

# Making Sense Of The Troubles A History Of The Northern Ireland Conflict

Making Sense Of The Troubles A History Of The Northern Ireland Conflict Making Sense of the Troubles: A History of the Northern Ireland Conflict The Troubles was a complex and tumultuous period in Northern Ireland's history, lasting from the late 1960s to the Good Friday Agreement of 1998. This conflict, rooted in deep-seated political, religious, and social divisions, profoundly shaped the identity and landscape of Northern Ireland. Understanding the Troubles requires exploring its origins, key events, major players, and the peace processes that eventually brought about a fragile stability. This article aims to make sense of the Troubles by providing a comprehensive overview of its historical background, main causes, and lasting impact.

**Historical Background of Northern Ireland** The Partition of Ireland The roots of the Troubles can be traced back to the partition of Ireland in 1921. Following centuries of British rule and Irish resistance, the island was divided into two political entities: Southern Ireland (later the Republic of Ireland): Predominantly Catholic and seeking independence. Northern Ireland: Comprising six counties with a Protestant majority, remaining part of the United Kingdom. This division created a political and religious divide that persisted over decades, with tensions simmering beneath the surface.

**Demographic and Political Tensions** Northern Ireland's population was divided along religious lines: Unionists/loyalists: Mostly Protestants who identified as British and supported remaining in the UK. Nationalists/republicans: Mostly Catholics who identified as Irish and sought unification with the Republic of Ireland. This demographic split led to political marginalization of Catholics and widespread discrimination, fueling grievances and unrest.

**2 The Civil Rights Movement** In the 1960s, inspired by global civil rights movements, Northern Irish Catholics began demanding equal rights, including: Fair housing Equal employment opportunities Voting rights These protests, however, were met with hostility from some Unionist groups and security forces, escalating tensions.

**Major Causes and Triggers of the Troubles** Discrimination and Inequality Discriminatory policies in housing, employment, and voting rights created deep resentment among Catholics, who felt marginalized and oppressed. This systemic inequality was a core grievance fueling unrest.

**Violent Incidents and Escalation** Several violent events acted as catalysts for wider conflict: The Battle of Bogside (1969): Large-scale riots in Derry marked the beginning of violent clashes. The deployment of British troops (1969): Initially seen as peacekeepers, their presence soon became controversial. Bombings and assassinations: Both republican and loyalist paramilitary groups engaged in violence, perpetuating a cycle of retaliation.

**Paramilitary Groups and Political Violence** The conflict was characterized by the rise of paramilitary organizations: Irish Republican Army (IRA): A republican group aiming for Irish unification through armed struggle. Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF): A loyalist paramilitary

organization committed to maintaining Northern Ireland's union with Britain. Other groups, such as the UDA and INLA, also played roles in the violence. These groups engaged in bombings, shootings, and intimidation campaigns, exacerbating the conflict.

### 3 The Impact of the Troubles

#### Casualties and Displacement

The Troubles resulted in over 3,500 deaths and thousands of injuries. Many families were displaced, and communities became divided along sectarian lines, leading to segregated neighborhoods. Economic and Social Consequences The conflict severely hindered economic development, with businesses suffering from instability and violence. Social fabric was damaged, and trust between communities eroded. Political Instability and Security Measures The British government implemented various security laws and policies, including internment and detention without trial, which often worsened tensions and accusations of state oppression.

#### The Path to Peace: The Good Friday Agreement

Negotiations and Peace Initiatives After decades of violence, political leaders and community representatives began working towards peace: The Anglo-Irish Agreement (1985): Recognized the importance of cooperation between Britain and Ireland. The Downing Street Declaration (1993): Affirmed commitments to peaceful resolution. The Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement (1998): Established a devolved government and frameworks for cooperation. Key Provisions of the Good Friday Agreement The agreement included: Power-sharing government between unionists and nationalists Decommissioning of paramilitary weapons Reform of policing to be more representative of communities Recognition of identities and aspirations of all communities

### 4 The Legacy of Peace and Ongoing Challenges

While the Good Friday Agreement significantly reduced violence, challenges remain: Political disagreements continue, especially related to Brexit and border issues. Paramilitary groups have not been fully disbanded or demobilized. Community divisions and sectarianism persist in some areas.

