

underlining how many sources in modern religious history we are yet to access. As is often the case with studies of women religious, readers may finish Mangion's book with an appetite for a comparative study on male religious experiences in the same era. Similarly, the depth of Mangion's research into English experiences is a rallying cry for complementary works to be realised in other national contexts. An inspiration in its originality and rigour, and a pleasure to read, *Catholic Nuns and Sisters in a Secular Age* is a major and progressive contribution to academic work on modern women religious.

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Thomas Paul Burgess, ed., *The Contested Identities of Ulster Catholics*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, pp. xiii + 263, £110, ISBN: 9783319788036

The contributors to this volume are from assorted professional backgrounds, academics, journalists, and former terrorists. The situation in Northern Ireland has moved on since the essays were written and some of pieces are therefore slightly outdated. Thomas Paul Burgess's own essay expressed skepticism about the re-establishment of devolved government in Northern Ireland (p. 9), but in fact it came into being again in January 2020. His strictures of the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) are reminiscent of Connor Cruise O'Brien and Ruth Dudley Edwards who predicted that the agreement would not last. It has, however, given relative peace to the province for twenty-two years. His cynical assessment that the GFA has 'exhausted its usefulness' (p. 19) is not mirrored by the actual realities of life in Northern Ireland.

In many instances the authors exhibit little or no sympathy for the Catholic community in Ulster and at times can barely rise beyond their own prejudices. Abortion is seen as the principle right of women and it is to be linked to 'progressive notions of womanhood' (p. 40) in Irish nationalism, according to Claire Pierson, in an oddly repetitive chapter. She is, however, simply wrong in her assertion that Pope Gregory XIV (1590–91) permitted abortion before 'ensoulment' (p. 51). The matter is too complex to detail here. It is true that in his *Sedis Apostolicae* (1591), which she does not cite, he removed the excommunication from those who procured abortion before 'ensoulment', but he nevertheless regarded early abortion as a serious sin. This sort of laziness is exhibited time and again. Malachi O'Doherty asserts that the Church teaches that homosexuals are 'intrinsically' disordered (p. 87), rather than homosexual acts. Furthermore, he gives no evidence for his assertion that Eamon de

Valera was an anti-Semite, nor is there evidence for any of his claims in an essay which is by far the weakest in the collection.

It is a grotesque distortion of the historical facts to claim, as does Connal Parr, that the Catholic Church was in anyway responsible for the creation of the Provisional IRA in 1970 (p. 120). The only evidence he adduces for this is a statement in Paddy Devlin's (his grandfather's) self-serving 1993 memoir. Devlin was a founding member of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), but Parr disputes that the SDLP was a labour party for the absurd reason that it did not support the extension of the 1967 Abortion Act to Northern Ireland. Further he wrongly claims the Act was introduced at Westminster by a Labour government (p. 121). In fact it was a private member's bill of David Steel the Scottish Liberal M.P. For all his praise of Gerry Fitt, another SDLP founder, as a 'Socialist Republican' he does not seem keyed to the irony of Fitt's acceptance of a peerage in 1983, at the hands no less of Margaret Thatcher, no socialist she.

There are similar distortions in Gareth Mulvenna's chapter on republican attitudes to Unionists and Loyalists. He is right to argue that working class Protestants now feel adrift socially, politically and economically in Ulster. However, it surely is not the case that part of the objective of the PIRA in the early 1970s was to draw the Protestant working class into war (p. 187). He disingenuously twists a remark of the late PIRA terrorist Brendan Hughes, about driving the British out of Ireland to make it apply to working class Protestant (p. 195.) He does not seem to realize that this is at variance with an observation he makes in a previous paragraph when he denounced Republicans for trying to force an 'Irish' identity unto the Protestant working class. He simply cannot have it both ways.

Anthony McIntyre's piece is a rehearsal of his well-known animadversion to the fact that Sinn Féin/IRA have embraced the peace process. In doing so they have distanced themselves from their murderous and violent past. It is almost as if McIntyre wished the conflict had been fought to the bitter end. However, he rightly points out the inconsistencies in the Sinn Féin/IRA's position and is surely correct to say that they now accept the principle of consent and the Unionist veto over Irish unity.

It would be wrong to give the impression that *The Contested Identities of Ulster Catholics* is simply filled with misspoke calumnies against Catholicism in general and Ulster Catholics in particular. On the contrary there are thoughtful, incisive and provocative pieces by a range of scholars. John Coakley's analysis of Catholic political attitudes is a real contribution to understanding Northern Ireland Catholic politics between 1968 and 2018. Brian Hanley's survey of the attitudes of people in the Republic of Ireland to Catholic refugees from the North in the early 1970s is enlightening. The attitudes change

from general sympathy in 1969 and after Bloody Sunday in 1972, to, as one official report had it, condemning them as 'very demanding, ungrateful and even obstreperous (pp. 70–71). Tony Gallagher, despite a couple of misstatements, gives a splendid account of the role of Catholic schools not only for the Catholic community but in the context of the general structure of Northern Ireland society. There are also interesting chapters on sport, Catholicism and politics and a splendid piece, despite its dig at 'dogmatic Catholicism' (p. 161), by Niall Gilmartin on the position of women in the Republican movement and the IRA. Aimee Smith ends the collection with a survey of young Catholics and their sense of belonging in a post-conflict world.

In general this is a useful collection, but at times it is simply too disparate. There is little attempt by some of the contributors to carefully excavate the *raison d'être* of the Ulster Catholic community and to address what we are promised in the title: Catholic identities in Ulster. In this regard Tommy McKearney's piece is outstanding. The index is woefully inadequate and the price will put off all but the more ardent readers. A somewhat cheaper paperback has recently been issued.

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Margaret Scull, *The Catholic Church and the Northern Ireland Troubles 1968–1998*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019, pp. xii + 236, £65, ISBN: 9780198843214

Margaret Scull's book *The Catholic Church and the Northern Ireland Troubles 1968–1998* transcends the parochial view on the Catholic Church during the Northern Ireland Conflict and instead situates it in a transnational framework. Thereby, she challenges established views and provides fresh insight.

Her publication is the first major English long-term study of the involvement of the Catholic Church in the Northern Ireland Conflict since the publication of Gerard McElroy's *The Catholic Church and the Northern Ireland Crisis* in 1991. In the period between the releases of the two books, only one other historical study on the same topic came out. In 2009, Markus Büchele published his book *Autorität und Ohnmacht. Der Nordirlandkonflikt und die katholische Kirche* (Power and Impotence. The Northern Ireland Conflict and the Catholic Church). Büchele's book has yet to be translated into English. Both of the earlier studies suffer from obvious flaws. McElroy wrote his book while the conflict was still ongoing. Therefore, he could neither include nor fathom the Catholic Church's contribution to bringing the conflict to an end from the late eighties to 1998 and its involvement in the peace process after the Good Friday Agreement. Büchele's more recent