

The lady he employed to help sort out his garden in Somerset in the 1980s was Paul Pollock's niece who, after some years, showed him her collection of family papers stretching back, via Belfast, to eighteenth-century Scotland. Fisher took this evidence, chased up many more loose ends to flesh out the story and has presented in this book a polished and reflective narrative, not only of Paul's experience as a soldier, but of the wider Pollock family, including Paul's father John, the Glasgow-born minister of St Enoch's Presbyterian Church in Belfast, and his grandfather Alexander, a Glasgow tea merchant. Other names, including Gibb(s), Gilchrist, Gourlay, McEwen and Riddell, crop up along the way.

The text is lavishly illustrated with high-quality images from the Pollock collection, including original letters and ephemera, as well as period photographs, several of which were taken by George Hackney, the now celebrated Belfast war photographer, who attended St Enoch's and served with Paul in the 14th Battalion. There is some nice contextual information on the history of St Enoch's church, on Hackney and war memorials, along with a section by Bridges taking the history of the Pollock family up to the present day.

While Fisher writes with real empathy and a solid understanding of the broader context of the First World War, his decision to summarise Paul's letters means that Paul's voice is strangely muted and the colour and immediacy of his life in the trenches sadly lacking. In fact, the strongest voice to emerge from the narrative is John Pollock's, who, as minister of one of the largest congregations in Belfast, President of the international Christian Endeavour movement, trenchant Unionist and long-distance cyclist, held strong views on Catholicism, Home Rule and the necessity of war. In a fiercely patriotic sermon, delivered to his congregation after a visit to Paul's regiment in England in 1915, he declared 'God is with us: To doubt that is treason to our righteous cause. Liberty shall not be destroyed. ... The kingdom of God is in no danger; it must triumph.' In a letter to George Hackney written after Paul's death, he could still say that 'I had rather have my son's body in an unmarked grave, having done his duty, than sitting beside me here having shirked it.' As other studies of war have pointed out, grief and loss worked to fuel home front determination, not dampen it.

Some small editorial decisions do mar the work. The Band of Hope was founded by a Baptist and an Irish Presbyterian, not by a Methodist. Presbyterians are 'called' to a congregation, not 'transferred' and Victorians of all types loved, and wrote, anagrammatic poetry. The plethora of supplementary sections (a preface, foreword and introduction as well as 8 appendices) are a distraction and would have been better placed, in most cases, in the central narrative. But there is much else about this book to recommend it, not least the fact that Fisher's research, along with the efforts of Alan Curragh and his instgreatwar.com website, have ensured that Paul's name, originally missed off the Commonwealth War Graves lists and the Thiepval monument, has now been reinstated. These efforts, and this short book, are a fine monument to Paul Pollock, his family and community.

JANICE HOLMES

DIARMAID FERRITER AND SUSANNAH RIORDAN (EDS)

*Years of Turbulance*

*The Irish Revolution and its Aftermath*

UCD Press, Dublin, 2015

pp 322 ISBN 978-1-9108200-7-0 €40/£32

Michael Laffan is certainly one of the finest living Irish historians. One good explanation for this is that he spent a great deal of time in his formative academic years studying the history of countries other than Ireland. At Cambridge in the late 1960s, Laffan was encouraged to focus on the role of the question of French security in Anglo-German relations in the years after the Treaty of Versailles. He learned German from scratch and was able to spend fifteen months working on archives in Bonn and Coblenz. After completing his Ph.D. in 1973, he was able to explore the recently opened French Foreign Office archives. In short, Laffan has always taken great care to view events in Ireland during the first half of the twentieth century in a broad European context. That wide perspective is especially evident in one of his lesser-

known works, a brilliant little book, *The Partition of Ireland 1911–1925*, published by Dundalgan Press in 1983.

Laffan has ensured that the scholars he has nurtured over the years have been imbued with the same broad outlook. This festschrift could have been planned as a grand chronological and analytical survey of the Irish revolutionary period of 1912–23, a lapidary contribution to the ‘decade of centenaries’ commemorations. It was surely sensible not to attempt to do that. Instead we are offered a series of micro studies by leading and emerging historians on aspects of that period.

Of course these do not offer a comprehensive treatment of that revolution, but each one – without exception – adds significantly to our knowledge and understanding of that time. Most of them do that in a compelling way: Laffan’s writing is always lucid and engaging and his acolytes have obviously striven to eschew any prose which threatens mental indigestion. And in the process they have made excellent use of a variety of recently released archival material, including the censuses of Ireland of 1901 and 1911, and the Bureau of Military History and the Military Service Pensions collections.

The work of female historians stands out in this volume and, as expected, they help us to rediscover the role of women in the independence struggle. Marie Coleman’s chapter, ‘Violence against Women During the Irish War of Independence, 1919–21’, based on recently-released sources, is sensitive, thoughtful and informative. In this she dispassionately considers women as the victims of violence, fatal and non-fatal, sexual and non-sexual. We are left with the conclusion that incidences of sexual violence were rare (if we exclude the forcible cropping of hair) and that rape was not used as a weapon of war by any of those engaged in the fighting – and that includes the Black and Tans. The contrast with the concluding phase of the Second World War in eastern and central Europe, and the violence accompanying the break-up of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, is striking.

