

CONFLICT, DIASPORA AND EMPIRE: IRISH NATIONALISM IN BRITAIN, 1912–1922. By Darragh Gannon. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2022. Pp 304. £85.

Darragh Gannon's new work on Irish nationalism in Britain during the revolutionary decade is both influenced by and contributes to two recent historiographical trends in exploring the significance of the revolution beyond Irish shores and of the Irish emigrant experience in Britain more widely. This work complements Gannon's existing contributions to our understanding of the global revolution, including his article in a recent special edition of this journal dedicated to that subject. This new book cements his reputation as an authority on the significance of Irish revolutionary movements and their impact outside Ireland.

The choice of date span is crucial to the success of the book as it covers both constitutional and revolutionary nationalism and straddles the First World War, the experience of which by the Irish diaspora in Britain is shown to have had a significant impact on how that cohort responded to the emergence of revolutionary fervour in Ireland from the mid-point of the war in 1916. With 150,000 British-based Irish in the trenches by 1915, the prospect of conscription posed a delicate challenge for Irish nationalists in opposing its extension to Ireland while living with its reality in Britain. This discussion of the Irish in Britain as 'ethnically conscientious objectors' (p. 115) contributes not just to the understanding of Irish opposition to conscription (which became more focused in Ireland in 1918) but adds a dimension to domestic opposition within Britain that is not adequately recognised by those studying conscientious objection from a British perspective.

Personalities loom large in this work and two about whom we learn more are T. P. O'Connor, the only British-based Irish Parliamentary Party (I.P.P.) M.P. and Art Ó Briain of the Irish Self-Determination League (I.S.D.L.). O'Connor was central to the extent of home rule activism in the pre-1914 period, and the book details the prevalence of both pro- and anti-home rule demonstrations in Britain in the years of the Ulster crisis. While the focus here is on nationalism, the examination of anti-home rule demonstrations and the spread of Ulster Volunteer Force companies throughout Britain in 1913 and 1914 suggests scope for a study mirroring aspects of Irish or Ulster unionist opinion and organisation in Britain during these years.

Not surprisingly, O'Connor fades from the narrative after 1918 as Ó Briain, the subject of a recent biographical study by Mary MacDiarmada, comes to the fore in a reflection of the replacement of constitutional by revolutionary nationalism, similar to what was happening in nationalist politics in Ireland. The I.S.D.L.'s activities in Britain were similar to those of Sinn Féin in Ireland and are explored in detail here — fundraising, prisoner welfare (given how many Irish republican prisoners were serving their sentences in British prisons) and, crucially, cultural activities, as cultural nationalism is shown to have been central to advanced Irish nationalism in Britain.

While this dynamic of the replacement of constitutional with advanced nationalism reflected the process playing out simultaneously in Ireland, Gannon shows how events specific to the domestic context in Britain were also a factor in the decline there of the Irish Party and its grassroots organisation, the United Irish League of Great Britain. In particular, he notes the significance of the extension of the franchise in 1918 under the Representation of the People Act. The larger electorate, the demise of the I.P.P. and the diffusion within British party politics with the post-war rise of Labour all contributed to the dilution of a distinctive Irish vote within the British electorate.


The two final chapters — dealing respectively with politics and Irish Republican Army (I.R.A.) activity during the War of Independence — account for a sizable portion of the book and make a sound case for Great Britain constituting an additional theatre in that conflict. There is an impressive level of detail on the political and militant actions of Irish revolutionaries, and the significance of the Military Service Pensions Collection, especially for chapter five on 'Arms, conflict and post-war violence', as a source, which has over the past decade allowed for a much greater understanding of such activity, is very clear.

On the political front, while the War of Independence was underway in Ireland, republicans in Britain were supporting hunger-striking Irish prisoners in British jails, raising

(though not very effectively) funds for the Dáil loan, generating awareness of British reprisals in Ireland, organising the funeral of Terence MacSwiney and highlighting the plight of Archbishop Daniel Mannix, who was denied entry to Ireland.

The final chapter complements Gerard Noonan's 2017 study, *The I.R.A. in Britain, 1919–1923: 'in the heart of enemy lines'*, and makes a strong case for the neglect by historians of the War of Independence of the prevalence of I.R.A. incendiaryism in Britain as an aspect of its guerrilla campaign. This reflects the wider reach of the book as whole, which demonstrates how Irish nationalism in Britain in this formative decade should not merely be treated as a side-show of what was happening in Ireland but as a significant force in its own right which developed not merely in response to Irish events but also to changing dynamics domestically in Britain accelerated by the First World War.

doi:10.1017/ihs.2024.13

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IRELAND AND PARTITION: CONTEXTS AND CONSEQUENCES. Edited by N. C. Fleming and James H. Murphy. Pp 388. Clemson, South Carolina: Clemson University Press. 2021. \$150/£118 hardback.

This ambitious work aims to broaden our understanding of Irish partition and the border that it created. The volume comprises fourteen essays, curated into five sections, which together offer a multidisciplinary perspective on both the historic context and contemporary impacts of the partition of Ireland.

The first section, which makes an original contribution to the broader historiography, lays the groundwork for understanding partition within an international context. Jason Knirck's chapter highlights the various international lenses that were applied to the Irish question, comparing Ireland with Quebec/Canada and Upper Silesia. The choice to focus on these two examples is an astute one, given that both case studies were used by contemporary commentators to support, as well as to oppose, partition in Ireland. This has allowed Knirck to masterfully showcase the complexity of narratives during the process and early years of partition. This is complemented by Erik Goldstein's chapter on post-First World War peace-making efforts and the transformation of diplomatic opinion from viewing partition as part of the problem towards a meaningful solution. The section concludes with Lorna Lloyd's contribution on the strained diplomatic relations between Ireland and Australia in the first decade of Queen Elizabeth II's reign; the Republic of Ireland's constitutional claim to Northern Ireland raised questions about the appointment of Australian ambassadors to the Republic. This is an excellent piece of thought-provoking scholarship, although the subject matter stands somewhat apart from the previous two chapters.

The second section on society and the economy opens with Cormac Moore's interesting reappraisal of how partition manifested itself across the sporting world. Whilst recapping the well-trodden histories of the G.A.A., I.R.F.U. and I.F.A./F.A.I., usefully Moore also offers insights into the post-partition realities for hockey, athletics and cycling, as well as Olympic triumphs. Liam Kennedy's contribution is undoubtedly unusual; part-personal reflection, part-soothsayer, Kennedy reflects on his own 1986 work *Two Ulsters: a case for repartition* and explores the potential constitutional futures of Northern Ireland. As interesting as the discussion is, Kennedy's essay lacks any firm conclusion. Graham Brownlow's offering is arguably the highlight of this section; his critical discussion usefully dispels the fundamental miscalculations advocated by scholars in the past and offers a more nuanced insight into the two Irelands' poor economic performances in the decades after partition. One particularly interesting conclusion is that 'there is evidence of Protestant [economic] privilege on both sides of the border' (p. 136), which is worthy of further research.