#### Understanding the Troubles Today

How the Troubles Shape Northern Ireland's Identity The legacy of the conflict influences identity, politics, and community relations: Memorials and commemorations often reflect differing narratives. Political parties continue to represent unionist and nationalist perspectives. Peace walls and segregated neighborhoods symbolize ongoing divisions. Lessons Learned from Northern Ireland's Conflict The Troubles offer insights into: The importance of inclusive political processes The dangers of sectarianism and discrimination The potential for peace through negotiation and reconciliation

#### Conclusion: Making Sense of a Troubled Past

The Troubles in Northern Ireland were a tragic chapter marked by violence, division, and loss. However, they also demonstrated the resilience of communities and the possibilities of peace and reconciliation. Understanding the complex causes, key events, and ongoing challenges helps us appreciate the importance of dialogue, respect, and political solutions in resolving conflicts rooted in identity and history. As Northern Ireland continues to evolve, the lessons from its troubled past remain vital for building a more inclusive and peaceful future.

#### Question/Answer

What are the main causes of the Northern Ireland conflict? The conflict, known as The Troubles, primarily stemmed from longstanding political, religious, and social divisions between Protestant unionists/loyalists who wanted Northern Ireland to remain part of the UK, and Catholic nationalists/republicans who sought unification with Ireland. Disputes over civil rights, discrimination, and national identity fueled tensions that

escalated into violence. 5 How did The Troubles impact civilian life in Northern Ireland? The Troubles led to widespread violence, bombings, shootings, and civil unrest, resulting in over 3,500 deaths and thousands of injuries. Many communities were divided, security measures increased, and everyday life was heavily affected by fear, curfews, and disruptions, leaving lasting scars on society. What role did British government policies play in the Northern Ireland conflict? British government policies, including policing methods, military interventions, and attempts at political solutions like the Good Friday Agreement, significantly influenced the conflict. Some policies were viewed as biased or heavy-handed, which sometimes exacerbated tensions, while others aimed to restore peace. What was the significance of the Good Friday Agreement? The Good Friday Agreement, signed in 1998, was a pivotal peace deal that helped to end most of the violence. It established a devolved government, outlined rights protections, and created mechanisms for power-sharing and ongoing dialogue, laying the foundation for relative stability. Who were key figures involved in the peace process? Prominent figures included political leaders like David Trimble and John Hume, as well as representatives from both communities and the British and Irish governments. Their collaborative efforts and negotiations were crucial in reaching the peace agreement. How does the history of The Troubles influence current politics in Northern Ireland? The legacy of The Troubles continues to shape political debates, community relations, and identity in Northern Ireland. Issues like sovereignty, cultural recognition, and the peace process remain sensitive, influencing elections and policy decisions. What lessons can be learned from the Northern Ireland conflict? Key lessons include the importance of inclusive dialogue, addressing underlying grievances, and the value of negotiated settlements. It also highlights the need for ongoing reconciliation efforts and the dangers of polarization. How has Northern Ireland's society changed since the end of The Troubles? Society has seen significant progress in peace and reconciliation, with increased cross-community cooperation and improved security. However, divisions still exist, and efforts continue to foster mutual understanding and address social inequalities. What role did international actors play in resolving the Northern Ireland conflict? International actors, notably the United States and the European Union, facilitated diplomatic efforts, provided mediation, and supported the peace process. Their involvement was instrumental in encouraging negotiations and implementing agreements. Making Sense of the Troubles: A History of the Northern Ireland Conflict The Troubles, a complex and tumultuous period in Northern Ireland's history, continue to evoke intense discussion and analysis decades after their peak. This conflict, which spanned roughly from the late 1960s to the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, was rooted in a tangled web of political, religious, social, and economic issues. Understanding the Troubles requires not Making Sense Of The Troubles A History Of The Northern Ireland Conflict 6 only a grasp of the historical timeline but also an appreciation of the underlying causes, key players, and the multifaceted efforts toward peace. This article aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the Troubles, analyzing its origins, major events, impact, and the ongoing challenges in making sense of this turbulent chapter of history. Origins and Roots of the Troubles Historical Background The roots of the Troubles lie deep in Ireland's history, especially

the division between Catholics and Protestants, and the political status of Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom. Since the partition of Ireland in 1921, Northern Ireland was established as a predominantly Protestant, unionist state committed to remaining part of the UK, while the Catholic minority often faced discrimination and marginalization.

