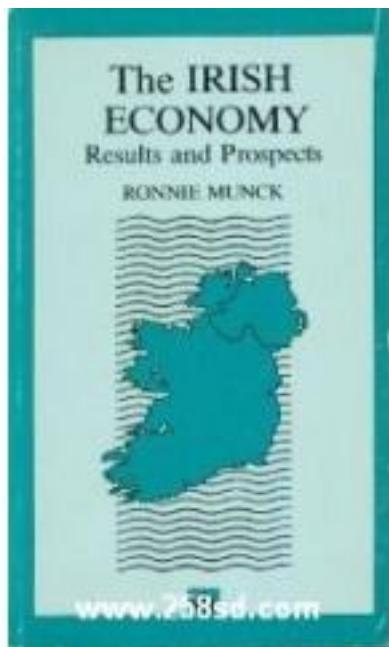


Irish Economy



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The economic developments now occurring in Ireland and more generally in Europe raise difficult questions and challenge many long-held beliefs. Discussion of these issues has been rather limited up to now especially in Northern Ireland but over the coming years the debate is certain to intensify. Ronnie Munck's book 'The Irish Economy: Results and Prospects' is a valuable contribution to this debate. Its author is well-versed in Third World theories of economic development such as dependency theory and he uses this knowledge to explore the economic history of Ireland and analyse the problems now facing the island. This makes the book unusual in both approach and sweep and for this reason alone it is valuable. The author writes from a radical perspective but he is undogmatic and the general

tenor
of the book is open-minded. This book should be useful to anyone
seriously interested in the Irish economy no matter what their political
views. I have certainly enjoyed reading it and I am sure others will too.
The partition of Ireland occurred seventy years ago. This event
damaged the economy of the island and inhibited future development.
It disrupted trade flows between North and South and weakened the
already somewhat tenuous economic links between the two regions.
More fundamentally, partition cemented political divisions in Ireland
and prevented the formation of a sense of common purpose and
determination to overcome the island's economic backwardness.
The two parts of Ireland have been affected somewhat differently by
partition. In its early years, the economic development of the South was
inhibited by its separation from the industrially more advanced North, whose skilled workforce and entrepreneurs could have contributed a great deal to a united Ireland. For its part, the North has suffered because of its overdependence on Britain, which in recent years has brought considerable benefit in the form of financial subsidies but has simultaneously reduced the region's capacity for self-sustaining economic development. Personal incomes and the standard of living are on

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