

New from Four Courts Press

Order on-line: www.four-courts-press.ie

The medieval castle in Ireland and Wales

J. KENYON & K. O'CONOR (EDS)

262pp ills. ISBN 1-85182-726-9 hbk €55/\$55 February

Catholic churchmen and the Celtic revival in Ireland, 1848-1916

KEVIN COLLINS

208pp ISBN 1-85182-658-0 hbk €50/\$50 February

Reading Irish histories: texts, contexts and memory

LAWRENCE MCBRIDE (ED.)

Key essays from leading scholars on Irish historiography and the teaching of Irish history.

240pp ISBN 1-85182-703-X pbk €55/\$55 March

Medieval Dublin IV

SEÁN DUFFY (ED.)

Fourth volume in the series containing essays, for the first time, relating to North Dublin.

288pp ills. ISBN 1-85182-743-9 hbk €50/\$50

ISBN 1-85182-744-7 pbk €19.95/\$19.95 April

Ireland: a social, cultural and literary history, 1791-1891

JAMES MURPHY

A precise and comprehensive overview of 19th-century Ireland.

224pp ISBN 1-85182-728-5 pbk €24.95/\$24.95 April

RECENTLY PUBLISHED IN 2002

The IRA, 1926-1936

BRIAN HANLEY

304pp ills. ISBN 1-85182-721-8 hbk €29.95/\$35

Pre-census sources for Irish demography

BRIAN GURRIN

112pp ISBN 1-85182-619-X pbk €17.95/\$19.95

FOUR COURTS HISTORY CLASSICS

The lordship of Ireland in the middle ages

JAMES LYDON

256pp ISBN 1-85182-737-4 pbk €24.95/\$29.95 May

A paper landscape: the Ordnance Survey in nineteenth-century Ireland

JOHN H. ANDREWS

384pp ills. ISBN 1-85182-664-5 pbk €24.95/\$29.95

Songs of Irish rebellion

GEORGES DENIS ZIMMERMANN

356pp ISBN 1-85182-629-7 pbk €24.95/\$29.95

FREE! Our 2003 catalogue can now be downloaded from our website. See www.four-courts-press.ie for details.



Four Courts Press

7 Malpas Street, Dublin 8, Ireland.

Tel.: (00 353 1) 453 4668; fax.: (00 353 1) 453 4672

e-mail: info@four-courts-press.ie

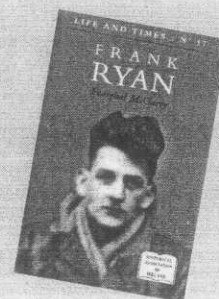
and in the USA: tel.: 800 944 6190; fcps@isbs.com.

Frank Ryan

Fearghal McGarry

(Dundalgan Press, €6)

ISBN 0852211430



This biography follows Fearghal McGarry's first book, *Irish politics and the Spanish Civil War* (1999), a work of such comprehensive objectivity that it deserves much wider recognition as the definitive textbook on the subject.

By contrast, the limitations of McGarry's second book are only partly related to its slim size of ninety-odd pages. The chapter headings label successive phases of Ryan's political life as 'Republican', 'Social Republican', 'Anti-Fascist' and 'Collaborator'. The overall approach itself proves defective, with a compartmentalisation that chokes off thematic continuity between one phase and the next. Accordingly, while McGarry uses the diaries of Rosamund Jacob to give us new and vivid insights into how Ryan responded to Armistice Day as 'Republican' pure and simple, he tells us nothing at all about Ryan's radically different response as 'Social Republican'.

The 'Anti-Fascist' chapter dealing with Ryan's role in the Spanish Civil War is the best, based as it is on McGarry's earlier work. But there is one instance where he seriously undermines his own previous high standards as a painstakingly objective historian. He now writes that 'volunteers who clashed with the communists—some in good conscience' had been 'in some cases (including Irishmen) executed'. There was, in fact, only one Irishman ever executed by the International Brigades (suggestions that there was one other result from a misreading of the evidence by McGarry's British source,

James K. Hopkins). Maurice Ryan (no relation) had been executed for shooting at his own men while drunk in charge of a machine-gun. In his earlier book McGarry carefully presented and conscientiously weighed all the evidence, and quite reasonably concluded that 'some form of personality dysfunction rather than fascism was the cause of Ryan's behaviour'—a far cry from his latest suggestion that Maurice Ryan had instead been shot for holding non-communist beliefs 'in good conscience'.

The greatest problem, however, lies with McGarry's 'Collaborator' chapter, where previous problems of compartmentalisation are compounded by a teleological approach that dismisses out of hand all evidence challenging such a categorisation of Frank Ryan's German years. McGarry quotes Ryan the 'pure and simple' Republican as saying in 1931 that in another great war England's difficulty would once again be Ireland's opportunity, and then proceeds to the sweeping statement that there is little reason to think that Ryan's views in this regard changed significantly over the course of the remaining years of his life. With one fell swoop McGarry abandons any responsibility of even alluding to, never mind evaluating, the increasingly sophisticated analyses of foreign policy that Ryan actually wrote throughout the 1930s, not least his specific disavowal of his own earlier simplistic sloganeering, now used to damn him.

