

## REVIEWS

To conclude, then, there are serious problems with this work. However, for those who have little knowledge of Moore's background and want to read something other than a biography, the numerous extracts do form a useful compendium of material that would require a good deal of trawling to obtain from other sources. Let us hope that the second volume, which we are told will deal with the controversial expeditions to Sweden and Spain, will be written with some of these caveats in mind.

CHARLES J. ESDAILE  
University of Liverpool

**Brian Hughes, *Defying The IRA: Intimidation, Coercion and Communities during the Irish Revolution*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press 2016. xi, 222pp. ISBN: 978-1-781-38297-4. Hardback. Price £75.00.**

This is a timely and valuable book given current problems in Syria and Iraq since it deals with the effects of insurgent violence against civil populations. Ordinary people invariably suffer the most in times of violent political upheaval, whether under the so-called ISIL or in the 1920 Irish republican shadow state. Brian Hughes's book is part of the *Reappraisals in Irish History* series edited by Enda Delany and Maria Luddy that includes new work on Irish women, the famine and the treatment of Irish soldiers who served in the British army in World War One.

*Defying the IRA's* focus is narrow, a 'grass roots' study of republican intimidation of Ireland's civil population during the war of independence, 1919-1921. The aim of the book is to analyze the success or failure of IRA political violence in persuading the Irish population to accept the independence of Ireland along republican lines. So clear a focus inevitably precludes discussion of state violence against civilians, however, the definition of civil population is extended to include the Royal Irish Constabulary, (RIC) Magistrates, Civil Servants and anyone economically connected with the British administration in Ireland. Interestingly, opposition to the IRA cannot simply be equated with Protestant loyalism. In Ulster, the Northern Command complained bitterly about Hibernians, (Catholic nationalists) who refused to support the republican shadow state, despite IRA claims to be protecting them from loyalist violence during the war of independence.

Divided into six chapters *Defying the IRA* examines a number of different aspects of resistance to republican violence, including intimidating Crown servants, opposition to Sinn Fein's shadow state, especially its tax gathering, the ambivalence of the IRA's

## REVIEWS

experience in Ulster and the aftermath of the 1921 Truce. The republican *Dail Eireann* (established in the wake of Sinn Fein's overwhelming victory in the 1918 Khaki election) quickly authorised military action against Crown forces, including policemen and judges. At the same time, it moved rapidly to ossify the British administration by a takeover of local councils, where tax payment or non-payment became a cause for IRA retribution. Likewise, a major IRA success was paralysing the ordinary administration of law and justice and replacing it with republican courts. The picture Hughes presents is a complicated one, where IRA intimidation was strongest in areas that had a long history of local revolt. Hughes makes an excellent case for the notion that rural IRA units in the west of Ireland were calling on older traditions of agrarian unrest dating back to the 'Gaelic Land League' of the 1880s. Young IRA recruits in country districts were often part of families with experience of anti-landlord agitation and violence was sometimes used to further opportunist personal disputes. Hughes quotes a threatening letter sent to one Arthur McClean, a self-proclaimed Orangeman and covenanter living on a disputed farm, signed by the IRA and the F.S. (Irish Free State) "United for one cause to free the country from land grabbers." But, for the bulk of the Irish people, there was no absolute either-or, rather resistance, collaboration, accommodation or even indifference was a continuum most people slipped in and out of during the war and its aftermath.

There are excellent chapters on 'Intimidating the Crown' and 'Coercion and Punishment' where Hughes attempts to give an effective accounting of how much violence actually occurred. The police were an obvious target. Outside urban conurbations, like Dublin or Belfast, the RIC, though a gendarmerie, was deeply rooted in the local communities; these RIC men were vulnerable, as were the trades-people that supplied goods and services to Crown officers. The IRA was successful in country districts in forcing large numbers of men to resign, through threats and economic boycotts, though less so in the towns, where ostracising families was harder and, in 1922 over 13,000 remained to be formally disbanded by the British state.

Hughes makes good use of key sources including the Irish Grants Commission (the British government's compensation scheme for people financially disadvantaged through loyalty to the Crown) as well as the Irish Free State's Damage to Property Scheme and interviews from the Irish Republic's bureau of military history archives to round out a picture of a society in flux, and where political loyalties were contingent. In 1927, William Carleton, a Cavan man, wrote to the IGC signing himself as a 'Southern Loyalist.' A few years earlier he'd made a 'Damage to Property' claim to the southern government as a 'Humble Citizen of the F.S.' This mirrors the experience of James McCabe, who made claims for compensation to the ICG as a staunch loyalist whose business, supplying food to the RIC, had been ruined by an IRA boycott and later to the Free State's Damage to Property scheme claiming to be

## REVIEWS

a good republican. On the face of it this suggests a certain political schizophrenia, but in reality, it reflects the ambiguity of political identity in revolutionary Ireland.

This is a first class piece of work and will be indispensable to those interested in the history of ordinary people in Ireland during the war of independence as well as university level students of Irish and British history.

DECLAN O'REILLY  
University of East Anglia

**Michael Livingston and Kelly DeVries (eds), *The Battle of Crécy. A Casebook*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015. xiv + 524pp. ISBN: 978-1-781-38264-6. Hardback. Price £75.00.**

The ambitious aim of 'gathering together in one place the most important primary documents' on the battle of Crécy has produced this welcome collection, consisting largely of chronicle accounts as very few administrative records are included. The contrast with George Wrottesley's *Crécy and Calais* (London, 1898) is striking, for he gathered a huge number of writs and other documents to demonstrate how the English army was recruited, and to identify many of those who took part in the campaign. This volume is not concerned with such matters, though they do much to explain the English success. Instead, the sources, impressive in number, located by the editors show the widespread interest of chroniclers across Europe in the battle, and the difficulty that they faced in describing it. Admirably, the sources are provided both in the original language and in translation. The texts are accompanied by half a dozen explanatory essays.

The arguments that the battle was not fought at the traditional site will attract much attention. In one of the essays, Michael Livingston suggests that it took place near Domvast, over five kilometres from the village of Crécy. One problem with this is presented by the sources which describe the battle as taking place at (*apud*) Crécy; this is dealt with by the simple expedient of translating *apud* as 'near'. A letter from Edward III described how the French army appeared 'a nostre venue a Cresci'; the questionable translation is 'as we approached Crécy', rather than 'at our arrival at Crécy'. Further investigation is needed to determine whether a ditch at Domvast, five metres deep and ninety metres long, was dug by English archers in a few hours as Livingston suggests, or is the remains of a late nineteenth century phosphate excavation. It seems improbable that a field name, the *Jardin de Geneve*, refers to the death of the Genoese crossbowmen in the battle. The alternative suggestion that it