

unlikely to have felt “enhanced” by gaining his acquaintance. Nevertheless, Fitzpatrick is successful in portraying Boland as an intelligent and resourceful man, deeply committed to the cause of Irish freedom, who is deserving of his reputation as something of a lovable rogue. Despite this the book does not shy away from portraying all sides of Boland’s character. Fitzpatrick highlights the compromises and contradictions inherent in a man who had a strong sense of honor and Christian values but who was willing to use terror and violence to overthrow British or Irish rule if it fell short of the republican ideal.

This book provides an examination of the range of activities that Boland was involved in during the revolution. These include his remarkable ability to avoid arrest while in Ireland, participation in the sometime farcical but ultimately successful escape from Lincoln Prison of De Valera in 1919, and his use of the IRB to infiltrate other nationalist organizations. A significant proportion of the book is devoted to an examination of Boland’s activities in the United States, where he was involved in a bewildering range of activities as both a representative of the Irish “government” and of the Supreme Council of the IRB. Although successful as a publicist of the Irish cause, his activities as a gunrunner and his attempts to organize and control the Irish-American movement were relatively unsuccessful. Fitzpatrick addresses these issues in detail, and in doing so he provides a fascinating insight into the complex world of the competing factions that represented Irish America. That Boland could occasionally make mistakes was demonstrated by his advocacy in January 1921 of a global “race vendetta” against all things English. His vision of a sustained worldwide campaign against the English “monster,” eighty years before Al-Qaida became infamous for advocating something similar against the United States, was predictably counterproductive. It is noteworthy that while he accepted that he had made a tactical mistake in making such views public, Boland did not express misgivings about the idea of advancing Irish freedom through a “race vendetta.” His inability to countenance accommodation with the British and his belief in the justice of the Irish cause and the inevitability of eventual victory informed his judgment until his death at the hands of former comrades more willing to accept the need for compromise.

This is a very impressive book. It is well researched and well argued. It provides new information on the life of Harry Boland, which in turn sheds new light on key individuals and events during the Irish revolution. It is written in a style that is authoritative but that will prove accessible to the general reader as well as to established scholars. The book is essential reading for anyone interested in the life of Boland. It will also prove extremely useful to anyone interested in the history of the Irish revolution in general.

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PETER HART. *The IRA at War, 1916–1923*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. Pp. 290. \$39.95 (cloth).

This is a fine collection of essays written over a ten-year period on various aspects of the Irish revolution. Some of the articles have appeared in other versions elsewhere; others are published here for the first time. All are original contributions to the historiography of the Irish revolution as is to be expected from one of the most talented scholars working in this area. Peter Hart’s first book *The IRA and Its Enemies* received both extensive praise and considerable criticism after its publication in 1998. *The IRA at War* has not garnered quite the same headlines, despite it being as impressive in many ways as his earlier work. Perhaps this is because much of both the praise and criticism of *The IRA and Its Enemies* was motivated by political considerations, and Hart’s new book is less open to hijacking for polemical point scoring. Critics of Hart’s earlier work concentrated to an excessive degree

on his treatment of two incidents during the revolution in Cork, the Kilmichael ambush where eighteen auxiliary policemen were killed by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the killings of thirteen Protestants in the Dunmanway area during April 1922. Many critics refused to accept that the IRA could either shoot men after they had surrendered or engage in sectarian activity against Protestants. Elements of the criticism became hysterical. On the other hand, some of those most effusive in their praise for *The IRA and Its Enemies* were quite frankly looking for arguments for use against contemporary Irish republicans and were no less hysterical at times than Hart's critics. Many of them regarded the Irish revolution as little more than a sectarian pogrom anyway, and Hart's book, selectively quoted, was used as a weapon in this argument. His work deserves better as *The IRA at War* shows.

The first three articles look at the overall perspective of the revolution. In "A New Revolutionary History," Hart argues for the incorporation of studies of Ireland from 1916 to 1923 into wider examinations of insurgency in Cuba, Palestine, and Vietnam, among others. In outlining the vast ranges of sources now available to historians there is a perceptive frustration that so many writers continue to cling to a familiar and comforting view of the period. While this is correct it might be noted that many of the celebrated debunkers of mythology are as content to take comfort in their views. In the "Geography of Revolution" and "The Dynamics of Violence," Hart seeks to explain why certain areas, largely in Munster and Dublin city, were areas of intense violence and others less so. Bandon, a small town in west Cork, was according to Hart, the "Gaza strip of the Irish *intifada*" (31) producing eleven times as many casualties as the whole county of Antrim. Some of Hart's most controversial and best work has been in actually seeking to explain how and why violence was carried out during the revolution. The celebrated ambushes and engagements of the War of Independence were the exception rather than the rule. Most deaths on both sides occurred through close-range assassination. As the conflict went on, both sides' tactics were heavily inspired by a desire for revenge; cycles of retaliatory violence were key to the war. As in Hart's earlier work there is a contention that ex-British soldiers were a key target for IRA violence. I believe that newer evidence may point to a greater role for ex-soldiers within the IRA. A valuable feature of almost every article is the extensive sets of statistics on violence and its victims or the social and geographical background to the revolution. In "Paramilitary Politics in Ireland," Hart examines why the political crisis in Ireland took the form of violent insurgency after 1916 when earlier upheavals such as the Land War had not done so. Contradicting some leading historians of the revolutionary period, Hart argues that the 1916 Rising must be seen as more than simply a "blood sacrifice"; the rebels were not "some mystical republican cult" (105).

