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A CONTESTED POLICY: IRISH AND AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES ON EIRE'S NEUTRALITY

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A CONTESTED POLICY: IRISH AND AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES ON EIRE’S NEUTRALITY

A Thesis
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the Graduate School of
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Accepted by:
Dr. Michael Silvestri, Committee Chair
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Dr. Paul Christopher Anderson
ABSTRACT

Although the Irish Free State had close relations and connections to the United Kingdom from its inception in 1922, Eire pursued a policy of neutrality throughout the Second World War. Although the majority of the Irish population supported neutrality, it attracted much criticism in Britain and America. The aim of this study is to explore Irish men and women’s experience with neutrality alongside how American newspapers as well as American war correspondents based in Britain addressed and viewed Ireland’s neutrality. In many ways, the Irish benefited from the policy of neutrality and the small nation was united on a level it never had been before. However, war correspondents coming from the warzone of Britain and visiting peaceful Ireland were highly critical of neutrality, viewing the Irish as standing by while the British fought for their freedom. Comparatively, American newspapers gave a more objective view of Eire, but their coverage turned much more critical once the United States entered the war. Ultimately, this examination will enrich the historiography on Ireland and the Second World War by illuminating the development of these varying perspectives on Irish neutrality and how they evolved.
DEDICATION

To my mother and father, Ruth and Dave Egofske, for always supporting and
encouraging me to do what I enjoy.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank my committee for making this thesis possible. The guidance from my committee chair, Dr. Michael Silvestri, was essential in helping me find and develop a thesis topic in which I could truly enjoy researching and exploring. I am especially grateful for the invaluable source material he led me to throughout my research along with his extremely helpful and encouraging feedback as my work progressed. Secondly, I would like to thank Dr. Paul Anderson, who, as an advisor and as a professor was always there to answer any questions and help me improve as a writer and as a student of history. I am grateful to Dr. Stephanie Barczewski, whose historiography course furthered my understanding of the profession while also allowing me to investigate the historical scholarship on neutral Ireland. As a whole, the Clemson University History Department provided me the perfect environment to enrich my historical education.

I must also thank my friends and family, who have been there for me throughout my graduate studies. Thank you, Grandma Seattle and Grandpa Kelly for supporting my academic career and instilling in me the benefits of a good work ethic, for, “nobody ever died from a lack of sleep.” I am forever grateful for the love and support from my parents, and my sisters, Anna and Kayla. Without you, who knows where the little “bean” would be. I am also thankful for my friends, Chasidy and Shane, for giving me balance and allowing me to enjoy the Clemson experience to the fullest extent.
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INTRODUCTION

Well the Irish in Belfast are just as Irish as they are in Dublin, and no matter what you may think of them you have to admit they are interesting. They nearly drive you nuts scrapping and brawling in the middle of this gigantic world war...

- Ben Robertson, July 3, 1941

After Hitler’s invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, the United Kingdom declared war on Germany. All of the nations in the British Commonwealth followed suit; that is, all save the Irish Free State. Instead of belligerency, Eire experienced “the Emergency” under Taoiseach Eamon de Valera from September 1939 until September 1946. Shortly after Britain’s declaration of war on Germany, de Valera along with the Irish Parliament, Dail Eireann, passed the Emergency Powers Act, which stipulated the course of neutrality that Ireland would pursue while giving the Irish government the authority to implement that policy. Throughout the entire war, this policy of neutrality would be protested and critiqued. It was ridiculed on many occasions by the British government and press along with many Americans who lived and experienced the war from Great Britain, such as U.S. war correspondents. As the war progressed an increasing number of Americans grew more critical of Eire’s neutral stance, especially after the United States entered the war in December of 1941, and this was reflected in American press coverage.

Those who chastised Irish neutrality did so for a number of reasons; most important being that Ireland’s fate was directly related to Great Britain’s. If the British

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1 Ben Robertson, Cable from Belfast to New York, July 3, 1941, Mss. 77 Ben Robertson Papers, Clemson University Special Collections Library. Referred to hereafter as Ben Robertson Papers.
fell to Nazi Germany, then Ireland would easily be overtaken as well. The British along with American war correspondents saw Irish neutrality as selfish. In this view, the British were sacrificing themselves and their nation for the cause of western civilization, while Eire remained neutral. In addition, the Irish were portrayed as unhelpful on many occasions—the largest being the issue over Irish ports. In 1938 Great Britain relinquished military control over three Irish seaports: Cobh, Berehaven and Lough Swilly. They did so anticipating closer relations and potential use of these bases in the event of warfare. However, the Irish did not allow the British military to use these ports during the Second World War because that would have violated their position of neutrality. British as well as American press coverage dwelled on this issue of Irish ports, presenting it as detrimental to the British war effort. Not only were American war correspondents and newspapers critical of Irish neutrality because of issues such as the ports, but also because it did not make sense to them while looking at the larger picture the Second World War. The Irish government and Irish people had deep connections with Great Britain, both physically and emotionally—whether with the United Kingdom as their largest trading partner or with the extremely large Irish minority living and working in Britain. Yet, as opponents of Irish neutrality saw it, Ireland continued to allow the British to stand alone against the horrific threats posed by Nazi Germany.

Many Americans ridiculed Ireland’s neutrality in the early part of the war, but the United States also pursued a policy of neutrality until the attack on Pearl Harbor. Although this seems hypocritical, American war correspondents who reported on Ireland saw the Irish experience during the war in comparison with what they witnessed in Great
Britain. Irish neutrality utterly perplexed these foreign onlookers. The critiques these
journalists gave Irish neutrality are seen sporadically in American newspapers before
1942—a large number of articles pertaining to the war were written by the very same
correspondents—but American press coverage additionally explained the contours of
Irish neutrality from the Irish perspective. Major U.S. newspapers, such as the *New York
Times*, covered Irish neutrality much more objectively until the United States entered and
had a much larger stake in the war. These criticisms by American journalists and
newspapers emphasized the selfish nature of Ireland’s neutrality. They saw the Irish as
sitting out of a conflict which was going to determine their fate as much as Great
Britain’s. However, the press coverage also largely ignored the role that Ireland did play
in the war. Tens of thousands of Irish men and women joined the British military, which
the Irish government never inhibited throughout the war. Many aspects of Irish
benevolence towards the Allies were unknown to these critics and would remain
obscured for decades after the war, notably the Irish government’s sharing of intelligence
and information with the Allies. From what these American reporters saw, it is not
difficult to understand why they would be perplexed and frustrated by Ireland’s
neutrality.

Yet, in the face of all this criticism regarding their neutrality, for Ireland, it was
the most logical position to take throughout the Second World War. Politically, neutrality
was supported by the majority of the nation—a policy that united factions from both sides
of the Irish Civil War, which was fought less than two decades before World War II. The

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2 Eunan O’Halpin, *Spying on Ireland: British Intelligence and Irish Neutrality the Second
Irish could not and would not ally with Great Britain. The Irish saw the British as century-old enemies from whom they only gained independence in 1922. When looking back upon British rule, they saw the British as callous oppressors. From the potato famine along with inequalities such as the Penal laws of the 18th century to the ruthlessness of the Black and Tans during the War of Independence, the Irish saw a consistent struggle against the unjust British rule. If they allied with the United Kingdom, it would only create discontent within Irish society, whose historical memory of British aggression would rebel against supporting a British war effort. Not only that, but in remaining neutral the newly independent Irish state was able to assert sovereignty over their own nation while also refusing to accept what they saw as the unjust Partition of Ireland (having the six counties of Northern Ireland remained part of the United Kingdom).

Beyond these political calculations, neutrality meant that Ireland was able to avoid the devastating impacts of the Second World War. Ireland did not have its cities blitzed and tens of thousands of its civilians killed and injured compared to the United Kingdom. Instead, Ireland and her people felt the less drastic side effects of the war. There was rationing throughout Ireland, which hurt the poorest sections of Irish society, but life went on. People enjoyed the bars, dances, plays, and cultural scene that Irish society had to offer—largely because the war inhibited the Irish people from leaving their “tiny little world” on the edge of major conflict.3 It was very difficult to leave Ireland during this time. The Irish were touched by the war in other ways as well. Victims from the Battles of the Atlantic would wash up on Eire’s shores, pilots would crash land

throughout the country, and occasionally, bombs were “accidentally” dropped on Eire. Although the Irish felt some impacts of the war, one can see the benefits of remaining neutral while the rest of Europe engaged in a devastating world war.

The critics, such as American war correspondents, saw these benefits that the Irish had by remaining neutral and it led them to further criticize and despise the Irish position of neutrality. They came to Ireland from Great Britain and saw the “bright lights” of Dublin not under blackout, unrationed foods, such as butter and eggs, the obliviousness that the Irish displayed towards the war. In spite of being told the rationale behind Irish neutrality, they could not comprehend how and why the Irish did not see the larger picture: that their whole world was at stake while they remained at peace. These critics, for right or for wrong, did not and would not see eye-to-eye with the Irish perspective. It was not difficult for contemporaries to see that Ireland’s well-being was directly related to the British, yet at the same time, it also is not surprising that a large majority of Irish men and women supported neutrality. Therefore, the aim of the following chapters is to closely examine these differing perspectives on Irish neutrality. First, to understand, why the Irish, even some who physically and emotionally backed the British war effort, could also support such a policy of neutrality. The second goal is to analyze how American reporters and newspapers grappled with understanding and then explaining Irish neutrality, a political position that seemed to them preposterous at times.

Chapter I explores the historiography of neutral Ireland, which has only blossomed in the past thirty years—showing how the historical understanding of Ireland’s experience with the war has evolved from a purely political analysis on Irish
neutrality to an examination of the cultural and social impacts that the war had on the Irish people. In looking at the historiographical interpretations of Irish neutrality, one can further understand the ways in which the Irish government and people participated in and were affected by the Second World War. Historical scholarship on Eire highlights how and why neutrality worked throughout Ireland during the Second World War.

Building on this historiography, Chapter II aims to broaden the understanding of the Irish perspective on neutrality by exploring first-hand accounts of Irish men and women with the war. This chapter highlights the benefits that neutrality had within Ireland, such as uniting this historically factious population under the common cause of neutrality. It also looks at several memoirs of the Irish who fought for the British armed forces in order to better understand how being from Ireland, a neutral nation, affected their experiences throughout the war. This memoir literature demonstrates the connections that Irish men and women had with one another while a part of the British military as well as displaying how these Irish combatants never ridiculed de Valera’s neutral stance in their recollections.

After delving into the Irish perspective, Chapter III studies some of the major critics of Irish neutrality: American war correspondents. This chapter, alongside the previous one, illuminates the stark differences on this issue throughout the Second World War. These Americans viewed the war as the British did, a fight for their livelihood, for freedom and democracy. In comparison, they visited Ireland and saw that the Irish people were whole-heartedly supportive of neutrality and, in instances, completely ignorant to their surroundings while the United Kingdom fought for both their lives. American war
correspondents reflected their concern for Great Britain and the British war effort. They saw the destruction in England, and were appalled by the lack of concern or help from across the Irish Sea.

Whereas American war correspondents viewed Irish neutrality in comparison to their experiences in Great Britain and throughout the war, reflecting a British point of view, the coverage on Eire given by American newspapers is more reflective of the changing position of the United States towards the war. Chapter IV looks at how the U.S. coverage on Eire evolved as the position of the United States changed. It explores the major U.S. papers, such as the New York Times and Washington Post, highlighting that before Pearl Harbor many Americans, especially those of Irish decent, supported and understood Eire’s neutrality, but after the United States entered the war, American papers no longer reflected the same understanding or support of Irish neutrality. By examining these differing vantage points this thesis illuminates how different perspectives on Irish neutrality evolved over the course of the war.
CHAPTER ONE

UNNEUTRAL NEUTRAL EIRE: THE HISTORIOGRAPHY 
OF EIRE AND “THE EMERGENCY”

Although the Second World War was one of the most critical moments in modern 
European history, historical scholarship on Ireland’s experience with neutrality during the 
war has, until recently, been relatively limited. Not until the late 1970s did historians 
begin to study World War II with a major focus on Ireland. The first of these studies 
concentrated on the political and diplomatic relations between Eire and the respective 
belligerents, with seminal works such as Robert Fisk’s *In Time of War: Ireland, Ulster 
and the Price of Neutrality* (1983). Over the years, scholarship expanded to include a 
wide range of topics regarding Ireland, her people, and the experiences of this nation on 
the edge of the global conflict. The significant impacts that warfare had on this tiny, 
neutral nation are evident from almost every perspective: Clair Wills’ *That Neutral 
Island: A Cultural History of Ireland during the Second World War* (Cambridge, 

Several factors have influenced the expansion of this historiography over the past 
three decades. Of key significance was the opening of archival material from the wartime

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4 Robert Fisk, *In Time of War: Ireland, Ulster and the Price of Neutrality, 1939-45* 
5 Eunan O’Halpin, *Spying on Ireland: British Intelligence and Irish Neutrality During the 
Second World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Clair Wills, *That 
Neutral Island: A Cultural History of Ireland during the Second World War* (Cambridge, 
years. The growing studies on Irish neutrality correspond with the growing availability of documents pertaining to British, Irish, and Northern Irish wartime policies, military operations, intelligence, and diplomatic interactions. For instance, Robert Fisk was able to complete *In Time of War* in 1982 by utilizing confidential wartime papers released for him by the Irish Government and the Northern Ireland Office, while Eunan O’Halpin was the first to take advantage of top-secret intelligence and military documents released by the British government in 2006. In addition to fresh sources, the emergence of this historiography coincided with the mainstreaming of Irish Revisionism. Revisionism was an attempt to view Ireland’s past objectively, looking beyond strong religious, political, or nationalistic sentiments, which have skewed the historical memories of Ireland and her people, fueling tensions and violence throughout the 20th century. Efforts to revise this historical understanding began in the 1930s, and the mission of revisionist histories “was to cleanse the historical record of its mythological clutter…by applying scientific methods to the evidence, separating fact from destructive and divisive fiction.”

Yet it wasn’t until the outbreak of the “Troubles” in Northern Ireland in the late 1960s that it became clear to many historians, “that the Irish people needed liberation from the nationalist mythology.”

Before the mainstreaming of Irish revisionism, nationalist perspectives that glorified Ireland’s past leaders and struggles against brutal British rule dominated the

7 Ibid.
history and memory of the Irish nation. Historians looked at Ireland’s past in order to justify its struggle against Great Britain and Irish animosity towards partition and their former “colonizer.” Therefore, as the atrocities of the Second World War became clear, it was better for nationalist historians to ignore Ireland’s neutral policies in their histories rather than to risk portraying the Irish nation in a negative light. It wasn’t until Irish revisionism replaced the dominant nationalist approach to Irish history, that historians critically looked at Irish neutrality with both its positive and negative consequences.

Despite their various foci and methodologies, every historian discussed here emphasizes Ireland’s history and relationship to Great Britain. Before, during, and after the war, tens of thousands of Irish men and women lived and worked in Great Britain, and the British remained the largest and most vital trading partner to Eire. At the same time, the twenty-six counties of the Irish Free State gained independence from Britain only seventeen years before the outbreak of the Second World War, with a large portion of the Irish still embittered about centuries of British oppression and their control of Northern Ireland. Because of this strange relationship with Great Britain, in which Ireland was embittered yet dependent towards its more powerful neighbor and oppressor, the common consensus amongst historians is that neutrality was the most practical political policy for Ireland.

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For some historians, Ireland’s history with Britain and the issues over partition are at the core of Eire’s neutral policies. The memories of the Anglo-Irish war and Irish Civil war were still fresh in the minds of the population in 1939, and a majority of Irish society supported de Valera’s policy to remain neutral. Historians also acknowledge that Ireland was not militarily equipped to fight in the war, and many, such as Donal O’Drisceoil, note that neutrality was a part of asserting both Irish sovereignty and the rights of small nations. Ireland remained neutral for many reasons, yet a unique characteristic of this neutrality which historians also emphasize was Irish benevolence towards the Allies. Irish men volunteered for the British military, British soldiers who crashed landed in Eire were not interned (unlike their German counterparts), and the Irish even relayed intelligence to the British. Another crucial element that continues to prevail in each historical account is the dispute over Irish ports. As stated in the introduction, Britain ceded control of several Irish ports (Berehaven, Lough Swilly, and Cobh) in 1938, but with the outbreak of war, the British saw the Irish ports as key to their success in the Battle of the Atlantic and thus to victory overall. All of these historians would agree on these key characteristics of Irish neutrality, but they each have looked at Ireland during the Second World War through varying lenses, and have highlighted the multiplicity of consequences in Ireland’s neutral stance. In general, the pattern of this historiography is

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11 See page 2.
that it has expanded from a purely political historical approach to cultural or social interpretations.

Robert Fisk’s political study of neutral Eire opened the door to this historiography by exploring a topic that had previously “been a largely unknown and comparatively unwritten chapter in the history of the Second World War.”\textsuperscript{12} Fisk’s study is based on over 11,000 wartime documents and memoranda in London, Belfast, and Dublin.\textsuperscript{13} In this large and heavily detailed volume, he examines the decision-making of the dominant figures from the governments of Eire, Britain, and Northern Ireland. Throughout the book he emphasizes the vital role that the partition of Northern Ireland played, which was not only a legacy of Ireland’s relationship to Britain but also representative of the long-disagreements between the two nations. Fisk begins his work with the British turning over Irish ports in 1938, an issue that plagued the two nations for the remainder the war as Britain desperately sought to use them. From there the book is organized chronologically, giving a political play-by-play account surrounding Ireland and the Second World War. Each chapter discusses major issues that developed throughout the war, such as Britain’s offer to end partition in 1940 if Ireland entered the war, or Germany’s “Operation Green,” that involved an amphibious landing in Ireland, as well as the fears Ireland had of a British invasion.\textsuperscript{14}

At each stage of the war, Fisk highlights the personal characteristics of the major leaders involved, such as Eamon de Valera or Winston Churchill, and how they

\textsuperscript{12} Fisk, \textit{In Time of War}, x.
\textsuperscript{13} Fisk, \textit{In Time of War}, x.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 189.
influenced the decision making for each country. For instance, de Valera could sympathize with Adolf Hitler and the Nazi’s argument about the Sudetenland during the Munich conference because the Irish Free State felt that it should control the six counties of Northern Ireland since it not only held a large minority of Irish Catholics but also it was viewed as a rightful part of Eire.\textsuperscript{15} Churchill’s ambiguous attitude towards Irish neutrality in turn created confusion in Britain’s policies because he would sometimes loathe de Valera and find Irish neutrality as incomprehensible, while at other times he would admire the Irish effort.

