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Damien Murray. *Irish Nationalists in Boston: Catholicism and Conflict, 1900-1928.* Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2018. Illustrations. 296 pp. \$75.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8132-3001-6.

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In David Brundage's study *Irish Nationalists in America: The Politics of Exile, 1798-1998* (2016), the overall impression painted of Irish-American migrant politics and views through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is that the wider diaspora was divided between loyalties to their new adopted homeland of the United States, the desire and hope for independence for their old homeland in Ireland, and the tensions that arose between Irish-American nationalist thoughts in comparison to Irish nationalist realities across the Atlantic. His work is a sweeping overview of two hundred years of history, a much-needed study within Irish-American scholarship. Yet his volume leaves the reader wanting more exploration of the disparate and competing nature of Irish-American nationalist visions, agendas, programs of action, ideals, groups, and actors. Damien Murray, currently associate professor of history at Elms College, takes up the mantle Brundage's work posits in his *Irish Nationalists in Boston: Catholicism and Conflict, 1900-1928* (2018). Using much of Brundage's wider methodological approach, Murray hones the focus onto a twenty-eight-year period in the milieu of Boston's complex Irish-American community at the turn of the twentieth century and through some of Irish America's most turbulent social developments in the era and atmosphere of the 1916 Easter Rising and World War I.

As Murray states at the very start, "this book ... examines the support for Irish nationalism in Boston during the first quarter of the twentieth century," looking at the way identity, Irish ethnic nationalism, and supportive diaspora political campaigns for Ireland's independence spread around, and caused tensions within,

Boston's Irish community. In particular, it highlights the tensions that developed among groups who reflected the differing views of the more-established American-born residents of Irish descent and those reflecting the views of Irish first-born immigrants still moving to the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Furthermore, Murray discusses how tensions and opinions competed "with the city's historically dominant group, the Yankees" of Boston's Protestant Brahmin families (p. x). Murray thus traces how Boston's Irish Catholic Church, Catholic social thought, and Irish ethnic nationalism interacted, intersected, and influenced the ways Irish Bostonians reacted to war, debates over American citizenship, white racial nationalism, immigrant rights, and local concerns through the 1910s and 1920s.

Irish Nationalists in Boston is divided into five lengthy chapters that focus on key areas of social discussion and flashpoints among Boston's Irish community. Starting at the midway point of the work's chronological focus, Murray's introduction uses the return of American troops from Europe in 1919 to highlight how World War I can be seen—on a local level at least—as a turning point of how the city's diaspora articulated and presented their Irish nationalist thoughts and how Irish nationalist groups showcased their arguments through actions, campaign movements, and meetings. Indeed, Murray argues that prior to the conflict, "Boston's Irish nationalist movement failed to arouse passionate interest from the majority of the American-born of Irish descent" who made up three-quarters of the city's population by 1910 (p. 5). However, the war, the Easter Rising, fears

about socialism, and anarchism in 1920s America, and ethnic nationalism's place within the wider construction of American identity evolution in the twentieth century, ensured that "Bostonians of Irish descent"—particularly middle-class professionals—were mobilized to an extent not seen previously, and presumably elsewhere in the country (p. 9).

The work then focuses on Boston's Irish-American campaigns for Irish Home Rule in the lead up to World War I and Irish nationalists' attempts to facilitate support in the prewar years. It reveals how nationalists had to work with, and navigate the complexities of, the tensions among recent immigrants, immigrants from previous generations advocating "separate ethnic identity," and the "factionalism and politicization of Boston's Irish-language movement" groups in the city (p. 41). These divided communities were all vying to define the Irish-American diaspora in the city. Through divisions, however, what becomes clear is that "expressions of ethnic nationalism ... were potentially more antagonistic toward Yankees" than in support of Irish independent nationalism—a common unity against Boston's most American Americans (p. 13). The second chapter then discusses the reaction and mobilized response generated by both the war and the Easter Rising and the divisions they caused within an already-fractured Boston Irish community. As Murray notes, the US entry into the conflict a year after the tumultuous events in Dublin "caused a division between American-born sympathizers of Irish freedom and Irish-born revolutionary separatists." This led to the emergence of several groups—like the Friends of Irish Freedom (FOIF)—that had national and local organizations around which Boston's "revolutionary separatists ... could openly mobilize" and garner popular support (p. 58). Such groups, FOIF in particular, then appear throughout the rest of Murray's work as many of Boston's Irish nationalist actors played active roles within the movement.

The final three chapters of the work—and the conclusion to an extent, which alludes briefly to developments beyond the scope of the book into the 1930s and 1940s—focus on the more complicated postwar period and the 1920s. Here, Boston's Irish Roman Catholic Church and Catholic laity couched their nationalism around the era of the Red Scare and charges of possible diaspora anarchist and socialist support. This is also the period of Éamon de Valera's 1919-20 tour of the nation (and meeting in Fenway Park) and his supporters' struggle for the soul of Irish nationalist support groups in America at the time of the Republic of Ireland's creation, with obser-

vations commenting on how Irish nationalism operated in the "Tribal Twenties." This period was one of continual reshaping and reforming as "local Catholic leaders" were successful in "linking Irish ethnicity to anti-socialism" in order to save the diaspora from any Yankee attacks, showcasing "how international events continually reshaped Irish identity in Boston" and 1920s politics across the nation (p. 94). Yet tensions still remained, particularly as Irish immigrant disquiet at being "more likely to remain at the bottom rungs of society than the American-born sons of immigrants" and their more-established resident counterparts resulted in class tensions that were susceptible to socialist ideals (p. 110).

