

The documentary evidence remains ambiguous, but Schmuhl concludes that de Valera's own specific statement in 1969 ruled out any American influence in the decision not to execute him. Is this matter of any historical significance? Schmuhl asserts that de Valera's American birth gave him a valuable mythic link to the U.S. and Irish America, which was of great use in his repeated visits seeking help and financing in building the Ireland de Valera envisioned. 'One conclusion', Schmuhl states, 'is that de Valera himself wanted to maintain an aura of mystery and that his often-asserted life-saving association with America strengthened him in his political and governmental pursuits' (p. 138). By the time of his 1969 statements denying any American influence in his survival, de Valera could let go. Intrigue, romance, denial, and myth are the terms Schmuhl uses to describe the American links to the Rising and the struggle for Irish self-government his four subjects characterised. This is a valuable innovative study.

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THE I.R.A. IN BRITAIN, 1919–1923: 'IN THE HEART OF ENEMY LINES'. By Gerard Noonan. Pp xiv, 371. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press. 2014.

'The war of independence and the civil war were ultimately won and lost by the actions of actors in Ireland, but republicans in Britain played a noteworthy role in the drama' (p. 328). This is the central conclusion of Gerard Noonan's Ph.D.-based study of the 1919–23 activities of militant Irish republicans in Britain. The book is well-researched and it offers much impressive detail. Its undramatic conclusion should not be held against it, and the study valuably complements the work of scholars such as Peter Hart and Iain Patterson on this subject.

Dr Noonan concentrates mainly on the Irish Republican Army (I.R.A.), although the Irish Republican Brotherhood (I.R.B.), Cumann na mBan and Na Fianna Eireann also feature appropriately. Physical force Irish republicanism in Britain during this period was, unsurprisingly, greatly sustained by nineteenth-century Irish immigrants. In relation to these people, the book draws well on archival sources and on contemporary newspapers, as it traces what Irish republican activists did in Britain and how the authorities there responded to them. The tale echoes a familiar narrative, but it does so on the basis of much direct quotation from the players themselves, and it is helpful in that respect.

The numbers of people involved were not large: 'the total membership of the I.R.A. in Britain in the autumn of 1921 was somewhere between 2,282 and 2,582' (p. 52). Michael Collins emerges as vital for these people ('For republicans in Britain, Collins was the most important figure in the leadership in Dublin' (p. 40)). And – as is clear from other studies of the Irish revolution – the initiative of a small number of individuals proved to be decisive in terms of what was and was not achieved.

Echoing other studies also is Noonan's judgement that family background, and the influence of friendship groups, could play a major role in leading people towards republican commitment. Once they were indeed committed, what many of these people focused on in practice was gun-running. Indeed, the author concludes that, 'Gun-running – the acquisition and smuggling of weapons to Ireland – was the most important activity of republicans in Britain' (p. 133) during these years. They also carried out some violent operations themselves, of course (often motivated in doing so by revenge). And they experienced the fractious vicissitudes of the civil war split as did their comrades in Ireland: 'The civil war saw men and women who had seen action in the republican movement in Britain during the war of independence serve on both sides, in Britain and in Ireland' (p. 262).

The book might have engaged more fully than it does with existing scholarly literature. The bibliography is rather thin on secondary sources. So, for example, Eugenio Biagini's important study from 2007, *British democracy and Irish nationalism 1876–1906*, is ignored, even though its argument about the effects of Irish nationalist politics on British life is deeply relevant to Noonan's work. Again, the broader historiography of British politics and society themselves during the period covered by Noonan's book is largely missing from his discussion, despite the vital role that such phenomena obviously played in contextual terms for those whom he examines. And the brief section towards the end of the book about post-revolutionary Irish republicanism in Britain is perfunctory and very shoddy in its engagement with the necessary literature. (It also misdates the 1972 Bloody Sunday atrocity.)

But the book is valuable for its detailed demonstration that, in these years as for so many other periods, Irish nationalism 'was not limited to the inhabitants of Ireland itself' (p. 3).

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HEROES OR TRAITORS? EXPERIENCES OF SOUTHERN IRISH SOLDIERS RETURNING FROM THE GREAT WAR 1919–1939. By Paul Taylor. Pp xv, 273. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015. £75.

Paul Taylor has written a welcome study of the experience of Irish ex-servicemen who returned to the twenty-six counties that formed the Irish Free State after their service in the First World War. The book is divided into three sections. The first asks whether they were the target for I.R.A. violence because of their participation in the war. The second assesses whether Britain, the imperial power, fulfilled its obligations to the ex-servicemen. The final section focuses on the extent to which the ex-servicemen were treated as equal citizens of the new state and the extent to which they became part of an integrated independent Ireland. These questions are important and are handled with some skill by the author. There is some repetition in the work but Taylor justifies this on the grounds of clarity in discussion.

Ex-servicemen were heavily concentrated in urban centres, though some of the figures provided by Taylor are probably exaggerated (p. 12). There is little evidence that ex-servicemen acted as a group with specific interests during the inter-war period in Ireland, with the possible exception of Remembrance Day ceremonies. Many were reluctant to participate in Remembrance Day ceremonies due to their imperial associations. Only a minority were active in the British Legion and most maintained their nationalist convictions. In some cases, individuals joined the I.R.A.; others joined the R.I.C. or the Black and Tans. It is estimated that some twenty five per cent of ex-servicemen joined the National Army after the Free State was established. This remained the most distinctive action by ex-servicemen during the entire inter-war period.

The most controversial section of the book is Taylor's challenge to claims made by Peter Hart and Jane Leonard, among others, that ex-servicemen were targeted by the I.R.A. during the War of Independence and Civil War because of who they were and not for what they had done (spying, etc.). The author makes an impressive case that these claims should be re-evaluated. Taylor provides a series of tables and supplementary data to demonstrate persuasively that ex-servicemen were neither discriminated against in the general society nor were they specifically targeted by the I.R.A. as 'enemies within'.

On the basis of these data, ex-servicemen were less likely to be targeted than the general population (all else being equal). Furthermore, in a painstaking reconstruction