public house, a row of shops, a book-makers' office were all that society allowed the people of this area. One hundred of the six hundred families have more than ten people in them, with each family cramped into ill-repaired, misplanned, jerrybuilt, houses. Forty seven per

cent of the residents are refused employment and the dignity of being able to provide for their own families. Sixty per cent of the population is under eighteen years of age. Is this an example of the society in which we are supposed to believe - a just and peaceful society? Of course not, but it is an example of the society in which we live and the story can be retold of areas all over Ireland.

Ballymurphy cannot cure itself of violence by a simple removal of the IRA from that area. Any of the eighty community groups in the area (and I do not suggest that they do or do not support the Republican Movement) will tell you that they yearn for peace day and daily. They told society that in the '60s. Their demand for peace came before 1969. They have always wanted peace and they have always been denied it.

Their peace demands were for employment, for better housing, play centres, facilities for the aged, the handicapped and the young. They desired freedom from heavy rents from homes they will never own; freedom from the dole queues and freedom from the Assistance Office. They have made these peace demands to the establishment for the last twenty years, but, like all peace demands, these were political demands - demands for a just and peaceful estate!! These demands have been consistently refused because they cannot and could not, be conceded by Stormont's political regime.

In the same way, and in due course, the peace demands of the peace people will also be rejected, because their demands cannot be conceded by such political regimes. A peaceful and just society cannot be built in Ireland by peace marches in the same way as it could not be built in Ballymurphy in demands to Corporation officials or Government offices.

Some people in Ballymurphy, like others throughout Ireland, decided that only a change of system and the establishment of a social system in all Ireland, equal and worthy of the Irish people, could bring about the just and peaceful society they desired. They engaged in revolutionary warfare and the cause of their violence lay in the society they sought to change. Any genuine demand for a peaceful and just society must run the same course, because the State will resist change and will use its men of violence, its armies, its terror squads, its laws and its systems in reaction to those making the demands. For these reasons, Republican violence has continued, and any call for peace, regardless of the sincerity of those involved, which singled out the Republican violence and which ignores the nature of the society in which we live, is sadly doomed to failure.

ORANGEISM

“I am an Orangeman first and a politician and member of this parliament afterwards... All I boast is that we are a Protestant parliament and a Protestant state....” Lord Craigavon, 1934.

Much of the street violence today, and the institutionalised violence outlined above, comes from the political cult of Orangeism. The Protestant minority in Ireland were guaranteed a permanent majority by the British Government, within the Six Counties, when the British Government forced its ‘settlement’ upon Ireland.

It is within this grouping that Orangeism has its base. Republicans do not oppose Protestantism, nor, indeed, the outward trappings of Orange parades or traditional ‘Orange’ music. They *do* oppose the fascist mentality of Orangeism and the violence that it breeds. They oppose the British imperialistic prop which sustains this mentality.

With the formation of the UVF in 1913, a modern historian has noted: "...The first fascist movement of this century stalked unrecognised on to the stage of history...." It has maintained a central position since then, unrecognised, perhaps, by observers, but clearly understood by the government of that day, and by the present Government.

A long history of Orangeism, of the Williamite wars and of the formation of the Orange society, "...to support and defend the King and his heirs as long as they support the Protestant Ascendancy..." as the original oath had it, is outside the scope of this essay. It is enough to say here that the British government have consistently supported that Protestant ascendancy - they created it and have always been the prop on which it is based. British Governments have always used a sectarian or racialist system to maintain their colonies. Ireland is a prime example of how an Empire was established on 'Pro-British' minorities holding a privileged position over dispossessed majorities. Sadly, remnants of that Empire exist even yet, in the British-controlled Irish statelet.

The continued existence of Orangeism today is nurtured by a sectarian ideology, vigorously nourished by local politicians, by the British Government and by material 'benefits,' which give some appearance of substance to that ideology. The fact that these benefits may sometimes be meagre, or that some sections of the Protestant working class endure want and poverty, does not change the situation. A brief study of the well-documented system of discrimination will prove the point, that in an area carefully starved of employment and with a chronic housing shortage, Orangeism expects that Protestants have, will have and expect to have, a virtual monopoly of all the good jobs, houses, etc.

