

Ethnic and Intercommunity Conflict Series

General Editors: **Seamus Dunn**, Professor of Conflict Studies and Director, Centre for the Study of Conflict, and **Valerie Morgan**, Professor of History and Research Associate, Centre for the Study of Conflict, University of Ulster, Northern Ireland

With the end of the Cold War, the hitherto concealed existence of a great many other conflicts, relatively small in scale, long-lived, ethnic in character and intra- rather than inter-state has been revealed. The dramatic changes in the distribution of world power, along with the removal of some previously resolute forms of centralised restraint, have resulted in the re-emergence of older, historical ethnic quarrels, many of which either became violent and warlike or teetered, and continue to teeter, on the brink of violence. For these reasons, ethnic conflicts and consequent violence are likely to have the greatest impact on world affairs during the next period of history.

This new series examines a range of issues related to ethnic and intercommunity conflict. Each book concentrates on a well-defined aspect of ethnic and intercommunity conflict and approaches it from a comparative and international standpoint.

Rather than focus on the macrolevel, that is on the grand and substantive matters of states and empires, this series argues that the fundamental causes of ethnic conflict are often to be found in the hidden roots and tangled social infrastructures of the opposing separated groups. It is through the understanding of these foundations and the working out of their implications for policy and practical activity that may lead to ameliorative processes and the construction of transforming social mechanisms and programmes calculated to produce longterm peace.

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Education in Divided Societies

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Foreword and Acknowledgements

This book has been long in gestation and there have been many people along the way who have supported and inspired me in various ways. Perhaps the most important of these were Karen Trew, for her work on the psychology of conflict, Bob Cormack and Bob Osborne, for their work on equality, and John Darby and Seamus Dunn, for their work on conflict and conflict resolution. I owe a great debt to all of them. Needless to say, while they have inspired work which has contributed to this book, I am solely responsible for its contents.

This book is based on a search for a way in which education can make a positive and progressive contribution to societies that are undergoing ethnic conflict. To a large part the reason for thinking about this issue arises from my own experience of growing up in Northern Ireland during the most violent part of its history.

The book is really organised around four themes. The first concerns the nature of conflict between people and is examined in the first three chapters. The experience of the Holocaust is examined first as a reminder of the depths to which human depravity can sink, but it is a reminder also that this should not be seen simply as a reversion to some sort of barbarous primitivism. The Holocaust, in other words, is a consequence of modernity, not an abandonment of it. The next two chapters examine the social processes that have created ethnically plural societies and some strands of work with Social Psychology which have attempted to offer some framework of understanding for these phenomena.

The second theme, covering the next four chapters, begins our examination of the impact of different educational structures. Chapter 4 looks at the three most plural European states, all of which operate federalised political systems in which education decision-making is a largely decentralised activity. The next three chapters examine the experience of the United States and Great Britain, both of which have tried to operate a common school system in which education is used primarily to promote social integration.

The third theme, covering the next two chapters, examines two situations where education is divided. The first of these is provided by apartheid South Africa in which education played a key role in the maintenance of minority White rule. The second is provided by

Northern Ireland where parallel religious school systems operate for Protestants and Catholics.

In the final chapter we try to draw the various strands of experience examined in the book together to see what can be learned for future practice. The main arguments we conclude with are that, for good or ill, there is no educational structure that provides a guaranteed positive (or negative) outcome, but that what is needed is a process of dialogue to determine what is considered desirable as educational outcomes and a willingness to act towards those outcomes.

For me the example of Northern Ireland hangs over the discussion throughout this book. It is in Northern Ireland that I live and work and it is there I can best make a contribution to the development of an educational system.

This book is dedicated to Liam Canning, a young man, a friend, who died in Northern Ireland and of whom I think almost every day.