- Colonial Legacy: British colonization and settlement policies historically favored Protestants, creating systemic inequalities.
- Partition and Its Consequences: The 1921 partition created a segregated society, fostering division and resentment.
- Civil Rights Movement: Inspired by global civil rights struggles, Northern Irish Catholics began advocating for equal rights in the 1960s, which was met with resistance and hostility from unionist groups.

Underlying Causes Several intertwined factors contributed to the outbreak of violence:

- Religious Divisions: Deep-seated religious differences fueled mistrust and hostility.
- Discrimination and Inequality: Catholics faced barriers in housing, employment, and political representation.
- Political Aspirations: Nationalist groups sought unification with Ireland, while unionists aimed to remain part of the UK.
- Economic Disparities: Economic underdevelopment and unemployment, especially among Catholics, exacerbated tensions.
- State Response: Police and security forces' heavy-handed responses often escalated unrest.

Major Phases and Key Events of the Troubles

The Outbreak: 1968-1972 The Troubles officially began in the late 1960s, sparked by civil rights protests that were often met with violence. The deployment of British troops in 1969 marked a turning point, initially seen as protectors but soon viewed with suspicion by the nationalist community.

Key Events:

- Civil rights marches and protests in Derry and Belfast.
- The Battle of the Bogside (1969), a large-scale riot and riotous resistance.
- Introduction of internment without trial in 1971, leading to increased unrest.
- Bloody Sunday (1972): British soldiers shot 14 unarmed civil rights protesters in Derry, igniting widespread outrage.

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7 Escalation and Violence: 1972-1985 This period was characterized by intense violence, including bombings, assassinations, and urban warfare. Notable incidents:

- The rise of paramilitary groups such as the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and loyalist militias.
- Bloody Friday (1972): IRA bombs in Belfast killed nine people.
- The hunger strikes of 1981, where prisoners demanded political status, garnered international attention and support for republican causes.
- The increase of sectarian violence, often targeting civilians and security forces.

The Peace Process and Ceasefires: 1985-1998 Amidst ongoing violence, efforts toward peace gained momentum. Key developments:

- The Downing Street Declaration (1993) and subsequent peace talks.
- The IRA's ceasefire in 1994 and loyalist ceasefires soon after.
- The Good Friday Agreement (1998): A historic accord that established devolved government, disarmament of paramilitary groups, and provisions for human rights and equality.

Impact and Consequences

Human Cost The Troubles resulted in profound human suffering:

- Approximate death toll of over 3,500 people.
- Tens of thousands injured, many with lifelong disabilities.
- Displacement of thousands of families and communities.
- Psychological trauma pervasive across generations.

Social and Cultural Effects The conflict deeply divided society along sectarian lines.

- Segregation of neighborhoods and education.
- Persistent mistrust and fear.
- Polarization reinforced through political and cultural institutions.
- Impact on arts, identity, and

collective memory. Political and Legal Outcomes The peace process redefined governance: - Establishment of the Northern Ireland Assembly. - Decommissioning of weapons by paramilitary groups. - Continued debates over issues like parades, flags, and legacy justice. - Challenges in fully implementing the Good Friday Agreement's provisions. Analyzing the Lessons and Making Sense of the Troubles Making Sense Of The Troubles A History Of The Northern Ireland Conflict 8 Complexity and Multiple Narratives One of the main challenges in understanding the Troubles is acknowledging the multiplicity of perspectives. The narratives of unionists, loyalists, nationalists, and republicans often conflict, each emphasizing different causes and justifications. Pros of recognizing diverse narratives: - Promotes empathy and mutual understanding. - Encourages reconciliation. - Provides a more nuanced historical record. Cons: - Can lead to relativism and relativize violence. - Difficult to reconcile conflicting memories and truths. Role of External Actors The conflict was influenced by Britain, Ireland, and international actors. External involvement included diplomatic efforts, peace negotiations, and security policies. - Positive impact: Facilitated peace talks and agreements. - Negative impact: External actors sometimes perceived as biased or heavy-handed, complicating trust-building. Lessons from Peacebuilding The peace process highlights several key features: - The importance of dialogue and inclusive negotiations. - The need for addressing underlying grievances, not just symptoms. - The role of leadership and committed mediators. - Challenges in disarmament, justice, and reconciliation. Ongoing Challenges Despite the peace process, issues remain: - Paramilitary dissidents continue sporadic violence. - Sectarian divisions persist in social and political spheres. - Legacy issues, including justice for victims and reconciliation, remain contentious. - Socioeconomic disparities and political disagreements threaten stability. Conclusion: Making Sense of a Complex Legacy The Troubles in Northern Ireland serve as a stark reminder of how deeply rooted conflicts can be, shaped by history, identity, and power struggles. While the peace process has brought significant progress, understanding the conflict requires recognizing its multifaceted nature and the diverse experiences of those involved. Moving forward, the ongoing efforts toward reconciliation, justice, and social cohesion are essential in ensuring that the lessons of the Troubles inform a more peaceful future. Ultimately, making sense of this troubled history involves embracing complexity, fostering dialogue, and committedly working toward a society where peace and understanding prevail over division and violence. Northern Ireland conflict, Troubles history, Belfast conflicts, Good Friday Agreement, Making Sense Of The Troubles A History Of The Northern Ireland Conflict 9 paramilitary groups, sectarian violence, peace process, political history, IRA, Irish nationalism