Executions, however, formed a marked feature of the time. Anne Dolan meticulously examines these chilling and squalid incidents, showing how the way victims were seized at night, tied up, shot and labelled sent horrifying waves of fear rippling across close-knit local communities not always certain where their loyalties lay. Shauna

Gilligan in her chapter on Pearse shows how his educational and political writings were largely ignored in the ten years after his execution; rather, admirers picked over his poetry and fiction to select material to make him an Irish identity *ikon*. Katie Lingard’s chapter upgrades still further Richard Mulcahy’s role in the War of Independence and shows how he and the IRA GHQ, in their campaign of violence, both encouraged and restrained their volunteers – often to the alarm of Dáil members – with an eye on international as well as national support.

William Murphy also contributes to our understanding of the role of women at this time. Carefully scrutinising the 1911 census, and taking advantage of its recent digitisation, he shows how at least some Irish suffragettes imitated their British counterparts by boycotting the census – in the words of James, the husband of Irish Women’s Franchise League member, Margaret Cousins, the census presented ‘a prime opportunity of throwing metaphorical spanners into official machinery’. Other women, however, used the census to make sure their educational achievements were recorded. The former Irish Party MP, Tom Kettle, signed his household’s census form but ... was it his wife Mary, sister of Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, who amended the wording, ‘Signature of the Head of Family’ to ‘Signature to one of the Heads of the Family’?

‘Whatever happened to Bulmer Hobson?’ I have asked myself on occasion, without bothering to inquire further. Now Marnie Hay, in ‘From Rogue Revolutionary to Rogue Civil Servant’ answers that most entertainingly, particularly in relating his later career as a civil servant and as a somewhat off-beat (not to say devious) campaigner for economic reconstruction.

Diarmaid Ferriter, editor of this book along with Susannah Riordan, makes excellent use of newly available sources in his detailed perusal of those who received or attempted to get Irish state military service pensions between the years 1925 and 1955. To do that Ferriter had to cast his eyes over great piles of hand-written letters, the ink on many of them still pulsing with pain and passion. Tom Barry, the charismatic County Cork IRA activist, fought a tenacious campaign to be put in the Rank A category, rather than Rank B; in spite of Éamon de Valera

(when Taoiseach) writing a letter in his support, Barry did not win his case until August 1940. Ferriter shows that many less prominent activists were in desperate need of what now seems very modest financial support. Nora Connolly O'Brien, a daughter of James Connolly and an active member of *Cumann na mBan* and the main organiser of its Belfast branch, wrote in July 1941 that she had not 'heard a word yet from the Pensions Board, so don't know what is going to happen in my case ... I am at my wits end. We are absolutely on the racks.'

Brian Maye writes an absorbing chapter on Michael Keogh's memoir (uncovered only in 2005) about working alongside Roger Casement as he tried to raise an Irish Brigade in Germany. Though the attempt to cajole captured Irish soldiers to fight for Germany failed miserably, those close to Casement like Keogh were most evidently spellbound by him. Keogh went on to take part in Ludendorff's spring offensive of 1918 and recalled that during it, almost certainly, he was partly instrumental in saving the life of Adolf Hitler.

Few Irish historians would pass up the opportunity to read new material by Tom Garvin, author of the final chapter on Seán Lemass. Garvin provides a sparkling account of Lemass' early years and then demonstrates, when he becomes part of the revolutionary elite, how Lemass, obsessed by economics even when seriously ill in hospital, was so utterly different from his boss de Valera, the man who supplied 'Kathleen ní Houlihan with green robes'. To Garvin 'the working partnership was not unlike the classic partnership between the rock and the wild man ... that between the dreamer and the practical man, each utterly dependent on the other, and each aware of the fact that he could not operate without the other'.

This is a handsomely produced volume with a couple of dozen well-chosen illustrations. It is certainly a fine tribute to an outstanding Irish historian.

JONATHAN BARDON

EMMET O'CONNOR

*Big Jim Larkin*

*Hero or Wrecker?*

University College Dublin Press, 2015

353pp ISBN 978-1-906359-93-5 hb €40.00

Labour leader James Larkin, the subject of this fine biography by Dr Emmet O'Connor of the University of Ulster, was born in Liverpool in 1874 to Ulster parents: his father came from Lower Killeavy in south Armagh, while his mother was from south Down. Indeed, as the author remarks, despite his birth in England, Larkin self-identified from at least 1909 as an Ulsterman and, like his colleague James Connolly, preferred to give the impression that he was Irish-born rather than the son of emigrants (p. 5). His pride in his Ulster background was deeply rooted and his supposed Ulster birth was believed as fact by his descendants, though not always by his political opponents. O'Connor records (p. 19) the following dismal exchange in Dáil Éireann in 1938 when Larkin was serving as an elected representative in his capacity as a TD:

*Mr Larkin:* I say that it is because of the men who drew the sword on behalf of this nation, few as they were, because of their sacrifice and the blood that was shed, that such as Deputy Dillon is allowed to speak in this house.

*Mr Dillon:* And you with a cockney accent.

*Mr Gorey:* And an Englishman.

*Mr Larkin:* I an Englishman? You are a liar, Sir, as I have had to tell you before.

*Mr Gorey:* It is a wise child that knows his own father ...

*Mr Larkin:* Go up to Killeavy, County Armagh and trace it. My mother's record can be found in South County Down.

The issue of birthplace, as Barak Obama has discovered in more recent times, can be a sensitive one when nationalist sensibilities are aroused and it is clear that Larkin and Connolly misled people to emphasise an 'Irishness' they felt was vitiated by their respective English and Scottish accents. In Larkin's case, in particular, strongly held nationalist beliefs underpinned his desire to be known as Ulster-born and thus an