The activities of the IRA in Britain have been largely forgotten. Yet in comparison to many of their units in Ireland the IRA was highly active in both England and Scotland. Perhaps embarrassment at later IRA campaigns in Britain has played a role in the lack of popular attention this area. As Hart notes their story is part of a wider British postwar radicalization, and many IRA volunteers there were also trade unionists, socialists, or communists; it clearly needs to be examined. Hart also looks at the background to the assassination of Sir Henry Wilson in 1922. Two Irish Republican Brotherhood members in London killed Wilson, a Unionist hard liner, believed by many nationalists to be involved in organizing pogroms against Catholics in Belfast. Numerous accounts have linked Michael Collins to the killing, but Hart concludes that the evidence does not support this thesis. In fact the killing need not at all be seen as part of wider conspiracy as for "two young idealists to take matters into their own hands . . . was not a particularly unusual political act in the summer of 1922" (220).

I would regard the difference in tone between Hart's two final articles as significant. The first, "The Protestant Experience of Revolution in Southern Ireland," was first published in 1996, while the final chapter, "Ethnic Conflict and Majority Responses," is more recent. The first chapter leans toward contending that a form of "ethnic cleansing" against Prot-

estants took place in southern Ireland during the revolution, that “sectarianism was embedded in the language and syntax of the Irish revolution” (220). Yet in his later piece Hart is more cautious and balanced, arguing that the fact that the IRA claimed to be nonsectarian and a “great many” of its activists took this seriously did act as a brake on sectarian activities. In comparison this “brake” did not exist for Unionist activists. Yet Hart continues to argue that ethnicity was a central feature of revolutionary violence in Ireland. Those who disagree would do well to study Hart’s work carefully as he once again has produced a superb book that adds considerably to our knowledge of the Irish revolution.

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PHILIP O’LEARY. *Gaelic Prose in the Irish Free State, 1922–1939*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004. Pp. 753. \$95.00 (cloth).

This exhaustively researched and invaluable book offers the first comprehensive account of the Gaelic literary movement during the two decades following Irish independence. Taking up where Philip O’Leary’s *The Prose Literature of the Gaelic Revival, 1881–1921: Ideology and Innovation* (1994) left off, this volume examines the prose produced by those who sought to build on the empowerment of a native government by reviving Irish throughout society and creating a viable literature in Irish. In the former goal, the activists were, as we know, unsuccessful. Anglicization increased throughout the period despite their alarmed protests. But in the more modest, yet still substantial, latter goal, the activists were remarkably successful indeed, particularly when measured against the considerable difficulties they faced. This book gives us a careful assessment of that very real success, without denying its shortcomings.

The scholarly research that has gone into this book can only be called heroic. O’Leary has done painstaking original investigation into manuscripts and collected papers of the period. He has consulted, by my count, some 156 periodicals, including regional newspapers, journals and magazines, and student publications from secondary schools and universities, as well as a great number of pamphlets and books, including considerable rare, ephemeral, and out-of-print material of idiosyncratic spelling and usage. He also cites and evaluates contemporary scholarship in Irish and English. He quotes copiously, giving accurate, idiomatic translations as needed, from this vast and heterogeneous archive, presenting the Irish originals in the voluminous, annotated footnotes so that interested readers may examine or quote the originals themselves. There is, moreover, a user-friendly index and a helpful biographical guide to his many unfamiliar protagonists. This authoritative and generous book not only recognizes its responsibilities as a groundbreaking study, it exceeds them.

An introductory chapter orients us to the new linguistic circumstances under the Irish Free State from 1922 and the short but nasty civil war that followed. Amid much partisan distrust, a sympathetic government populated by numerous movement adherents instituted Irish instruction across the national schools, helped fund many literary and dramatic endeavors, and established a state publishing agency in 1926, producing more books in Irish than ever before. Yet old issues persisted: dialect rivalry, disputes over fonts and orthography, competition between native speakers and learners, an obsession with linguistic purity, and nativist ideology. Fundamental questions loomed. What could and should be written in Irish? How would the language be transformed to address modern topics? Who would write it? Who would read it? Could writers in Irish make a living? Literature was more valued as ideal than practice, for it was expected to serve not art, but native pride, language rescue, and pedagogy, especially for the young. For the author-activist, therefore, “literature was not . . . a solitary pursuit of truth, but . . . a team sport” in pursuit of “the goal of a Gaelic nation once again.” This only aggravated the challenges “faced by the author of any