

Book Reviews

***The Long Road to Peace in Northern Ireland*. Edited by Marianne Elliott. Liverpool, UK: Liverpool University Press, 2007. xiv + 317 pp. \$27.50 Paper**

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The second edition of *The Long Road to Peace in Northern Ireland* is a collection of papers (and later postscripts by the authors) presented for a “Peace Lectures” series sponsored between 1996 and 2000 by Liverpool University’s Institute for Irish Studies, headed by the book project’s editor. Most of the authors are Irish and British academics, parliamentarians, or government officials who have long associations to the conflict and peace process in Northern Ireland. Because of their enduring interest, they give the volume a type of intimacy with the peoples and legacies of these three lands that only those who with long associations can. The rest hail from South Africa, Norway, and the United States and bring wider regional perspectives to this interesting analysis on the evolution of proposals, principles, and sentiments that led to the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement of 1998.

The 18 authors traverse vast stretches of historical and diplomatic ground in their journey down Northern Ireland’s long road in an effort to offer a lessons learned approach to peace. Several papers (especially those by Sir George Quigley, Lord David Owen, and Senator George Mitchell) provide wider overviews, or roadmaps for the peace process, concentrating on past decades’ interim political achievements while at the same time identifying pitfalls experienced by negotiators in the drive toward the Belfast/Good Friday agreement. Other chapters address questions of whether changes to society, governance, and the institutions of republicanism brought on by the agreement are in process or permanent (see especially the entries by Peter Mandelson, Sir David Goodall, and Kevin Bean). Most of the analysts express cautious optimism that the direction toward “somewhere” (Paul Arthur’s

destination) most likely cannot be reversed. As the title of Peter Shirlow and Colin Coulter's article ("Enduring Problems: The Belfast Agreement and a Disagreed Belfast") implies, and as their quantitative analysis shows, movements away from violence and toward transformation and societal change are less pronounced than anticipated. Perhaps Arthur's destination to "somewhere" might be a more distant path. The ongoing importance of religion in this conflict is portrayed by Marianne Elliott's examination of persistent qualities of Northern Irish Protestant and Roman Catholic identity that endure as challenges toward greater social unity. This treatment is balanced by Maria Power's grassroots investigation of inter-church religious organizations that are striving to build peace along neighborhood "fault lines," suggesting the importance of localized efforts for building trust and changing the conditions for communication and perception.

Several authors assert the importance of international actors who helped break new ground in a chronic conflict, at least in Northern Ireland's chronic conflict. Specific mention of the Norwegian influence (or "back channels") on negotiations, as well as the involvement of former U.S. President Bill Clinton, affirm Lord Owen's analysis of the importance of internationalization in a conflict that for a long time was guarded jealously as a matter of British (and Irish) national sovereignty. Recognition of the importance of exogenous factors creates an intriguing dialogue with South African scholar Frederick Van Zyl Slabbert's contribution. He points out how important it was in his own country's chronic conflict that movement towards reconciliation came from "within."

When viewed collectively, the book's lessons from the Northern Irish experience would be that long-term conflicts necessitate just as enduring efforts toward reconciliation and peace; that the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement represents a complex equation of internal and external actors who together launched the prospects for changing conditions on the ground as well as in the heart; and that nothing was achieved without dialogue. Talking continued among the right people and at the best possible time despite radical and violent efforts on both nationalist and unionist sides to upset progress. Last, the book's appendices document major pre-1998 negotiations and agreements, as well as post-Belfast/Good Friday commission reports. This constitutes a valuable resource for all readers, allowing one to move easily between analysis and primary sources.

Certainly this book cannot stand alone as a comprehensive text covering "the Troubles" of Northern Ireland. But it does not aim to be a thoroughgoing chronicle of history, a full examination of the ethnic and

religious dimensions of violence, or an assessment of the many civil society groups and individuals that helped facilitate or mitigate the chronic conflict. Though emphasizing the importance of conflict transformation evidence in Northern Ireland, the book does not set out to be a profile of conflict theory. And while making a contribution by paying greater attention to the roles played by President Clinton and his policies, as well as by the Irish-American community, one might ask about other exogenous influences that are less evident, such as the presence of the European Union or the structures (and roadblocks) of economic growth and investment. For these issues, other texts must be sought out. But what *The Long Road to Peace in Northern Ireland* does provide is a more intimate and insider analysis of the evolution of proposals towards the resolution of the Northern Irish conflict – and this it provides very well.

***The Origins of Christian Anti-Internationalism: Conservative Evangelicals and the League of Nations.* By Markku Ruotsila. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2008. 256 pp. \$49.95, Cloth, \$29.95 Paper**

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The acrimonious debate about “Mr. Wilson’s League” has long been considered a pivotal point in American history. Professor Ruotsila’s new book addresses a neglected aspect of that debate: the religious aspect. Because the League was promoted avidly by theological liberals of the day, little attention has been given to dissident religious voices. As a result, historians have overlooked the era during which conservative evangelicals became anti-internationalists, opponents of “political organizations that were secular, invested with worldwide supranational authority, and predicated on multilateralism and the equality of all nations and religiocultural traditions” (3).

Ruotsila has done impressive research, immersing himself in unexplored original source material. He treats matters of faith respectfully