Here, Murray's work offers an interesting comparison to studies on Italian and German anarchism in postwar America and American reactions to imagined and real socialist threats. In Boston, for example, "Catholic clergymen's exaggerated fears of a potential Bolshevik revolution in America may have inspired an antisocialist riot on May Day 1919" in Roxbury and other violence in eastern Massachusetts (p. 129). That international influence is also on show in the final chapter, as "the demise of Irish-American nationalism as a mass movement both in Boston and elsewhere in the United States" grew through the 1920s (p. 202). Local Irish Catholic identity evolved again in response to the Immigration Restriction League, colonial challenges to British rule across the empire, the place of "hyphenated Americans" in the country, and racial discourse within Irish cultural nationalism.

It is apparent from the start that Murray has great attention, understanding, and in-depth analysis, which is a benefit to such detailed focus on Boston's Irish nationalists and wider Catholic community in this period. However, that is a hindrance at times, as the subject matter becomes extremely dense. Trying to follow the minutiae of Irish nationalist actors and groups make the work hard to follow in parts and hard to follow a central narrative. The work would benefit from a bibliographical synopsis appendix of key figures. There are two interconnecting issues that factor into this observation. One is the fact that the chapters have no breaks or subsections to signpost where the argument is going, which can at times submerge some necessary detailed focus (such as on women in Irish nationalist movements). The other is that much of this work has appeared in article and chapter form in other publications, which leads at times to a lack on contextualization in some parts and more detail in others. This is certainly an academic work and requires a good knowledge of Irish-American social and political developments on local levels to gain the most out of the text.

Arguably, it is the narrow and nuanced focus on Boston over a twenty-year period that leads to this opaque narrative. Murray leaves open questions about what is happening contextually among Irish nationalists in the diaspora's enclaves of New York City and Chicago, which would have offered an interesting comparative point.

It would also remove the subconscious presentation of a microhistory narrative, where Boston's Irish nationalists can appear as somewhat atypical of the wider movement and Irish-American experience within the country. However, that is not to take away from some of the fascinating insights Murray brings to light in this history that do, in part, link to wider histories. For instance, there were several violent backlashes to Harvard students announcing intentions to form a Ku Klux Klan chapter at the university, with riots "involving Catholics of Irish background" in areas around Boston between 1923 and 1925. The city remained peaceful, mostly due to Mayor James Michael Curley's refusal to grant Klan meetings inside Boston and a wider "hatred of the Klan" by Irish-American residents (p. 246). It was seen, the book argues, "as symbolic of local Yankee's prejudice toward Catholics and immigrant groups who could not trace their ancestry to the Puritans," presenting an anti-KKK aspect to Irish nationalism in Boston itself (pp. 246-47).

There are also a couple of engaging sections about the role women played in Irish nationalism. Murray traces how an "untapped" opportunity for female support in the prewar period developed into women playing an active role in suffrage groups, Irish-American female militancy groups (like the left-leaning American Women Pickets for the Enforcement of America's War Aims), and "social outlets in ethnic organizations" through to the 1920s. Great stories emerge in these sections. In Easter Week 1920, for example, more than sixty Irish-American women, including those from Boston and the Irish Progressive League, picketed the British Embassy to protest against British rule in Ireland (p. 171). This showcased how local movements always had an international and transnational focus to them. Certainly, a whole chapter dedicated to Boston's Irish-American female nationalists

in this period would have been good to see in this work. It also raises the prospect of further study not only in the Boston context but also in the wider American context of female engagement with Irish nationalism through its whole development.

For the scholar of Irish-American nationalism, identity politics, transnational developments, and the wider Irish-American experience in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century (while also keeping in mind nineteenth-century developments), *Irish Nationalists in Boston* is definitely a welcome addition to the canon. Murray's work sits well within broader scholarship, referring to and drawing on past studies. He moves the focus forward from Brundage's wider macro-history and shows that Irish-American experience and views were never homogenous; instead, they varied depending on multiple local and national factors. Indeed, as Murray concludes, "how the Boston Irish understood their ethnic nationalism was constantly transformed by important outside forces," as much as local concerns, tensions, realities, and factors (p. 256). Nonetheless, while this may be a narrow analysis of one city, Murray's study continues to show how disparate and fractured Irish nationalism was within the broader Irish-American diaspora beyond Boston.

Developments and events at the local level reflected larger divisions that had been in existence since the growth of Irish nationalist independence movements and mentalities from the middle of the nineteenth century. It was these divisions that de Valera's supporters could exploit as his power grew not only in Boston but also elsewhere in Massachusetts and America, and his organization effectively seizing control of Irish-American nationalism and decentralizing FOIF's nationalist sway. Independence and identity, and the evolution of both within Irish nationalist frameworks in Boston's Irish-American Catholic community, are presented here as complex. They are also, in Murray's own words, "self-confident" (p. 253). It is an apt description for Murray's assessment of the city's Irish nationalist movement in the first decades of the twentieth century.

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