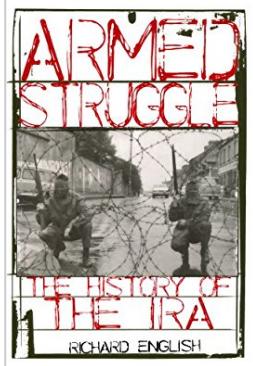


Armed Struggle: The History of the IRA

By Richard English



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Armed Struggle: The History of the IRA By Richard English

The IRA has been a much richer, more complexly layered, and more protean organization than is frequently recognized. It is also more open to balanced examination now--at the end of its long war in the north of Ireland--than it was even a few years ago.

Richard English's brilliant book offers a detailed history of the IRA, providing invaluable historical depth to our understanding of the modern-day Provisionals, the more militant wing formed in 1969 dedicated to the removal of the British Government from Northern Ireland and the reunification of Ireland. English examines the dramatic events of the Easter Rising in 1916 and the bitter guerrilla war of 1919-21, the partitioning of Ireland in the 1920s, and the Irish Civil War of 1922-23. Here, too, are the IRA campaigns in Northern Ireland and Britain from the 1930s through the 1960s. He shows how the Provisionals were born out of the turbulence generated by the 1960s civil rights movement, and examines the escalating violence that introduced British troops to the streets of Northern Ireland. He also examines the split in the IRA that produced the Provisionals, the introduction of internment in 1971, and the tragedy of Bloody Sunday in 1972. He then discusses the struggle over political status, culminating in the Hunger Strikes of the early 1980s and describes the Provisionals' emergence as a more committed political force throughout that decade, a politicization that made possible the peace process that has developed over the last decade. English offers a dazzling synthesis of the motives, actions and consequences of the IRA.

Neither romanticizing the IRA nor condemning them outright, this is a balanced, definitive treatment of one of the world's leading revolutionary movements.



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Editorial Review

Review

"Combines a readable, comprehensive, and neutral history of the IRA with a muscular and unflinching analysis of its actions and its attempts at self-justification."--Christian Science Monitor

"An essential book. At a stroke it replaces the many journalistic 'histories' of the IRA, too often flaccid and shoddy."--Roy Foster, *The Times* (London)

"This vivid, reflective work will likely become the standard introduction to the subject. It also serves as a valuable corrective for anyone who thinks that the difficulties in Northern Ireland are amenable to quick-fix solutions."--Financial Times

"A fluent, fascinating account of the origins, actions and ideologies of that caucus of shadows, the Provisional IRA."--Observer

"Mr. English's well-written book convincingly demonstrates the ghastly futility of the IRA campaign."--The Economist

"With fine detail and a flair for narrative, Richard English chronicles the rise of the IRA from the ashes of the Easter rising to the promise of peace today. Balanced and thoughtful, Armed Struggle offers new insight into Ireland's republican movement. And it reminds us, in the author's words, that 'the voices of the victims still deafen.'"--Terry Golway, author of *The Irish in America*

"English's balanced and complex account of the IRA, more particularly the Provisional IRA, will help anyone understand the strong feelings and difficult issues behind today's headlines.... The author, a professor of politics at Queen's University in Belfast, makes some controversial assertions, as when he claims that the IRA's post-1969 violence, ostensibly aimed at protecting Catholics, only lead to increased anti-Catholic carnage. Even more controversially, English calls into question the whole point of the long IRA war. What English does brilliantly is to describe the IRA's own justifications for its war against Britain, with special attention to the socialism pervading much of IRA belief. He has written a provocative and essential book for anyone trying to understand Northern Ireland's tempestuous recent history."--Publishers Weekly

"About Richard English's *Armed Struggle: History of the IRA* there is a kind of passionate objectivity you'll rarely find on this subject. The author works mightily to present two sides of a story that keeps shifting. You might read the book wondering, perhaps, where his sympathies lie, but even if you sneak a look at the last chapter, where he lays out his credentials, you'll come away impressed with his balance and fairness. I am neither scholar nor historian, but this is the one book I recommend for anyone trying to understand the craziness and complexity of the Northern Ireland tragedy."--Frank McCourt, author of *Angela's Ashes*

"What impressed me most was the way Richard English managed to present such an historical and contradictory mess with such clarity and fairness. The book grabbed and held me like a very good novel."--Roddy Doyle, author of *A Star Called Henry*

"Here is the book we have been waiting for--the first full history of the I.R.A. and the best account by far of the twentieth century's longest war. Richard English has read everything--from secret documents to the Long Kesh library --and he has talked to the men who fought the war. He also brings a rare balance of empathy

and judgement to a topic that desperately needs both. The result is a superb piece of writing: clear, insightful, and engrossing. If you want to know where the I.R.A. came from and how they think, this is the book to read."--Peter Hart, Chair of Irish Studies, Memorial University and the author of The IRA and Its Enemies

About the Author

Richard English is Professor of Politics at Queen's University, Belfast. His previous books include Ernie O'Malley: I.R.A. Intellectual and Radicals and the Republic: Socialist Republicanism in the Irish Free State 1925-1937.

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Mamie Salinas:

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