

Leaving the North: Migration and Memory, Northern Ireland 1921-2011

Johanne Devlin Trew



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Leaving the North: Migration and Memory, Northern Ireland 1921-2011 Johanne Devlin Trew *Leaving the North* is the first book that provides a comprehensive survey of Northern Ireland migration since 1921. Based largely on the personal memories of emigrants who left Northern Ireland from the 1920s to the 2000s, approximately half of whom eventually returned, the book traces their multigenerational experiences of leaving Northern Ireland and adapting to life abroad, with some later returning to a society still mired in conflict. Contextualised by a review of the statistical and policy record, the emigrants' stories reveal that contrary to its well-worn image as an inward-looking place - 'such narrow ground' - Northern Ireland has a rather dynamic migration history, demonstrating that its people have long been looking outward as well as inward, well connected with the wider world. But how many departed and where did they go? And what of the Northern Ireland Diaspora? How has the view of the 'troubled' homeland from abroad, especially among expatriates, contributed to progress along the road to peace? In addressing these questions, the book treats the relationship between migration, sectarianism and conflict, immigration and racism, repatriation and the Peace Process, with particular attention to the experience of Northern Ireland migrants in the two principal receiving societies - Britain and Canada. With the emigration of young people once again on the increase due to the economic downturn, it is perhaps timely to learn from the experiences of the people who have been 'leaving the North' over many decades; not only to acknowledge their departure but in the hope that we might better understand the challenges and opportunities that migration and Diaspora can present.

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