

distribution of American-raised relief funds encouraging Land League organisation (and winning support from Catholic priests put in charge of the distribution). American funds underpinned the ‘rent at the point of a bayonet’ strategy, allowing more prosperous farmers to resist landlords up to a point without actually being evicted. American funding, however, could be disrupted by internal American disputes and ebbed and flowed unpredictably in response to political excitement; it was best stimulated by language which alienated the British opinion Parnell required to secure Home Rule, and agitation which potentially dissipated money faster than any effort could raise it. Parnell’s principal objective was to hold back sufficient financial reserves to secure an effective political organisation under his own control – ‘the leitmotif of his entire political career [was] the constant struggle to secure political funding that would not be consumed by agrarian agitation’ (p. 162) – and the illusion that Parnell possessed limitless financial reserves contributed to his downfall by alienating colleagues who could not understand his reluctance to subsidise the ‘money-pit’ Plan of Campaign.

Even such an admirable study cannot completely cover its subject. The view that as a semi-clandestine movement the United Irishmen could not produce popular political mobilisation as O’Connellism did (pp 13–14) might be challenged by scholars such as Jim Smyth. The contrast between conservative elitism and O’Connellite populism may also be overdrawn. For example, both Ireland and Britain had a well-recognised tradition of aristocratic radicals or Tory-radicals presenting themselves as proudly self-funding champions of the people, and criticism of O’Connell sometimes invokes this older image of the ‘friend of the people’. (Tom Steele, the eccentric Clare Protestant landowner who was one of O’Connell’s principal lieutenants, embodied this tradition despite severe financial hardship; in the 1870s the small Co. Down landlord William Johnston of Ballykilbeg failed to create a lasting Orange-populist movement because his refusal to seek money from supporters soon forced him back to seeking patronage from the official Tory leadership.) Early nineteenth-century newspapers often satirised opponents by publishing fictitious reports of ridiculous meetings, and the August 1841 report in the (Whig-O’Connellite) *Freeman’s Journal* of Tory organisers at the Carlton Club voting ‘a new coat, waistcoat and breeches ... to Mr Bonham [Peel’s Chief Whip and election organiser] as a reward for his active and daily abuse of the Whigs’ (pp 85–6) seems to be an example, though Keyes treats it as genuine.

Nonetheless, subsequent researchers will stand in the same debt to Keyes as he argues Parnell did to O’Connell. He has created a template; and no short review can do justice to the wealth of detail and range of comparisons and contrasts employed in its construction.

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IRISH JOURNALISM BEFORE INDEPENDENCE: MORE A DISEASE THAN A PROFESSION. Edited by Kevin Rafter. Pp xv, 240. Manchester: Manchester University Press. 2011. £65 hardback; £14.99 paperback.

Newspapers and journalists have played a hugely important role in the evolution of Irish political culture, particularly during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Despite this, scholarship on the history of the Irish press has been relatively scant, especially when compared to the robust state of British media studies. In recent years some excellent books and articles from publishers and journals on both sides of the Atlantic have begun to address this lacuna. Equally encouraging has been the founding of the multidisciplinary Newspaper and Periodical History Forum Ireland (N.P.H.F.I.). Edited by Kevin Rafter, this collection features a number of essays that were presented at the 2008 inaugural meeting of the N.P.H.F.I. at N.U.I. Galway. As Rafter rightly notes in

his introduction, 'more often than not journalism has been the source material for academic research rather than a significant discipline of research in itself'. This volume takes 'Irish journalism seriously . . . to further enhance the idea of journalism [studies] as a scholarly exercise rooted in the historical evolution of the profession' (p. 3). Accordingly, the majority of the essays in this volume briefly explore the careers of notable Irish-born editors, leader-writers, and correspondents who wrote for newspapers in Ireland, Britain, and the United States.

The book is not formally organised in this manner, but one can divide the contents into five subject areas. The first of these, the professionalisation of journalism, is explored in essays by Mark O'Brien and Michael Foley which examine how Irish journalists came to see and organise themselves as professionals over the course of the nineteenth century. The second subject, the editor and leader writer, is taken on by Matthew Potter and Maurice Walsh in their entertaining essays on Frederick Potter, the eccentric owner and editor of the *Skibbereen Eagle* and James Woulfe Flanagan, the Catholic loyalist leader-writer for the *Times* and author of the infamous 'Parnellism and crime' articles.

The third topic, the correspondent, is addressed in three essays. In one of the strongest chapters in the book Peter Murtagh offers new insights into the career of W. H. Russell, arguably the first war reporter and most famous correspondent of the Victorian era. Murtagh reveals both the efforts of the British military and government to hamper Russell's reporting from the Crimean theatre and the critical support he received from his editor at the *Times*, John Thaddeus Delane, in overcoming these institutional obstacles. Kevin Rafter explores the fascinating career of the peripatetic special correspondent E. J. Dillon, who reported on European affairs for the *Daily Telegraph* and other London periodicals for almost thirty years. Rafter demonstrates (as do O'Brien and Foley) how a career in journalism offered the opportunity for upward social mobility to men of modest (and Catholic) backgrounds such as Dillon. John Horgan's essay investigates how the reporting and worldview of Frances McCullagh, an internationally recognised correspondent most active in the 1920s and 1930s, was influenced by his Irish and Catholic roots.

Gillian O'Brien and Anthony McNicholas cover transatlantic links, the fourth subject. O'Brien briefly charts the careers of four prominent Irish or Irish-American journalists based in Chicago. McNicholas explores the colourful career of Martin O'Brennan, who launched and edited a series of failed newspapers in Ireland, Britain, and America, igniting controversy and winning enemies everywhere he went.

The last subject area, journalism and nationalism, not surprisingly comprises the largest group of essays. The first of these is Paul Rouse's piece on the role of journalists in the creation and popularisation of the Gaelic Athletic Association. Regina Uí Chollatáin explores the role of the press in the Irish revival and creation of an Irish-language-reading public. Felix Larkin briefly investigates Arthur Griffith's criticism of the *Freeman's Journal*, while Ciara Meehan studies the most important of Griffith's own newspaper ventures, *Sinn Féin*. The finest essay in this subject area is Ian Kenneally's persuasive piece on the important role played by the owners and editors of the three leading Irish daily newspapers (*Freeman's Journal*, *Irish Times*, and *Irish Independent*) in the development of the peace process in 1920–21.

As with any collected volume, there is some unevenness, and several of the essays feel insufficiently developed. To be fair, it does seem that the contributors were rather constrained in regards to the length of their essays, which average just ten printed pages excluding notes. One wishes that either the publisher was more generous with the length of the essays or that Rafter had selected fewer contributors. Regardless, this volume is a welcome addition to a growing body of scholarship, and one that suggests new avenues for research.

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