The system in the Six Counties is controlled by, was established by, and is the responsibility of, the British Government. The terrorism indulged in by those who wish to maintain their own position within that system is also the responsibility of the British Government. No solution will ever be found within this system and even the most recent short-term 'solutions' from Westminster have foundered.

The system itself is undemocratic and in its relationship with the U.K., under the British connection, democracy is also absent. Republicans believe that ordinary Protestants will face up to the reality of the situation when the British prop and the system which uses them as its tools is removed. When the British do, through time, those presently professing a pro-British loyalty will realise that the conflict in Ireland is not about religion and the reality of that situation will force the vast majority to realise that their welfare will be better served in a system in which they, and all Irishmen, regardless of religion, can work together. That system cannot evolve within the present set-up. Peace will only come when its side-effects and the British presence which maintains them are removed.

"....The Orangeman is no more loyal to England than we are. He wants the Union because he imagines it secures his prosperity; but he is ready to fire on the Union flag the moment it threatens his prosperity. The position is perfectly clear and understandable. Foolish notions of loyalty to England being eliminated it is a matter of business-like negotiation." P.H. Pearse, Republican leader - later executed by the British.

THE TWENTY-SIX COUNTIES - STATE VIOLENCE

Ireland's other parliament has control of 26 counties. It rules from Leinster House and, again, it was established by the British 'Government of Ireland Act.' It was maintained in its infancy by concentration camps, summary executions, coercion and terrorism. It is so ruled today.

It was established, according to a British Government spokesman: "...In order that British interests will be maintained with an economy of British lives...." Many Irish lives have been lost since then, and British interests continue to be maintained. Those who maintain this status quo, like their counterparts in the North, are the acceptable face of terrorism and, apart from the hardship and the torment involved in opposing them, a more passive way of removing them would be welcomed by people like me. It would save hardship to all, innocent or guilty involved.

I fear it cannot be done, especially in the Twenty-Six Counties. There, Republicanism, not just the IRA, is being coerced. Irish history is being rewritten; censorship abounds and the past is being legislated from Irish memory. The people, before this were led to believe that the Government would achieve Irish unity, and that only the IRA hampered their efforts.

Now, we are being asked to believe that Irish Unity is not only unlikely, but that it is a distasteful and unnecessary thing. We are being told that we don't really want to be free and that the British Government is really Ireland's friend. We are being asked to believe that we have no Irish language of our own. It, like Wolfe Tone 1916 and Partition, is only part of a clever IRA propaganda plot.

The overriding question is, of course, the National Question, but there are many, many issues affecting people in the Free State linked to the National Question: issues which can only be solved when it is solved. The politicians, have failed miserably. They pay lip-service to the idea of Unity, while engaged in a sell-out. They collaborate with the British Government, with British Intelligence and with the British war-machine. They have made Irish economic policy subservient to British economic interests. The Government is taxing the working-class man out of existence, while allowing subsidies to foreign firms. They are capitulating to foreign mining firms and oil companies to the detriment of native concerns. They refuse to give women equal pay. They are discriminating against the Irish language in general, and the Gaedhaltachtaí (Irish-speaking area) in particular.

A State of Emergency has been declared - not because of the economic situation, but in the face of the Government-manufactured threat from 'subversives.' The State of Emergency, and the new powers assumed by Liam Cosgrave will force the Twenty-Six Counties to derogate from the European Convention of Human Rights, and are simply a blind to cover up the state of chaos created by successive Leinster House parties.

Government spending on health, housing, etc. has been cut and the Social Services are accepted as being one of the worst in Europe. The wealth flows out of the country; unemployment figures rise and small farmers are being forced off the land in growing numbers. 200,000 are unemployed; the country is £900 million in debt; thousands of jobs are threatened and, with 32 per cent of the Free State population under fifteen years of age, the Leinster House Government persist in refusing to correct the situation.

Can they be talked into emptying the prisons and halting the torture of 'suspects' (Cooney, the 'Justice' Minister states that this is done - "without instruments..."). can they be persuaded to get the British out of Ireland? Can people, who are intent on protecting the status quo, and maintaining their own interests - can people who are selling off our lands, our factories, our rivers, our mines, our natural resources, our country and our people, be persuaded to change their ways? One and a quarter million Irish people have been forced to emigrate between 1926 and 1971. While this violence continues, peace will, sadly but surely, continue as a desirable, but elusive idea.

