

Editorial

Brice Dickson

Tom Hadden is one of those people for whom the expression “light under a bushel” seems to have been invented. Despite being one of the clearest thinkers and most energetic activists in relation to the troubles of Northern Ireland over the past 40 years, he remains undemonstrative to an extreme. This collection of essays has been compiled by some of the very many admirers and beneficiaries of Tom’s insightfulness and commitment to liberal and scholarly values during that period, including several of his former students. Being so un-self-promoting, he will probably not approve of the venture, and he will certainly take issue with lots of what is said in these pages, but on this occasion it is the contributors who insist that he is wrong and they are right.

Tom was born and reared in Northern Ireland but then spent a year at the Université Libre de Bruxelles before going up to Christ’s College, Cambridge, to take a degree in Moral Science and Law in 1964. He followed this with the postgraduate LLB degree at Cambridge and in 1965 was awarded a research fellowship at Emmanuel College to undertake a PhD in the Cambridge Institute of Criminology. He completed his thesis, on the law relating to company fraud, within two years, and then spent the next two years lecturing at the University of Kent at Canterbury.

In 1969, he returned to Northern Ireland as a lecturer in the Faculty of Law at Queen’s University Belfast where, in 1972, he published his seminal work *Company Law and Capitalism* in Weidenfeld and Nicolson’s ground-breaking “Law in Context” series. He then increasingly turned his attention to the serious civil unrest which Northern Ireland was experiencing at the time and began collaborating with another young law lecturer at Queen’s, Kevin Boyle, and a sociologist, Paddy Hillyard. Their *Law and State: The case of Northern Ireland* (London: Martin Robertson 1974) was a brilliant analysis of how the political and legal structures of the day had failed to respond appropriately to the civil rights campaign and the ensuing violence. The trio followed up this work a few years later with the short but powerful *Ten Years On in Northern Ireland: The legal control of political violence* (London: Cobden Trust 1980). Like the earlier study, this book was based on meticulous research (particularly into the Diplock courts), funded by generous charitable foundations. In 1985, Tom and Kevin again collaborated in an influential “Penguin Special”, *Ireland: A positive proposal*. The duo continued to work together on various submissions to official inquiries (including the Forum for a New Ireland) and in 1994 produced another Penguin, *Northern Ireland: The choice*. The ideas they promoted in the decade 1985 to 1995 were very prescient of the Belfast (Good Friday)

Agreement in 1998. In this period, Tom also found time to co-author a book on *Northern Ireland Housing Law* (Belfast: SLS Legal Publications 1986), his collaborator this time being our colleague at Queen's David Trimble, the future leader of the Ulster Unionist Party, Nobel Peace Prize winner, and member of the House of Lords. Whether David was influenced politically by Tom is, however, another question altogether.

Ahead of his time even then, in 1974 Tom opted to be employed on a part-time contract at Queen's so that he could also focus on his non-academic work as the founding editor of *Fortnight: An independent review for Northern Ireland*. He has remained centrally involved in that invaluable publication ever since, through its many trials and tribulations. In many ways the open-mindedness of the magazine reflects the wide-ranging interests and great expository skills of Tom himself. It bears his stamp in its insistence on clear, penetrating analysis of current affairs as well as thoughtful commentary on Ulster's thriving artistic and literary scenes. In 1990, Tom helped to establish the Fortnight Education Trust, which promotes discussion and debate about peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and beyond through the publication of supplements and conference reports. While running *Fortnight* Tom was also quietly working on founding and managing a hostel for the homeless in Portadown, near where he was then living. He had already been centrally involved in setting up a range of pressure groups, such as Shelter and the Committee on the Administration of Justice.

In 1985 Tom was promoted to a Chair in Law, becoming the first ever part-time professor at Queen's. He has continued to write on a variety of legal topics and has held visiting professorships at the University of British Columbia, Magill University, University College Galway, and the University of New South Wales. He carried out public service, too, being a member of the Standing Advisory Commission for Human Rights in Northern Ireland from 1985 to 1990 and a Commissioner on the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission from 1999 to 2005. As the chair of the latter commission during the same period, I can personally testify to the magnificent work Tom undertook on a range of human rights issues, not least on the commission's consultations on, and draft proposals for, a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. There were some difficult times at the commission but Tom was always a rock of integrity and a pillar of wisdom. I can also remember Tom being centrally involved in the establishment of a Human Rights Centre at Queen's in 1989, and in the contemporaneous inauguration of a Masters degree in Human Rights Law, which has gone from strength to strength and is now one of the University's most popular taught postgraduate courses. Tom's energy, hospitality and creativity were all much in evidence then, as they still are today.

In recent years, Tom has undertaken important work at the international level, being a consultant, for instance, for the United Nations Working Group on Minorities. He has produced a number of innovative documents on matters such as the integration of minorities and, for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, policing for diversity. His latest (edited) book is *A Responsibility to Assist: Human rights policy and practice in European Union conflict management operations* (Oxford: Hart Publishing 2009).

In 2008, Tom took on the additional role of Visiting Professor at the Transitional Justice Institute at the University of Ulster, a typically ground-breaking attempt to forge better links between that body and the Human Rights Centre at Queen's. He continues to travel widely, to teach on a broad range of subjects, and to dispense much appreciated advice to innumerable postgraduate students.

Many more people than have done so could have contributed to this collection of essays written in Tom's honour: a lack of space prevented a widening of the circle. The range of

topics covered is itself testimony to Tom's catholic interests. The articles have been brought together as a small recognition of the great respect and affection which Tom commands in academic legal circles. I know they will be of interest to the journal's worldwide readership.

I would also like to acknowledge the support given to this project (as well as to her husband!) by Tom's dynamic wife, Chris Moffat.

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