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this work traces the genesis evolution and completion of the peace process in northern ireland from 1920 to the present the author also provides an account of events that led to the good friday peace accord

a collection of essays by academics and specialists rather than participants that provides a comprehensive analysis of the perceptions and responses of each of the predominant political movements and forces which in combination comprise the northern ireland question the essays identify and dissect the individual elements of which the problem is composed and thereby illuminate the complex issues involved and the obstacles blocking their resolution distributed by ashgate annotation copyright by book news inc portland or

from the plantation of ulster in the seventeenth century to the entry into peace talks in the late twentieth century the northern irish people have been engaged in conflict catholic against protestant republican against unionist marc mulholland explores the pivotal moments in northern irish history the rise of republicanism in the 1800s home rule and the civil rights movement the growth of sinn fein and the provisional ira and of the opposition the dup led by dr ian paisley his detailed examination of the violent upheaval of the last century epitomized by the killing of 13 civilian demonstrators on bloody sunday culminates in the controversy surrounding the current ongoing peace process over 300 years on the question still remains can two identities and national allegiances be accommodated in the same state without oppression rebellion or violence about the series the very short introductions series from oxford university press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area these pocket sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly our expert authors combine facts analysis

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completely revised and updated edition the essential history of the troubles compellingly written and very even handed by far the clearest account of what happened in the northern ireland conflict and more importantly why it happened irish news extraordinarily well balanced sane comprehensive and rich in sober understatement glasgow herald first published two decades ago making sense of the troubles is widely regarded as the most comprehensive considered and compassionate irish times history of the troubles in northern ireland written by a distinguished journalist and a teacher of history in northern ireland it surveys the roots of the problems from 1921 onwards the descent into violence in the late 60s and the three terrible decades that followed in this fully revised and updated version mckittrick and mcvea take into account the momentous events of the ten years that followed their first publication including the disbanding of the ira ian paisley s deal with the republicans and the historic power sharing government in belfast an updated reissue of a collaborative study published 12 years ago to rave reviews as a frank accurate and authoritative narrative of events which should be required reading for anyone hoping to understand what had been going on in the north irish independent i would strongly advocate that it be made compulsory reading for everyone in northern ireland because for the first time it is our history all of it warts and all presented in a clear and understandable way irish news

appropriate for undergraduate students in irish northern ireland politics this book combines an examination of the historical context of the northern ireland conflict with an examination of the contemporary political situation and the peace process it explores the issues behind the longevity of the conflict and provides a detailed analysis of the attempts to create a lasting peace in northern ireland this is the first textbook to address the political situation in light of recent developments relating to the 1990 s peace process and the recent return to violence making this the most up to date book available on the subject debate and analysis will sit alongside historical and ideological description allowing the student to develop the analytical tools necessary to analyse and understand a complex and contentious topic

this study of the problem of catholic and protestant discord in northern ireland was written under the sponsorship of the irish association for cultural economic and social relations the antagonism that plagues northern ireland s life is diagnosed in chapters which deal with social relations employment politics leisure and other topics

this book looks at the roots of the current struggle in ulster and of british military intervention setting both in the longer perspective of the anglo irish troubles and addressing the issue of the response of democratic states to ethnic conflict