ENGLAND - ITS RESPONSIBILITY

IRA violence has spilled over into England, not to the same degree as British violence has overspilled into Ireland, but nonetheless many people have died or been seriously injured as a result. This recent overspill fits the pattern which has evolved over the decades. English people should be interested in what their country's army is doing in Ireland. Sadly, this interest has only come when the problem has involved them directly.

The issues, closely guarded and distorted by their government, have been clouded and confused. Some individuals involved in the British news media have indeed protested at the lack of objective reporting of the situation in Ireland and at the lack of coverage given those engaged in this situation. British soldiers are dying on Irish streets and there are periodic bombings in England itself. Two Irishmen, Michael Gaughan and Frank Stagg, have died on hunger strike within the last two years, in English gaols, and Irishmen and women are still being brutalised in prisons in England.

With this in mind, English people must concede, regardless of the confusion and distortion of facts, that their government has not brought peace to Ireland. They must decide that responsibility for our long war can be traced to the system of imperial plunder based in England. If they so decide, and if they are true democrats, they must argue for the withdrawal of their soldiers and for the dismantling of that system.

The stage for war this last fifty years in Ireland was decreed by their Parliament's 'Government of Ireland Act.' It established British agents in power at both Stormont and Leinster House. The results are therefore the concern of the English people. When Irish people call for a withdrawal of British troops and the dismantling of the British system; when they call for peace in Ireland; English democrats should respond. It is their Government - 'The Mother of Parliaments' - which controls Irish destinies. This Government has no rights in Ireland, no rights to Ireland. English people should help Irish people to win peace. They should insist on the disestablishment of one of the most corrupt Imperial manifestations that humanity has ever known. They should remove their soldiers and their Government from the conflict, if only to ensure an economy of British lives (????).

Republicans want peace. Does the establishment order want peace? They have shown no evidence that they see merit in urgently seeking ways to end violence. On two separate occasions, Republicans have talked 'Truce' with the British Government in an effort to bring the war to its conclusion. The British Government did not want peace. Would someone appeal to them and let the world know if they are sincere; if they can show courage, endurance and nobility.

If left to our own devices, we can only form our own conclusions and I, as a Republican, have

concluded that the British presence in Ireland is a criminal presence; that its cause is a mercenary cause and that there is no morality in the methods it uses in the vested interests of that cause. There can be no justice for us while our affairs are managed by regimes uninterested in our welfare. Only when these regimes are replaced will we have peace and justice in Ireland.

CONCLUSION

We cannot have justice; we cannot have peace in Ireland, because we have not a society capable of upholding them. Instead, we have two statelets dependent on coercion, violence, sectarianism and exploitation. By their very natures they cannot be just or peaceful and, while this is so, revolutionary violence will continue to strive to overthrow them in pursuit of true justice, peace and happiness.

Republicans must ensure that our cause and our methods remain within the bounds of our consciences, and we must ensure that our consciences are dictated to by our concern for the welfare of our people and by our determination to establish a society in which all will be free and where exploitation of man by man will cease. Republicans must continue to examine their organisation, their tactics, their programmes and their achievements with objectivity, honesty and far-sightedness. Revolutionary violence, and this excludes sectarian violence, must be controlled and disciplined - a symbol of our people's resistance and the spearhead of their desire for a peaceful and just society.

Until that society is a reality, we will have institutionalised violence, oppression, coercion, exploitation, British Army violence, Loyalist violence and violence from the 'Free' State Government. We

will undoubtedly also have Republican violence. This is the reality of the situation in Ireland. It will not go away unless we commit ourselves to changing the society which causes it. The Irish will always have the society they deserve. Only they can change it and the English will always have the colony they deserve until they persuade their Government to abandon it.

