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Review of *Na Fianna Éireann and the Irish Revolution, 1909-23: Scouting for Rebels* by Marnie Hay

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Marnie Hay, *Na Fianna Éireann and the Irish Revolution, 1909-23: Scouting for Rebels*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019. xiii + 273pp. ISBN: 978-0719096839 (hardback). Price £80.00.

Marnie Hay's study of Na Fianna Éireann, the Irish National Boy Scouts, in 1909-23 is a valuable addition to literature on the Irish Revolution, and is also an important contribution to wider work on militarism across during this period. Founded in 1909 by Bulmer Hobson and Countess Markiewicz, at a time when other scouting-type organisations were being formed in Britain and Ireland, the Fianna had a similar militaristic tone to the activities of, for example, Baden-Powell's movement. Arguably, the Fianna were more important militarily than any other scouting organisation anywhere else. Indeed, Pádraig Pearse argued that the Irish Volunteers formed in 1913 'would never have arisen' had it not been for the formation of the Fianna four years before, not least because the Fianna had created a body of drilled and trained young men who were capable of organising the Volunteers. The military significance of the Fianna did not simply rest in being the progenitor of the Irish Volunteers. Fianna members played their own active part in the Easter Rising of 1916, during which seven members of the Fianna were killed.

Hay's thematic approach to the subject enables rigorous analysis of matters such as the type of activities engaged in by the Fianna, along with consideration of ideas of militarism and the question of who joined the Fianna. Hay stresses that there is already a narrative history of the Fianna (Damian Lawlor, *Na Fianna Éireann and the Irish Revolution, 1909-1923* (Rhode, Co, Offaly: Caoillte Books, 2009), but she still provides enough description of the story of the Fianna to allow readers not previously familiar with the group to understand what it did and when.

Some of the most valuable insights into the Fianna come in the chapter on who joined. There is a fair amount of archival detail available on some Fianna members in the Irish Republican Army's pension records and in the Bureau of Military History's Witness Statements. Indeed, sometimes the amount of information can be a little daunting and so Hay has appropriately sampled from three sources – the pensions records and witness statements mentioned above, and the *Dictionary of Irish Biography* which provides information on some of the more prominent members. That enables Hay to, for example, build up a picture of links between the Fianna and groups such as the Irish Republican Brotherhood finding the strongest links between the two in Dublin. Perhaps a little more could have been said about social class which is really only dealt with in one paragraph. However, this can be difficult to do rigorously with necessarily small samples and would possibly be more appropriately placed in regional studies

which Hay points to as being an obvious next step for anyone wishing to build on her work.

Beyond those with interests in Irish history, readers of this book interested in the impact of militarism on society across Europe will find much with which to engage. Increasingly, histories of the Irish Revolution range beyond Ireland in situating the factors of the revolution in wider international developments. Marnie Hay's book is a strong indicator of the benefits of such an approach.

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Okan Ozseker, *Forging the Border: Donegal and Derry in Times of Revolution, 1911 - 1925*. Kildare: Irish Academic Press, 2019. 302pp. ISBN 978-788550703 (paperback). Price £17.99.

This book is the latest in a long line of studies that seek to explore the revolutionary period in Ireland through the prism of local analysis. In this case Ozseker builds on templates provided by David Fitzpatrick, Marie Coleman and John Borgonovo by focusing on the counties of Donegal and Derry, examining the context, course and consequences of the war revolution there. The result is a strong book that fills a significant gap in the historical literature of the period and explains the complexity of the area in an accessible and credible manner.

One of the great strengths of this work is that it builds a coherent picture of the intricacy of the region. Donegal was split into two areas: a Catholic dominated, poor and mountainous seaboard, and a richer, more fertile eastern half which contained a majority of Protestants. Added to this was the fact that the north east of the county had far more in common with the city of Derry than the rest of the county, meaning that when the border between the Free State and Northern Ireland solidified in 1922, Derry was cut off from a large section of its natural economic and social hinterland. Donegal was also extremely poor, contained little in the way of infrastructure, was plagued by emigration and the county was taken into the Congested Districts Board (CDB) in 1909. In political terms too, the region was complex. Donegal was dominated by the moderate nationalism of the Irish Parliamentary Party and the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH), while the county of Londonderry was staunchly unionist; between these two poles was the city of Derry which contained an explosive mixture of the two.