

vital documentation of the central debates of the diversity era transpiring across scholarly, institutional, and artistic channels. As such, *Black Film British Cinema II* is on its way to becoming a landmark publication, as is the case with its predecessor. Nwonka and Saha's generous act of custodianship makes it possible for readers to put the two works into conversation. All of their labors, including the crafting of this scholarly sequel, contribute to the continued growth of Black British film studies in all of its temporal and contextual registers.

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DAITHÍ Ó CORRÁIN and GERARD HANLEY. *Cathal Brugha: "An Indomitable Spirit."* Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2022. Pp. 222. €24.95 (paper).
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As Daithí Ó Corráin and Gerard Hanley recount in *Cathal Brugha: "An Indomitable Spirit,"* in July 1922, in the days after Cathal Brugha's death, Michael Collins recalled him as "one of the very few who gave their all that this country should have his freedom" and observed that "when many of us are forgotten Cathal Brugha will be remembered" (161). Within a few short weeks the death of Brugha, the first prominent civil war casualty, was overshadowed by the losses of Harry Boland, Arthur Griffith, and, most notably, Collins himself. Brugha is remembered for his courage in face of fire during the Easter Rising, his death in action, and his inflammatory speech during the Treaty debates, when he criticized and undermined Collins's role in the War of Independence and announced that acceptance of the Treaty would be "national suicide" (139–40). Cemented in national memory as a soldier, it seemed fitting that Portobello barracks was named after him. With their meticulously researched study, Ó Corráin and Hanley challenge simplistic narratives and offer a fascinating reappraisal of a complex and important figure.

In what is emphatically not a conventional biography, Ó Corráin and Hanley analyze how Charles Burgess, born into a Dublin business family in 1874, became the republican martyr Cathal Brugha. The Gaelic League was an important part of this transformation and Ó Corráin and Hanley give it due attention as they trace Brugha's political development and the growth of his republican idealism. The Cathal Brugha that emerges from this book is determined, single-minded to a fault, ruthless, courageous, and dedicated to the republican cause above all else. He held himself and others to high standards even in the midst of what he considered a war. He sought evidence for the assassination targets for Bloody Sunday 1920, wrote apologetic letters to family members of men wrongly executed as spies, and insisted that all violence fulfil a political aim. At the same time, he had no qualms about using assassination as a tool and plotted to take out the British Cabinet if conscription were implemented in Ireland in 1918. One of the most arresting scenes in the book is Brugha's regular visits to the British parliament, where he was assisted to the public gallery by staff who assumed he was a wounded British Army veteran.

The Easter Rising is vividly recounted and interesting, in part due to Ó Corráin and Hanley's focus on the South Dublin Union, one of the less familiar sites occupied by the rebels. The battle between the rebels, led by Éamonn Ceannt, and the British soldiers is dramatically told, drawing on eyewitness accounts. Brugha was close to the inner circle (so close that he was entrusted with a copy of the plans for the rebellion, which he buried in his garden) but not such a prominent leader that he faced execution, his wounds notwithstanding. His injuries, which left him with a permanent disability, meant that he also escaped

imprisonment or internment—indeed, he must be the most prominent revolutionary figure who spent the least amount of time in jail. He was free to play a vital role in rebuilding the Irish Volunteers after the Rising, but missing out on the camaraderie associated with imprisonment may have contributed to the sense of him as a somewhat aloof outsider.

During his time as minister for Defence in the War of Independence, he frequently came into conflict with cabinet colleagues, particularly regarding finances and the role of the Irish Republican Brotherhood. He was a stickler for financial accountability, likely influenced by his own experience when his older brothers stole from their father's business and brought the family close to financial ruin. The conflict over the Irish Republican Brotherhood persisted into the Treaty debates: Brugha resented the influence of the Irish Republican Brotherhood and felt it should be disbanded. Ó Corráin and Hanley explore the preexisting tensions within the movement on the eve of the Treaty debate, aiding to historians' understanding of the path to civil war. Ó Corráin and Hanley recount Brugha's infamous remarks on Collins and the Treaty during the debates, along with his later more conciliatory comments accepting that the Treaty signatories believed they were acting in Ireland's best interests. While apparently opposed to the outbreak of the civil war, he appears to have decided that his greatest contribution could be his own life, hoping his death might bring about reconciliation. This of course did not happen.

Ó Corráin and Hanley do not neglect the impact of Brugha's republican activities on his family, noting that Brugha's daughter Brenda was born prematurely in May 1916, attributed to his wife Caitlín's trauma during the rebellion and in the torturous weeks afterward, when her husband was gravely wounded. During the War of Independence, the family moved frequently, returning to Dublin only during the Truce. Caitlín Brugha emerges as a fascinating figure in her own right, a stalwart republican who was deeply protective of her husband's legacy. Left with limited means to support her six young children, she established a successful draper's business. Caitlín remained politically active, and she was successfully elected for Sinn Féin in 1923 and 1927. She did not apply for a widow's pension under the Military Service Acts, refusing to engage with the Free State government. While her stance was understandable, had she applied, the paperwork involved in the process would have provided historians further insight and detail on the family's living conditions in the decades after the civil war.

More than a biographical account of Brugha, Ó Corráin and Hanley's study serves as a history of the Irish revolution, covering the main events from 1914 to 1922 with enough context to inform the more general reader and sufficient nuance and detail to maintain the interest of the scholar of the revolution. While Brugha did not leave a diary or many other personal papers, Ó Corráin and Hanley follow his experiences through others' references to him, surviving letters in the possession of others, and his public speeches and writings. They draw on a rich source base, notably material held at the Military Archives, the National Library, and the National Archives. They also make use of some material held by Brugha's grandson, but they use it sparingly and most sources are publicly accessible.

Ó Corráin and Hanley are to be commended for this engrossing study, which represents a significant contribution to ever-growing historiography of the revolution period. It deserves a wide readership and will be of value to any interested in a nuanced understanding of the tumultuous events of early twentieth century Ireland.

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