206). An expanded reaction from the male perspective, however, could provide greater context as to how women's activism altered gender relations. Woman's roles during the Cold War largely revolved around children's health and safety and the general well-being of the family, an emphasis which attempted to mitigate their encroachment in the male realms of defence and foreign affairs. Including some additional individual male voices would shed light on how this contradictory international role advanced by women was deemed to challenge the traditional understanding of family and established gender roles.

Cold War Comforts is an engaging study that examines the domestic and international activism of Canadian women between 1945 and 1975. Brookfield's work is an important contribution to the historiography of the Cold War because of the connections established between foreign policy and the protection of children's health and safety. The fusing of socio-cultural analysis with traditional political and diplomatic points of emphasis creates a far more nuanced understanding of the ideological conflicts that characterized the Cold War and plagued the twentieth century.

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Irish Canadian Conflict and the Struggle for Irish Independence, 1912–1925. Robert McLaughlin. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013. Pp. 296.

In the past decade scholarship on the Irish population of Canada has expanded in important new directions. Mark McGowan's *The Waning of the Green* and Donald Akenson's *The Irish in Ontario* have, for a long time, established the way in which many think about Irish Canadians and their place in British North American society. Throughout much of the 1990s their work formed a consensus: by the early-twentieth century Irish Canadians had become historically invisible, having both divested themselves of Irish identity and successfully integrated into English-Canadian society. However, it is now clear that despite their acculturation, Irish Canadians maintained a keen and noticeable engagement in Irish affairs, responding audibly to the revolutionary upheaval in Ireland between 1912 and 1923. Robert McLaughlin's *Irish Canadian Conflict and*

the Struggle for Irish Independence is an important work that adds to our understanding of this transition.

When McLaughlin's work first appeared as PhD thesis in 2004, it was part of a historiographical turn—asking not to what extent the Irish had become at home in Canada, but rather the degree to which they maintained a continued interest in Ireland (p. 20). The results of McLaughlin's research were striking and, along with other contemporary scholarship, helped to change the kind of questions that were being asked about Irish Canadians in the early-twentieth century. Now, as a recent publication, the book has lost some of its edge. In the transition from thesis to monograph, McLaughlin appears to have updated his work relatively little—a common complaint amongst other reviewers.[11] So as book in 2013, *Irish Canadian Conflict* appears slightly behind the curve, engaging with the historiography of a previous decade, despite the release of several new books and articles. This has produced a noticeable lack of nuance in parts of McLaughlin's argument. And from a current perspective, he often appears overzealous in his attempt to swing the historiographical consensus in a new direction. To the educated reader, unfamiliar with the general scholarship, McLaughlin's work contains a good deal of value. But to the assiduous scholar, the book is best understood in relation to a seemingly-dated body of literature.

Proceeding chronologically, the book examines Irish Canadian reactions to events in Ireland, from the Home Rule Crisis of 1912 to the conclusion of the Irish Civil War over a decade later. McLaughlin traverses these events along transnational and religious lines, shifting between the drama in Ireland and the ongoing and changing response of Irish Catholics and Protestants in Canada. "Contrary to the assertions of Canadian historians," he argues, "... the Irish in Canada maintained an interest in events in Ireland between 1912 and 1925" (p. 20). Their demonstrable engagement in Irish politics and international affairs set them apart as an identifiable community that maintained a sense of "Irish-ness" and were motivated to act upon it. As international conflict pushed and pulled the prospect of

[11] See, Terrence J. Fay, Review of *Irish Canadian Conflict and the Struggle for Irish Independence, 1912–1925* by Robert McLaughlin, *American Historical Review*, 119, 3, June 2014: 884–884; David A. Wilson, Review of *Irish Canadian Conflict and the Struggle for Irish Independence, 1912–1925* by Robert McLaughlin, *Canadian Historical Review*, 94, 4 (December 2013): 612–613.

Irish independence in different directions, so too did Irish Canadians change their political position and their degree of personal engagement. McLaughlin demonstrates this consistently and effectively throughout the monograph.

In fact, perhaps the most admirable part of McLaughlin's book is the delivery of its content. As the book proceeds, McLaughlin presents the reader with a series of mirrored chapters on a specific topic—one chapter from the perspective of Protestant Unionists, the other from Catholic Nationalists. Each chapter grants equal space to these opposing religious and political positions, something that many studies do not accomplish. Moreover, the book's alternating structure also facilitates the narrative. In combination with a variety of new and existing research, McLaughlin delivers a comprehensive and coherent narrative that positions Irish Canadians—their domestic politics, religious differences, and ethnic identity—in a decades-long international drama over the fate of Ireland and its position within the Empire. The reader should come away from the book with an understanding of "the struggle for Irish independence" from the multiple perspectives of Canada's Irish diaspora and how they changed over the course of the early-twentieth century.

