

Personal Accounts from Northern Ireland's Troubles

PUBLIC CONFLICT, PRIVATE LOSS



Edited by Marie Smyth and Marie-Therese Fay



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Most people are unaware of the true consequences of the kind of violence that Northern Ireland has experienced over the last thirty years. The language used by the media in phrases such as collateral damage, and friendly fire, conspires to sanitise and conceal the awful, gory and horrifying reality of the impact of war on the lives of ordinary people.

Based on in-depth interviews and survey work conducted by the pioneering The Cost of the Troubles Study, this collection represents the first in-depth evidence of personal loss in Northern Ireland during the conflict. The events described in this book are told from the perspectives of interviewees drawn from varied backgrounds and who have a range of experiences of the conflict. The heartbreaking and unbearable reality for all is that their loss is irretrievable. No one can repair the damage: nothing can compensate. At a time when violence is increasingly presented as entertainment, gun-cultures proliferate and armed conflicts can escalate seemingly overnight, this collection provides a necessary understanding of the cost of violence. Uncomfortable, painful, shaming and heart-breaking as it may be to read these accounts, the experiences contained in them, argue the editors, must be known, acknowledged and available to a wider public. Only then can the various truths about the past and the various burdens the past has produced be more evenly distributed amongst us.

Marie Smyth is a Research Fellow attached to INCORE, the Initiative on Conflict Resolution and Ethnicity, University of Ulster and the United Nations University, and Project Director of The Cost of the Troubles Study.

Marie-Therese Fay is the Research Officer with The Cost of the Troubles Study in Belfast. They are both coauthors of *Northern Ireland's Troubles* (Pluto Press 1998).

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