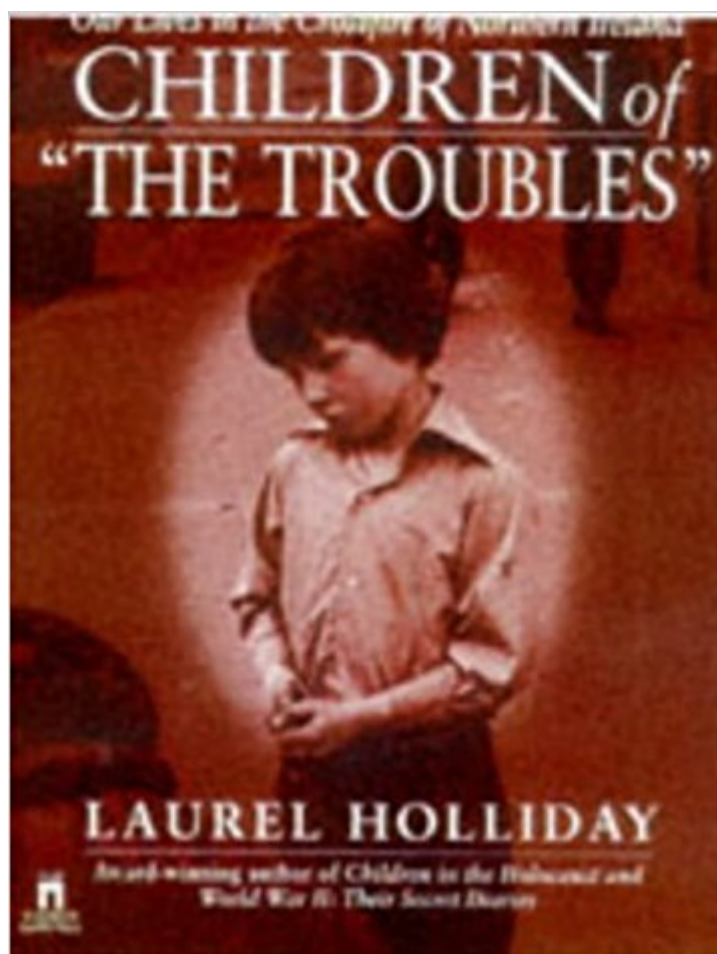


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Children Of The Troubles: Our Lives In The Crossfire Of Northern Ireland



Synopsis

In this remarkable second book in the Children of Conflict series, Laurel Holliday presents a powerful collection of young people's memories of growing up in the midst of the violence in Northern Ireland known as "The Troubles." ""All my life I have been afraid. When it would get dark I would lie in bed and be frightened to move in case men would be outside who were going to smash the doors in with a sledge hammer and then shoot whoever is in the house as they have done before." -- Bridie Murphy, age twelve" More than sixty Catholic and Protestant children, teenagers, and adults chronicle their coming-of-age experiences in the war zone, from bomb-devastated Belfast to the terrorist-ridden countryside. ""It was like my head exploded. It's an experience you can't really understand -- getting shot in the head -- unless it's happened to you. -- Stephen Robinson, wounded while walking home from secondary school" For the first time in thirty years there is some hope for an end to the murders and bombings that have wounded more than 40,000. But the ravages of war remain indelibly etched on the minds and souls of the generation known as children of "The Troubles."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The second book in the celebrated "Children of Conflict" series, following *Children in the Holocaust and World War II* (Pocket, 1995). Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