For the general reader, unfamiliar with the topic, all this makes for an accessible and compelling work of history. But the book does have significant problems. Close attention to McLaughlin's source material reveals the strength of some chapters in relation to others. For example, chapters on the Irish-Canadian reaction to Home Rule, and later, the creation of the Free Irish State, lean heavily on Toronto's *Orange Sentinel* (for Protestants), the *Catholic Register* (for Catholics), and New Brunswick's *The New Freeman.* The reader may question whether three newspapers from two cities can actually be representative of the Irish Canadian population, and not simply the opinion of the newspapers' editors. Moreover, the absence of Montreal from the book renders McLaughlin's claims about the "Irish Canadian" experience less convincing. The Irish in Montreal remained a substantial community at the beginning of the twentieth century, the largest concentration of Irish Catholics in the country. McLaughlin examines no newspapers from Quebec, and does not address the potential for regional differences between one Irish population and another. If, in fact, Irish Canadians were largely united in their political position towards Ireland, then McLaughlin

provides no explanation for this ostensible consistency across the country.

The most important concept in the book is also the title of McLaughlin's central chapter, "From Home Rulers to Sinn Feiners." The chapter provides the narrative arc for the book, describing the shift in Irish Canadian attitudes after the Easter Rising from moderate republicanism to the more urgently-radical Sinn Fein. McLaughlin uses the little-known example of the Self-Determination for Ireland League of Canada as the basis for this political transition. The chapter also contains a more expansive and fascinating set of source material. McLaughlin, however, sometimes takes the concept too far. It is true that, after April 1916, Irish Canadians came to increasingly sympathize with the goal of Irish republicans, and were openly critical of British imperial policy. But to suggest, as McLaughlin sometimes does, that Irish Canadians *were* republicans ignores the unique position that they held as both critics of Britain's Irish policy, and staunch supporters of the Dominion's war effort (pp. 149–150). Greater attention to international literature on the Irish diaspora, including their engagement in the Great War, suggests there are parallels between these disparate populations and their international engagement in the early-twentieth century. But they also developed their own unique principles in relation to the world around them.[12] The Dominion's Irish population was no different.

There is also a certain degree of inconsistency in particular parts of the book. The most glaring example appears on page 75 where McLaughlin explains how, despite the opinions of previous historians, the American and Canadian branches of the Ancient Order of the Hibernians (AOH), an Irish fraternal society, was actually well integrated and consistent in their policies. McLaughlin cites Mark McGowan's example of the schism between the AOH's two branches during the First World War over their respective allegiances to

[12] Differences and similarities between the various Irish diaspora communities can be found throughout the international literature. While disparate Irish communities all reacted with anxious anticipation to the events in Ireland after 1912, those in Canada, the United States, Australia, and South Africa engaged with them differently based on local circumstances. See, Malcolm Campbell, "Emigrant Responses to War and Revolution, 1914–1921: Irish Opinion in the United States and Australia," *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol.32, No.125 (May 2000): 75–92; And, for the split between Irish and Irish-American nationalists see, Michael Doorley, *Irish American Diaspora Nationalism: The Friends of Irish Freedom, 1916–1935* (Portland, OR: Four Courts Press, 2005).

Britain. But he does so as a contrast to the creation of a Canadian vice-presidency in 1912—evidence, he claims, of the brotherhood between Canadian and American members and their love of the Old Country (pp. 75–76). The chronological inconsistency between these two examples does not hold up well. It comes across as a serious mistake, given that during McLaughlin's chapter on the Great War he goes on to discuss the same wartime schism between the two branches of the AOH (pp. 83–84). Greater attention to minor chronological inconsistencies might make the book a more seamless piece of scholarship.

Irish Canadian Conflict and the Struggle for Irish Independence is full of good information and compelling stories. It is a fine introduction to the topic, and may well serve as a survey text for students and interested readers. However, in many ways, it is an artifact of the changing historiography of the early twenty-first century. Current researchers may find it a useful reference, as McLaughlin's primary research has uncovered a number of fascinating document collections for consideration. But the book is also a reminder to historians about the dangers of simplifying identity. Despite their increasing acculturation into English-speaking society in the early-twentieth century, Irish Canadians (and other immigrant groups) certainly maintained dual identities at specific historical moments. The question should not always be about whether they lost or maintained their identification as immigrants, but rather what being Irish and Canadian meant during the transformative early-twentieth century.

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A Time Such as There Never Was Before: Canada After the Great War. Alan Bowker. Toronto: Dundurn, 2014. Pp. 438.

The Great War continues to fascinate us a century after its outbreak. Thousands of books have been published in many languages trying to explain its origins, its nature, the strategies and tactics, the apparent failures of the generals and the impact of its mass slaughter and mutilation of millions of men. There is a good reason for this because it was, as most people came eventually to recognize, a sharp dividing line in the evolution of western civilization. It is a cliché to say that