

Northern Ireland and the Politics of Reconciliation

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Book Reviews

Keogh, Dermot, and Michael H. Haltzel, eds. *Northern Ireland and the Politics of Reconciliation*. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; and Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Dermot Keogh and Michael Haltzel's collection of essays is a high-quality production. Anyone interested in the Northern Ireland conflict should get a copy. The book is the result of a conference held in 1990. However, some attempt has been made by the contributors to bring their papers up to date (as of late 1992). We can assume that the editors themselves must have done some of this updating, as they have one of their contributors, who died in 1990, discussing the 1992 UK general election.

The collection has fifteen papers, divided into three sections, on "historical perspectives," "the politics of social and political division," and "in search of the politics of reconciliation," respectively. Many of the contributors are well-known academics, including Paul Arthur, Roy Foster, Don Horowitz, Joe Lee, and John Whyte. There are also contributions from philosopher-politicians like Garret FitzGerald and John Hume.

While the collection overall is impressive, it is, like many of the genre, of uneven quality. There are a number of highly valuable contributions: the late John Whyte successfully dismisses the superficial notion that Northern Ireland is a static society and polity. Instead he shows that the region is constantly changing, though not in ways which promise an end to the constitutional stalemate. Joe Lee provides an informative discussion of social and political change in the Irish Republic through the eventful 1980s and early 1990s. Garret FitzGerald offers a fascinating glimpse into the behind the scenes negotiations which led to the Anglo-Irish Agreement. John Hume gives an articulate (though somewhat optimistic) argument for the conflict-dissolving powers of European integration. Of more general interest is Don Horowitz's excellent essay on "vote-pooling" as a method of political accommodation. This is a summarized version of the views outlined in his important *A Democratic South Africa?* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991).

In addition to these contributions, Roy Foster presents his interpretation of how Anglo-Irish conflict flows from distorted and Anglophobic readings of Irish history. His view is effectively combatted by Kerby Miller who points out that there is considerable substance in the nationalist claim that Ireland has been mismanaged and exploited by Britain. Miller's own account, however, is flawed by a tendency to reduce the conflict to its social and economic dimensions.

There are interesting contributions on the constitutional background to the crisis by Alan Ward and on the role of the Catholic church in the early years of the Northern Ireland statelet, by Mary Harris. Less relevant or valuable is a paper on the role of American Churches in Irish conflict resolution, by Beeman and Mahony.

Lord Armstrong should have been pressured to come up with something more substantive than four-pages of musings on "Ethnicity, the English, and Northern Ireland." Rounding off the collection are contributions by Charles Townshend on the role of emergency legislation from a historical perspective, from Terence Brown on the development of culture (poems and prose) in Northern Ireland from 1965 to 1991, from Paul Arthur on the Anglo-Irish Agreement as a device for territorial management, and from Enda McDonagh on new forces for positive change in Ireland.

I have two minor reservations about this collection. First, if the editors felt bound to secure contributions from John Hume, Garret FitzGerald and an English civil servant (Lord Armstrong) largely responsible for the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, why didn't they secure a Unionist contribution? As it stands, the collection is slanted toward a constitutional nationalist perspective. A piece by Unionist academics like Arthur Aughey or Tom Wilson would have rounded of the collection nicely.

Second, if the editors went to the trouble of including substantial papers on change in the Republic of Ireland (Lee), Northern Ireland (Whyte) and Europe (Hume), why didn't they include a paper on change in Britain? A contribution which explored how change in Britain (Scottish nationalism, European integration, multiculturalism) might impact on the Northern Ireland conflict would have made the collection more comprehensive. Notwithstanding these qualms, Keogh and Haltzel should be commended for their work in putting this book together.

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Little, David. *Sri Lanka: The Invention of Enmity*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1994.

David Little has brought out some of the salient features of the Sinhala-Tamil conflict in Sri Lanka and focused his mind on what he thinks went wrong with two peoples who had co-existed for over two millennia. Little's subtitle offers much promise. However, he has not elaborated on it very much. One factor might throw light on "the invention of enmity." He might have looked into whether Sinhalese and Tamils were the same people divided only by language through some quirk of history?

Little's inference that cultural revivals preceded political nationalism appears valid. The key figures in this metamorphosis, which occurred in the nineteenth century, included the Sinhala nationalist leader, Anagarika Dharmapala (who died in 1933), who was influenced by Western sympathizers. Among the