An occasionally powerful collection of young people's memories and impressions of Northern Ireland's violent civil strife. Holliday continues her Children of Conflict series (Children of the Holocaust and World War II, not reviewed) with this collection of brief essays, poems, and diary entries that people sent to her in response to her requests made through newspapers and schools. Because the 60 children, young adults, and adults (recalling events from the heights of "the Troubles" when they were children) were not responding to a specific questionnaire, the results are not always focused, detailed, or engaging. The author considers it a "testament to these writers' courage . . . that not a single person in this anthology asked to be anonymous," but lack of anonymity (and the b&w photos of each contributor) prevents those who admit having committed sectarian crimes from discussing their acts in detail, and thus keeps much of the collection blanketed in banality. The book opens with a young Irishman's teenage memories of how he "split a black soldier's head open" during a riot, and then vomited after seeing a woman keeping watch over her dead son's corpse, "his intestines hanging out like snails." While the book never again captures such drama or gore, there are passages about Catholic boys being savaged by British militia for the crime of carrying empty milk bottles and petrol (popular ingredients of handmade bombs) and the anger, fear, and grief felt by Protestants in the wake of IRA bombings. The anthology is at its best when offering first-hand accounts of hunger-striker Bobby Sands's funeral, expressing resentment over terrorists targeting even the milkman of a police officer, and conveying the courage of "pigs in the middle," who socialize and sympathize with the other side. The bibliography and chronology add to the book's value as a teaching tool for high schoolers, but adults will find this collection lacking the more candid and unrehearsed eloquence of other first-person works on "the Troubles." -- Copyright ©1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Great book. Telling stories of the "troubles" in Northern Ireland. A great read!!

Laragh Cullen is a young woman who grew up in Dungannon, County Tyrone, in Northern Ireland. She tried her hand at poetry when she was eleven years old and her words are among those included in the book CHILDREN OF THE TROUBLES. Laragh states: I'm tired of the sirens The town's like a cage I wish there was peace I'm eleven years of age. Her words describe the many challenges faced by the children who grew up in war torn Ireland, yet the hope for peace is also evident in many of these same young voices. This is the subject of the book CHILDREN OF THE TROUBLES. CHILDREN OF THE TROUBLES is a collection of stories by people living in Northern

Ireland during what has is referred to as "the troubles." Most of the pieces included in the collection are written by adults who grew up in the midst of the strife between Catholics and Protestants in this divided section of the world. While the entries were written by adults, the experiences mentioned in the book took place when the writers were young. The book is divided into three sections, the first dealing with situations which take place in Belfast, the area that was most affected by the strife. The second section deals with how the strife affected other counties of Northern Ireland. The third section deals with those who tried to remain neutral. The editor, Laurel Holliday, has edited similar works involving children in Israel and Palestine, African Americans in American inner-city environments, and diaries of children of the Holocaust. The selections in this volume were written by a variety of people both Catholic and Protestant, of all educational levels, some victims, and some who were in the midst of the violence. Each of the voices in this work shows us what we probably already know, or should know, but never seem to learn, namely that we are all more similar than we realize. We also get a clear sense that while it may be religion that divides many of the people of Northern Ireland, theology, spirituality or God rarely enter into the debate. The strength of this volume would be the stories themselves. Most of them are accompanied by a photograph of the person telling the story which makes the reader see that the accounts involve actual people who lived through these horrendous years, and many are thought provoking. People reading the book will not find it a depressing work. Many of the entries are hope-filled and also show that even though there was strife and violence in their homeland, many of the young people did experience the normal joys and adventures of childhood.

Laurel Holliday has put together a powerful collection of sixty children's experiences during the violent and turbulent war of cultural differences known as "The Troubles" in Northern Ireland. After posting advertisements in newspapers around Northern Ireland, Holliday received responses from both Catholic and Protestant individuals who had an experience to share about their lives during the "Troubles." These powerful and sometimes disturbing stories show the bravery and danger these children (some of whom are now adults) faced during the conflicts prior to the cease-fire in 1994 as well as their tentative hopes for a peaceful future. After personally experiencing New Years 2000 in Belfast, I can only hope that the peace agreement holds and that the differences between people can be embraced rather than fought. The future children of Northern Ireland deserve to experience a life of peace in a beautiful country with a tremendously difficult history. "Children of the Troubles" is an excellent book for both adults and children. The stories are powerful and moving with photographs included of most of the children who bravely share their stories.

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