

Ireland. The reality is that there is no archival evidence to suggest that the British government sponsored any such campaign. In fact, the evidence in various U.K. archives overwhelmingly shows that the British authorities worked hard to control the phenomenon. Moreover, modern historians should accept that these incidents were not as easy to prosecute as they might imagine. Leeson makes this point, noting that the rank and file of the police were unlikely to give evidence against one another, and that forensic science was in its infancy at the time. In short, sufficient evidence to satisfy a court or court martial was often unavailable to the authorities, with the result that they could often do little more than General Strickland and insist on the departure of the units in question.

Any criticisms of this book are minor as, on the whole, this study constitutes a major step forward in our understanding of the experience of the police in Ireland from 1920 to 1921. Indeed, for anyone who wishes to gain a deeper understanding of the police and their responses to violence in Ireland in this period, this book should be the first port of call. I look forward with great interest to Dr Leeson's next book, and have every confidence that this one will give new impetus to research on the Royal Irish Constabulary's operations and experiences during the period.

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THE COSGRAVE PARTY: A HISTORY OF CUMANN NA nGAEDHEAL, 1923–33. By Ciara Meehan. Pp xiv, 311, illus. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy. 2010. £30.

In the past ten years an increasing amount of historical attention has been devoted to the pro-Treaty side of the nationalist divide. Works by John Regan, Anne Dolan and Anthony Jordan have all sought to recover the historical experience of those nationalists who 'won' the Civil War but ultimately lost political influence ten years later. Ciara Meehan's book provides an admirable addition to this burgeoning literature by placing the focus squarely on the achievements of the Cumann na nGaedheal party during the first decade of Ireland's independence. This book is unashamedly political in nature and provides a necessary corrective to the prevalent orthodoxy regarding the ineffectiveness of the first independent government in Ireland.

As the title of the book indicates, Meehan is interested in exploring the impact that the major personalities had on the party's fortunes. William Cosgrave is characterised as a moderate leader who could impose his will on occasion but was generally preoccupied with reconciling the divergent views within the party. Richard Mulcahy and Kevin O'Higgins are, somewhat simplistically, depicted as representing two competing ideological factions. The former represented the more republican, or Irish-Ireland, faction while the latter represented a more conservative, Anglophile one. These designations are often used without sufficient evidentiary or explanatory basis but effectively illustrate Cumann na nGaedheal's complicated and frequently contradictory political identity.

Meehan's primary objective, however, is to dispute the popular view that Cumann na nGaedheal's tenure in government was overly conservative, unimaginative and destined to failure after the emergence of Fianna Fáil. Thus, although not ignoring the party's failures, she is keen to accentuate its successes. Issues such as the reduction in the old age pension receive only a couple of pages while a whole section of the book is devoted to the Shannon electrification scheme. The implications of Cumann na nGaedheal's patriarchal legislation for the social and political status of women is only marginally addressed while significant attention is paid to the party's international successes at the League of Nations and imperial conferences.

The most compelling sections of the book, which derive from Meehan's Ph.D. dissertation, concern Cumann na nGaedheal's electoral activity. She observes that, unlike

most other political parties, Cumann na nGaedheal was formed while already in government rather than as a result of the aspiration for power. This resulted in a government more concerned with the business of running a state than the business of winning elections. Nevertheless, through a comprehensive comparison of the voting results from all the elections contested by the party, Meehan convincingly argues that Cumann na nGaedheal's electoral defeat was not inevitable even after Fianna Fáil began contesting elections. She examines the specifics of each campaign to investigate exactly what led to the decrease in support for Cumann na nGaedheal. Using a multidisciplinary approach, she incorporates research from political theory in order to examine the impact that trends in political campaigning had on voting patterns during this period. For example, she contends that whereas negative campaigning was effective during the September 1927 election, which followed the assassination of Kevin O'Higgins, during the 1932 election such tactics were ineffective compared to Fianna Fáil's vague but constructive platform. Furthermore, her analysis of voting patterns indicates that the majority of Cumann na nGaedheal support was transferred to smaller parties rather than Fianna Fáil.

Drawing on approaches deriving from the 'new political history', she moves her analysis past a focus on ideology and campaign rhetoric by examining the mechanics of campaigning. Meehan contends that Cumann na nGaedheal displayed a very modern attitude towards elections. For instance, the party employed advertising firms and used some of the most modern technologies, such as airplanes, automobiles and propaganda films, to help spread its message. Unfortunately, Meehan missed an opportunity to examine the impact of mass rallies and open-air political meetings on political campaigning. During this period, Irish politics continued to be public politics, as all of the major parties held frequent rallies throughout the Free State.

This is a well-researched and well-written book but it suffers from a cumbersome structure. The chapters are organised chronologically but, within each chapter, issues are dealt with thematically, resulting in a bewildering shifting of topics that often obscures important points. Nonetheless, it is an important contribution to the history of the Cumann na nGaedheal party and to the history of elections in the first decade of Ireland's independence.

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INSIDE THE I.R.A.: DISSIDENT REPUBLICANS AND THE WAR FOR LEGITIMACY. By Andrew Sanders. Pp vii, 280. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. 2011. £65.

This study offers a fluently written and well-referenced account of modern Irish republicanism. In the initial pages the reader is introduced to a stimulating research agenda, which promises to explore the 'schismatic tendency' within Irish republicanism, identifying the causes of this factionalism (ideological disagreement, personalities, wider context etc.) and their consequences. Moreover, as the book progresses there are numerous points of interest. In particular, Sanders is at his most original and informative when discussing the militant republican support groups in the United States over the course of 'the Troubles'. He highlights, for instance, the radical and relentless nature of Noraid's *The Irish People*, with its celebration of the 'armed Republican vanguard' (the Provisional I.R.A.) and their 'expert fighting tactics'. This reviewer was also intrigued to learn that it was in 1984 that the idea of Gerry Adams being invited to the U.S. was first mooted.

And yet, herein, one can perhaps see one of the weaknesses of this book, for it was not entirely clear how the history of the 'American connection' was directly relevant to the