

Gender complicates the picture, as women's emigration was debated with particular vehemence. If constructions of ideal womanhood bolstered images of nation and family in independent Ireland, then by emigrating they were seen as abandoning their duties to chase commercial comforts, for 'their love of "things" in general stretched to desirable objects such as ovens and sinks, not to mention electricity and running water' (p. 70). Though couched in terms of the dangers of Anglicisation and consumerism, fears expressed about migration were intimately linked to anxieties about modernisation and Irish society itself.

The second part of the book comprises three chapters dealing with the Irish in Britain and depictions of them from both inside and outside the group. In Chapter 3 Wills argues that texts such as those by Dónall Mac Amhlaigh and Richard Power can be treated as works of ethnography as well as of memoir. However, while she quotes Irish-language writing in both its original and translated forms in earlier chapters, these writers are not afforded the same courtesy. This is problematic because Mac Amhlaigh expressed dissatisfaction with Valentin Iremonger's translation of *Dialann deorai* (*An Irish navy*) and its tone is sometimes at variance with the original. Irish writers, as well as British observers, dipped into the reservoir of cultural stereotypes, which Wills examines in Chapter 4. She demonstrates that in the post-war era these representations were not merely repeated, but reconfigured, particularly in the context of the welfare state. The final chapter addresses depictions of manual labour in non-textual artefacts: Phillip Donnellan's film *The Irishmen* (1965) and Frank Auerbach's paintings of building sites, one of which features in colour on the cover of the book. While Wills might have made more of the film's soundtrack, her inclusion of images and emphasis on the visual is exemplary.

Literary scholars such as Wills have much to contribute to historical research and this book demonstrates the value of a true interdisciplinary approach. It challenges us to think consciously about representations and discourses, to look at 'traditional' sources in new ways and to look to 'non-traditional' visual and literary sources as well. While historians may find the bibliography a bit thin, the strength of this text lies in its ability to position close textual analysis within broader ideological and historical frameworks. For that reason, it makes a valuable contribution to Irish migration scholarship.

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IRELAND, THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE CONGO. By Michael Kennedy and Art Magennis. Pp 288. Dublin: Four Courts Press. 2014. €40.50.

Between 1960 and 1964 almost six and a half thousand Irish soldiers cut their teeth as United Nations peacekeepers under the specially established *Organisation des Nations Unies au Congo* (O.N.U.C.). This detailed diplomatic and military history of Ireland's involvement in the Congo crisis is a fusion of archival evidence and personal recollection. The archival slog has been carried out by Michael Kennedy (executive editor of the Royal Irish Academy's *Documents on Irish Foreign Policy* Series), with the narrative complemented by private papers, memoirs and interviews gathered by Magennis (Commandant of the Irish 35th battalion during the conflict).

Scrupulously wedded to context, the text does not concern itself with the ghosts of a famous earlier Irish intervention in the region. As detailed in Roger Casement's 1904 report, Belgian colonial rule in the Congo was marked by murder and mutilations:

punishments meted out to locals by plundering white Europeans. Similar themes stalk this story. The plundering white Europeans did not simply exit the country upon the declaration of Congolese independence in June 1960. Following instability, the Belgian military intervened and the profitable Katanga province attempted secession. Pockmarked by the mines of Belgian mining company *Union Minière*, Katanga just so happened to possess sixty per cent of the world's cobalt, ten per cent of its copper, and significant deposits of that most sought-after of Cold War-era raw materials: uranium.

U.N. secretary-general Dag Hammarskjöld requested a 'neutral European battalion' intervene. Irish troops, eventually sent to do so, certainly saw themselves as fitting the mould. Invaluable micro detail crops up throughout this volume, an example being the code words adopted for local places by the 35th battalion, which display an anti-colonial and anti-partitionist self-image. Like all Irish troops, the 35th were not trained in radio code systems and instead spoke Irish to one another in order to conceal information. Innocently enough, some place names were gaelicised simply by their first letter: hence, Mokambo became 'Muileann Gearr' and Luluaburg 'Lismor'. Tellingly, however, code word for Katanga (whose secession was supported by European mercenaries) was 'Sasanach'.

But as this comprehensive history reveals, Congo did not conform neatly to the postcolonial blueprint. The complexities attached to notions of civilisation and barbarism in *Heart of darkness*, the 1899 novella by Casement's contemporary, Joseph Conrad, soon found their echo in the sixties. A seemingly straightforward issue became complicated. Irish troops found themselves dragged into an atmosphere of primordial violence, craving deliverance from 'E-ville' (shorthand for the Katanganese capital Elisabethville). Two of their number, Michael Nolan and Patrick Mullins, met a grisly end, dragged through the streets by a mob before allegedly falling victim to cannibals. Postcolonial certainties were soon inverted as a narrative of 'Little' Katanga checking the 'big' United Nations emerged; predictably enough, sections of public opinion back home in Ireland soon turned hostile as well.

'Peace enforcement is simply another word for war' is the punchy verdict of the book, which cites an extraordinarily aggressive note from U.N. head of mission, Conor Cruise O'Brien, who – despairing of the run of events – threatened the execution of prisoners held by O.N.U.C. troops. O'Brien had 'gone local'. Others were to follow suit. In the maddening heat, Irish U.N. peacekeepers were soon pursuing violence on the ground, with an emotional Magennis himself threatening to punish obstructive Belgian priests by burning their monastery 'to the ground'.

There is a military meticulousness to this account, which includes maps, weapons specifications, and even notes on 'time zones, sunrise and sunset'. This is offset by Kennedy's broad-ranging research, which makes use of the U.N. archives in New York and the Dag Hammarskjöld papers in Stockholm. What emerges is a suffocating atmosphere of confusion and isolation. The U.N. brief was ill-defined from the start and, as the book reveals, U.N. troops equipped for police duties actually undertook heavy fighting. Detachments of Irish troops were surrounded and taken hostage by European mercenaries as Operation Morthor, the military engagement between O.N.U.C. forces and the Katanganese, misfired.

A central assertion is that Hammarskjöld, in claiming never to have authorised actions for which O'Brien ultimately took the rap, was lying. This is backed up by a telegram from his private papers and significantly revises opinion on the U.N. chief killed in a plane crash in Rhodesia in 1961 and conventionally portrayed as martyr rather than Machiavelli (see, for example, Susan Williams's 2011 book *Who killed Hammarskjöld?*). Neither does O'Brien emerge from this book well, with Kennedy assiduously deploying archival evidence to challenge certain claims in his memoir *To Katanga and back* (1962). Irish minister for Foreign Affairs, Frank Aiken, too, is criticised for his 'naïve' faith in the U.N. Interestingly, taoiseach Seán Lemass, who fretted about the public relations impact of the entire affair and was at pains to keep on-side with the Western powers – an attitude cynically reapplied in his anxiety not to

get on the wrong side of apartheid South Africa – escapes criticism. Likewise, the bigger picture of great power scheming in the Congo crisis is left relatively unexplored. But such matters are beyond the remit of this study which, as the title promises, confines itself to the Irish experience. In doing so, and in delicious depth, this book establishes itself as the definitive account of an escapade as darkly compelling as Casement's trip along the Congo River sixty years earlier.

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