For damnation it most certainly is, with McGarry's choice of the label

'Collaborator', a political term with a specific dictionary definition—one who cooperates traitorously with an enemy of one's own country. Such Irish collaborators did, of course, exist—principally the former Irish minister in Berlin, Charles Bewley, sacked by de Valera on the eve of the war and conspiring thereafter to bring about a Nazi *coup d'état* against him. The same charge was explicitly made against Ryan by David O'Donoghue in *Hitler's Irish voices* (1998), as a result of Francis Stuart's 1989 claim to have been horrified at Ryan supposedly speaking to him in 1940 of German victory. That claim, however, is devoid of credibility, not least because O'Donoghue's soft interview failed to confront Stuart with the fact that he was contradicting everything else he had ever written on Ryan over the previous forty years, not to mention the documentary evidence that it had been none other than Stuart himself who had been triumphantly writing in 1940 of such a German victory!

McGarry quotes Stuart's slander of Ryan, having himself charged Ryan with promptly responding to the August 1940 submarine death of IRA leader Seán Russell with 'a conscious determination to collaborate with Nazi Germany'. He neglects his responsibilities as a biographer to even refer to the most pertinent eyewitness account of the complete collapse of Ryan's health in the wake of Russell's death. In her memoirs *Cé hé seo amugh?* (1992), Stuart's Berlin mistress during 1940, the unreconstructed Nazi Róisín Ní Mheara, describes how, in the months that followed, Ryan was refusing to eat, barely deigned to converse with Stuart, manifested total distrust of any Germans who came near him, and in fact used his deafness to avoid communication with them.

By the end of 1940 Ryan's health had recovered enough for him to become functional

again. In a review of Seán Cronin's pioneering 1980 biography I disputed the left-wing mythology that Ryan was part of some mysterious anti-fascist conspiracy in Germany. His role was much more specifically Irish. He was not the 'collaborator' of McGarry's contention but made himself de Valera's *de facto* and most effective representative in Germany. McGarry refers to recently released British intelligence material on the interrogation of Kurt Haller but makes poor use of it. Quite apart from checkmating Bewley in Berlin, Ryan also subverted the original Russell plan by assigning to de Valera a veto on any proposed German arms assistance in the event of an Anglo-Irish conflict. Acting as such an Irish agent Ryan inevitably supped with the devil but, as a British intelligence evaluation concluded, 'Regarding himself as an Irish patriot and not a creature of the Germans, he refused to associate himself in any way with Hartmann's Irish broadcasts'.

'Patriot' would have been the more appropriate chapter heading for McGarry to use in respect of Ryan's final years. In an interview with Michael McNerney shortly before his own death, de Valera himself spoke of 'this great Irishman'. He continued: 'Frank Ryan always put Ireland first in everything he did or said, at home or abroad. He has earned his place in history.' Dev knew how vitally important Ryan's role had been in successfully pursuing his own strategy of safeguarding Ireland from both war and fascism. McGarry's silence on that de Valera interview, notwithstanding a passing dismissive reference to McNerney, is one final omission from this disappointingly flawed biography. One hopes that his next book, a biography of Eoin O'Duffy, will see a return to his previous high standards of scholarship.

Manus O'Riordan

INSTITUTE OF IRISH STUDIES

www.qub.ac.uk/iis

- *Public Seminar Series each semester*
COMMEMORATION AND REMEMBERING (FEB–APRIL)
- *Short academic and cultural programmes for visiting University groups*
- *MA postgraduate programme* – opportunity for graduates to undertake interdisciplinary study in the field of Irish Studies

International Summer School

21 July–8 August 2003

This three-week interdisciplinary summer school in Irish Studies offers participants the opportunity to learn from internationally-acclaimed scholars about Irish politics, anthropology, history, film and theatre and language and literature. A full programme of cultural events and fieldtrips is included and participants will have the opportunity to examine the current situation in Northern Ireland through meetings with community group leaders, politicians, and the Police Service. *Cost: £695stg (tuition and bed & breakfast).*

Further details and applications available from:

Catherine Boone, Institute of Irish Studies,
Queen's University Belfast,
Belfast BT7 1NN,
Northern Ireland
Tel: 44 (0) 28 9027 3386
E-mail: irish.studies@qub.ac.uk
Website: www.qub.ac.uk/iis



Queen's University
Belfast

Royal Irish Academy

Documents on Irish Foreign Policy Volume III 1926–1932

Edited by Ronan Fanning, Michael Kennedy, Dermot Keogh and Eunan O'Halpin

This new volume explores Ireland's developing relations with the League of Nations, the Commonwealth and the USA. Less well known aspects of foreign policy are highlighted such as state entertainment in the 1920s and politics of soccer and rugby matches.

ISBN 1 874045 96 8, 1016 pages, hardback, €45

Irish Historic Towns Atlas, no.11, Dublin, part I, to 1610

By H.B. Clarke

First in the series of parts relating to Irish cities. With historical and archaeological details and a range of large-format maps and photographs offering an unprecedented study of medieval Dublin.

ISBN 1 874045 89 5, large format maps and plates with 36 pages of text in 410mm x 305mm folder, €30



Available from booksellers or
Royal Irish Academy

19 Dawson Street
Dublin 2

Email publications@ria.ie