the complete history of northern ireland from the irish civil war to brexit a wonderful book beautifully written informative and incisive irish times after two decades of relative peace following the good friday agreement of 1998 the brexit referendum in 2016 reopened the northern ireland question in this thoughtful and engaging book feargal cochrane considers the region s troubled history from the struggle for irish independence in the nineteenth century to the present new chapters explain the reasons for the suspension of devolved government at stormont in 2017 and its restoration in 2020 as well as the consequences for northern ireland of britain s decision to leave the european union providing a complete account of the province s hundred year history this book is essential reading to understand the present dimensions of the northern irish conflict

the routledge handbook of the northern ireland conflict and peace is the first multi authored volume to specifically address the many facets of the 30 year northern ireland conflict colloquially known as the troubles and its subsequent peace process this volume is rooted in opening space to address controversial subjects answer key questions and move beyond reductive analysis that reproduces a simplistic two community theses the temporal span of individual chapters can reach back to the formation of the state of northern ireland with many starting in the late 1960s to include a range of individuals collectives organisations understandings and events at least up to the good friday belfast agreement in 1998 this volume has forefronted creative approaches in understanding conflict and allows for analysis and reflection on conflict and peace to continue through to the present day with an extensive introduction preface and 45 individual chapters this volume represents an ambitious expansive interdisciplinary engagement with the north of ireland through society conflict and peace from a wide range of disciplinary perspectives theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches while allowing for rich historical explorations of high level politics rooted in state documents and archives this volume also allows for the intermingling of different sources that highlight the role of personal papers memory space materials and experience in understanding the complexities of both northern ireland as a people place and political entity

the first volume of the definitive political history of northern ireland

the origins of the northern irish state are of great importance for the study of irish history and anglo irish relations but this subject has never been tackled in great detail in this diligent and detailed account follis makes up for this oversight he examines the turbulent early years of northern ireland looking at how its administration was established and how it survived in the face of widespread communal violence near bankruptcy and political uncertainty exacerbated by problematical relations with the governments in westminster and dublin the highly controversial subject matter is subject to careful analysis and if a particular standpoint emerges at its conclusion an expression of it is long overdue this is an honest and extremely lucid piece of research on a subject of vital importance



the definitive study of this troubled region the northern ireland conflict is the most protracted and bitter campaign of terrorist violence in modern history despite decommissioning and political compromise violent incidents are still rife and unionists and nationalists are as segregated as ever this landmark introduction uses the latest archival material to chart the history of the troubles and examine their legacy exploring the effects of sectarian violence british intervention and efforts to improve community relations this astute book extends beyond the usual clichés found elsewhere

compellingly written and even handed in its judgments this is by far the clearest account of what has happened through the years in the northern ireland conflict and why after a chapter of background on the period from 1921 to 1963 it covers the ensuing period the descent into violence the hunger strikes the anglo irish accord the bombers in england to the present shaky peace process behind the deluge of information and opinion about the conflict there is a straightforward and gripping story mr mckittrick and mr mcvea tell that story clearly concisely and above all fairly avoiding intricate detail in favor of narrative pace and accessible prose they describe and explain a lethal but fascinating time in northern ireland s history which brought not only death injury and destruction but enormous political and social change they close on an optimistic note convinced that while peace if it comes will always be imperfect a corner has now been decisively turned the book includes a detailed chronology statistical tables and a glossary of terms

the objective of this book is to substitute analysis for myth in the understanding of the tragedy which has engulfed northern ireland for over two decades the contributors discuss such questions as the roots of violence employment differentials and the legal response to the troubles

brexit and the northern ireland constitution considers the intersection of two processes the complex and constitutional process of the united kingdom s withdrawal from the european union brexit and the steady yet fragile development of the northern ireland constitution deriving primarily from the belfast good friday agreement of 1998 interdisciplinary in approach the analysis draws on legal and political theory to develop a novel framework for assessing the progressive impact of brexit on the northern ireland constitution based on systematic definitions of both this approach elucidates dynamics and implications not yet considered in the otherwise extensive debates about brexit and its impacts on northern ireland based on detailed analysis of the brexit process it is argued that its impact on the constitution of northern ireland has been profound fundamentally brexit changed the political and legal environment in which the northern ireland constitution had existed for over twenty years embracing constructive ambiguity the 1998 agreement recognises and accommodates the concerns of both unionists and nationalists in northern ireland it did not therefore solve the constitutional conflict but rather allowed it to be managed differently through an innovative system of multileveled governance

