

UNIONISTS & REPUBLICAN INSURRECTION

Fine Gael TD, Neale Richmond, responding to comments made by Sinn Féin President, Mary Lou McDonald, during the course of a *Sunday Independent* interview last weekend, excoriates Ms McDonald over the Provisional IRA campaign in the north which Mr Richmond said was unjustifiable ('Mary Lou McDonald comments hammer home Fine Gael concerns over talks', *Irish Examiner*, May 25). Many of those on the receiving end of British/Unionist hegemonic government in the North over many decades would not agree.

In 1968, during the civil rights marches, efforts by people like John Hume, Ivan Cooper, Gerry Fitt, and Austin Curry to bring about equality of treatment throughout the North were rejected time and again, with brutality, by a recalcitrant unionism.

If unionism acted at that juncture with a modicum of common sense and political integrity, the nightmare of the armed struggle might never have evolved and this island may well have been spared the horrors of the following thirty years.

Even when Prime Ministers Capt Terence O'Neill, Major Chichester-Clark, and Brian Faulkner attempted to introduce mild legislative political change, they were dumped by bigoted unionism.



Rarely has a community acted more purposefully against its own interests than unionism. For half a century, Catholics were imprisoned in politically constructed ghettos, were denied equal access to jobs and housing, and to ensure the continuation of this odious policy were denied the right to vote themselves out of their predicament.

The Catholic/Nationalist community refused to permit themselves to be governed according to the principles of sectarian mob-rule and would no longer acquiesce in threats and intimidation or be subservient to unionist bullies. Perhaps Mr Richmond might familiarise himself with the long established and internationally recognised right of people to resist foreign occupation as expressed in United Nations resolutions 3070 and 3103 which acknowledge the status of combatants struggling against colonial domination.

Tom Cooper, Communications Officer, INC