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Ireland and the Crimean War (review)

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dents of the period and the American navy did their best to stop the illicit invaders of other countries.

Nonetheless, May fails to note that Britain's occupation of the Mosquito Coast and Belize (Honduras) were direct violations of the Monroe Doctrine and the 1850 Clayton-Bulwer treaty in which Britain was able to quash three United States–Nicaraguan transit treaties, including U.S. envoy Ephraim George Squire's treaty with the Nicaraguan government for "free and unlimited" passage across that country to and from the Pacific. Moreover, Britain was so concerned about American expansion that it regularly and illegally stopped and searched American Mail steamers on the high seas. But then Britain's policy of "containment" of the United States was clearly spelled out by this reviewer some time ago in *When the Eagle Screamed: The Romantic Horizon in American Expansionism, 1800–1860*. Then, too, in 105 pages of closely packed notes the author ignores Edward S. Wallace's pioneering work on the filibusters, *Destiny and Glory* (thus missing some great stories in this present dull book). He also ignores Robert Russel's classic, *Improvement of Communication with the Pacific Coast as an Issue in American Politics, 1783–1869*. Strange research!

The structure of the book is as follows: first defining away British and French filibusters, though Rudyard Kipling's satire on British filibustering, *The Man Who Would Be King*, is mentioned; then, secondly, he recounts briefly the stories of selected filibusters like William Walker, Henry L. Kinney, Henry A. Crabb, Narcisco López, Juan Cortina, Carvajal, poor old firebrand, John A. Quitman (who just couldn't make it) and the Mexican War veterans who invaded Yucatán. In another chapter the author speculates that most of the filibusters were Southerners, but then realizing that they started many expeditions from New York he blames the City's mechanics! Then the author tries U.S. authorities, from presidents to secretaries of state to local judges, before the bar and finds them unfortunately not particularly guilty. The best part of the book is the latter part where the author concludes that the filibusters stymied American expansion into the Caribbean and especially Southern expansion of more slavery into the region—a compromise that might have prevented the Civil War, an event which, as the author laments, is better known than the story of the three thousand "men of destiny."

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*Ireland and the Crimean War*. By David Murphy. Portland, Oreg.: ISBS, 2002. ISBN 1-85182-639-4. Maps. Photographs. Illustrations. Tables. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xxv, 262. \$45.00.

Recently, Irish historians have begun to rediscover the nature and extent of the Irish contribution to the British military power, both as part of the United Kingdom and after partition in 1922. David Murphy's account of

Ireland's part in the Crimean War 1854–56, based on his doctoral thesis at Trinity College Dublin, demolishes some cherished myths. Irishmen were proportionally over-represented in the British armed forces of the mid-nineteenth century; and from their own accounts they did not volunteer from hunger or reluctantly, but in the hope of a military career. Both elite and mass popular enthusiasm for war against Russia was considerable, sustained through to the war's successful conclusion, and commemorated in pageants, ballads and memorials afterwards. In fact the Irish presence in the Crimea was so ubiquitous, and the response of Ireland was so much like that of the rest of the United Kingdom, that Murphy's book raises questions about the nature of Irishness in this period, as opposed to Scottishness, Welshness, or Englishness. In his search for Irish nationality, Murphy also sometimes stretches too far (under some of his criteria, Robert E. Lee would be called English); social class divisions and upbringing were much more significant at the time, and famous Crimean figures such as General Sir George De Lacy Evans and William Howard Russell of the London *Times* are better understood as "Anglo-Irish." Correctly, Murphy does not treat Lord Lucan as Irish, any more than Lord Cardigan and Lord Raglan were Welsh.

Murphy provides good chapter-length accounts of Ireland both on the outbreak of the war and at its conclusion, and chapters on the Crimean theatre and on the critical naval operations. His emphasis on the Royal Navy in the Baltic is unfortunately less original than he realises: despite impressive wider reading he has somehow missed the most influential recent revisionist account, Andrew Lambert's *The Crimean War* (1990), which deals comprehensively with the naval war issue. His failure to read Hew Strachan's equally revisionist works on the British Army also causes him to repeat some discredited opinions. His strongest and most interesting chapters deal with wider neglected issues such as the Irish role in the support services in the war, including the Royal Irish Constabulary contingent in the Mounted Staff Corps, and Irish "navvies" or labourers. The chapter on the experiences of Irish surgeons, nurses, and chaplains is fascinating, including the well documented records of two Jesuits in the Crimea (Catholic chaplains had been allowed in British service in 1836), and the virulent clashes between the Dublin nursing Sisters of Mercy and Florence Nightingale. This book makes an important contribution both to a neglected aspect of Irish history and to the wider history of the war.

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***Historical Dictionary of the Crimean War.*** By Guy Arnold. Historical Dictionaries of War, Revolution, and Civil Unrest, No. 19. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2002. ISBN 0-8108-4276-9. Maps. Bibliography. Pp. xxvi, 179. \$49.00.