within northern ireland power sharing devolution on the island of ireland north south cooperation and between the islands of great britain and ireland east west cooperation all underpinned by a multifaceted principle of constitutional popular and cross community consent by forcing a paradigmatic shift in the way that the systems of government established by the 1998 agreement operate brexit disrupted the constructively ambiguous compromise that it represents completed two years after the legal implementation of uk withdrawal from the eu whitten concludes by considering the potential longer term constitutional repercussions of brexit both within and beyond northern ireland s recently notorious borders

despite the staggering number of books related to the northern ireland political arena most of the literature concentrates on only a few dimensions of the conflict and especially on constitutional policy and the on going search for a resolution of the antagonisms this original textbook the first of its kind serves as a comprehensive examination of the subject by exploring these topics and other important dimensions of politics which have been overlooked and undervalued politics in northern ireland is written by a team of distinguished academics drawn from both within and outside northern ireland it adopts the analytic tools of political science and brings a comparative perspective to bear on the politics of northern ireland early chapters examine the historic sources of conflict analyze the period since the outbreak of the modern troubles and discuss the differences between the communities the book then examines the nature of parties elections and elective assemblies before focusing on policy matters such as fair employment policing and gender in the concluding chapter contributors consider relations with the republic of ireland and discuss events as current as today s headlines including the historic breakthrough in negotiations the referendums and the assembly elections the result is a well rounded core text designed for the classroom as well as for those interested in learning more about different facets of politics in northern ireland

the book examines how the belfast agreement came about and its effect on unionism nationalism the paramilitaries electoral support for local parties and the constitutional position of northern ireland it also considers the extent to which the agreement may be regarded as an exercise in political cynicism or the basis for lasting peace

written during the northern ireland peace process and just before the good friday agreement the politics of antagonism sets out to answer questions such as why successive british governments failed to reach a power sharing settlement in northern ireland and what progress has been made with the anglo irish agreement o leary and mcgarry assess these topics in the light of past historical and social science scholarship in interviews of key politicians and in an examination of political violence since 1969 the result is a book which points to feasible strategies for a democratic settlement in the northern ireland question and which allows today s scholars and students to analyse approaches to northern ireland from the perspective of the recent past

front of cover final 5 11 98 northern ireland since 1945 second edition sabine wichert postwar world logo spine postwar world logo northern ireland since 1945 second edition wichert colophon outside trim probable price probable publication back of cover ato those who understand no explanation is necessary to those who will not understand no explanation is possible a the different attitudes that can be read into this celebrated graffito from the falls road in 1980s belfast arrogance belligerence alienation intransigence and despair amongst them have all contributed to the isolation of northern ireland in the modern world explanation and understanding however are the stock in trade of the historian and it was to to provide the first and assist the second that sabine wichert published this well known study in 1991 it rapidly established itself as terence ranger predicted at the time in irish studies review as aa standard text in contemporary history and politics coursesa for other reviews of the first edition see inside the front cover there are many reasons for its success it is a work of great authority formidably well grounded in the scholarship rather than the prejudices of the subject sabine wichertas approach is distinctively that of a historian rather than a political scientist or a journalist she has a special understanding of the economic factors underlying the troubled provinceas recent history and particularly she herself a german academic who has lived and worked in northern ireland for almost 30 years now is uniquely well placed asboth outsider and insider to write with impartiality insight and compassion about her adopted home much has happened to northern ireland since the book was published and this second edition will be widely welcomed the existing text has been reconsidered in the light of fresh perspectives and many new economic and social tables have been included along with a thoroughgoing overhaul of the extensive bibliography above all the coverage has been fully updated to incorporate the major events of recent years particularly the developments from the anglo irish agreement through the evolving peace process to the elections to northern irelandas new assembly for this is a critical phase in the province for the first time in its recent history a real possibility of stabilisation and more peaceful and democratic forms of government can be detected and sabine wichert examines the contribution of all sides including the irish british and us governments to this changing climate yet tensions remain and readers of this important second edition will await with mingled hope and apprehension the arrival of its eventual successor to clarify whether these apparently brightening horizons do indeed mark a turning point or were only another false dawn sabine wichert is senior lecturer at the queenas university of belfast where she has taught since 1971

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