Democrats in Ireland, in England and throughout the world must insist upon peace in Ireland. They can best do this by campaigning for the removal of the cause of the conflict. They can ensure peace in Ireland. They can help to forge an alliance which will rid Ireland of the decadent and mercenary system which divides her and exploits her people. Such an alliance, so forged, will, in the future, also guarantee freedom for oppressed people everywhere. In the meantime, let us, regardless of our nationality, campaign for a British withdrawal from Ireland.
Then, we will have peace.

POSTSCRIPT

This brief essay gives only a broad analysis of the situation in Ireland. Prison restrictions prevent a more ambitious venture. The Republican view is that the Irish question arises from our British problem. While British Imperialism maintains its control in Ireland, it is a question of whether the sovereignty of Ireland is vested as of right on Westminster or in the people of Ireland. Peace will come only when this question of sovereignty is resolved.

Until then, the English people have a responsibility for Ireland's British problem. They have the power to persuade their Government to withdraw and freedom-loving people throughout the world have the power to persuade their Governments and their politicians to pressurise the British Government into dismantling the British system in

Ireland. For those interested in doing so, and for anyone interested in increasing their knowledge of the situation in Ireland, we suggest the following books:

The Northern Conflict and British Power - Jack Bennet.

Fourteen Days of Fascist Terror - Jack Bennet
Northern Ireland - The Mailed First - Ass. of Social Just.

The Irish Question and the British People - C.D. Greaves.

The Irish Crisis - C.D. Greaves.

Brian Faulkner and the Crisis of Ulster Unionism. A. Boyd.

Holy War in Belfast.- A. Boyd.

The Hooded Men - Fr. Murray and Faul

The Black and Blue Book - Fr. Murray and Faul
Majella O'Hare - Frs. Murray and Faul.

The Murder of Leo Norney - Frs. Murray and Faul
The Guinea Pigs - John McGuffin.

N. Ireland - The Orange State - Michael Farrell

The Republic of Ireland - Dr. O'Connor Lysaght

Labour in Irish History - James Connolly

British Imperialism in Ireland - Elinor Ellis

The Great Hunger - Cecil Woodham-Smith

Tragedies of Kerry - Dorothy MacArdle

The Irish Republic - Dorothy MacArdle

The Secret Army - J. Bowyer-Bell

Freedom Struggle - Issued by the IRA

The UVF - David Boulton

Peace by Ordeal - Lord Longford

The following may also be of interest:

The Government of Ireland Act (1920)

**British Government Violations of Human Rights in
N.I. (The report of the European Commission of
Human Rights into allegations of Torture in
Northern Ireland)**

The Hunt Report

The Scarman Report

The Widgery Report

The Civil Authorities (Special Powers Act 1922)

The Criminal Justice Bill

Anti-Terrorist Legislation (Six Counties)

The proposed new anti-terrorist legislation (26 Cos).

I have regarded the connection between Ireland and Great Britain as the curse of the Irish Nation, and felt convinced that whilst it lasted, this country could never be free or happy.... We have no National Government; we are ruled by Englishmen and the servants of Englishmen, whose object is in the interest of another country; whose instrument is corruption; whose strength is the weakness of Ireland....

Theobald Wolfe Tone

[sentenced to death by the British Government and murdered in a British Prison].

The great appear great to many because we are on our knees; let us rise.

James Connolly

[Executed by Brit forces of occupation].

Who will tell the British when the time has come to tell it, keep its hands off? Human nature, even the strongest human nature is weak and the time will inevitably come; with his 'Free-State' coming into existence, when you will have a permanent government in your country, and permanent governments in any country have a desire not to be turned out and they will seek to fight their corner before anything else - Men will get into positions and men will hold power, and men who get into positions and hold power will desire to remain undisturbed and will not want to be removed or will not wish to take a step that will mean their removal in case of failure....

Liam Mellows

[Executed by the 'Free-State' Government].

“As long as British Forces remain in N. Ireland the situation is frozen. Nothing decisive can happen until they go. The outcome may be unpleasant as it often is when men refuse to face a problem ... at any rate there is only one course for the British to follow for the sake of the Irish as well as for their own. It is:- Troops Out Now”

A.J.P. Taylor [British Historian].

“They say Ireland is peaceful. Yes; but she is not so because she is contented. But because she is held under coercive laws.....”

Benjamin Disraeli.