

of the nationalist press and its personalities in the ten years between 1849 and 1859 and again stresses the importance of the press for any political movement. With its emphasis on *The Irishman* and the role of the press in the tenant right movement it examines the machinations at the heart of the relationship between press and politics. Chapter four continues this examination by looking in detail at the *Irish People* and the Fenian movement, while a concluding chapter brings everything together in a cogent manner by summarising exactly how and why the newspapers examined influenced the development of Irish nationalism later in the century and beyond.

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THE SCOTS IN VICTORIAN AND EDWARDIAN BELFAST: A STUDY IN ELITE MIGRATION.

By Kyle Hughes. Pp x, 236. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. (Scottish Historical Review Monograph, 21). 2013. £55.

This is an awkward book on an awkward subject. Any acquaintance with the north of Ireland will demonstrate the importance and contributions of the idea of Scotland and the Scots to the identities and cultures of those counties. The Saltire has long been used as an ethnic marker. A sense of 'origins' can easily lead Ulster-Scots and Scots in Ulster to morph into one another. Kyle Hughes has focused on the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a period of uncertainty and aggressive identity-building for Ulster Protestants. He disciplines his topic in two ways. The first is through the idea of diaspora, that sense of a bounded group building a homeland in a foreign place with a sense of a distinct culture derived from often mythical origins. The second is through the demographic discipline of 'born in Scotland'. There were 12,451 Scots born in the Belfast population in 1911 and 11,074 in 1901. A careful study of the census manuscript showed that the Scots born tended to be more Presbyterian, more likely to be in skilled and white collar occupations, and more likely to be married males. The census record showed that many families were returnees, comers and goers. In skilled trades, Belfast was in the same labour market as Glasgow in terms of wages but housing was much superior.

The discipline of 'born in Scotland' brings this study to two distinct groups. The first was an important group of capitalists, men like John Barbour, Robert Workman and James Mackie. The study raises the issue of the Belfast dependence on non-native capital and capitalists. Was this one of the many weaknesses in Belfast civil society? The Scots-born group tended to avoid formal municipal politics and focus on bodies like the Harbour Board. This group provided the most obvious evidence of diasporic behaviour. The Burns Club was founded in 1867. Of members identifiable in 1911, 76 per cent were born in Scotland, 77 per cent were Presbyterian and all were middle class. Public figures such as M.P.s attended. Food was the cultural marker. There were pipers and haggis, loyal toasts, as well as toasts to Belfast and the 'land of cakes'. Attempts at a highland games were not nearly so successful but the real problem came when anyone mentioned Home Rule. 'True Scotsmen' were always welcome and a sense of Scottish virtue, common on both sides of the water, was built into the growing sense of the 'Ulsterman'. At the same time the 'Scots born' brought with them that strain of liberalism dominant in the politics and culture of Scotland. The Scotland of the Midlothian campaign and Gladstone was not welcome in Belfast. The Scots were continually reminded that they were not born in Ireland. Great resentment was expressed when Lord Aberdeen with his home rule sympathy was invited to the St Andrew's Society annual dinner in 1910. Many members were comfortable with dual identities, Scots in Ulster, Irish and British as they were Scots in the Empire. For Ulster Unionists with a deep desire to incorporate the Scots

and the sense of Scottishness into their own politics and culture, the likes of Lord Aberdeen were simply Scotsmen gone wrong. The same sort of story emerges from a study of Presbyterian ministers from Scotland. They were resented as ‘outsiders’ and brought with them the long standing strand of liberalism which was part of Scottish Presbyterianism.

At one level this is a valuable addition to the growing literature devoted to that great puzzle: understanding Belfast. At another level this study is deeply unsatisfying. Maybe this is because being a Scot in Belfast during this period was deeply unsatisfying. It maybe that the discipline Kyle Hughes chose for this study placed too many limits on his curiosity. There is something here about the experience of being an ‘outsider’ in a culture which was dominant and threatened. There is something about the influence on Ulster of being so close to a Scotland which was the same but very different. What did the citizens of Belfast learn when they read Burns, the most borrowed poet from their public library in the 1890s?

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THE IRISH-AMERICAN DYNAMITE CAMPAIGN. By Joseph McKenna. Pp 216. Jefferson: McFarlane & Company. 2012. \$49.95.

THE FENIANS: IRISH REBELLION IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC WORLD, 1858–1876. Patrick Steward and Bryan McGovern. Pp 328. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press. 2013. \$45.

Writing the history of failure is difficult and if fenianism is to be judged by its declared aims, then to chronicle or analyse its heyday – rather than the extraordinarily powerful memory cultures it generated – is peculiarly difficult. It was not that the I.R.B. mounted a viable attempt at revolution only to be defeated by superior crown forces, but that it never achieved the organisational basis or the acquisition of sufficient materiel to make such an attempt remotely plausible. As such, to fully appreciate Patrick Steward and Bryan McGovern’s attempt to write a synoptic history of fenian activities on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, the reader has to see past their apparent assumption that fenianism was the default politics of any right-thinking Irish nationalist, if only practical political, social and economic considerations allowed. It is hard not to think that they needed to treat arguments made by Vincent Comerford in *The Fenians in context* (1985) more carefully, locating fenianism as one of several competing and not always clearly differentiated Irish nationalisms. Similarly, drawing on Marta Ramon’s 2007 biography of James Stephens – absent from their bibliography – might have led to a more sceptical treatment of the notion that 1865 could have been fenianism’s ‘year of action’. The promotion of this was in part a propagandistic effort to keep funds flowing across the Atlantic. Indeed, to speculate about the shortcomings of Stephens’s military leadership can smack a little of the armchair military strategist. It might be reasonable to ask, as the authors do, whether ordering a ‘series of small strikes against government outposts, whether successful or not,’ would ‘have precipitated a groundswell of grassroots military activity’. However, the authors chose to leave this question unanswered, consequently rendering this a polemical rather than genuinely analytical point (p. 84). To rephrase the question with a contrary polemical intent: were local fenian groups ready to attack isolated R.I.C. barracks in country districts had Stephens so ordered them? Was Ireland in 1865, as the authors imply, in a similar state to Ireland in 1798 or, for that matter, in 1919? Similarly, the idea that the failure of the feeble Fenian rebellion of 1867 ‘permanently eliminated any possibility that Irish nationalists would be able to establish a strategic alliance with the United States government’ seems a little far-fetched (p. 163). Greater distance needed to be placed between the authors