Fisk concludes the book by summarizing the “price” Ireland paid for its policy of neutrality and with a brief hypothetical explanation on what could have happened if Ireland had chosen to join the Allies. According to Fisk, if Ireland opened its ports to Britain as an ally, then the war in the Atlantic could have ended sooner, resulting in fewer deaths, and the invasion of Normandy might have taken place months before. He even hypothesizes that Russia might not have had time to reinvade Poland, which could have dramatically changed post-war Europe.\textsuperscript{16} Fisk is not the only historian to conjecture at what could have happened, but his is by far the most optimistic interpretation. Others believe that Germany would have invaded Ireland if she joined the Allies.\textsuperscript{17} Regardless of what could have happened if Ireland changed its policy, Fisk outlines the consequences of the policy Ireland pursued. After the war, Ireland was denied acceptance to the United Nations until 1955 because of its neutrality, and as a result of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 49.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Fisk, \textit{In Time of War}, 475.
\item \textsuperscript{17} Tony Gray, \textit{The Lost Years: The Emergency in Ireland, 1939-45} (London: Warner, 1998), 211.
\end{itemize}
the extreme censorship in Ireland a lot of the Nazi atrocities, including the Holocaust, were difficult for the Irish to comprehend. The most lasting consequence for Anglo-Irish relations in Second World War, Fisk argues, was to make partition more fixed. “Both the Dublin and Belfast Governments used the war,” Fisk concludes, “the first to assert Eire’s sovereignty, the second to secure further Northern Ireland’s place within the United Kingdom”

Around the same time as Robert Fisk’s book was published, T. Ryle Dwyer wrote a diplomatic history of Ireland during World War II, *Irish Neutrality and the USA 1939-1947* (1977). Dwyer was the first historian to focus primarily on the diplomatic interactions between Ireland and the United States, whereas Fisk gave more of a comprehensive overview of Ireland’s political history during the war, emphasizing Anglo-Irish relations. Both are similar in methodology; Dwyer concentrates on the U.S. Ambassador to Ireland, David Gray, and his interactions with Ireland during the war. Dwyer argues that Ireland played a prominent role in the diplomacy of World War II even though it was a small island of barely three million people, and that Eire’s neutrality cannot be understood without looking at its interactions with the United States. Claiming that, “during the Second World War the Irish-American influence on United States politics played a very important role in shaping both British and American policy towards Ireland.” Dwyer argues that without the support of Irish-Americans, Washington could

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20 Ibid., 24.
not go to war until the attack on Pearl Harbor. These Americans shared the deep-rooted anti-British feelings of Eire, and as Dublin worked for Irish-American support of neutrality, Washington was trying to sway the Irish government and the population at large to join the war effort. Throughout his book, Dwyer articulates the complexities of diplomacy and the relationship between the two nations.

Another major focus of Dwyer’s study is David Gray and his impact on U.S.-Irish and Irish-Allied relations. Dwyer’s examination of Gray paints a very negative picture of the diplomat, who Dwyer sees as not only misunderstanding de Valera and Ireland’s neutrality but also unreasonably critical. Dwyer argues that Gray probably received his appointment only because of his family ties to the President. As ambassador to Ireland, Gray adamantly pushed for the Irish to join the war, or at the very least allow the British to use their key ports. Gray saw Irish involvement as critical to the British war effort and defeating the Third Reich. In Dwyer’s interpretation, Gray’s views on Irish neutrality proved his inadequacies as the U.S. representative to Eire because he could not comprehend the Irish perspective and their relationship to Great Britain. Throughout the book Dwyer quotes Gray’s absurd and unreasonable statements, such as saying, “thank God!,” after Pearl Harbor because the United States would finally have the Irish-American support necessary to formally enter the war. Many historians who have built on this historiography of “the Emergency,” such as John P. Duggan, agree with and cite

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21 Ibid., 45.
22 Dwyer, Irish Neutrality and the U.S.A., 46.
Dwyer’s interpretations on the unhelpful attributes of the American diplomat. Nevertheless, Dwyer highlights the key diplomatic relationships of Neutral Eire with the United States and the differing opinions, or perhaps misunderstandings, which critics of Irish neutrality, including Gray, held.

Shortly after T. Ryle Dwyer and Robert Fisk’s political histories, John P. Duggan’s diplomatic history published *Neutral Ireland and the Third Reich*, contributing to the historiography by focusing on Ireland’s relationship with the Third Reich. The principal sources for his work are the official reports of the German Ambassador, Eduard Hempel, which had never previously been used. Duggan gives a very positive portrayal of the German minister, whose main task once the war was underway was to keep Ireland neutral. Duggan begins by outlining the background of German-Irish relations, noting that Ireland was nothing more than a backwater on the periphery as far as Hitler was concerned; however, it came to be relevant after it was clear that Britain was willing to go to war with Germany because of Eire’s close proximity to the United Kingdom.

Throughout the war, Duggan highlights key issues that Hempel faced as the minister to Ireland during World War II. Hempel had to attempt to reconcile Berlin’s negative views of de Valera, which were outdated stereotypes dating to the Irish Civil War, while pursuing the Fuhrer’s agenda that could potentially alarm and anger the Irish government. For instance, Hitler sought to contact members of the IRA, an illegal

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24 Dwyer, *Irish Neutrality and the USA*.
25 Duggan, *Neutral Ireland and the Third Reich*, x.
26 Ibid., 7.
organization in Ireland, in order to obtain secret information and help sabotage the British war efforts. Hempel also relayed the Reich’s concerns to the Irish government, including prisoners of war or German spies, like Herman Goertz, an Abwehr spy who parachuted into County Meath in May of 1940. Overall, Duggan’s analysis depicts how complicated a policy of neutrality can be, especially in interactions with belligerents. Eire had “to appease British fears, to allay German suspicions and to keep down internal trouble,” which “meant that de Valera had to tread warily.”

Despite all the complexities, Duggan argues that de Valera was successful in his neutrality, and the German Minister along with the British Ambassador Maffey helped him to succeed, even if he was more sympathetic towards the Allies. To Duggan, “in international law the necessary attitude (of neutrality) was not incompatible with sympathy for one belligerent and antipathy towards another.”

In contrast, Trevor Salmon argues against this interpretation of Eire’s neutrality in his study, *Unneutral Ireland: An Ambivalent and Unique Security Policy*, published in 1989. Salmon’s book doesn’t focus specifically on Ireland during World War Two, but it is an important part of the historiography because his argument has been repeatedly cited. Salmon looks at Ireland’s “neutral” background from the inception of the Irish Free State in 1922 until the 1980s, arguing that Ireland has never had a truly “neutral” foreign policy. He contends that Ireland has never conformed to the standard rules of neutrality by comparing it with other nations such as Switzerland and Austria. According

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28 Ibid., 7.
to Salmon, Ireland continuously fails during critical moments, like the Second World War, to act neutral. In Salmon’s view, Ireland’s close relationship with belligerent powers, especially Great Britain, made her benevolent towards the Allies, and therefore not neutral. Historians who have written on “the Emergency” after Salmon’s critique, such as Donal O’Drisceoil, demonstrate his influence through statements like, “Ireland would be more accurately described as ‘non-belligerent,’ rather than neutral.”

Contradicting Salmon’s interpretation of Irish neutrality is Jerrold Packard’s study, Neither Friend nor Foe: The European Neutrals in the Second World War. He also takes a comparative approach to show how the five European neutral nations (Sweden, Spain, Switzerland, Portugal, and Ireland) had to act strategically towards the belligerents in order to secure their neutrality, something he felt de Valera did successfully. Packard thus places Ireland within the context of other European neutrals. He aims to look at how these countries “reacted to and eventually overcame the enormous pressures from the belligerents, what the consequences of their neutrality were, how their people lived on the edge of a maelstrom that threatened at any moment to spill over their borders.”

Packard briefly outlines Ireland’s contentious history with Great Britain and the political issues that Ireland faced during the Second World War, while also touching on how the war impacted the people within Ireland. For instance, he emphasizes the main issues of partition and American involvement in the war, while also describing the

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30 O’Drisceoil, Censorship in Ireland, 7.
31 Packard, Neither Friend nor Foe, ix.
problems with shortages and Irish censorship.32 Although Packard examines the common issues faced by the European neutrals during the war, on several occasions he notes how Ireland was a special case. Ireland was the only nation that had a substantial risk of being invaded by both the Axis and Allies, and where almost the entire population wanted to see Hitler defeated in the war, but for multiple reasons they didn’t feel the need to be involved. Where Packard’s analysis of neutral Ireland differs from the works of Dwyer and Duggan is in his skepticism of the overall success of de Valera’s policies. He views Irish neutrality as unforgivable for moral reasons and argues that it kept a barrier of distrust between Ireland, Northern Ireland, and Great Britain.33 The comparative approach of Packard’s study helps put Ireland and its policies into the larger framework of European countries suffering a similar situation during this time of turmoil.

Through the early 1990s, the historiography of Ireland during World War II retained primarily a diplomatic and political focus. As more archives and documents became available on subjects such as the inner workings of British as well as Irish intelligence and military campaigns, historical understandings and interpretations also expanded. In the last fifteen years the historiography of Ireland during the war has shifted away from an emphasis on international diplomacy towards the social and cultural impacts of the war on Ireland. Historians have more comprehensively examined the internal repercussions that the war had on Ireland and its population at large. For instance, historians have begun to assess the significance that censorship had on the Irish population. Censorship was nothing new to the young nation, usually with the goal of

32 Ibid., 261.
portraying a morally wholesome, nationalistic picture of Eire and her history. However, with the outbreak of war, the state extended these censorship policies to regulate moral as well as political messages in order to maintain the stability of the nation.34

With Censorship in Ireland 1939-1945: Neutrality, Politics, and Society, Donal O’Drisceoil became the first historian to analyze Ireland’s extensive censorship policies and how they influenced Ireland’s political culture and emotional climate during the war.35 From the Irish Free State’s inception, “censorship became an important mechanism of control…a measure designated, in its various manifestations, to maintain the security of the states and protect the (narrowly defined) morals and culture of the nation.”36 Donal O’Drisceoil outlines the background of Ireland’s extensive censorship prior to the war and then analyzes their strict policy by each genre, such as film, newspapers, and literature. He places these policies within the broader context of the Second World War. O’Drisceoil agrees with almost all other historians that neutrality was Ireland’s most practical option, for reasons related to Anglo-Irish relations as well as the fact that they could not defend themselves militarily. However, he adds a new spin to the historiography by arguing that censorship was the “backbone” to Ireland’s neutrality. Censorship worked as an internal security measure, and it was crucial for the Irish government in order to keep the public supportive of neutrality and prevent belligerents from an excuse to invade.37

34 O’Drisceoil, Censorship in Ireland, 6.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid., 1.
37 Ibid.
By dividing his chapters by genre, the thoroughness of Irish censorship and the key actors involved under the Emergency Powers Act of 1939 becomes clear. This legislation allowed the Irish government to maintain neutrality by giving them more authority, including control over the Irish economy and censorship. When looking at film and censorship, he uses examples such as the government banning Charlie Chaplin’s film, “The Great Dictator” (1940), because Chaplin pokes fun at Adolf Hitler and his oppressive policies. If this perspective of Hitler was shown, it could have “meant riots and bloodshed” throughout the country according to Frank Aiken, the Minister of Co-ordination of Defensive Measures. The banning of this film is just one of the ironies that O’Drisceoil constantly refers to. The Irish were careful to censor anything that might be interpreted as biased towards the Allies or the Axis powers, while in reality the government was clearly in favor of the Allies. He concludes by illuminating the impacts that the censors had and how the media and public responded after the war when censors were lifted. For instance, Irish packed cinemas where previously banned newsreels were playing or the Irish Times editor’s, R.M. Smyllie, printed an article, “They Can Be Published Now,” with graphic details and images of the war. One of the negative consequences of Eire’s censorship was that the images and incidences from places like Katyn, Dresden, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki were difficult for the Irish public to digest and accept after enduring the war innocently ignorant of its major atrocities.

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40 Ibid., 6.
41 Ibid., 161.
42 Ibid., 291.
Although the Irish public was aware of the war, and felt at least some of its repercussions, many historians emphasize Ireland’s real isolation from the war, like Dublin’s “bright lights” compared to the blackouts in Northern Ireland and Britain.  

Building on the work of Donal O’Drisceoil, Robert Cole’s book, Propaganda, Censorship and Irish Neutrality in the Second World War, extended the scope of historical research on Irish censorship by focusing on the international elements of propaganda within Ireland and the functions of the censors during the “Emergency.” Cole’s study also added a new perspective by placing it within the context of expanding mass communications in this era and the governmental powers of persuasion. Cole focuses on the key initiators behind the propaganda machines of the belligerents, especially Great Britain and the United States. Both the Allies and the Axis had organized propaganda regimens within Ireland to promote their interests in the war, while Irish censors and their own government-initiated propaganda labored to portray unbiased accounts and keep the public in support of neutrality. According to Cole, the United States and Great Britain made larger efforts to sway Irish opinion because they had a much greater interest in changing Irish opinion, whereas Germany realized their best hope was keeping Ireland neutral.  

In this analysis, Cole focuses on the main actors, such as the British Ministry of Information and the American Office of War Information, and how they attempted to shift Irish opinion against neutrality. He looks at various elements outside of Ireland that

44 Cole, Propaganda, Censorship, and Irish Neutrality in the Second World War.
played into the international propaganda efforts, including the important opinion of the Irish-American population who supported Irish neutrality until Pearl Harbor and voiced their opinions through various newspapers such as the *Gaelic American*.\(^\text{45}\) Some of the most prominent channels of influence that the Allies had in Ireland were through British radio broadcasts as well as the illegal distribution of leaflets. Through this extensive research on propaganda networks in Ireland, Cole is able to conclude that de Valera and Eire’s censorship “won the war of words.”\(^\text{46}\) Nonetheless, he argues that the Allies didn’t lose because the Irish government was very helpful in relaying information to the United States and Britain, and hundreds of thousands Irishmen still helped the Allied war effort, either through working at munitions factories in Britain or even volunteering for the British military.\(^\text{47}\)

Moving away from the propaganda machines of Eire and the Allies, Eunan O’Halpin researches the intelligence networks of the British within Ireland. His book, *Spying on Ireland: British Intelligence and Irish Neutrality During the Second World War*, was not possible until very recently, when highly confidential sources became available for historical scholarship in the British National Archives, such as documents pertaining to the Security Service (MI5) or the Records of Special Operations Executive (SOE). O’Halpin’s study examines “British dealings with Ireland in the wider context of the challenges facing British intelligence,” as well as comparing it to Allied relations with


\(^{46}\) Ibid., 177.

\(^{47}\) Ibid., 176.
other neutral nations.\textsuperscript{48} Interestingly, O’Halpin points out that the British had very little knowledge on Ireland, there having been an absence of British diplomatic presence since the formation of the Irish Free State in 1922.\textsuperscript{49}

Throughout the book, O’Halpin effectively articulates the changes and developments in British Irish intelligence as the war progressed and concerns were altered. During the “phony war” of 1939-1940, Irish neutrality was more of an irritant than a real problem, but once Germany took over nations like France and Norway, Ireland was seen as a mortal security threat for Great Britain. Germany have could easily defeat Ireland militarily, placing them only a step away from the England.\textsuperscript{50} The tensest times for Allied intelligence was with a heavy presence of American troops in Ulster and the effort to preserve secrecy leading up to Operation Overlord. Other historians have emphasized this issue when covering the “American Note” (the U.S. demand that Eire expel the German and Japanese delegations from Dublin), but O’Halpin explains it from a British intelligence perspective. However, as unnerving as neutral Eire was to Great Britain throughout the war, O’Halpin shows how they became extremely useful for relaying information to the Allies. O’Halpin concludes that, “intelligence activities concerning Ireland during the Second World War belong to different points on a spectrum running from what became an almost full alliance…to aggressive black

\textsuperscript{48} O’Halpin, \textit{Spying on Ireland}, x.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 44.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 86.
propaganda against Irish neutrality.”51 Ultimately, the cooperation between Dublin, London, and Belfast was a necessary cornerstone in the Allied war effort.

Distinguishing herself from other historians who have studied Ireland and the Second World War, Clair Wills examines the Irish cultural experience during the war in *That Neutral Island: A Cultural History of Ireland during the Second World War*. Wills utilizes works from the community of poets, playwrights, writers, and dramatists throughout her book and shows how their works represent the larger sentiments of the Irish during World War II and their overall benevolence towards the Allies.52 The common view on Ireland is that it was an isolated place during the war, but her argument shows how the war touched the majority of the Irish people. Wills points out that the Irish were involved through “volunteering, migrant work, spying, smuggling, unemployment, shortages, censorship, defence: there was no home front in Ireland, but the country was nonetheless shaped by war.”53

She begins her study by outlining the major issues affecting Irish society at large, specifically its dilemma between modernization and Eire’s traditional lifestyles along with its bitter sentiments towards the British. Each chapter recognizes a major issue that Ireland faced during the war and dissects the public’s reactions to it. For instance, Chapter 6, “War in the Air,” overviews the air raids of the Luftwaffe and the impacts they had on the British Isles. Wills shows how contemporary literature represented the Irish role in this during the war, like Vincent Carroll’s play, “The Strings are False: A Drama

52 Wills, *That Neutral Island*.
53 Ibid., 10.
of Clydeside Air Raids.” This play emphasizes the humanitarian concerns of the Irish fire brigades in their response to bombings in Belfast. Apart from the depictions in popular culture, Wills cites an abundance of various Irish men and women’s experiences, detailing how the Irish were in direct contact with the wartime brutalities: from the dozens of accounts reminiscing about bodies that washed up on the west coast of Ireland during the Battle of the Atlantic to the presence of British and American troops on leave in Eire.

Although one consequence of Ireland’s neutrality was the expansion of local theatres and cultural organizations, That Neutral Island concludes with a discussion on “paying for neutrality.” Wills outlines many of the negative consequences of Ireland’s neutrality. The war stimulated the “vanished generation”: young people leaving Ireland for better economies and livelihoods in places like Britain, something that has been a concern of the Irish since before independence. Ireland was condemned by the Allies for not contributing, de Valera was ridiculed for paying condolences to the German minister after Hitler’s death, and there was an overall distrust throughout the Irish population of the horrific images of the war that were suddenly shown, a repercussion of censorship that has been noted by historians such as Cole and O’Driscioel. Ultimately, Clair Wills cultural study combined with the historical studies of Irish politics, intelligence, or censorship, shed light on the overarching themes of the Irish wartime experience.

54 Wills, That Neutral Island, 218.
55 Ibid., 144.
56 Ibid., 313.
57 Ibid.
From these historians’ analysis one can see how the war impacted Eire and her people, yet Richard Doherty’s multiple studies even further this historical understanding of Ireland during the Second World War by exploring the Irish who joined the British military. While Irish involvement in the Allied forces during the Second World War was briefly acknowledged by almost all of the historians discussed here, Doherty highlights how prevalent and significant the Irish were in the Allied war effort. Whether it was the Irish men and women working in munitions factories in England or the Irish generals in command during the Second World War, Doherty argues that the Irish played a very prominent role. He has written several books regarding the Irish and the Second World War, many of which build upon each other, including: *Clear the Way! A History of the 38th Brigade* (1993), *Irish Men and Women in the Second World War* (1999), *Irish Volunteers in the Second World War* (2002), *Ireland’s Generals in the Second World War* (2004), and *In the Ranks of Death: The Irish in the Second World War* (2010).58

Doherty is primarily a military historian, and these works delve into the roles that Irishmen played throughout World War Two. He looks at the Irish experience as military commanders, as soldiers in key battles, as well as soldiers fighting in the air, at sea, on land, and even Irish immigrant workers in Great Britain. The number of Irish men and women who served with the British forces during World War II fluctuate between various Irish estimates, British estimates, and official documents. According to

Doherty’s calculations, over 110,000 Irishmen enlisted in British forces, with more per capita joining from the southern, neutral twenty-six counties than from Northern Ireland.\(^5\) However, reaching a decisive number is extremely difficult. Many southern Irishmen fled to Belfast or across the Irish Sea to enlist in England, lying about their origins, whereas others were already a part of the British military or already living in Great Britain when they signed up. Although the actual number may vary, what is undeniable from Doherty’s account is that a very large number of Irishmen joined and fought for the British forces during the war.

In his studies, *Ireland’s Generals in the Second World War* and *Clear the Way! A History of the 38th Brigade*, Doherty gives a precise military history of specific Irishmen involved, whether it is an account of the Irish generals’ experiences in the Second World War or a battle-by-battle description of the Irish brigade and their exploits. However, in his other works regarding Ireland and World War Two, such as *Irish Men and Women in the Second World War* or *In the Ranks of Death*, he tries to understand why these Irishmen joined, their accomplishments, and their significance. He looks at a wide variety of Irish who served, using personal interviews, diaries, memoirs, and letters as sources. Doherty analyzes the roles that these Irish played, from chaplains or doctors to airmen and infantry. Historians have speculated why the Irish would join the British forces, with many concluding that Irishmen joined for monetary reasons or family traditions, but Doherty strongly argues in works such as *In the Ranks of Death* that these Irishmen fought for what they believed in, whether it be democracy or freedom, and that they

deserve to be remembered and acknowledged for their heroism. Many of the Irish that fought for the British were either forgotten or ostracized after the war, especially those that deserted the Irish Army because it was not their war to fight. Doherty alongside recent efforts with the University College Cork’s Volunteers Project aims to keep their memories alive and give them credit they deserve for fighting in the War.⁶⁰

With Doherty’s military histories on Irish volunteers, O’Halpin’s intricate study of British Irish intelligence, and Wills’ cultural history of the Irish experience during this time, one can see how far the historiography on wartime Eire has expanded in recent decades. As more documents and archives have become available, historical understanding on Neutral Ireland and life on the “edge” of global conflict has also broadened. Until Donal O’Drisceoil’s *Censorship in Ireland*, the historical writing on Ireland throughout the Second World War focused on a political narrative. The books written by Dwyer, Fisk, Duggan, and Packard analyzed the major interactions and concerns that the Irish government under Eamon de Valera dealt with, and allowed for historians like Clair Wills to place her cultural understanding within this broader historical interpretation. Almost all of these historians have built off of one another, each adding new understandings to “the Emergency.”

After looking at the historical scholarship on Eire, the portrait that emerges is one of very complex relations and interactions between Eire, her people, and the European theatre of war. Politically, neutrality was the only option for de Valera and his

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⁶⁰ The Volunteers project, similar to Doherty, began in 1995 as a research project on Irish citizens who served in the British forces during the Second World War, interviewing and recording the experiences of these veterans.
government, however, like the population at large, his policies favored the Allied powers of Great Britain and the United States. Eire remained neutral throughout the war because of historical memory of the conflict with Great Britain and the fact that in doing so cemented Irish sovereignty. Even in remaining neutral, the war was at the forefront of governmental policy, both domestically and internationally. Under de Valera, the Irish government pursued programs such as harsh censorship throughout the country and rationing due to limited resources as an island nation surrounded by war.

Nevertheless, it is also clear that the Irish nation remained on the edge of this conflict. Yes, the war dominated Irish politics of the time, but Ireland was only a concern to belligerent powers depending on the wartime events outside of Eire. And even though Irish men and women joined the British cause, the majority of the Irish remained within the neutral borders of Eire. When looking at the consequences of the neutrality or the culture, censorship, and politics during the war, the Irish people were removed from the global catastrophe. Most of these historians, such as Jerrold Packard or Donal O’Drisceoil maintain that in the aftermath of the war, it was difficult for the Irish to relate to or even comprehend the traumatic events that occurred in the world around them. By remaining neutral, Ireland did not experience or witnessed the devastating brutalities of the Second World War. Instead, they experienced the milder repercussions of war, such as limited resources, rationing, or encounters with various victims who arrived in Eire from the battles in the air and at sea. Unlike the rest Europe, Ireland did not undergo blackouts, experience extensive bombing, or have tens of thousands her people killed or injured as a result of the conflict. Ultimately, it is clear that the Irish government and
people were sympathetic towards the Allies, however they did not want to and were not fully involved in the war.

The blossoming historiography has allowed for this depiction of Ireland and the Second World War to evolve; however, many areas of Eire and the Irish experiences on the edge of world conflict remain untouched. One aspect that no historian has given a primary focus to is how American journalists and newspapers covered Irish neutrality during the war. Almost all historians will note the breadth and significance that Irish censorships on the media within Ireland, seen in the works of O’Drisceol and Wills, but they do not delve into how other nations portrayed the Irish in the war. For Americans, their perspectives on Ireland’s neutral policies changed significantly as the war evolved and the United States formally joined the Allied cause. Once the United States was at war with Germany, Irish Americans along with the rest of the American population could be more critical of other nations who were not participating in the Allied war effort. Major U.S. newspapers, such as *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post*, reflect the shifting opinions that Americans had towards Eire from the beginning of the war until the defeat of Japan.

In addition to American newspaper coverage on Eire, for American war correspondents and journalists placed within the war zone, it is understandable how their assessments on Irish neutrality grew more critical and less understanding with time. The outlooks of Americans living in Great Britain during the Blitz in 1940 reflected their
environment and affected their reporting on Ireland. However, no historian has explored how American reporters who “stood with Britain” viewed and reported on Ireland.

Because this historiography has yet to explore the coverage that American newspapers, war correspondents, and journalists gave Ireland throughout the war, the following chapters will do so in comparison with the issue of how the Irish themselves perceived the war and their role in it. Examining the Irish experiences during the war alongside the experiences of American journalists and their reporting will enrich the historiography with new perspectives on Irish neutrality. Ultimately, the Irish and the American correspondents did agree upon one thing: Ireland could not erase the memories and myths of past centuries under British rule. For six years, Ireland benefited in one way or another from the war and the Irish supported their nations’ policy, even if it was a “selfish” decision because they did not have to experience the devastation of the war and maintained their sovereignty. Nevertheless, critics of neutrality had a point; Eire’s fate was wrapped up with Great Britain, if Hitler defeated Britain he would not hesitate to take over Eire, and in times like the Second World War, century-old memories should be set aside.

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CHAPTER TWO

IN AND OUT OF THE WAR: THE IRISH PERSPECTIVE ON WORLD WAR II

Yet from the events of those years, certain conclusions can be drawn about the priorities and self-interest of nations at a time of war…about the principles underlying a policy of neutrality.

- Robert Fisk, In Time of War

The Second World War transformed Irish society, whether fighting abroad or living in Dublin, which became a “city of cyclists” thanks to wartime shortages. The war cemented the political independence of the new nation and touched all Irish men and women, in some way or another. It marked the first time the Irish military attracted men who supported both sides of the Civil War, while Dublin was seen as a vibrant city with a humming social life, and this small neutral nation hosted many Allied soldiers on leave. Furthermore, tens of thousands of Irishmen, from both North and South, volunteered to join the British forces during the war, exemplifying the fact that Ireland’s neutrality was benevolent towards the Allies. Emotionally and even physically, the majority of Irish people wanted Britain to win the war; however, joining the Allied cause was a step too far. Almost the entire Irish nation supported Taoiseach Eamon de Valera’s policy of neutrality, and Eire was able to endure the war with minimal damage compared to other belligerent nations. Nevertheless, Irish neutrality had many critics, especially from the Allied nations of Great Britain and the United States.

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Because the subsequent chapters will explore critics of Irish neutrality (American war correspondents coming from London and coverage given by U.S. newspapers) this chapter looks at the experiences of Irish men and women both living in Eire and fighting abroad in order to further understand the contours of Irish neutrality. It is important, first because it illuminates why Eire and her people pursued and supported a policy of neutrality and secondly because it places the criticisms of Irish neutrality into the context of the larger Irish experience, showing why these condemnations were never widespread enough amongst the Irish to override neutrality. These varying perspectives on Irish neutrality are closely related to the surroundings and experiences of those involved, whether living in Eire and constantly hearing of the past atrocities of the British or reporting on Eire’s position after experiencing the harsh realities of the London Blitz. This chapter explores the first of these differing perspectives, but it also adds to the historiography by looking at the experiences of Irish men and women within Eire as well as the Irish who volunteered for the British army, highlighting the relationship Eire had with Great Britain during the war and why these volunteers reflect the larger position that the Irish Free State had towards the war. Whereas previous historians such as Richard Doherty explored the involvement of Irish men and women towards the British cause, giving more of a play-by-play account of Irish actions during the war, this chapter analyzes the overall Irish experience in the military and how they related to one another as well as to the British military as a whole. In doing so, one can further see why Irish neutrality worked for Eamon de Valera and the Irish people.

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64 Richard Doherty, *Clear the Way! A History of the 38th Brigade* (Irish Academic Press,
Exploring memoirs, diaries, and recollections of Irishmen during the war, alongside the interviews undertaken by Benjamin Grob-Fitzgibbon, it is evident that many Irish benefited from the neutral policy and that their neutrality was in favor of the Allies. Grob-Fitzgibbon, in an effort to further the historical understanding of the Irish experience during the Second World War and to create a valuable source for future historians, interviewed seventeen Irish men and women who lived during the Second World War, from those who fought with the British military to those that lived in Dublin for the duration of the war. This chapter will utilize these interviews in Grob-Fitzgibbon’s oral history while also exploring other memoirs by Irishmen whom lived in Eire or fought in the British military, such as Sam McAughtry or Aidan MacCarthy. All of these stories are by no means representative of the entire population, and many of the interviews, memoirs, and recollections were written decades after their experiences in the war or with neutrality. However, what they do is show a glimpse of what life what like for the Irish during this time, in and outside of Eire—showing the complex relationship that Eire has had towards the United Kingdom, with the interactions of Irish between the neutral South and belligerent North as well as with the Irish as part of the British war effort. Ultimately, these interviews and memoirs support the interpretation of Irish

neutrality agreed upon by all the historians in the previous chapter—that it was
benevolent towards the Allies—while also showing why Irishmen, even those fighting
abroad, refrained from criticizing Irish neutrality alongside the American war
correspondents and U.S. newspapers who did.

So why did Ireland pursue a policy of neutrality during World War Two, a time
when Europe’s fate hung on the edge of sword? In a speech given by Eamon de Valera
in December of 1941, he reaffirmed the belief that Ireland had no choice except neutrality
because, “our circumstances and history and the incompleteness of our national freedom
through the partition of our country made any other policy impracticable.”67 If Ireland
aligned with Great Britain, not only would it have meant accepting partition, but as
Irishmen admit themselves, it would have obscured and discredited their recently won
freedom from Great Britain. As Tom Ryan, a student in Dublin during the war, stated,
“the state was only formed in 1922, so we only had seventeen years of freedom from our
long troubles with England. So, I don’t think people would have liked us to join with
England in anything.”68 Not only that, but as seen with studies such as Clair Wills’
discussion on the “mobilization” of Eire’s defenses or Robert Fisk’s discussion to the end
of partition, Ireland had a very weak military, making an invasion by a powerful force
almost impossible to stave off.69 Just as important, de Valera’s policy was “supported by

68 Tom Ryan, Interview with Benjamin Grob-Fitzgibbon, *The Irish Experience in the
69 Clair Wills, *That Neutral Island: A Cultural History of Ireland During the Second
World War* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2007); Robert
Fisk, *In Time of War: Ireland, Ulster, and the Price of Neutrality, 1939-1945*
the majority” of the population, an impressive feat for such a historically divided nation.\textsuperscript{70}

Beyond these practicalities that favored neutrality, much of the Irish population benefited from the neutral stance compared to places in the United Kingdom that were under the constant threat of Luftwaffe raids, such as London or other British cities as Dover. For instance, Dublin was an attractive city to visit and live in throughout the war. Not only did it have better selections of food to those that could afford it, but Ireland offered a lively social scene as well as a vibrant cultural blossoming, as detailed by Clair Wills in \textit{That Neutral Island} and supported by the Irish men and women looked at here.\textsuperscript{71} The “social life went on,” and from the separate interviews of Patrick Scott, Patrick Lynch, Maureen Disken, and Laim O’Reagan, the entertainment was very good during their war. There were bars, dances, comedians and plays to attend. According to Tony Gray’s recollections of living in Dublin during the war, “another attraction Ireland offered at this period was a very active literary and theatrical scene.”\textsuperscript{72} Gray paints a very positive portrayal of Irish neutrality, even though he himself was a journalist for the \textit{Irish Times} under R. M. Smyllie and encountered on a regular basis the “blue pencil” or heavy wartime censorship policies.\textsuperscript{73} Looking back on Eire during the war, Gray reminisces fondly on the cultural and literary movements, such as a formation of the “White Stag,” an artistic group that met in Dublin throughout the war under the direction

\textsuperscript{70} Liam O’Reagan, Interviewed by Benjamin Grob-Fitzgibbon, \textit{The Irish Experience During the Second World War}, January 12, 2001, 265.
\textsuperscript{71} Wills, \textit{That Neutral Island}, 305-306.
\textsuperscript{72} Tony Gray, \textit{The Lost Years: The Emergency in Ireland, 1939-45} (Boston: Little, Brown Book Group, 1997), 15.
\textsuperscript{73} Tony Gray, \textit{The Lost Years}, 156; Donal O'Drisceoil, \textit{Censorship in Ireland, 1939-45}. 

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of Smyllie. Ultimately, Gray argues that neutrality was beneficial to Ireland because the Irish had to rely more upon each other and Eire’s resources, such as turf.

As seen with the previous chapter, there were also negative consequences of Irish neutrality, however the benefits, such as the social life or even the cultural scene as described by Tony Gray or Patrick Scott, made Dublin a very appealing city to visitors who could get there. Although American journalists, such as Ben Robertson or Quentin Reynolds, constantly remarked on the all the “red tape” they had to go through in order to visit Eire from England, many Allied soldiers came down to Eire while on leave. As Patrick Scott notes, “when they [Americans] came into the war and they were stationed, hoards of them, in Derry and generally in the North. They used to come flooding down on the weekends for steaks.”

Eire remained neutral, yet the Irish as well as Allied soldiers or journalists made their way between the belligerent North and the neutral South. For many it was to enjoy the benefits of Eire’s wartime policy, whether it was the lights of Dublin or the food that those with money could purchase. However, Irishmen also ventured to the North. As will be explored further, thousands of southern Irishmen went through Belfast to enlist in the British military but also the neutral government of Eire sent fire brigades to Belfast after they were brutally bombed by the German Luftwaffe in May 1941.

From these images of wartime Dublin, a place with a humming social life and an attraction for Allied servicemen, compared to the blackouts and extensive bombings of

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74 Patrick Scott, Interviewed by Benjamin Grob-Fitzgibbon, *The Irish Experience During the Second World War*, May 2, 2000, 279.
cities throughout the United Kingdom, Ireland’s neutrality seems only logical. Why wouldn’t the Irish government and Irish people avoid the brutalities of war by pursuing a neutral policy? Even beyond these visual benefits of Eire’s neutrality alongside issues of national sovereignty and their tumultuous history with Great Britain, the war brought the Irish population together under the policy of neutrality. Even the Irish Republican Army (IRA) had trouble finding support throughout the southern twenty-six counties.

At the beginning of the War, the IRA made an attack against the Irish Army, known as the Magazine Fort Raid or the “Christmas Raid.” On December 23, 1939 members of the IRA raided the Irish Army’s ammunition depot in Phoenix Park, Dublin following the passing of the Emergency Powers Act, which stipulated the policies that the Irish government would pursue throughout the course of the war. However, following this attack, the Irish government cracked down on the IRA and the organization lost momentum and support throughout the country until after the war years. In fact, with the help of many civilians the Irish military eventually recovered nearly all of what was stolen. According to Irish Army Commandant Owen Quinn, who served during the war, the raid “turned the people wholesale against them.” The IRA had been officially outlawed after the Civil War of 1922-23; however, they continued to garner support from a significant section of the Irish population, even with their violent attacks against the Irish government, Northern Ireland, and Great Britain.

The lack of support for the IRA during “the Emergency” displays one way in which the Irish population was united under its government’s policies. Not only has the

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76 Owen Quinn, Interviewed by Benjamin Grob-Fitzgibbon, *The Irish Experience During the Second World War*, January 9 2001, 204.
historiography put IRA activity during the war on the backburner, but also even Uniseann Maceoin, a member of the IRA who was detained at the Curragh throughout the war for being involved in this illegal organization, admits its diminishing significance. After the raid, “the IRA’s morale was dashed completely by what had happened… in Curragh and among the prisoners who were released there was no talk about reforming or going back at all. It was thought that the IRA was pretty well finished.”

There were a few IRA prisoners who went on hunger strike during the war, like Jack McNeela or Tony D’Arcy, and the government allowed them to die without upsetting the population at large. For the most part, the IRA’s World War II experience reflects the very small pro-German portion of Irish society. From Irish recollections of “the Emergency,” like Sean Clancy or Patrick Lynch, “the IRA didn’t count that much,” or “their numbers during the war were very, very small…I have no real recollections whatsoever of IRA activity.”

Beyond being unsupportive of contentious activities against the government, the population within Ireland during the war came together under the common cause of defense. After Dunkirk and the German invasion of Norway, a potential attack on Ireland became a very realistic fear. The Irish military was small and poorly equipped, however they did recruit and prepare for warfare during “the Emergency.” This Irish Army went from standing at 7,600 (with 19,000 on full mobilization) to almost doubling its size within the first five weeks of their recruitment campaign in early 1940. Not only did

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79 Clair Wills, *That Neutral Island*, 106.
thousands join the Irish Army, but also even more volunteered for the Local Defense
Force (LDF), with thousands more on reserve.

The defense of Ireland prepared for a possible invasion from both Great Britain
and Germany, even though most people feared that they would be invaded by Germany.
In 1938 Great Britain had relinquished their hold on key Irish ports: Berehaven, Lough
Swilly, and Cobh. When war broke out, the Allies saw these ports as vital components to
winning the war at sea, however if Ireland allowed the British to use these ports, it would
be impossible for them to remain neutral. As Robert Fisk writes, Great Britain even
suggested the end to partition in June of 1940 if Ireland would join the war and allow
them to usage of the ports.\textsuperscript{80} However, de Valera understood the political realities to the
end of partition and remained committed to neutrality, cementing their sovereignty and
perhaps even partition itself. Nevertheless, Ireland reached an agreement with Britain
that if Germany invaded, which seemed imminent on several occasions, the British
military could then enter the nation to help defend it.

The Irish prepared for invasions in multiple ways, such as by removing all
signposts throughout the island, making it more difficult for a potential invader to
navigate. Although they trained and took various measures against an attack, Irish
veterans understood that their prospects were dismal in the face of assault from military
machines of Adolf Hitler. “We were all conscious that we wouldn’t have lasted long in
open warfare, but we were convinced that we would have reverted to guerilla warfare

\textsuperscript{80} Robert Fisk, \textit{In Time of War}, 188.
when our machine did break down,” according to Brigadier General Patrick Hogan.  

Other Irish Army veterans interviewed by Grob-Fitzgibbon (Brigadier General Patrick Hogan, Brigadier General Patrick Daly, Lieutenant Colonel James Coyle, Lieutenant Colonel John P. Duggan, and Commandant Owen Quinn) expressed similar opinions. These accounts, alongside Clair Wills examination regarding the build-up of Irish defense forces, show that many people throughout Eire understood the likelihood of an invasion, however, their military strength remained dismal even after they mobilized.

Not only would Irish defenses have proven weak in the event of an invasion, but also many who were a part of the Army remember it as “a bit of a light hearted affair.” In fact, John Keyes Byrne gives a more satirical take on Irish defenses in his memoir describing his Dublin childhood, *Home Before Night.* He was a young teenager during the war and joined the Local Defense Force, describing his unit as a “lethargic group” who never finished training because new recruits kept joining and they would spend their time acting out scenarios of a potential invasion of Dublin. Even though he left the LDF without saying a word, nobody came looking for him, and he later joined the Local Security Force in which, all he remembered from it was, “learning to operate a stirrup pump,” his disbandment dinner, and “being detailed to patrol the back roads from

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82 Ibid., 208.
83 Clair Wills, *That Neutral Island*, 90.
86 Ibid., 126.
midnight until four a.m., in the company of a man named Devaney.” These recollections support the notion that Ireland’s weak military was yet another valid reason not to join the war.

The defenses of Eire may have been embarrassingly weak, but the make-up of the Irish Army alone during this era alone shows how the Irish nation came together more than ever before in its short, independent history. For the first time since the twenty-six southern counties were granted independence from Great Britain, Irish men and women from both sides of the Civil War were united within the framework of the Irish Army. When asked why the Army had such an inactive place in Irish society before the war, Patrick Hogan explains its transformation stating:

First of all, it had been representative of only one side in the civil war. The civil war was over fifteen or sixteen years before I joined but still the leaders of the army and everyone above the rank of lieutenant in it had fought in the civil war, and on one side in the civil war. So, there was that which made it a little tighter than if it had been representative of the whole country. At that stage it was not representative at all. It became so as soon as the war broke out. Very quickly it became representative of the whole country, entered into the social stream, and was very much part of the life.  

Even if many people who enlisted, like John P. Duggan, did so primarily for a job, they were able to “bury the hatchet” on the issues surrounding the Civil War. Perhaps more important than the Irish military’s expansion and preparations during this time, is how military service unified divided Irishmen.

The most significant aspect of Ireland’s military that these sources illuminate, is that a significant portion of the Irish were united under de Valera’s policy of neutrality;

yet, at the same time both the population and the government favored Allies. Irish Army veterans even stated that almost everybody within its ranks wanted the Allies to win, even the senior officers who fought against them in 1920-21. And for those that weren’t pro-British, they just wanted “to give the British a bloody nose, rather than a victory for the Germans.” Even American newspapers reported that the majority of Irish preferred a British victory, but at the same time many Irish would also like to see them “almost licked.” The Irish and British had a closely intertwined relationship to one another, no matter how much either would like to admit it. So much so, that it was still legal for Irishmen to join the British Army. Ireland has historically been a large recruiting ground for the British military, and “at no point during the war did the Irish government seriously consider putting a stop to the voluntary recruitment of Irish men and women in the British forces.” The fact that tens of thousands of Irishmen risked their lives by voluntarily fighting in British uniforms during the war explicitly signifies that a large portion of the Irish population favored the Allies.

From the memories and recollections of Irish men and women throughout their wartime experiences, almost everybody knew of Irish men or women serving with the British military, or at the very least working in the armament factories over in Great Britain. Dublin resident Maureen Diskin, a Dublin resident, father worked in a munitions

89 Patrick Hogan, Interviewed by Benjamin Grob-Fitzgibbon, The Irish Experience During the Second World War, January 9, 2001, 200.
90 Ibid., 201.
92 Doherty, In the Ranks of Death, 16; Will, That Neutral Island, 110.
93 Doherty, In the Ranks of Death, 12.
factory and her boyfriend was shot down over Dunkirk while serving in the RAF (Royal Air Force), John P. Duggan commented: “the pride all of us took here, that we got seven Victoria Crosses in the war and Canada only got some smaller number, and we were supposed to be neutral.”\textsuperscript{94} According to estimates by Richard Doherty, 110,000 Irishmen from both Northern and Southern Ireland enlisted, with more per capita coming out of the twenty-six technically neutral counties. Furthermore, roughly 7,000 Irish deserted the Irish Army in order to join the British.\textsuperscript{95} In an oral interview of a group of veterans, when John P. Duggan stated that, “I’m sure all of you had the experience of fellows deserting our army to go to the British,” the veterans agreed this was a common experience.\textsuperscript{96}

This large segment of Irish joining the British military, and even deserting the Irish, might seem contradictory to the notion that Irish men and women were united under the policy of neutrality, but in fact, it illustrates how most Irish supported a British victory even though the nation as a whole never joined the war effort. From the sources of Irish men and women viewed here, they all knew friends, family, acquaintances that served with the British, and at least for some, when it came to tension between those that joined and those that didn’t, they “never encountered any.”\textsuperscript{97}

\textsuperscript{94} Maureen Disken, Interviewed by Benjamin Grob-Fitzgibbon, \textit{The Irish Experience During the Second World War}, April 21, 2000, 125 & 136; John Duggan, Interviewed by Benjamin Grob-Fitzgibbon, 218.
\textsuperscript{95} Doherty, \textit{Irish Volunteers in the Second World War}, 84.
\textsuperscript{96} John P. Duggan, Interviewed by Benjamin Grob-Fitzgibbon, \textit{The Irish Experience in the Second World War}, 202.
\textsuperscript{97} Lydia Johnston, Interviewed by Benjamin Grob-Fitzgibbon, \textit{The Irish Experience in the Second World War}, 148.
Of course, after the war ended many of these soldiers didn’t receive a hero’s welcome, and some were more or less forgotten or isolated. Major James F. Hickie even stated that, “you were regarded as being slightly less than Irish, having been in British service.”\(^{98}\) When he was asked why, he opined that those who joined the Irish army felt like they “missed out” on the adventures of war, even though they didn’t admit it.\(^{99}\) Significantly, the most negative sentiments occurred only after the war, according to these accounts. Perhaps this reflects that the anxieties and hype that evolved out of the wartime atmosphere were temporary, seen with the unification of Irishmen from both sides of the Civil War under the policy of neutrality or the underlying support for Great Britain’s and the Allies war efforts. For the thousands of Irishmen who joined the war, they not only represent the “incestuous relationship between the two islands,” but also show that the Irish population was largely supportive of the British war effort.\(^{100}\)

Why these soldiers deserted or joined the British military is debatable, whether it was for better pay, family tradition in the British military, adventure, or simply because they believed in the cause. Throughout these memoirs, diaries, or interviews of the Irishmen that joined the British military, it is clear most of them related to one another, whether they were Protestant, Catholic, from Northern Ireland, or from Southern Ireland. Like the members of the Irish Army, these men and women from throughout Ireland were united by the fact that they not only were from the Emerald Isle, but also because they

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\(^{99}\) Ibid., 180.

were fighting under the British crown. These few sources are by no mean representative of the tens of thousands of Irishmen who fought for Britain, but they at least show the interconnectedness that Irishmen had towards one another in the British forces as well as that on the individual level, Irish neutrality was much more complicated than just staying out of the war.

These memoirs and recollections of wartime experiences suggest that the Irish formed a distinct group in the British military. For instance, as soon as a fellow British soldier heard an Irish accent, they were referred to as “Paddy,” regardless of the fact that many were technically from the United Kingdom as well.\textsuperscript{101} Furthermore, these Irish volunteers display a sense of camaraderie, whether they were from the North or South. Throughout Sam McAugthry’s memoir of his wartime experience, \textit{McAughtry’s War}, he, a Protestant from Belfast, never fails to comment on meeting an Irishman, buying him beers, or reminiscing of home.\textsuperscript{102} His experiences display a type of brotherhood between Irishmen in the British forces. For example, an officer, who was from the North Wall in Dublin, did not lash out at him for having an improper shaving kit because he heard his accent.\textsuperscript{103} Ray Davey, a Presbyterian from Belfast, also emphasizes the companionship between Irishmen, in his diary of the war, writing: “met a chap from Sandy Row who treated me like a long-lost friend. I was given a present of Italian cigars.”\textsuperscript{104} Davey’s diary chronicles his day-by-day experiences with the war, yet he has nothing but positive

\begin{footnotes}
\item[101] Sam McAughtry, \textit{McAughtry’s War}, 6.
\item[102] Ibid., 7.
\item[103] Ibid., 8.
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entries on his run-ins with fellow Irishmen, both northern and southern. McAughtry even states that he “remembers Padgate [where he trained] for discovering my Irishness.” Even though McAughtry might embellish the realities of serving with the British Army, especially because later in life he protested the sectarian violence between the factions in Ireland, his memories alongside others such as Ray Davey can at least shed light on the interactions of Irishmen serving with the British. Not only were they constantly referred to as “Paddy” and stereotyped on the basis of accent alone, but on one occasion McAughtry was even asked if his heart was in the war, specifically because of his Irish heritage.

Beyond the connections that Irish serving abroad felt towards one another, none of them criticize or even call into question Irish neutrality. These Irishmen experienced firsthand the brutalities of the war, just as the American correspondents discussed in the next chapter did; however unlike the U.S. journalists, they did not criticize Ireland’s neutral stance. Even Aidan MacCarthy, an Irish-Catholic from Berehaven in West Cork, never questions or criticizes de Valera’s policy. This is shocking especially after his experience as a prisoner of war at the mercy of the Japanese. MacCarthy personally faced the atrocities and crimes against humanity that occurred during the Second World War, being beaten on one occasion simply for having a southern Irish address (meaning he volunteered to fight against the Empire of Japan). Yet, MacCarthy still refrained from

105 Sam McAughtry, *McAughtry’s War*, 7.
106 *A fire broke out while he was on guard one night, and the military court questioned him incessantly, wondering if he started it as an act of “sabotage.”* 22.
critiquing Eire’s position throughout his memoir.\textsuperscript{107} Even others, such as Ray Davey or Major James F. Hickie, who were on the front lines of battle, did not assert any contempt towards De Valera’s policy. This expression, or lack thereof, contrasts markedly from the U.S. war correspondents and newspapers that criticized Eire for standing back while others fought for their freedom and for not helping the British when they were in dire need.

In fact, the only time these veterans refer to Irish neutrality is when interviewer Benjamin Grob-Fitzgibbon explicitly asked about the issues in relation to their involvement in British forces. To Major James F. Hickie, a Roman Catholic from north Tipperary, his nationality did not make a difference while serving with the British military and the only time he discusses the issue of Irish neutrality is when comparing “the lack of adventure” people had serving in the Irish army compared to the British.\textsuperscript{108} When returning to Ireland during the war Hickie encountered no problems. Lydia Johnston, an Anglo-Irish from Limerick who joined the British Auxiliary Territorial Services (ATS), claimed that she “never encountered any” tensions between those that joined the British forces and those that didn’t.\textsuperscript{109} From Johnston’s interview, she states that her and her family were very “anti-Dev,” but looking back even she still wasn’t sure that Ireland should have entered the war.\textsuperscript{110}

\textsuperscript{107} Aidan MacCarthy, \textit{A Doctors War}.
\textsuperscript{108} James F. Hickie, Interviewed by Benjamin Grob-Fitzgibbon, \textit{The Irish Experience During the Second World War}, 179.
\textsuperscript{109} Lydia Johnston, Interviewed by Benjamin Grob-Fitzgibbon, \textit{The Irish Experience During the Second World War}, April 20, 2000, 148.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., 148.
These recollections only represent a sliver of the experiences tens of thousands of Irish men and women who served in the British forces between 1939 and 1945 had, but they illustrate how it was possible for Irishmen to enlist and fight in this war while also understanding the political realities of neutrality. They weren’t critical towards neutrality, even though they themselves risked their lives fighting in the Second World War. Even if an individual didn’t join the British military themselves, most knew somebody who was serving abroad. Although these experiences represent how Irish men and women supported the British war effort by joining the British military, their engagement in the British army also show how dedicated the Irish government was towards neutrality and how the people as a whole supported neutrality. For instance, even though hundreds of thousands of Irish citizens were in the British forces, the Irish government offered no help in relaying information on the status of loved ones and the newspapers were prohibited from mentioning any names due to censorship.\textsuperscript{111} Censorship was key to de Valera’s policy of neutrality, giving a public presentation of impartiality in order to prevent any trouble of belligerents, and therefore publicizing information on Irish servicemen in the British Army was out of the question.\textsuperscript{112} Yet, individuals still joined knowing that families would have a very difficult time in keeping track of them. As Lydia Johnston notes, “so many young people, ordinary people, joined up and their

\textsuperscript{111} Grob-Fitzgibbon, \textit{The Irish Experience During the Second World War}, 18.
\textsuperscript{112} O'Drisceoil, \textit{Censorship in Ireland}, 6.
parents were always coming to my father to find out what had happened to them. They thought having been in the Army he would be able to find out.”

While trying to grasp the perspectives on Irish neutrality it might seem irrelevant to look at those Irishmen who fought for Britain from Northern Ireland, however they highlight the broader complexities and connections between Ireland and Great Britain. Not only did these Irishmen from all thirty-two counties interact with one another while fighting abroad, but as seen earlier, Irish men and women as well as members of the Allied forces traveled between Northern Ireland and Eire while station in the north. Furthermore, Northern Ireland was technically a belligerent nation, yet even there, the war effort was unable to garner as much support as other parts of the United Kingdom. For instance, conscription was never implemented in Northern Ireland because British officials felt that it would do more harm than good. The beliefs of a large minority of the Northern Irish population, who always felt more connection towards Ireland than towards Great Britain, is noticeable. These Catholic, and many times nationalists, would have preferred to remain neutral just as Eire had, which was why Northern Ireland’s Lord Craigavon and even Prime Minister Winston Churchill refrained from implementing policies like conscription.

The history of Ireland, and how Irishmen remembered it during the Second World War, largely prevented them from joining the war. Irishmen could not and would not forget their tumultuous past with Great Britain, which led them to fight for independence.

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two decades previously and also led to the controversies surrounding partition. An issue that has been very much alive since, and by joining Great Britain they not only would have to have forgotten their hostile past with them, but they also would question their own sovereignty from the British Crown. The Irish could not overcome this relationship with Great Britain. Yes, most of them sympathized for the British cause and wanted them to come out on top, but John P. Duggan notes, for many Irish they still wanted, “them to get a kick in the arse for what they did with the burning of Cork and the terrible behavior of the Black and Tans. I mean, all you had to do was mention the Black and Tans and the leaves would wither, wouldn’t they? Because their behavior was so terrible.”

Even though the experiences of Irish men and women throughout this chapter has shown a lot of unity and camaraderie, whether through the Irish soldiers fighting abroad or going on leave in Eire, there still were and are underlying tensions within the society. The same old rivalries that have plagued Ireland for centuries are apparent from the moment the war ends with the burning of the Irish tricolor by students at Trinity College Dublin. That, along with Churchill’s condemnation of Irish neutrality and de Valera’s response shows the deep-seated antagonisms. The critics of Irish neutrality, whether Churchill, student demonstrators, or even American war correspondents cannot overlook the historical memories and issues that were very much alive for the Irish people. Because as irrational as these sentiments may or may not be, the Irish and critics of neutrality alike, agreed that they gave de Valera no option but neutrality if he wanted it to be supported by the nation.

Along with the significance of the Irish past that must be kept in mind when criticizing Irish neutrality, one still cannot ignore the obvious benevolence that Ireland and the Irish people had towards the Allies. Thousands of men and women joined the British forces, risking their own lives for the cause. In their recollections of serving, none of them criticize or question Irish neutrality, perhaps because they understood the political realities of it. Not only that, but it is apparent that throughout the rest of society, on at least some level, the majority of people pulled for the Allies. It must be taken into account that their perceptions could be slightly skewed. After the atrocities of Nazi Germany became apparent, of course Irish people would want to highlight benevolence towards Great Britain and the Allies. Nevertheless, based on these sources it must not be forgotten that a significant number of Irishmen fought for the British cause while the majority of the population supported, and in some respects, even enjoyed the benefits of neutrality. Although most of these recollections reminisced fondly on Irish neutrality, the next chapter will look some critics of Irish neutrality: American war correspondents. They visited Ireland from the warzone of England, seeing a vibrant social life, plates full of food, and also, stubborn Irishmen. They saw Ireland’s wartime experience in many ways as selfish. The Irish were enjoying themselves, oblivious to the realities of the war, while people throughout the United Kingdom feared night after night the bombs raining down from the German Luftwaffe, allowing the Irish to remain at peace.
CHAPTER THREE

THE “IRRATIONALITY” OF IRISH NEUTRALITY:
AMERICAN WAR CORRESPONDENTS AND EIRE

The 1940 war is very far away to him. Rather would he talk of the time in 1014 when the Dalcassians of County Clare drove the Danes out of Ireland. Rather would he talk of Michael Collins and of how back in 1920 when there was a price of 40,000 pounds on his head he would walk gaily along O’Connell Street every day, rubbing elbows with the Black and Tans.
- Quentin Reynolds, The Wounded Don’t Cry

During the Second World War, the opinions and critiques of American war correspondents towards neutral Ireland were reflective of the contemporary British point of view towards their former “countrymen,” or as many would say “colonists.” Before the United States entered the conflict on the Allied side, most Americans stationed in Great Britain and throughout the European theatre of war identified with the British cause. As stated previously, they were highly critical of Ireland’s neutrality, viewing it as irrationally ignoring the dangers posed by Nazi Germany as Great Britain and her people paid the price for Ireland’s peace. These Americans witnessed the horrors of the Second World War throughout Great Britain, seeing not only the devastation and destruction caused by the German Luftwaffe but also the courage and sacrifice of the British character. Because Ireland remained neutral throughout the war, most Americans who traveled and reported on Eire from 1939 to 1941 only visited Ireland while based in Great Britain. Almost immediately, they recognized the drastic differences and attitudes of the Irish, who lived less than one hundred miles away from Britain and the warzone. These

Journalists, along with many other Britons and Americans, asked the question: why wouldn’t the Irish join in the British war effort? Did they not realize their fate was tied up with the British? Why not let the British use their vital seaports? How could they not see that the future of civilization hangs in the balance? Quite frankly, from their encounters with the Irish, they saw Eire’s reasoning and position in the war as ridiculous compared to the enormity of the Second World War.

These American war correspondents traveled to Eire for various reasons throughout the war: whether it was in anticipation of a Nazi invasion, to try and convince the Irish to participate in the war effort, or simply to escape the warzone for a time. Several of these Americans who made short trips to Eire and reported on her neutrality included Ben Robertson of New York’s PM newspaper, Quentin Reynolds representing Collier’s magazine, Helen Kirkpatrick of the Chicago Daily News, Vincent Sheean writing for the Nation, and Roi Ottley also reporting for PM. Although this chapter will explore a variety of American war correspondents and their experiences and reporting’s in Ireland, it primarily focuses on Robertson and Reynolds. They are just two of the many Americans who lived in Great Britain for an extended period of time during the war; however, their recollections, reporting, memoirs, and correspondence highlight the perspectives and issues facing these American journalists who reported on Eire. They demonstrate the impact and the realities of living in wartime Britain, but also display how Americans—from a neutral nation as well—could view the Irish and Irish neutrality as absurd in the first two years of the war.
Both Quentin Reynolds’ book on his wartime experiences, *The Wounded Don’t Cry* (1941), and Ben Robertson’s *I Saw England* (1941) along with various other cables, articles, and letters, highlight important areas of and reasons for American criticism towards Irish neutrality.\(^{118}\) What they witnessed throughout the war compared with their brief experiences in Ireland make their perspectives very understandable, and in many ways justified, even if they overlook occurrences of Eire’s benevolence towards the Allies, such as the hundreds of thousands of Irish men and women in the British forces.\(^{119}\) Reynolds was on the front line with the French Army before escaping France via Pointe de Graves. Arriving in London thereafter, *Collier’s* sent him to Dublin in anticipation of a Nazi invasion. After spending a couple weeks in Ireland, Reynolds would go back to London to endure the horrors of the Blitz, publishing these early wartime experiences in 1941. In *I Saw England*, journalist Ben Robertson also published his recollections of the early part of the Second World War after residing in London from June to December 1940. While stationed in London, Robertson visited Ireland for several weeks in early November 1940 alongside Helen Kirkpatrick and Vincent Sheean, which reinforced his criticisms towards Eire’s policies and their neutrality altogether. Robertson traveled the world as a war correspondent and would return to Britain the following year, even visiting Northern Ireland in the summer of 1941 before his untimely death aboard the Yankee Clipper en route back to London in February of 1943. While living in and reporting on places such as Great Britain, reporters similar to Robertson and Reynolds

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saw the dire situation of the British war effort alongside Irish neutrality. Instead of highlighting the benevolence that the Irish government had towards the Allies and the participation of Irish men and women towards their neighbor, American reporters saw a peaceful nation with a vibrant social life, whose neutral policies were hurting the courageous Britons who were in dire need of assistance.

In order to better understand the critiques posed by American war correspondents, one must first understand the circumstances in which they came from, and the experiences they endured before they came to Ireland. Everywhere and everybody in Britain was affected by the war, whether it was the threat from the air or in being rationed just enough to get by—as in receiving an egg a week, if lucky.\(^\text{120}\) The German “Blitz” on the United Kingdom, an attempt by the Luftwaffe to break the English spirit by attacking populated civilian areas, lasted from September 7, 1940 until May 1941. The devastation resulted in over 60,000 deaths, tens of thousands injured, and even more homeless.\(^\text{121}\) Germans attacked almost every major city in United Kingdom, including Belfast, Coventry, Liverpool, Bristol, and of course, London. Ben Robertson himself, who did not reside in London throughout the entire attack, experienced over 500 air raids.\(^\text{122}\) The widespread destruction of German bombs hit both Reynolds’ and Robertson’s residences while they were in London, the Lansdowne House and Waldorf Hotel.

\(^\text{122}\) Robertson, \textit{I Saw England}, 199.
Americans based throughout Great Britain saw first hand the brutalities of warfare unleashed under the Nazi regime, and the accounts of Reynolds, Robertson, and a handful of other Americans vividly portrays the effects that this had on them and their perspectives on the war. Every night there was a full moon, these Americans alongside the British population would fear the worst. They saw the fires, the broken glass, the destroyed homes and buildings, the injuries, and even the deaths. They visited and slept in the underground bomb shelters along with thousands of others, and they would work with Londoners throughout the days to clean up the rubble and destruction from the night before. Even the American ambassador, Gil Winant, was seen throughout London helping Londoners put out fires or clear rubble.123 An excerpt from Ben Robertson’s *I Saw England* shows just how widespread the bombings hurt and transformed the lives of people all around them:

Maude [his chambermaid] was bombed out and lost all she had. She said it did not matter, nothing mattered but beating Hitler. The waiter lost his sister, one of the men who worked at the Western Union office was injured in a raid, and Johnny Johnstone at the Commercial Cable office left his mother-in-law’s dinner table and went out into the garden and gathered parts of a crashed airman in a basket…my room was bombed at the Waldorf and I moved to the front of the hotel. And there came the day when the doorman did not show up for work. No trace of him was every found, so we decided he must have been hit by a bomb on his way home—he must have been demolished.124

Through these harsh realities of wartime England, American reporters painted a very positive picture of the British character, which withstood these brutal attacks. From his first impressions of wartime London—arriving right after the evacuation of

Dunkirk—Robertson recalled the determination of British citizens to prepare the city for what seemed like an imminent German invasion. He tried to tell himself that, “I could not allow myself to be swept away in a day, that there were many more things that had to be studied—I must form a careful unbiased opinion,” but “just the same I knew from that time on that there was courage and bravery and determination in the British capital.”

Or as Helen Kirkpatrick put it, reporting on one of the first nights of the Blitz in September 1940, in Britain “there is some terror, but nothing on the scale that the Germans may have hoped for and certainly not on a scale to make Britons contemplate for a moment anything but fighting on.” Not only were Americans awed by British attitudes and actions, but what they witnessed made them want to be a part of this fight against the Axis powers. Ben Robertson and Edward Murrow were not particularly Anglophiles before the war, however, after living in Britain during the war, they became strong advocates of Great Britain fight as well as American involvement. Others as well, such as American Bill Greiger, who initially volunteered for the R.A.F. for a pure sense of adventure, remembered the exact moment in which the British people made him realize that their cause was his as well. While in London, Grieger witnessed a man working to defuse a bomb in a deep hole in the street, surrounded by calm and collected people. In this experience, Greiger asserted that, “you get caught in that kind of courage,

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127 Lynne Olson, *Citizens of London*, 44.
and then pretty soon you say, ‘now I want to be a part of this. I want to be part of these people. I want to be a part of what I see here and what I feel here.’

According to the accounts of American reporters, the remarkable attitude and perseverance of Londoners was reflected throughout the rest of the nation as well. They traveled throughout the United Kingdom witnessing and reporting on what life was like for Britons during the war. They witnessed horrors beyond the imagination in their roles as war correspondents in the early years of the Second World War, which shaped their opinions of the war, and the dire need for Americans as well as the Irish, to aid Britain in her struggle for existence. Quentin Reynolds gives one of the most moving descriptions on how these reporters felt about this phase of the war and their experiences in it. While attached to a London ambulance unit responding to bombing in a residential area, one German bomb fell through a house that they came upon, killing all inside, and Reynolds exclaimed that:

This is the war I see. If you want a front seat to the war come and stand over this three-year-old child with me. Don’t be afraid of the bombs that are falling close or the spent shrapnel that is raining down on us. You want to see what war is really like, don’t you? Take another look at the baby. She still looks as though she were asleep. This is war—fall style, 1940. This is the war that Herr Hitler is waging.

Even if the reports and articulations on Britain’s lone stand against in the Nazi’s in 1940, such as this assertion made by Reynolds, were part of a larger effort to convince American as well as Irish opinion to join the cause, one cannot deny that these firsthand

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experiences shaped and cemented the political as well as moral attitudes that these journalist had towards neutrality.\textsuperscript{130}

Not only was Britain being pounded by the German Luftwaffe, but in the first years of the war they were experiencing military defeat after military defeat. One of the most vital battlegrounds was the war at sea for the British. The Atlantic was Britain’s “lifeline,” supplying food, raw materials, troops, and equipment from North America and other places. If they lost this, it would probably lead to wholesale defeat in the war. In 1940 alone, the U-boat threat resulted in the loss of over a thousand Allied ships, with an average of three ships a day in September. Not only that, but a large number of sinkings in the North Atlantic in late 1940 occurred off of the Irish coast, shaping popular opinion even further against Irish neutrality, and especially against the Irish refusal to allow Britain to use naval and air bases to aid in their defense of the Atlantic.\textsuperscript{131} Here, the British saw the negative effects of Ireland’s neutral policy, whose ports they occupied only a couple years beforehand, while they also feared a German invasion of Ireland, creating an easy stepping stone to Britain for Hitler and the Third Reich.

In such dire circumstances, on top of the close proximity and position of Eire to Britain, it is not difficult to see why the British wanted to use Ireland’s key ports, or even simply have the Irish help contribute to their war effort. The writings of these Americans stationed in Britain reflect this perspective on Irish neutrality. Arriving from belligerent England, journalists like Robertson and Reynolds were shocked at what life was like just

across the Irish Sea. To Robertson, who arrived in Dublin after experiencing two months of the Blitz, claimed that, “it was like reaching heaven to arrive in Dublin from the battleground of London. All the burden of the war was lifted from you, and there was light about you and a feeling of airiness, and suddenly you were free.”

Reynolds reiterates this sentiment in *The Wounded Don’t Cry*, writing, “coming to Ireland after the nightmare and death of France and after the tension and horrible feeling of dreaded anticipation in London was like emerging from a dark, dank swamp into the brilliant light of the sun…there were no blackout and no soldiers on the streets.”

After Reynolds’ experiences with the chaos of France in 1940, and the destruction throughout England that Robertson witnessed, it is not surprising that both saw Ireland as such a haven. As noted in the previous chapter, Eire did feel the effects of the war, having to ration some items, and experiencing fuel shortages, and off-target bombing raids. To visitors from elsewhere in Europe, however, it was a drastic change of scenery. In fact, when Robertson arrived, he, along with fellow American journalists in Dublin, Wally and Peggy Carroll of the United Press and Ed Angly of the New York *Herald Tribune*, watched the lights in the streets come on, and even counted them, being, “the only light between Moscow and New York.”

Not only were the lights a significant change from the blacked-out cities of Europe, but also the selection of food was an enormous change for these reporters, even though they themselves were better off than most Londoners while in England. For Reynolds, “there was a heaping plate of golden

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butter on the breakfast table alongside a filled sugar bowl—two things the eyes of this correspondent had not seen for many a long day.” ¹³⁵ When Robertson first arrived in November of 1940—“the waitress must have thought she had a starving customer on her hands, for she brought out sixteen lumps of sugar, twenty-one pats of butter, four sandwiches, a buttered muffin, a pot of coffee, and a half dozen cakes.” ¹³⁶ Yet, it was only “for those with money [that] there was still plenty of everything except Petrol.” ¹³⁷ In reality, the poorest sections of Irish society suffered severely from “half-hearted” rationing system, whereas in Britain, “wartime rationing had the effect of raising nutrition levels for the poorest in society.” ¹³⁸ However these reporters, who stayed in some of the most luxurious hotels Dublin had to offer, would not have known nor noticed the detrimental effects of wartime rationing in Eire, instead they perpetuated the “idea that Ireland was a land of plenty” while Britain suffered defending democracy. ¹³⁹

These reporters went to Eire not just because it was a relative break from war-torn Britain, but also because many thought that an invasion of Ireland was very likely in 1940. In a letter to Ben Robertson, Helen Kirkpatrick states that she “spent three heavenly weeks in Ireland,” as a nice break from England. ¹⁴⁰ One, Quentin Reynolds, visited in anticipation of a Nazi invasion. He went over immediately after arriving in London from France, and after he, “found that smart Ed Angly of the Herald Tribune had

¹³⁵ Reynolds, The Wounded Don’t Cry, 114.
¹³⁶ Robertson, I Saw England, 184.
¹³⁷ Wills, That Neutral Island, 244.
¹³⁸ Ibid., 243.
¹³⁹ Ibid., 245.
¹⁴⁰ Letter from Helen Kirkpatrick to Ben Robertson, September 15, 1941, Ben Robertson Papers.
sent a man to Dublin; Ray Daniels of the *New York Times* had someone sent over; Chris had hurried a man to Ireland; Bob Low of *Liberty Magazine* was on his way; so was brilliant Virginia Cowles of the *Sunday Times*—all were predicting an invasion.\(^{141}\)

According to Reynolds’ sources, “the best minds of Fleet Street” and the people in the War Office, Air Ministry, and Admiralty thought Hitler would move to Ireland next because “Germany would have as much trouble grabbing Ireland from de Valera as Wallace Beery would have had snatching a peppermint stick from Shirley Temple.”\(^{142}\) As Robert Fisk observes, the common belief in the weeks and months after Dunkirk was that, “a German invasion of Ireland might even precede an invasion of Britain,” and in reality there was a German plan to invade Ireland.\(^{143}\)

Regardless of the potential for invasion it is clear that for an American visitor life in Dublin was much easier than Britain during the war. Although there were real threats of invasion, Vincent Sheean explains in August 1940, only a few months after Dunkirk, that, “as the war went on without approaching any nearer to Irish shores, there was a general relaxation of tension in Eire.”\(^{144}\) However, even with this more relaxing atmosphere, these reporters still did not find it as “charming” as one would think. As Robertson explains, “you would think all of that would have had a soothing effect on an American escaping from London, but, as a matter of fact, it made you very restless. You found when you were away from London, and the full moon shone, you could not keep

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\(^{142}\) Ibid., 106.

\(^{143}\) Fisk, *In Time of War*, 163.

\(^{144}\) Vincent Sheean, “Nobody Doubts that the Irish are Brave...,” *The Milwaukee Journal*, August 28, 1940.
from worrying. You worried about London and about everyone you knew in London.”

Not only that, but as both these reporters note and historians have acknowledged, the British and these Americans saw Ireland’s neutrality as essentially insensitive. Ireland and her people reaped the benefits of staying at peace, while the British fought for themselves and even Eire’s peace. In *I Saw England*, Robertson sums this sentiment:

“They were quite willing to accept the protection of the British Empire, but that was as far as they intended to go—if England lost the war, they knew Germany would swallow up Eire anyhow, and if England won, then Eire could go right on being Eire, without having been bombed. Ireland had become one of those countries that expected to ask and to receive.”

Not only were these reporters critical of Ireland’s neutral stance because they saw that Ireland’s fate was wrapped up with Great Britain, but the situation in Ireland also deeply unnerved them. When Reynolds visited immediately after Dunkirk in June 1940 and Robertson just a few months later, a German attack was a real possibility. The encounters that both Reynolds and Robertson had with Irishmen during their visits did not make them feel any better about a potential invasion. Instead, they saw most of the Irish population as ambiguous towards a German invasion. Or, they saw something even worse: the Irish believed that they could resist the Nazis and prevent the Germans from using Eire as a base against the British. In Sheean’s article, written after firsthand experiences in Ireland, “one finds it downright pathetic that the Irish should place such faith in their own courage when it is, practically speaking, weaponless.” These American reporters could not understand how the Irish refused to see the frailty of their

148 Sheean, “Nobody Doubts the Irish are Brave...”
position. How could they not feel obliged to help the British out in any way possible, like by letting them use their ports? And even most of them got along very well with the Irish, as Reynolds explains:

Oh, but you wanted to scream at these happy, lovable, charming people and tell them to wake up, destruction might be just around the corner. But they’d slap you on the back and Jack Arigho [Irish rugby player] would go to the piano and play *Minstrel Boy*, and sing it in his high, sweet voice, and Pat O’Loughlin would make another speech of welcome in Gaelic which not a man in the room would understand, for only three percent of the people of Eire know the mother tongue.\(^{149}\)

Reynolds’ describes how he tried to reason with the Irish and explain their predicament, but besides the Irish military build-up, the people would not listen to his warnings. These experiences differ slightly from what the recollections and interviews of Irish discussed in the previous chapter, but they both show that overall the Irish were not interested in formally joining the Allied war effort, and in many ways reflect the notion that, “people enjoyed themselves while they could.”\(^{150}\)

In fact, many of the observations made by these reporters are similar to what the Irish themselves remembered about the war, even if most of these Americans looked at it with a much more critical, eye. For instance, Quentin Reynolds describes the impressive build-up of the Irish military during his travels throughout the country. Reynolds believed that the Army was the only segment of the Irish population that took the threat of invasion seriously, strategically placing Army brigades and using the Irish terrain to their advantage. Not only that, but Reynolds even obtained an interview with Eamon de


Valera, who impressed him and was very much concerned with the potential German threat.\footnote{Reynolds, \textit{The Wounded Don’t Cry}, 108.}

These reporters also saw that the vast majority of the Irish supported neutrality, and that they would fight against the Germans alongside the British if they were invaded. This notion of Irish benevolence towards the Allies was supported by the recollections of the Irish men and women themselves as well as by the analysis of historians. For example, Robert Fisk devotes an entire chapter to the “W Plan,” which was an agreement made between Eire and the United Kingdom, giving the British permission to enter Eire if Germany invaded.\footnote{Fisk, \textit{In Time of War}, 203.} Even though these reporters found “deep sympathy” amongst the Irish for Great Britain, they still were highly critical and disagreed with the Irish.\footnote{Robertson, \textit{I Saw England}, 187.} This is seen with Robertson’s explanation of the Irish position towards the “treaty” ports, “they took the stand De Valera had taken—they assumed their right to neutrality on the most unassailable moral grounds. Their right to sovereignty was involved, and I formed the conclusion that they were going to keep their sovereignty if they lost the last shred of it.”\footnote{Ibid., 186.}

More than anything, the commentary of these American journalists on Ireland illuminate that in large part, a highly contentious history separated Eire from joining the Allied war effort. Like the recollections of Irish men and women, the Irish that these American journalists confronted about Eire’s neutrality would cite the brutalities and degradation that the British subjected the Irish to for centuries. As Sheean explained, the

Irish “are the heirs of 700 year struggle against England, and until the actual moment when they face the German invader, if that moment ever comes, they will continue to think the British more dangerous to them than any other race.”\textsuperscript{155} For Ben Robertson, when trying to better understand Ireland’s position in the war, the Irish would talk about Ireland’s freedom, their “tiny world” ignoring the realities of war, the Black and Tans, and ultimately, the Ulster question.\textsuperscript{156} The memories of these Irish men and women, both those who interacted with these journalists and others who have reminisced on Ireland and World War II, display what was at the heart of Ireland’s neutrality: their contentious past with Great Britain. In fact, while visiting Armagh almost a year later, Robertson cabled back to New York a public statement made by Cardinal Joseph MacRory regarding conscription in Northern Ireland. Even though Belfast was bombed by the Germans, MacRory passionately disputes notions of conscription because it “does not touch the essence of the question, which is that an ancient land, made by one God, was partitioned by a foreign power against vehement protest of its people, and with conscription it would not seek to compel those who still writhe under this grievous wrong to fight on the side of its perpetrators.”\textsuperscript{157} This statement not only shows that many throughout Ireland were still bitter about British rule of Northern Ireland, but also that for some Irish, such as Cardinal Macrory, the historical memory with the British is one of oppression. Why, then, should they join the fight as these war correspondents want and believe they should?

\textsuperscript{155} Sheean, “Nobody Doubts the Irish are Brave…”
\textsuperscript{156} Robertson, \textit{I Saw England}, 186.
\textsuperscript{157} Robertson, Cable from Belfast to New York, July 1, 1941, Ben Robertson Papers.
In remaining neutral Eire cemented its sovereignty from Great Britain, something the Irish saw as a centuries-long struggle, while refusing to acknowledge Britain’s political hold over Ulster, which Ireland’s constitution claimed as a part of the nation. In addition, neutrality meant that they didn’t have to formally ally with their historic aggressor and would be able to remain at peace throughout the brutal conflict. As “selfish” as their neutrality may seem, it was a logical political decision and clearly supported by the vast majority of the population. Robertson and others experienced the horrors of the war largely at the expense of innocent English men and women, and to see the Irish nation sit back peacefully, even they understood that how Ireland remembered their past, prevented Eire and her people from supporting the war.

However, in the United States, not everybody was critical of Irish neutrality as these reporters were. In fact, not only do the newspapers explored in chapter four show points of understanding that Americans had for Irish neutrality, but also Ernest Boyd wrote in article in *Foreign Affairs* in January of 1941 specifically in response to these critical American war correspondents. Boyd was born in Ireland, but he lived in and was reporting from the United States. To him, those news correspondents in London are responsible for misconceptions, “they have gone over to Dublin for a few days, stressed the absence of darkened streets and air raids, talked to a few very cautious officials, listened to ironical or jocular comments in bars and clubs, and have solemnly reported that the Irish are hopelessly, short-sighted and incredibly irresponsible.”\(^\text{158}\) Boyd explains the Irish the position of neutrality and defends it on key issues, such as the ports. Britain

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relinquished them to the Irish in 1938, something he asserts these journalists are leaving out or misconstruing to the American public. In addition, Boyd attempts to describe and explain the issues over Northern Ireland, and that, the Irish would never side with the British as long as their country is partitioned. Even more, Boyd describes the underlying historical issues, “Eire knows little about Nazism and Fascism…the only people behaving like fascists that the Irish Catholics have ever seen were the British Black-and Tans.”

That is a very bold and contentious statement to make, but it illuminates how Boyd tries to rationalize the Irish position. It shows the historical obstacles standing in the way of Ireland’s involvement in the Second World War. In Boyd’s explanation, it does not even matter what the Nazis or the British stand for, what does matter is Eire’s history with the British. Boyd does acknowledge the participation of Irishmen towards the British cause; however, his argument has just as many points of contention as the war correspondents. Neither will succumb to the other’s rationalizations on Irish neutrality and its relations to the British Empire.

But even with these defenders of Irish neutrality, as seen with Boyd, and the assertions of the Irish themselves defending neutrality, the overall projection of Americans stationed in the European theatre of war was highly critical. Not only did they see Ireland’s fate tied up with Britain, but also that Ireland was deeply dependent on the British for their well-being. Yet, as these journalists reported, the Irish did little more than express their sympathy towards the British cause. Robertson even asked them, “who brought their overseas food,” the answer clearly being the British, in a way to understand

159 Boyd, “Ireland Between Two Stools, 429.
how they could not ally with the British. All the Irish said was that, if Britain stopped trading food, petrol and other supplies, then they would have no cattle from Ireland.\textsuperscript{160}

These assertions, which seem harsh in the context of the Second World War, when they so dependent on the United Kingdom, display how strongly some Irish felt towards neutrality over allying with the British. Because as the Irish saw it, their position of neutrality was grounded by many reasons, and as Packard explains, Ireland was “fueled by centuries-old hatred for England, depleted of 400,000 of its citizens by an almost literally thankless role in World War I, exhausted by a struggle for independence that was followed by a civil war, and, finally embittered by the islands partition.”\textsuperscript{161}

Even though individuals similar to Ben Robertson were well aware of these reasons given for Irish neutrality, they still were not satisfied with them. For instance, shortly after Robertson left Ireland, he received a letter from Senator James F. Byrnes dated December 9, 1940:

\begin{quote}
While I hope you succeeded in convincing officials of the Irish Free State of the correctness of your views, I have my doubts. The attitude of De Valera has been a terrible disappointment to me. In the past England did everything possible to antagonize the Irish people, but in recent years their attitude has been entirely different and it is unfortunate that De Valera and his people cannot forget the wrongs of the past.\textsuperscript{162}
\end{quote}

The Irish, in turn, were perplexed and annoyed that these criticisms of neutrality came from a neutral nation. One, Robertson told a group of Irishmen that he believed Americans overall would want Ireland to relinquish their ports, and that America

\textsuperscript{160} Robertson, \textit{I Saw England}, 185.
\textsuperscript{162} James F. Byrnes to Ben Robertson. December 9, 1940. Special Collections: Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina.
respected and acknowledged their independence but found that helping England win the war was the most important aspect. In response, “they asked me why America, which was at peace, should try to involve peaceful Ireland?”163 It was not unusual for Americans such as Robertson to be supportive of Great Britain; in fact the United States neutrality was very pro-British in their policies before Pearl Harbor, as seen with the Lend-Lease act. However, while the majority of the U.S. supported their own neutrality, many Americans alongside these war correspondents were critical of Eire’s position. By early 1941, 62% of Americans polled by the New York Times even believed that the Irish should scrap their neutrality.164 Yet, it must be kept in mind that much of the U.S. press and coverage on Eire came from these war correspondents, who clearly wanted the Irish to join the war.

These reporters condemned Irish neutrality because they saw “the reality of its [Eire’s] geographical position” on the edge of world conflict on top of their experiences in the war zones and amongst the innocent victims in Britain.165 Nevertheless, from the Irish perspective, one can see how they would be skeptical of a neutral American coming to neutral Ireland and trying to convince them to enter the war. But these reporters criticized not just Irish neutrality while in Britain; they also ridiculed United States neutrality. By examining Ben Robertson’s cables back to the United States while visiting Northern Ireland in the summer of 1941, one can see how frustrated he was with American neutrality as he reported on Irish neutrality. In Robertson’s travels around

163 Robertson, I Saw England, 186.
165 Sheean, “Nobody Doubts the Irish are Brave...”
Northern Ireland, he is acutely aware of the religious and nationalistic divides that marred the six counties since their inception. For instance, he cabled that, “you hear Orangemen in Belfast referring scornfully to Southern Irishmen as crying beer drinkers and poets, and Irish nationalists will tell you that Orangemen do a lot of talking about being loyal to the crown but what really touches an Orangemen’s heart is a half crown (two shilling and a sixpence).”\textsuperscript{166} Although he ridicules both sides for the intense divisions in the society, Robertson is much more critical of Eire than he is of Northern Ireland, concluding that those six counties are very much a part of the war effort, even if they did not implement conscription because of the discontent from Irish nationalists and their Southern neighbor.

In Robertson’s criticism of the political divisions in Northern Ireland, and of Eire, he ignores the contributions that the Irish did have towards the British war effort. Yes, he admits that the Irish sympathized with the British, but he fails to acknowledge that tens of thousands of southern Irishmen volunteered and fought for the British Empire—a contribution that is dually acknowledged by Boyd in his defense of Eire as well as in several newspaper articles. Or that, as Eunan O’Halpin asserts, at many times Ireland’s neutrality favored the Allies so much so that it “became an almost full alliance.”\textsuperscript{167} However, reporters such as Robertson would have a harder time understanding the realities of Irish neutrality, considering that Eire’s government did everything possible to project the policy of complete neutrality. Most of the concrete evidence of the Irish tilt

\textsuperscript{166} Ben Robertson, Cable from Belfast to New York,, July 3 1941, Ben Robertson Papers.
\textsuperscript{167} O’Halpin, \textit{Spying on Ireland}, 299.
towards the Allies has only become available in the last few decades. Nevertheless, Robertson emphasizes the unhelpful, difficult aspect of Eire’s neutral stance throughout his cables.

While there, he made visits to both Catholic Cardinal MacRory and Protestant Archbishop Gregg. These experiences were drastically different. The Cardinal immediately told him he had “no regard for American people,” and shortly after speaking with him abruptly left. Whereas the archbishop, told him that President Roosevelt was a great man and the two spoke for half an hour on how the fight against Germany was very much a Christian crusade. In his reporting on Northern Ireland, Robertson uses these divisions to criticize and articulate his position on American neutrality—something, which surely would move an American audience reading these articles and cables. After explaining in detail divisions in Northern Ireland, Robertson broadcasts his real feelings towards American neutrality:

In Northern Ireland the majority is fighting but in America not even the minority has succeeded in doing anything about our fighting. We are divided worse than they are. In Belfast you find yourself saying why do we at home keep on trembling at edge of precipice. What is it that holds us back—is it fear is it lack or resolution is it lack of leadership. You find yourself saying again and again and again that it is better to be bombed than it is to say to the world that this is our war and then to allow another countrys men to die for us in our battle. It is not honorable it is not worthy of us—our fathers would be ashamed of such conduct. In Belfast you find yourself wondering what has become of that sense of destiny which used to inspire us. What does Hitler care about our elaborate political maneuvering? What does he care about all speeches we have been making. All that Hitler asks of us is to stay out of war until end of this summer. He will have us then, we will have contributed our fullest measure to our own defeat….this is the saddest most heartbreaking July in all history of the American world\textsuperscript{168}

\textsuperscript{168} Ben Robertson, Cable from Belfast to New York, July, 3 1941, 5, Ben Robertson Papers.
Ben Robertson, along with almost a majority of his fellow Americans stationed in Britain and throughout the war desperately attempted to persuade the United States to enter the fray. Robertson is highly critical of neutral Eire, but as one can see, he is also vehemently against American neutrality. And, as Americans stationed in Britain, they were constantly being questioned and cornered by Britons about America. The British were constantly looking for answers that would relieve some of their fears and anxieties of the war, looking for support. This is seen from Lynne Olson’s portrayal of U.S. ambassador Gil Winant as a major advocate for U.S. aid and effort towards the British cause, to Ben Robertson’s firsthand experiences as a resident of London.

The reality was, however, that America remained neutral for a good portion of the war, especially during the perilous months of the Battle of Britain. Its neutrality, like the Irish, was supported throughout the nation, even if not as fiercely as in Ireland. This perplexed the Irish. Americans were criticizing their neutral stance, urging them to relinquish their ports and air bases, but America herself remained peacefully neutral until attacked at Pearl Harbor. Americans were more removed from the war, no matter how much these journalists, politicians, and reporters wanted them to join the war. They criticized Ireland’s neutrality, the people’s ambivalence towards immediate threats and their lack of aid to the British in the most ominous circumstances, such as the Battle of the Atlantic, but America was in a similar situation. They had the potential to aid Britain much more in the beginning of the war, and most of these war correspondents saw that. Like Ed Murrow, who upon return to America in November of 1941 was utterly appalled at what he saw. Like many others in his situation, “Murrow had trouble coping with the
sheer normality of America, the seeming lack of concern about the fighting and dying on the other side of the ocean, the apparent refusal to acknowledge that America had any stake in the outcomes of this cataclysm.” In fact, after seeing the situation and attitudes in the United States, compared with what he knew was happening in London, Murrow ended up, “spending most of my time trying to keep my temper in check, so many well-dressed, well-fed, complacent-looking people.”

These Americans and war correspondents had good reason to fear British defeat and Nazi takeover, however they still do not represent the American opinion on the war. As seen with the American newspaper coverage on the war, and of Ireland, the United States remained neutral and undecided on issues like Irish neutrality until Pearl Harbor. Perhaps that is because of the large Irish-American population, Anglophobia, or because living thousands of miles of the warzone, Americans could not possibly comprehend the real horrors of war experienced by those like Robertson or Reynolds. War correspondents in Britain, no matter what nationality, witnessed the destructions caused by the Third Reich and the innocent victims involved. They saw the undefeated mindset of the British and their stance against this heartless foe.

When arriving in Ireland or even the United States, neutral nations at peace, after experiencing the destruction, fear, and realities of 20th century warfare, of course they are going to be shocked. Not only that, but the Irish were threatened with the same destruction, yet they still did not help the British fight the Nazi’s as a nation, even if thousands of Irish men and women joined the British forces and the country’s sympathies

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169 Olson, *Citizens of London*, 141.
laid with Britain. They saw the Irish as selfish, and perhaps rightfully so. These journalists saw that Ireland’s history with Britain stood in the way of their involvement. The historical memories of centuries of brutalities, the question over partition, the bullying of the England, they all were at the forefront of the Irish stance of neutrality. Looking at the Irish, these were reason enough to stay neutral—even Irish volunteers explored in the previous chapter did not call into questions de Valera’s policy. But why not pursue a policy that will help secure national sovereignty and keep the Irish from the destructions of war? Ben Robertson, Quentin Reynolds, Helen Kirkpatrick, Vincent Sheean, and the other American journalists saw this Irish mindset as irrational. To them, the Irish needed to get over their divisions and centuries-old conflicts with the British in face of German threats. Overall, these American war correspondents could not and would not see eye to eye with the Irish. They saw the historical issues in the war, but knew they could never wrap their brains around the Irish’s justifications. As Reynolds states: “To understand the Irish one must study them at long range. You cannot get to know them by living with them. You will get to know that they are lovable and honest and very brave, but this is no understanding.”

And though much of this chapter explores the critiques American correspondents had of Irish neutrality while America was also neutral, the critiques were only amplified after the United States entered the war. Though America’s entry was “bound to affect the attitude of the average Irishman,” as

\footnote{Reynolds, The Wounded Don’t Cry, 122.}
the U.S. newspaper coverage further testifies, Ireland held firm to its neutrality against growing American criticisms.\textsuperscript{171}

\textsuperscript{171} Helen Kirkpatrick, “Demand Raised for Bases in Ireland to Offset Naval Losses,” \textit{Chicago Daily News}, December 15, 1941.
CHAPTER FOUR

SYMPATHETIC TO NONSENSICAL: HOW U.S. NEWSPAPERS COVERED IRISH NEUTRALITY

Americans should have no difficulty in understanding the position the Irish have taken regarding participation in the war. It took Ireland centuries to do what was done here during the seven years of the American Revolution.
- New York Times, March 16, 1941

From the recollections of the wartime experiences of Irish men and women to the commentaries of American war correspondents visiting Ireland, one can see how various perspectives on Irish neutrality developed. The oral histories and memoirs of Irish men and women demonstrate how Ireland’s experience with neutrality was widely supported throughout the nation and in many ways benefited Eire. However, from perspectives of American war correspondents, coming to Ireland from the battleground of the United Kingdom, Ireland’s position was not only frustrating but in many ways incomprehensible. This perception was exemplified by the experiences of Americans Ben Robertson, Quentin Reynolds, and the U.S. ambassador to Eire, David Gray. 172 Whereas the previous chapters discussed how the Irish viewed neutrality as well as how the experiences of American war correspondents shaped their opinions on Eire’s neutral stance, this chapter will examine how American newspapers portrayed Irish neutrality to the American public throughout the war.

Although some of the articles published in American papers were written by the very war correspondents explored in the previous chapter, such as Ben Robertson’s

reporting for New York’s *PM*, the American papers’ coverage’s and criticisms of Ireland in the Second World War are more reflective of the United State’s overall position in the worldwide conflict. American neutrality, along with the large Irish-American influence in the United States allowed for a more objective depiction of Irish neutrality in U.S. papers, whether they were articles written by or pertaining to Irish-American support for Eire or simply covering Ireland’s perspective on major issues, such as the continuing controversy over Irish ports. Even though criticism also arose from U.S. papers such as *PM*, the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Wall Street Journal* before December 1941, they did so alongside other articles that explained or sometimes even defended Ireland’s neutral position. However, once the United States joined the war, fully committed to the British and Allied cause, U.S. coverage on Eire and Irish neutrality grew increasingly critical.

This chapter explores the coverage U.S. newspapers gave Ireland from 1939 until the end of the war. Eire rarely received front-page attention, remaining on the periphery of war coverage in the United States; however, the coverage that was given by U.S. papers is worthy of attention. It furthers the historical understanding of Ireland during the Second World War by examining how the small, island nation was portrayed in the press of one of the major combatants. Additionally, U.S newspapers illuminate yet another way Americans viewed Eire and the war apart from the war correspondents. They show that coverage pertaining to Ireland during the war predominantly reflected the geographical isolation of the United States from the European war and the changing position of the U.S. from a neutral nation to a belligerent.
From the beginning of the war, people in the United States, although well aware of the conflicts abroad, were distanced from the war compared to those in Britain or even in the Irish Free State, allowing for a more objective view on Ireland to be taken until the U.S. became openly involved. The U.S. was 3,000 miles away from the European theatre of war, feeling no immediate threat of invasion like the British and Irish feared after Dunkirk.\footnote{173} Furthermore, in being so far away the United States did not have to worry about aerial bombings of its cities, a devastating consequence of belligerency in Second World War Europe. As seen in the previous discussion of American war correspondents in Britain, this was part of everyday life and was even felt in parts of neutral Ireland as well. Ireland was bombed several times on “accident,” and Eire aided Northern Ireland with fire brigades and ambulances after the Luftwaffe struck Belfast.\footnote{174} Even after the United States entered the war, Americans felt the repercussions less drastically than in Great Britain or even Ireland. In Great Britain it is estimated that 62,000 civilians died throughout the war, compared to the United States, where besides the attack on Pearl Harbor, barely any civilians died unless they were actively involved in war zones abroad, such as volunteer ambulance drivers or journalists.\footnote{175} More than a year before the United

\footnote{173} As described by Lynne Olson, \textit{Citizens of London: The Americans Who Stood with Britain in its Darkest, Finest Hour} (New York: Random House, 2010), 231.  
\footnote{174} See page 38.  
States even joined the war, air raids had already killed 14,000 civilians and injured over 20,000 in the United Kingdom.\textsuperscript{176}

Although hundreds of thousands American lives were lost or maimed fighting in the war, a majority of people back home still felt the effects of war less than those in Eire or especially Britain. Rationing in the United States did not begin until spring of 1942, and the cutbacks were less widespread than in the island nations of Great Britain and Eire, who were dependent on war-torn shipping lanes for a large portion of their commodities. In the United States, basic items were rationed, such as sugar, meats, cheese, shoes, fuel, oil, and coffee from 1942 until the end of the war.\textsuperscript{177} Although an American could not purchase as much as they might want from the store each week, they still could get ahold of these items and they were not in as short supply as in Great Britain or Ireland. In neutral Ireland, Clair Wills emphasizes that the poorest sections of society struggled with wartime cutbacks.\textsuperscript{178} And even those that had wealth to purchase necessary foodstuffs, cutbacks affected the nation at large. Almost everyone in Dublin relied on bicycles for transportation while the population turned to burning turf as a major energy source.\textsuperscript{179} In Great Britain, rationing was even more structured and lasted well

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{176} Raymond Daniell, "Churchill Sees Rising U-Boat Peril; Urges Ireland to Modify Neutrality: All Parties in Commons Back Plea for Bases," \textit{New York Times} (Cabled from London), November 6, 1940.


\textsuperscript{178} Clair Wills, \textit{That Neutral Island: A Cultural History of Ireland During the Second World War} (Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 2007), 244.

\textsuperscript{179} See Page 37.
\end{footnotesize}
after the war ended. Lynne Olson emphasizes the stark differences in rationing between the United States and Great Britain in her study of Americans in London, explaining that in the United States, “eggs, which were almost nonexistent in Britain became a meat substitute in America. Margarine took the place of butter, and when sugar was rationed, it was replaced by corn syrup and saccharin,” and although restricted, “American motorists never had to give up their cars entirely.” Looking at rationing alone, the differences between the American experiences and the experiences of those living in the European war zone or on the edge of it are clear. In fact, one could argue that the Irish had more reason to join the war than Americans, who were clearly more distant from its direct impacts.

Therefore, when exploring how American newspapers covered and presented Irish neutrality to the larger American audiences, it must be kept in mind where they were reporting from and who their intended audiences were. Reporters such as Robertson and Reynolds were highly critical of Irish as well as American neutrality because of what they experienced in Britain; however, most Americans supported neutrality until the attack on Pearl Harbor. Additionally, articles cabled to the United States from places London or Dublin are more representative of the respective cities in which they were written. For instance, reports out of London tend to explain the significant consequences of Irish neutrality and why Eire’s position could be detrimental to Britain’s war effort. This is seen with Raymond Daniell’s 1940 article, cabled from London to the New York

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Daniell covers the secret meetings that occurred after Dunkirk, when the governments of Eire, Northern Ireland, and Great Britain met to discuss Eire’s weak defenses and a potential Nazi invasion. He writes that it, “clearly indicates Premier de Valera is again blackmailing the British Government to end the partition and this at the very moment when an enemy is at our gates.” As Robert Fisk has argued, British officials were willing to negotiate an end of partition in June 1940 if Eire entered the war, but Churchill and de Valera could not agree on the terms. Nevertheless, Daniell’s take on the meetings represent Britain’s critical sentiments towards de Valera and Irish neutrality. On the other hand, articles sent from Dublin paint the Irish position more positively. Just four days after Daniell’s article, Harold Denny cabled from Dublin to report Eire’s build-up of arms in order to defend the nation from an invasion. Denny explains that most Irish sympathize with the British in spite of their fervent neutrality but cannot join the war because, “as the average Irishman sees it, Ireland contributed 320,000 volunteers to the British forces in the World War and for a reward got Black and Tan rule after the war.” Denny’s article was inevitably influenced by his surroundings in Ireland and the prevalence of censorship in Eire during the Second World, but regardless his
article alongside Daniell’s shows the varying perspectives covered in U.S. newspapers depending on where they were reporting.

Additionally, the coverage given to Eire differed slightly amongst these U.S. newspapers. All of these papers covered major events and issues of the worldwide conflict; yet, they each had differing foci and political slants. For instance, the Wall Street Journal, a financial and politically conservative newspaper, covered Eire throughout the war in articles pertaining the Ireland’s commercial and economic interests.186 Also, The Wall Street Journal covered Ireland less thoroughly than other American papers such as New York Times or Washington Post, both of whom allot a significant amount of coverage to the international scene. As Aurora Wallace states, for the New York Times it was “particularly important for the paper to serve the local audience well with substantive foreign news. With a large and growing population, many of whom were newly arrived immigrants from Europe, readers were more demanding of complete coverage of events back home.”187 The coverage given to Eire in the New York Times was, like the other papers, increasingly critical of Eire, however it also reflected the large Irish-American population in the United States and the New York area, covering groups in the United States that supported de Valera’s policy such as the Friends of Irish Neutrality. The attention given to Eire by the New York Times and the Washington Post, two of the largest American papers even during the Second World War, was relatively similar. Both of these papers prided themselves on giving fair, substantive news reports, and their

186 Seen with articles such as “Eire Increases Food Production,” Wall Street Journal, November 11, 1940 or “Eire Loan Issued,” Wall Street Journal, December 7, 1939.
reports on Ireland during the war reflect the overall importance of Eire as it pertained the United States.

Even though Eire was rarely ever front-page news, American readers were informed of Ireland’s neutrality and experience in the war alongside other articles presenting the brutalities of the war—at many times making Ireland’s neutrality look ridiculous in comparison. For instance, *PM*, a newspaper that reflected owner Ralph Ingersoll’s “political commitments to the liberal wing of the Democratic Party, the labor movement, and anti-fascism,” would print articles relating to Ireland’s refusal to allow the British military use of their ports alongside articles such as “What Germany Did to Poland.”¹⁸⁸ This article and similar ones, like “German Bombs Are Doing This to England,” presented American audiences with graphic images of the destruction and brutalities committed by Germany’s Third Reich upon innocent civilian victims.¹⁸⁹ So, although not every article pertaining to Eire outwardly condemned Irish neutrality, the reader could not help but question how Eire could remain neutral in the face of these criminal actions committed by Hitler’s regime and the threat that Germany posed of Eire herself.

The coverage given to Eire in *PM* was much more critical than the other papers, yet, similar to other papers such as the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, the criticisms relating to Ireland’s neutrality only grew. This reflects the findings of Michael Carew, who argues that American newspapers along with Americans grew more and

¹⁸⁹ “German Bombs Are Doing This to England,” *PM*, May 2, 1941.
more supportive of war from 1939 to 1940. Newspapers increasingly portrayed the international scene as an extreme threat to American life, and most Americans “relied on its news media for its perception of foreign affairs.”\(^{190}\) Throughout, U.S. press coverage, regardless of their focus or political leanings, gradually portrayed more of the negative consequences and effects of Irish neutrality as the war progressed further and the U.S. felt more threatened by the Nazi menace.

Overall, coverage of Irish neutrality published in the United States reflected the American interactions and involvements with Eire, Great Britain, and the war. Before the U.S. entered, newspapers did not display the same sense of urgency to join the war and help the British in whatever way possible that Americans in London did. Instead, the press reflected that U.S. interests were with a British victory but that the U.S. was still technically neutral. This is evident in from the economic developments within the United States as well as the government’s Lend-Lease agreement with Great Britain, which gave the United States temporary use of British seaports in exchange for desperately needed war materials. Even before U.S. entry into the war, the United States in many ways profited from the war and rearmament. For example, in June 1940, *PM* published the article, “Ford Gets Plane Engine Contract: British Order 6,000 and U.S. Contracts for 3,000,” speculating that this was leading to a prosperous economy and showing the

\(^{190}\) Michael G. Carew, *The Power to Persuade: FDR, the Newsmagazines, and Going to War, 1939-1941*, (Maryland: University Press of America, 2005); Robert Cole, *Propaganda, Censorship and Irish Neutrality in the Second World War* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2006) also examines Allied media on Ireland throughout the war, arguing that Allied press actively ridiculed Irish neutrality because it was viewed as a threat.
support that Americans had for the British. Just a few months later Emmett V. Maun wrote that, “steel shares hit a new high for 1940 yesterday” with “the stocks directly affect by rearmament profited most.” The growth of the U.S. economy and aid to Britain reflect the connections and investments that the United States had with the British. Therefore, it is understandable why articles in U.S. papers would push for Ireland to join the war or at least help the British cause by lending the Brits vital seaports.

However, even with American aid and interest in the British cause, many Americans still had deep connections with the Irish, dividing the opinions and viewpoints on Irish bases. Ben Robertson explains this strange position while visiting Ireland in his PM article on November 12, 1940:

When you are away from London you worry. You also as an American worry in Dublin about Irish bases—about the attitude of Britain, Eire, and the U.S.A. on the question. You understand the Eire position. You understand the British position. You understand also that we in America are too devoted to Ireland, and at the same time are determined to help Britain win this war. As an American in Dublin you realize we have the opportunity to help adjust this situation, for we still have a Boston Irish Ambassador credited to London, and we are as anxious for Ireland and England as we are for the U.S.A.

Although Robertson and reporters similar to him urged action by Ireland as well as the United States, the deep Irish-American connections and significant Irish minority left a large portion of the United States supportive of Eire. The United States was home to a very large Irish population, who supported Eire’s neutrality and rights over her own

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191 “Ford Gets Plane Engine Contract: British Order 6,000 and U.S. order 3,000...Aircraft Boom Spreads,” PM, June 19, 1940.
192 Emmett V. Maun, “Stocks go Up, Up, Up...Tempers of FDR’s Critics Tag Right Along,” PM, November 8, 1940.
193 Ben Robertson, “Dublin Street Lights Give Real Thrill After London Blackouts,” PM, November 12, 1940.
territory, such as the naval bases, until the United States joined the war and it became an essential issue for “Americans.” According to Kevin Kenny, between 1820 and 1920 roughly five million Irish men and women migrated to the United States, and although immigration was cut drastically after the First World War, roughly 260,725 Irish men and women immigrated to the United States in the 1920s, 30s and 40s. Even today, one out of every six Americans claim some degree of Irish ancestry. This very large Irish population within the United States is cited prominently alongside articles discussing Ireland’s neutrality. From information gathered in U.S. papers, many Irish-Americans supported de Valera’s position of neutrality and the obstacles surrounding a formal alliance with Great Britain.

One of the most heavily publicized organizations supporting Irish neutrality in the United States was the group Friends of Irish Neutrality. On December 9th, 1940 over 6,000 members of this group met in New York City and passed a resolution protesting “any attempt on part of any belligerent in Europe that would jeopardize peace and territorial integrity of Ireland.” From the coverage given, this group firmly supported Ireland’s position in the war, especially regarding the Irish retention of the treaty ports. The group even hosted a rally in honor of visiting General Frank Aiken, Eire’s Minister for Coordination of Defensive Measures. Here, where “the Irish flag—green, white and

195 Ibid., xi.
196 As seen in articles such as “Irish Here offer Prayers for Peace,” *New York Times*, April 20, 1941.
orange—hung over the platform between two American flags,” an audience of 4,500 Americans cheered on the Irish minister, widely supporting Eire’s determination to remain neutral and keep her bases from British occupation. At the time of the Second World War, PM estimated that over 745,000 Irishmen lived in the United States, and the prevalence Irish-American and support for Eire is clear. Some historians, such as T. Ryle Dwyer, argue that this population was so influential that the United States could not enter the war alongside Great Britain until it was directly attacked at Pearl Harbor. However, according to a Gallup poll taken in early 1941, 40% of the large Irish-American population thought that Eire should let England use her bases. Nevertheless, a significant amount of this large minority within United States supported and sympathized with Ireland’s position before America joined the war.

Indeed newspaper coverage on Eire in the first two years of the war is at many times broadly sympathetic to Ireland’s position. This is true of all of the newspapers discussed in this chapter. For instance, on November 11, 1940 the New York Times published “Bases Mean War, De Valera Insists: Even End of Irish Partition Would Not Sway Him, He Says, in Explaining Position.” This article briefly and sympathetically explained Ireland’s neutrality from the perspective of Taoiseach Eamon de Valera, quoting that, “this question is one which involves our national sovereignty and our

199 “Backdoor to Britain?,” PM, July 14, 1940.
people’s will. It also is one which involves the safety of our people.” Not only that, but it explained to an American audience that Ireland’s bases are no comparison to the agreement between the United States and Great Britain, lending Americans British ports for warships, because America is 3,000 miles away, and if America disobeys strict rules of neutrality, they do not have the immediate threat of Nazi attack as Eire did.

In response to the 1941 Gallup poll the Washington Post published an article entitled “The Irish Viewpoint.” Here, Edward Folliard described how, “for the Irish to turn over their ports to the British would be to ask the Germans to come over and do their worst—to do to Dublin and other Irish cities and towns what they had done to Coventry and Southampton, with a consequent slaughter of men, women, and children.” Even further, the article explains that similar to the United States, Ireland is a republic and the majority of the Irish nation supported neutrality. They understood that their fate was wrapped up with Great Britain’s, but the past atrocities committed by the British and the threat posed by Germany if they relinquished their ports to the British outweighed the benefits. This article—along with many others—described the position of Irish neutrality by emphasizing the bitter historical memories held by Irish men and women.

New York’s PM even published an extensive overview on Ireland in a Sunday edition entitled “Backdoor to Britain?” which highlighted how the past animosities between Eire and England prevented Ireland from allying with the British. After the evacuation at Dunkirk, invasion of Britain was a very real possibility, and many feared

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204 “Backdoor to Ireland? PM’s Gallery Presents IRELAND,” PM, July 14, 1940.
that the Nazis would first invade Ireland and use it as a base for the larger attack on Britain. *PM*’s article explores how Ireland could be used as a stepping-stone to Britain, and why the Irish pursued a policy of neutrality. Explaining that, “for 600 years the relations between England and Ireland have been marked by bloodshed. The result is that Ireland now is divided as the map shows” and consequently this “centuries old struggle for liberty help explain Eire’s determination to remain neutral.”

The idea that Ireland’s historical memory influenced their neutral stance was also emphasized in articles on American—particularly Irish-American—support for Irish neutrality. American sympathy is clear in the coverage of the Friends of Irish Neutrality, but also in other articles such as “Irish Here Offer Prayers for Peace: If Forced into War Eire would become ‘a Mass of Ruins,’ Father Flanagan says.” Here, coverage of an Irish-American clergyman illuminates the contentious history of Eire and Britain, and that elements within Irish society would rebel against any type of allegiance alongside the British in the war. *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* even explain that the majority of Irish want England to win because it is in their best interest (Britain is their largest trading partner, they support democracy, and cannot fend off the Nazi’s if Britain lost), but they still would like to see Britain “almost licked” due to the political and historical differences between the two nations.

