

historical circumstances of the 1830s and 1840s and the clear evidence of the Report in favour of the distinction between colonial and imperial powers.

In summary, there is some good material in this work. The comparison with De Tocqueville is instructive and so too, on the whole, is that with the philosophic radicals. Durham's liberalism is well explicated. However, the argument on assimilation is tendentious, and the original part of that on responsible government lacks an adequate foundation in historical understanding and evidence. The book could, in addition, have been longer. This would have allowed a more measured, comprehensive style of argument and thorough consideration of all the evidence. As it is, the presentation is frequently, on big issues as well as on small, cryptic and extremely provocative.

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Donald H. Akenson — *Small Differences: Irish Catholics and Irish Protestants, 1815-1922*. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988. Pp. xii, 149 and appendices.

This is not a great barmbrack of a book. It is a tightly argued, revisionist assault on several widely held assumptions about the Irish people in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Those familiar with Donald Akenson's writings on things Irish — this is his twelfth book — will smile wryly at the recondite term used above. It is his wont to throw in, quite regularly, words that make one dive for the dictionary — the large one — to ensure that we do not nod. It is, perhaps, a bit of mild self-indulgence, but I doubt if the puckishness could ever now be exorcized. Besides, it is fun and certainly does not vitiate this powerful argument.

In much of this recent writing (*The Irish in Ontario* being an excellent example), Akenson's enemy is the unexamined cliché. Now, in *Small Differences*, he addresses a bit of conventional wisdom more central to the Irish experience. Are cultural differences between Irish Protestants and Irish Catholics causal factors of group behaviour, especially toward each other? This, he explains, is a main theme in much of Irish historiography, especially that written by American and Irish American historians. Akenson begins with an excellent historiographical survey which illustrates the pervasive cultural determinism dominating the work of even marxist and empirical historians of Ireland, who eschew economic substructures in favour of national self-assertion. They assume a causal cultural gulf: an assumption that he sets out to demolish.

Using a myriad of sources, he examines the two communities in Ireland over a one hundred-year period according to empirical socioeconomic indicators, including occupational stratigraphy, family structure and attitudes toward women. He comes to the startling conclusion that there is very little difference between the two groups and mentions, but leaves aside, the converse conclusion that they are indeed similar. But there remain the possibilities that the indications are not entirely conclusive or that Ireland is too excited an ambience to yield reliable results. To control these possibilities, Akenson then proposes to remove his tests to what he terms "clean laboratories".

Certain preliminary factors must first be established: at the end of the nineteenth century, some 40 percent of all those born in Ireland lived outside the country, but who had perforce taken their cultural baggage with them; those who emigrated were generally representative of the total population; and Catholics and Protestants emigrated in similar proportions. He must also deal with a mountain of literature on the Irish diaspora, most of it generated in the United States, which has established a whole new set of clichés. This posits that the Irish arrived penniless and were ghettoized in the cities of the eastern seaboard; that they were technologically backward and unable to adapt to new agricultural methods; and that they lacked any entrepreneurial skills or spirit. In America, the Protestant Irish (the so-called Scotch Irish) disappeared into the majority population. Thus the Irish, in this literature, are urban, clannish, poor, backward, lethargic and Catholic.

Only some "laboratories" are suitable to test this image. The census of the United States throughout the period studied did not keep data on ethnicity, religion, etc., and neither do such data exist in England and Scotland. But New Zealand, Australia and particularly Canada received significant numbers of Irish immigrants and kept careful records. After examining the data, Akenson concludes that in all three countries, not only is the stereotype false in almost every particular, the Protestant and Catholic Irish abroad exhibited almost no significant differences when measured by standard tests. He is, therefore, satisfied that, reflexively, there are no causal cultural distinctions of any significance between the two communities either at home or in the diaspora. Where then does this leave Professor Akenson? How does he account for the obvious fact that in Ireland there are two communities defined by religion who, for decades, have faced each other in apprehension and hostility?

He resolves the paradox in two ways. In both Catholic and Protestant communities in Ireland, the institutional mechanisms of endogamy and separation of the youth have maintained the boundaries between the groups. Proscriptions against "mixed" marriages and insistence on denominational, if not clerical, control of education by both sides have segregated Protestants and Catholics into two uncomprehending polarities. This has led to group self-definitions that negate communication and belief systems that are incompatible. It also accounts partly for the "tragedy" of partition in 1922: "a natural consequence of the intersection of constitutional change with the polarized mindsets of the Irish people." It was, in the end, the Freudian notion of the narcissism of small differences which divided the Irish Protestants and Catholics. But let Akenson sum up: "In imaginatively calendaring the ways in which they differed, one from another, in dwelling on details too minor to matter but too delicious to forget, they kept alive by the great god of contrast, their own sharp and treasured self-definitions."

Small Differences is a book of compelling logic, methodological clarity and felicitous style. There is more hard-headed analysis here than we are accustomed to seeing in historians in Canada. Unhappily, though, it must be said that for a McGill-Queen's book, it is rather sloppily edited. There is a typo on p. 103, for example, that distorts the meaning of the next three sentences. But that aside, this book is a joy to read.

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Abraham Ascher — *The Revolution of 1905: Russia in Disarray*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988. Pp. viii, 412.

Abraham Ascher has written the finest account in English of the major stages of the 1905 Revolution to appear since the 1960s. This is the first of a two-volume study treating the Revolution from 1905 to 1907. The book divided the Revolution judiciously into "the Old Regime under Siege" and "the Assault on Authority and Revolution and Reaction." A strength of the book is the detailed examination of the tsarist autocracy reacting to the Revolution. The reviewer, in contrast to Ascher, agrees with Lenin that the Revolution of 1905 was the "dress rehearsal" for 1917. The second volume is awaited to see if Ascher's thesis that the 1905 Revolution opened up several paths for Russia is convincing. However, the first volume ends on a pessimistic note concerning Tsar Nicholas as a constitutional monarch.

Ascher documents well the case that the tsarist government never seized the opportune moment to conciliate the opposition from 1904 till October 1905. The failure of Witte to accommodate the Liberals, in 1905, is well shown. The reviewer questions the criterion used in extensive reliance on foreign diplomats to illuminate the pages of the Revolution. Accounts of individual peasants or workers are missing. A weak point is the lack of attention to the Russian peasantry. One hopes that the second volume will clarify the role of men, women, young and old peasants in risings in