

began to travel extensively. Instead of uniting the nation, as Macaulay famously argued, Guldi contends that the vast expansion of travel divided the nation between those who could afford the new coaches and those who continued to tramp the roads. Based on a wide variety of personal stories, literary sources, and travel writing, she argues that the Victorian road network did much to divide the nation into social classes and to limit the personal interactions among strangers.

In her concluding chapter, Guldi briefly explains how late Victorian cities and counties abolished the turnpike trusts and tolls and how Britain's central government assumed responsibility for its road network in the twentieth century. She unfortunately also burdens the book with a discussion of Britain's recent privatization of infrastructure, the failure of the United States to maintain its road network, Chinese investment in infrastructure, and how the Internet has become a toll highway. While Guldi's book certainly suggests reflections on these issues, the real value of the book is the historical tale she tells and its argument that road building is a good example of how an industrializing Britain was not shy in using the state to promote economic development.

*Gerard M. Koot*, University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth

GERALD R. HALL. *Ulster Liberalism, 1778–1876*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2011. Pp. 272. €55.00 (cloth).

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In *Ulster Liberalism, 1778–1876*, Gerald R. Hall moves beyond narrow studies of nationalism and unionism to concentrate on the interactions between Catholics and Protestants in a liberal middle ground. He sees a distinct and pragmatic Ulster liberalism emerging from the Volunteer movement and enduring through most of the following century, with modest but significant successes. Of course, the meaning of *liberal* in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is not universally agreed, but Hall argues convincingly for the broad definition, centered on reform, that underpins his work. Liberals modified their tactics and language as Ulster changed, but their outlook and principles remained intact. The depth of Hall's research in newspapers, pamphlets, and archival records, presented in a thorough analysis, results in a dense, detailed, and ultimately compelling case.

In his opening chapter, Hall concentrates on the late-eighteenth-century unrest that gave rise to liberalism in Ulster. The swirling collection of religious and political ideals within the Volunteer movement provided an opportunity for the emergence of the language of liberalism. At this crucial early stage, Scottish Enlightenment ideas had a powerful impact. While the importance of "new light" thinking in Ulster religion and politics is well established, Hall emphasizes the significance of Scottish sociologists. Many Presbyterians traveled to Scotland for education, and they absorbed the ideas of thinkers such as Adam Ferguson and John Millar. Scottish sociologists conceptualized social and political institutions as evolving; this would set liberals apart, since they were looking to do more than preserve an ancient constitution. Outside of the Volunteers, the mixture of viewpoints became more combustible, and Hall states that the violence of the 1790s "would act as a crucible for the formation of Ulster liberalism" (32). Some former Volunteers formed the core of the United Irishmen, while others joined the yeomanry. But after the uprising was convincingly crushed, civic republicans, Whigs, and covenanters drew together on the common ground that Hall explores in the chapters that follow. These Ulster reformers could reconcile themselves to the union because of their evolutionary principles, believing that they could work within the new institutions to improve them and avoid future division and bloodshed.

In the early nineteenth century, these fledgling elements lived in an Ireland that remained under the control of the aristocracy to a greater degree than the rest of the United Kingdom. If they were to effect any change, liberal Presbyterians would need to work pragmatically to secure cooperation with moderate Catholics. Hall emphasizes the role played by evangelical feeling in inspiring liberal activity while exploring the challenges they faced due to the overwhelmingly Catholic campaign for repeal. Cooperation with Catholic moderates in the early 1830s opened up liberal Presbyterians to attack from Henry Cooke and his allies. It was during lulls in repeal activity that Ulster liberals achieved halting gains in parliamentary elections. Local government provided more opportunity. Hall's impressive research in this underexplored area allows him to suggest that liberals "used the town commission to mount a surprisingly widespread, prolonged and effective challenge to the traditional, conservative order in Ulster towns" (106). While parliamentary politics lent itself to control by the elite, liberal Presbyterians in towns such as Coleraine and Armagh could achieve significant change in the local arena. In a small but symbolic example, the recently established town commission in Enniskillen changed the name of a main street from William Street to Castle Lane, outraging local conservatives.

Reacting against the position that liberalism in Ulster degenerated after the 1790s, Hall presents compelling evidence for its survival and development. He does not deny that liberalism changed, but he argues that this is only to be expected given the impact of forces such as industrialization. The major agitation of the midcentury period, the campaign for "tenant right," serves to demonstrate his point: reformers such as Sharman Crawford did adopt the language of political economy in pressing their case, but it did not mean they abandoned their liberal beliefs. Aided by the ebb of repeal sentiment and concern for the impact of the famine, Presbyterians and Catholics focused on their shared grievances to create a "public sphere" where they could work together. Religious or political differences were deliberately excluded, and Catholic priests and Presbyterian ministers could share tenant right platforms. In addition, an evangelical rhetoric of a "godly commonwealth" (152) emerged. Drawing on biblical and religious conceptions of justice and mercy, this language provided a means to effectively engage with Presbyterians, including significant numbers from the seceding tradition.

In his final chapter, Hall traces Ulster liberalism in decline. After 1860, especially in Ulster's growing towns, confessional solidarity was more easily reinforced than the complex, delicate, relationships between Catholic and Protestant liberals. Drawing on Emmet Larkin's work on the "Devotional Revolution," Hall points to liberal Protestants such as James Godkin, a prominent journalist and former Congregationalist minister, who sensed an emboldened Catholicism would harm the liberal cause. Open-air preaching by evangelical Presbyterians raised similar concerns for Catholics. Weaknesses within the Catholic community, especially socio-economic deprivation and internal divisions, also contributed to a fraying of Ulster liberalism. The shared middle ground was eroding. Sectarian demonstrations and confrontations increased, with Belfast a particularly violent example. In Armagh, acrimony around the town commission served as a harbinger of the sectarian divide that would widen in the following decades. For Hall, the 1874 election, with its parliamentary successes for liberal candidates, was misleading—the land issue again provided a joint cause for Catholics and Presbyterians, but they had widely differing motives and aims. The window of opportunity for liberals had closed. While the Home Rule era that followed would be characterized by an entrenched sectarian divide, Hall has succeeded in providing a history of an earlier, different, dynamic outside the familiar framework of nationalism and unionism. He has raised ideas that invite further study, and his research in local history especially suggests possibilities for future work in this period. This book is a valuable contribution to our understanding of not just Ulster liberalism but Irish history.

*Anthony Daly*, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts