

Shadows Inside Northern Irelands Special Branch

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Shadows: Inside Northern Ireland's Special Branch: Amazon—

This is a well-written, gripping account of a Special Branch officer's career inside the elite agent handling unit of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) in Northern Ireland. Most of the book describes the author's time spent working undercover in the city of Derry, providing key insights as to how the police surveilled and prosecuted suspected IRA men and women.

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Shadows Inside Northern Ireland's Special Branch (PDF)

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In this explosive book, Alan Barker gives a gripping inside account of the inner workings of the Royal Ulster Constabulary's elite Special Branch and its struggle against terrorism, a struggle which resulted in those who waged that war feeling ultimately betrayed and let down.

In the early hours of 30 April 2003, twelve armed and uniformed officers accompanied by four plain-clothes detectives burst into Alan Barker's house. They stayed for hours, turning over rooms, seizing documents, impounding computers, files and anything else that interested them. The family were treated as terrorist suspects, the operation resembling so many others in Northern Ireland during the Troubles. But Alan Barker was and is no terrorist. In fact, he has spent his adult life fighting terrorism on the streets of his native province. Barker belonged to the Special Branch, the RUC's elite unit dedicated to fighting the IRA, the INLA and loyalist terrorists. He gives a gripping insider's account of life on the frontline and demonstrates how the RUC used sophisticated listening devices and informants, including the notorious supergrass Raymond Gilmour, in their fight to gain the upper hand. After nearly 30 years of loyal service, Barker retired angry and disillusioned about what he views as the government's capitulation to the terrorists. This is the book that Downing Street and the Northern Ireland Office don't want you to read. It is a story of courage under fire, guile, Le Carré-esque plots and treachery.

This book examines memoir-writing by many of the key political actors in the Northern Irish Troubles (1969-1998), and argues that memoir has been a neglected dimension of the study of the legacies of the violent conflict. It investigates these sources in the context of ongoing disputes over how to interpret Northern Ireland's recent past. A careful reading of these memoirs can provide insights into the lived experience and retrospective judgments of some of the main protagonists of the conflict. The period of relative peace rests upon an uneasy calm in Northern Ireland. Many people continue to inhabit contested ideological territories, and in their strategies for shaping the narrative telling of the conflict, key individuals within the Protestant Unionist and Catholic Irish Nationalist communities can appear locked into exclusive and self-justifying discourses. In such circumstances, while some memoirists have been genuinely self-critical, many others have utilised a post-conflict language of societal reconciliation in order to mask a strategy that actually seeks to score rhetorical victories and to discomfort traditional enemies. Memoir-writing is only one dimension of the current ad hoc approach to "dealing with the past" in Northern Ireland, but in the absence of any consensus regarding an overarching "truth and reconciliation" process, this is likely to be the pattern for the foreseeable future. This study provides the first comprehensive analysis of a major resource for understanding the conflict.

This book provides an account and analysis of policing in Northern Ireland, providing an account and analysis of the RUC (Royal Ulster Constabulary) from the start of 'the troubles' in the 1960s to the early 1990s, through the uneasy peace that followed the 1994 paramilitary ceasefires (1994-1998), and then its transformation into the Police Service of Northern Ireland following the 1999 Patten Report. A major concern is with the reform process, and the way that the RUC has faced and sought to remedy a situation where it faced a chronic legitimacy deficit. Policing Northern Ireland focuses on three key aspects of the police legitimization process: reform measures which are implemented to redress a legitimacy crisis; representational strategies which are invoked to offer positive images of policing; and public responses to these various strategies. Several key questions are asked about the ways in which the RUC has sought to improve its standing amongst nationalists: first, what strategies of reform has the RUC implemented? second, what forms of representation has the RUC employed to promote and portray itself in the positive terms that might secure public support? third, how have nationalists responded to these initiatives? The theoretical framework and analysis developed in the book also highlights general issues relating to the implications of police legitimacy and illegitimacy for social conflict and divisions, and their management and/or resolution, in relation to transitional societies in particular. In doing so it makes a powerful contribution to wider current debates about police legitimacy, police-community relations, community resistance, and conflict resolution.

Bombs, Bullets and the Border examines Irish Government Security Policy and the role played by the Gardaí and Irish Army along the Northern Irish border during some of the worst years of the Troubles. Mulroe knits together an impressive range of sources to delve into the murky world occupied by paramilitaries and those policing the border. The ways in which security forces under Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael governments secretly cooperated with the British Army and the RUC, exacerbating tensions with republican groups in the border counties, are meticulously examined. Mulroe also reveals the devastating consequences of this approach, which left a loyalist threat unheeded and the 26 counties open to attack. The findings of the Smithwick Tribunal and the upheaval of Brexit have kept the issue of Irish border security within the public eye, but without a complete awareness of its consequences. Bombs, Bullets and the Border is vital reading in understanding what a secure border entails, and how it affects the lives of those living within its hinterland.

The counterinsurgency (COIN) paradigm dominates military and political conduct in contemporary Western strategic thought. It assumes future wars will unfold as "low intensity" conflicts within rather than between states, requiring specialized military training and techniques. COIN is understood as a logical, effective, and democratically palatable method for confronting insurgency—a discrete set of practices that, through the actions of knowledgeable soldiers and under the guidance of an expert elite, creates lasting results. Through an extensive investigation into COIN's theories, methods, and outcomes, this book undermines enduring claims about COIN's success while revealing its hidden meanings and effects. Interrogating the relationship between counterinsurgency and war, the authors question the supposed uniqueness of COIN's attributes and try to resolve the puzzle of its intellectual identity. Is COIN a strategy, a doctrine, a theory, a military practice, or something else? Their analysis ultimately exposes a critical paradox within COIN: while it ignores the vital political dimensions of war, it is nevertheless the product of a misplaced ideological faith in modernization.

War and conflict are a reality of life throughout the world. While much is written about the impact of violence and disorder, how people and organisations adapt to these environments is poorly understood. This book tells the often hidden story of people managing, delivering services and sustaining economies through and beyond violent conflict. It is written for both general readers and academic specialists, combining first person interviews, insights from witness seminars, and informal conversations with more scholarly research. Building on what we already know about organisational behavior and conflict transformation, the book looks at the delivery of housing and public amenities, the management of public space and commemoration and the role of local businesses during and beyond violent conflict. In particular, it focuses on the role of organisational managers as peacebuilding entrepreneurs, generating and sustaining conflict transformation efforts.

Informers have been active during many periods of unrest in Ireland but, until Tudor times, they had never been an organized phenomenon until the twentieth century. The decision (or refusal) to inform is dangerous—thus the motives of the informers are compelling, as is their ability to deceive themselves. Drawing on firsthand and newspaper accounts of the Easter Rising and other events, this book provides a history of the gradual development of informing in Ireland. Each informer's story details their life and secrets and the outcome of their actions. All of them have shared two experiences: the accusation of informing, whether true or false, and betrayal, whether committed or endured.

Sectarian murder, torture, bloody power struggles and racketeering are what for many define their image of the Ulster Defence Association. Yet as Northern Ireland's Troubles worsened in 1971 and 1972, it emerged with a mass membership to defend Loyalist areas against the IRA and to uphold the Union with Britain. By 1974 it was able to defy the will of an elected government and it went on to formulate political strategies for working-class Loyalism. Ian S. Wood uses his specialist knowledge as well as extensive interviews to recount these events and the ruthless war waged by the UDA on the nationalist community. He explores issues such as the UDA's descent into criminality and its relationship with the 'secret war' conducted by Britain's undercover services and he assesses what impact the organisation had on the outcome of Europe's worst political and ethnic conflict between 1945 and the break-up of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia after 1990.

Truth, Denial and Transition: Northern Ireland and the Contested Past makes a unique and timely contribution to the transitional justice field. In contrast to the focus on truth and those societies where truth recovery has been central to dealing with the aftermath of human rights violations, comparatively little scholarly attention has been paid to those jurisdictions whose transition from violent conflict has been marked by the absence or rejection of a formal truth process. This book draws upon the case study of Northern Ireland, where, despite a lengthy debate, the question of establishing a formal truth recovery process remains hotly contested. The strongest and most vocal opposition has been from unionist political elites, loyalist ex-combatants and members of the security forces. Based on empirical research, their opposition is unpicked and interrogated at length throughout this book. Critically exploring notions of national imagination and blamelessness, the politics of victimhood and the tension between traditions of sacrifice and the fear of betrayal, this book is the first substantive effort to concentrate on the opponents of truth recovery rather than its advocates. This book will interest those studying truth processes and transitional justice in the fields of Law, Politics, and Criminology.

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