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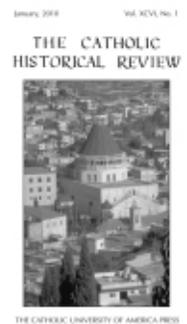
The Fenian Problem: Insurgency and Terrorism in a Liberal State, 1858-1874 (review)

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Finally, Cummings seems to have a penchant for factoids; for example, “Thérèse has been the subject of over nine hundred biographies, almost one a month since her death (p. 178); on the other hand, some opinions seem enigmatic: “Thérèse identified with the atheists as a result of this nihilistic experience of utter darkness” (p. 188). Although there is no index, there are ample references at the end of each chapter. Although the author’s heavy reliance on secondary literature has resulted in a number of misstatements and a rather routine portrayal of historical events, the popular audience for whom this book seems intended will probably not notice these deficiencies. For such readers, this book will probably be an eye-opener to an era of dramatic interaction between “guardians” and “prophets” who might otherwise be completely forgotten.

The Catholic University of America

JOHN T. FORD

The Fenian Problem: Insurgency and Terrorism in a Liberal State, 1858-1874. By Brian Jenkins. (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press. 2008. Pp. xvi, 439. \$85.00. ISBN 978-0-773-53426-1.)

Brian Jenkins’s book sets out to explore “the response of successive governments of the British liberal state to the threat of Fenianism” (p. ix). He finds commonalities in the Victorian era with those dilemmas that still face society today of combating terrorism in a free society. He concludes, however, that in some respects the Victorians remained more faithful to the traditional freedoms granted to citizens under the law than did those who tackled Irish terrorism in the late-twentieth century.

The Fenians flourished both in the United States and Ireland. Theirs was a secret organization devoted to the overthrow of the British state in Ireland, initially by means of insurgency and open rebellion. This strategy singularly failed in several sporadic attempts at insurrection in Ireland in 1867, partly because in 1865–66 the Liberal government under Lord Wodehouse, as lord lieutenant or governor of Ireland, had suppressed the Fenian newspaper, arrested the leading Fenian figures, and suspended *habeas corpus*.

A second line of Fenian activity involved what Jenkins identifies as terrorism, in our present use of that term. Much attention is devoted to several notorious incidents that took place in Britain in 1867, the fracas in Manchester that led to the shooting of a policeman, and the explosion at Clerkenwell Jail that resulted in civilian deaths. Jenkins meticulously reconstructs the circumstances surrounding these events and the trials that followed them, those executed after the former incident becoming the “Manchester Martyrs” of Irish nationalist iconography. Both incidents put pressure on the Conservative government of the time but “[t]here was no resort to arbitrary arrests in Britain” while in Ireland “the liberal state remained a promise only” (p. 178).

All of this had a distinct effect on the Liberal party, which returned to power in late 1869, under the leadership of William Ewart Gladstone. On becoming prime minister he was determined to tackle the Fenian issue, not by means of repression, but by his “justice for Ireland” policy. He hoped to marginalize the Fenians by winning over other sections of Irish society. As well as a measure to increase the rights of tenants, he attempted to woo the Catholic Church, which had never been sympathetic to the Fenians, by disestablishing the Anglican Church in Ireland and by attempting, although ultimately failing, to find an acceptable means of allowing Catholics access to university education. Although Fenianism faded to a degree, there was renewed support for Irish self-government, and Gladstone was forced to agree to restrictions on civil liberties to combat crime. His policy of winning Ireland round had failed, although Jenkins is struck by how relatively moderate were the infractions of liberal principles even in Ireland.

The issue of the response of the liberal state to terrorism is an important thread that runs through this densely evidenced book, rather than a dominating theme. Jenkins paints a very full picture of the events of the times and offers a most interesting account of the deliberations of British statesmen as they sought to respond to Fenianism. In this, they were caught among liberal principles, reformist impulses, public opinion both in Britain and Ireland, the pressure of interest groups, and the need to maintain order. *The Fenian Problem* offers both an insight into the issue of managing terrorism and a thorough introduction to much of the British high politics of the time as it related to Ireland.

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JAMES H. MURPHY

Georges Goyau (1869–1939): Un intellectuel catholique sous la III^e République. By Jérôme Grondeux. [Collection de l'École Française de Rome, Vol. 38.] (Rome: École française de Rome. 2007. Pp. xii, 445. €53,00. ISBN 978-2-728-30749-4.)

It is difficult to read sources in early-twentieth-century French Catholicism without encountering Georges Goyau, member and secretary of the Académie française (1922–39). His prolific stamp is everywhere—as organizer or sponsor of events and associations; and as author, editor, or authority in publications. Because he is largely unknown, interpreting such encounters has been frustratingly difficult. Fortunately, this welcome volume changes all that. In addition to Grondeux’s comprehensive biography, his bibliography is exhaustive: besides Goyau’s eighty monographs (1893–1939), it also includes about 110 articles Goyau published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* (1895–1939) and another 550 articles in *Figaro* (1920–39). Grondeux also provides details on locating archival sources, including voluminous correspondence only recently made available at the Bibliothèque nationale.

In his career’s first phase, begun under Pope Leo XIII, Goyau advocated social Catholicism: “It is clear that for Goyau, to renounce social Catholic