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205 “Backdoor to Britain?,” *PM*.
Even though the Irish could not overcome past prejudices to join fully the British cause, American newspapers highlighted various ways in which Eire did assist the British. Briefly, articles covered the Irish men and women who joined the British forces and also how the Irish who remained in Eire helped the British cause and people. One way they did this was through negotiations to allow British women and children refuge from the bombed areas caused by the German Blitz in England, covered in the Washington Post article, “Asylum in Ireland.”\(^{208}\) Around the same time (October 1940) the *New York Times* published an article entitled “Irish Offer Homes to Bombed Britons.” Here, it was estimated the Ulster and Eire might take 25,000 Britons by Christmas, perhaps giving refuge ultimately to more than 100,000.\(^{209}\)

American newspapers also devoted significant attention to how the Battle of the Atlantic affected the Emerald Isle, whether in discussion of Irish ports, the minefields surrounding the island, or the victims who washed up on Ireland’s shores. As early as October 1939, victims of U-Boat attacks landed upon Ireland’s west coast, such as when a German submarine, reportedly responsible for the sinking of the Greek steamer *Diamantis*, dropped off twenty-eight survivors at Dingle, Co. Kerry.\(^{210}\) Evident from the press coverage on Ireland along with the historical scholarship regarding Eire, an increasing amount of Allied as well as ships from neutral nations were sunk off the Irish

\(^{208}\) “Asylum in Ireland,” *the Washington Post*, October 24, 1940.
coast by the German U-boats as the war carried on into 1940 and 1941, amplifying the
debate over Irish ports. In early November 1940, Hanson W. Baldwin’s article in the New
York times asserted that “about 3,400,000 tons of merchant shipping—some 930 ships—
have been lost by Britain,” since the war began, with 420 of them sunk since June 1st of
that year.\footnote{Hanson W. Baldwin, “Losses in Tonnage Serious to Britain: 930 Ships of
3,400,000 Ton Sunk During the War, 420 of These Since June 1,” New York Times,
November 7, 1940.} As this war at sea intensified, Britain looked to Eire as well as the United
States for aid. The U.S. responded with the Lend-Lease Act, in which the British lent the
U.S. naval bases in return for old U.S. battleships from the First World War. In spite of
sympathy for Eire; however, U.S. newspapers also pressed the issue of allowing the
British to use the Irish ports that they controlled only a few years previously.\footnote{Robert Fisk,
In Time of War, 257.}

American press thoroughly covered the Irish ports controversy, reporting on both
the British and Irish perspectives, yet, they presented more of a British perspective.
While discussing the “peril” of British merchant and naval shipping, the Associated Press
reported that, Winston Churchill “spoke bitterly...of the fact that Britain’s warships and
planes cannot refuel at the ports of neutral Ireland and said this, ‘is a most heavy and
grievous burden.’”\footnote{The Associated Press, “U-Boats Peril ‘Life of State,’ Churchill Says: Nation is
Warned to Except ‘Heavier Attack’ Next Year,” The New York Times (cabled from
London), November 6, 1940.} \textit{PM} reported that “a vigorous demand for British bases in Eire came
today from representatives of all parties and from the British press...the lack of such
bases was handicapping the Royal Navy in combatting the growing menace of German
Press coverage described the ports as rightfully British. In early 1941, the American Institute of Public Opinion found that 63% of Americans wanted Ireland to cede its bases to the British cause. Whether this reflects the American benevolence towards Great Britain in policies like the Lend-Lease or the influence of American newspapers describing the perilous condition of British shipping, it does show that a majority of Americans did not support Irish neutrality while the U.S. remained neutral. The same poll taken a year later, after the United States joins the war, reported that 90% of Americans now wanted Ireland to join the war and allow the British to use their ports, showing the changing interests on the war once the U.S. joined as well as the growing criticisms towards Irish neutrality.

Besides the major issue of Ireland’s ports, American press also touched upon significant events pertaining to Ireland, such as the bombings of Belfast as well as Dublin. For instance, when Belfast was bombed in late spring 1941, the *New York Times* commented on the rare amity between the Irish on both sides of the border in the article, “Barriers Burned Away.” And the *Washington Post* explained that southern Irishmen do not see Northern Ireland as a foreign country, and when they were bombed, “neutrality was thrown to the winds,” as Eire rushed aid to Belfast. Just a few weeks after Belfast was blitzed, “Dublin was bombed for the second time, and in that bombing 27 persons

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214 From the United Press, “Britain Wants Bases in Eire: Churchill’s Revelations That Fleet is Handicapped Bring Demands,” *PM*, November 6, 1940.
were killed and 80 injured.”

The bombings of neutral Ireland, which “neither the Dublin government nor the Irish people are under any illusions as to who was responsible” also brought further speculations by the press to the American people on Eire’s neutrality and whether or not this would encourage her to help the British. “

The negative effects of Irish neutrality were also highlighted in American newspapers, not only in terms of massive British losses in the Atlantic, but also in the reports of IRA actions or even the political policies, such as censorship, pursued by the Irish government. The Irish government imprisoned thousands of IRA suspects, as the press notes, and the majority of Irish people full-heartedly supported their government and its policy. However, at times the coverage given by U.S. newspapers on the I.R.A. present the organization as a lingering menace. For instance, on March 22 the New York Times reported that “four hundred armed men of the outlawed Irish Republican Army, defying the Ulster Government’s ban on demonstrations in commemoration for the Easter Week rebellion of 1916, paraded through Belfast.” PM asserted while describing Ireland’s neutrality that, “the most fanatical workers for an end of division between Northern Ireland and Eire are members of the illegal Irish Republican Army,

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which has been charged with dozens of bombings,” and warned that, “Germans might try
to use IRA to help weaken Ireland.”

Beyond coverage of the IRA, coverage on Irish censorship presented negative
aspects of the Irish government to the American people. Eire established “rigid press
censorship forbidding correspondents to send out-of-the-country uncensored reports of
any events connected with the war.” By looking at the reports given by the U.S. press,
it is evident that the American public was aware of, at least to some extent, Eire’s
extensive censorship. O’Drisceoil highlighted the thoroughness of Ireland’s censors,
which regulated newspapers, literature, film, and even news on fellow Irishmen fighting
abroad.

The negative consequences of Irish neutrality were present in American
newspapers even before U.S. entry into the war; however, once the attack on Pearl
Harbor happened, critiques in the American press on Irish neutrality only grew. While
American newspapers continued to criticize Irish policies such as censorship, stating that
it was, “unduly rigorous for a country that is not at war,” articles sympathizing with and
explaining Irish neutrality slowly dwindled. When the United States first entered the
war, U.S. media speculated that Ireland might join the war as well because the strong

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U.S.-Irish ties would swing Irish public opinion towards joining the war. On January 26, 1942 the *Washington Post* suggested that with “the entry of the United States into the war an increasingly larger section of Irish opinion is being persuaded that neutrality cannot much longer be maintained. Naval and air bases in Western and Southern Ireland are so essential to the whole Anglo-American strategy in the Atlantic that sooner or later the Irish government must yield.” PM reported that a “settlement on Irish naval bases predicted,” in January 1942. Newspapers thus made it seem only natural for Eire to join the war now that the United States shed its neutrality. When Eire continued to remain neutral, however, defenders of Irish neutrality were portrayed as ridiculous. After American troops landed in Northern Ireland in early 1942, de Valera accused the United States for violating Eire’s neutrality. The *Washington Post* published in article illuminating the flaws in Eire’s position on Northern Ireland. Explaining that, “the protest against the landing of American troops in Ulster is based on the theory that Eire, in refusing to recognize the partition created by the Anglo-Irish treaty of 1921, considers the six counties of Ulster part of its own territory;” however, if this is how the government in Dublin felt about Belfast, it is worth noting that, “no protests, as far as we can discover, were dispatched to Berlin about the repeated bombardments of Belfast.” Even more critical were Ralph Ingersoll’s comments on de Valera’s protests:

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229 “One-Way Neutrality,” *The Washington Post*, February 1, 1942; Another article that relates to this is “US Troops Land in a Troubled Spot: Lease-Lend ‘Comes True’
Funny people the Irish. A day or two ago I would have said they did not care who laid down his life that they might remain free—an Englishman or a Chinaman or a Russian. But now it seems they are getting choosy. De Valera’s protested our landing troops—even across the border in Ulster. What’s the matter? Aren’t we good enough to make the supreme sacrifice so that the Irish may have the privilege of going on fighting among themselves? Mayn’t we help make sure they are undisturbed by Nazi firing squads, Nazi hangman, Nazi axmen, Nazi machine-gun murderers of hostages, Gestapo concentration camp guards and all the other symbols of fascism?\(^{230}\)

Although this was just a postscript to his larger article pertaining to Egypt’s neutrality, it represents the same criticism that reporters like Quentin Reynolds held before the United entered the war: Ireland’s fate was tied up with the British, yet they refused to help out in the war effort. Not only that, but it makes de Valera, and therefore his entire policy, look ridiculous in the face of the larger concerns of the war.

Irrespective of these issues regarding U.S. troops in Northern Ireland, the coverage of U.S. newspapers on Ireland grew simply because the proximity of American interests to Ireland grew. Tens of thousands of American troops were stationed in Northern Ireland, and naturally American papers covered the activities of their soldier’s abroad and where they are located. Newspapers reported on Ireland for many reasons. The *New York Times* published an article entitled “Our men in Ireland urged to be cautious: Guide Book Advises A.E.F. to shun controversial topics,” which provided an overview of the advice given to U.S. troops as well as the factious climate through Ireland. Because “Ireland sent many gifted and valuable citizens to the United States,” American soldiers were told, “we Americans don’t worry about which side our

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grandfathers fought on in the Civil War, because it doesn’t matter now. But these things still matter in Ireland and it is only sensible to be forewarned,” so, “don’t argue religion,” and “don’t argue politics.”\footnote{Mary Pat Kelly, \textit{Home Away From Home: The Yanks in Ireland}, (Belfast: Appletree Press, 1994), 39.} Beyond the advice given to American G.I.’s, newspapers also touched on Americans who visited southern Ireland.\footnote{“American Civilians Enjoy Dublin’s Faire: But Soldiers and Sailors are Barred from Holiday Trip,” \textit{The New York Times}, December 27, 1943.} However, the newspapers only reported from the policy of the U.S. military, which formally banned soldiers from visiting neutral Ireland. They made no mention of the hordes of US soldiers who frequented Dublin while on leave.\footnote{Clair Wills, \textit{That Neutral Island}. [PP 3s]}

These reports were not necessarily critical of neutral Eire, but they highlighted the rifts between de Valera’s neutral government and Northern Ireland along with the United States. Additionally, they represent what interested U.S. journalists visiting Ireland and what they believed the American audience wanted to know about the Emerald Isle. But as the U.S. forces in Northern Ireland grew and invasion of the continent neared, American press became much more critical of Ireland’s neutrality. They gestured that Axis spies crossed into Northern Ireland from the South, ridiculed the Irish government for hosting enemy delegations after the American note was published, and at times, even accused Eire’s neutrality of favoring the Axis powers.

For example, the \textit{New York Times} reported on September 21, 1942, that (according to article’s title), “Pro-German Irishmen Spy on U.S. Troops in Ulster.”\footnote{Frank Kluckhohm, “Pro-German Irishmen Spy on U.S. Troops in Ulster,” \textit{New York Times} (Cabled from Somewhere in Northern Ireland), September 21, 1942.} The

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\item \footnote{Mary Pat Kelly, \textit{Home Away From Home: The Yanks in Ireland}, (Belfast: Appletree Press, 1994), 39.}
\item \footnote{“American Civilians Enjoy Dublin’s Faire: But Soldiers and Sailors are Barred from Holiday Trip,” \textit{The New York Times}, December 27, 1943.}
\item \footnote{Clair Wills, \textit{That Neutral Island}. [PP 3s]}
\item \footnote{Frank Kluckhohm, “Pro-German Irishmen Spy on U.S. Troops in Ulster,” \textit{New York Times} (Cabled from Somewhere in Northern Ireland), September 21, 1942.}
\end{itemize}
article conceded that most Irishmen are pro-British, but went on to explain how “the infiltration across the Eire border to North Ireland of numbers of South Irish who are sympathetic to the Nazis has caused trouble that is growing as the size of American forces and installations increases.” Concluding that, “as long as Eire maintains her present neutral position those working on the problem [spying] will be handicapped.” Other articles further supported the threat that Irish neutrality posed to the American War effort, such as the coverage on two Irishmen who parachuted into southern Ireland from German planes to work as spies for the Nazi regime in early 1944. Not only do these articles highlight major flaws in Irish neutrality, as seen by Americans, but also it further separated the interests and understandings of Irish neutrality from the American perspective.

The biggest criticism of Irish neutrality seen in American press reports surrounded the “American Note,” which asked the Irish government to expel the Axis legations of Japan and Germany leading up to D-Day; a request Ireland refused to grant. U.S. papers made clear that the “note” was sent to the Irish government, “based on the contention that there were espionage activities that constituted a danger to the lives of American soldiers and to the success of the Allied military operations.” However, U.S. newspapers also heavily cover the accusations made by Secretary of State Cordell Hull

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235 Kluckholm, “Pro-German Irishmen Spy on U.S. Troops in Ulster.”
and sent to de Valera by the U.S. ambassador to Ireland David Gray, which “stated flatly that Ireland’s neutrality was operating in favor of the Axis and against the Allies.”  

This accusation presented to the public via these U.S. newspapers (that Eire’s neutrality favored the Axis) was clearly wrong.  Nevertheless, these articles represent the growing criticisms on Irish neutrality from the U.S. perspective. Once America gave up her neutrality and as American interests in Ireland and their neutrality grew, it was only natural for Americans to have a more critical eye towards Eire’s policy. Some Americans, like Ben Robertson, found faults in Ireland’s neutrality from the beginning of the war, which could only be magnified after experiencing the Blitz in London. Robertson along with other American journalists such as Ralph Ingersoll, viewed Eire’s neutrality as Summer Welles put it in a Washington Post article—as Ireland having “been able both to have its cake and eat it.”  

Because the Irish have not suffered “the hourly fear of Nazi attack,” and that “the strong right arm of the British armed services, whether the Irish appreciate it or not, has saved them” from a Nazi invasion.

In spite of these accusations and criticisms, the Irish people still supported neutrality. They could not overcome their past with Great Britain, which was described by the Irish themselves, told to the American journalists visiting Eire, and explained to

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239 As the historians have shown throughout their studies on neutral Ireland, such as John P. Duggan’s Irish Neutrality and the Third Reich or Richard Doherty's Irish Volunteers.


241 Ibid.
the American populations through various press reports. This issue of the Irish historical memory with Great Britain is further supported by the fact that the Irish neutrality allowed them to avoid the devastations of modern warfare as well as unite and appease the various factions through the small nation. Nevertheless, as the war progressed, these explanations or understandings of Ireland’s neutrality slowly seemed more and more preposterous to the Allies, and it is reflected in these papers as well as in the accounts of the journalists. Nonetheless, it is important to see how these newspapers primarily reflect the political alignment of the United States. They were much more understanding of Irish neutrality before the U.S. joined the war because America’s strong ties with Ireland and the fact that America was also neutral.

In many ways the situation in America was similar to that in Ireland. The U.S. was not only neutral, but as Edward R. Murrow’s experience shows, going back to America from war-torn Britain was very close to the American journalists visiting Ireland just across the Irish Sea. As stated previously, in Murrow’s visit back to New York in November 1941, a friend described him as having, “trouble coping with the sheer normality of America,” and “the apparent refusal to acknowledge that Americans had any stake in the outcome of this cataclysm.”242 This mirrors some of the largest criticisms that Americans had of neutral Ireland; that they remained at peace while the British sacrificed everything to stave off the Nazis. The growing critiques of Irish neutrality present in American papers alongside the American journalists, who lived in Britain and only visited Ireland for short period, highlight how perceptions of Ireland’s neutrality are

242 Olson, *Citizens of London*, 141.
directly related to the environment in which they originated. But even with all of these changing and at times conflicting views on Irish neutrality, Eire remained on the periphery of world conflict, not as many in Britain and America wished, as one of the Allied nation.
CONCLUSION

From this study, it is evident that surrounding Ireland’s neutrality were conflicting and evolving opinions. Yet, even with these passionate critiques of Irish neutrality, especially from the American war correspondents, Ireland was only important as it pertained to the larger world conflict. The most prevalent criticisms on Ireland arose at the height of the Battle of the Atlantic, when Britain’s hold was wavering, and then again during Allied preparations for the invasion of continental Europe, where Eire and its people were viewed as a security threat to American lives and the Allied war effort at large. Even though Ireland and her policy only sparked the interests of foreign onlookers on the periphery of the larger, major wartime events and issues, studying the experiences of Ireland’s “Emergency” and her critics illuminates the conflicting interests and opinions of individuals as well as nations. Showing that the attitudes on Ireland’s neutrality, both from American reporting and the Irish, reflect the self-interest of those involved.

While looking back upon Irish neutrality—exploring the Irish viewpoints, the Irish interactions in and with the war, and even Eire’s detachment from it—the contours of Irish neutrality are justified, or at the very least understandable. Irish men and women supported neutrality, they were seemingly united under the policy, and even those that physically fought for the British refrained from criticizing or even commentating on Eire’s neutrality. That being said, it is important to bear in mind that, in hindsight, Ireland’s policy during the war may seem inevitable. However, if somebody other than Taoiseach Eamon de Valera headed the Irish government, Eire’s role throughout the war could have been drastically different. Under de Valera’s leadership, he implemented
heavy censorship and publically emphasized nationalistic sentimentalities alongside the justification of Eire’s neutrality and right to it. As seen throughout this thesis, many of the Irish responses to and reasoning’s for neutrality reflect those of Eamon de Valera and the Irish government. Perhaps this was how the majority of the nation truly felt, or perhaps this displays the influential effects of censorship and the government. Additionally, the Ireland interned thousands of IRA members throughout “the Emergency,” which consequently could have impacted the sense of unity throughout Ireland during the Second World War. Whether or not these policies led by de Valera’s government altered the way in which Eire’s neutrality was viewed and remembered, they are important to consider when studying the Irish perspective throughout World War II.

Similar notions must be kept in mind when delving into the American opinion on Ireland throughout the war. Were the Irish really that passionate about the oppressive British rule, such as the Black and Tans, as reported by these Americans? Or, was that just an easy answer for Irishmen to give an inquiring foreigner? Simply put, the Irish may have seen no great need to enter such a large, brutal conflict, but for Americans to report the long, embittered Irish history as the main reason for the Irish staying out of the war, it made the Irish look more ridiculous to their audiences—promoting their viewpoint on Eire’s neutrality. Regardless of how correct or fairly these Americans interpreted and reported Irish neutrality, their criticisms on it can be viewed as reasonable given their experiences. As these critics perceived, or at least claimed to, Ireland’s neutrality was based upon historical and political circumstances within Eire; yet, Ireland was just as susceptible to the war and its outcome as Great Britain and the rest of Europe.
It is impossible to understand what truly drove the Irish to support neutrality or the American reporters and newspapers to condemn it, but it is clear that this policy had both positive and negative consequences. An obvious benefit of remaining neutral was Eire’s avoidance of the devastating impacts of the blitz. On the other hand, neutrality also had damaging effects, one of which is directly reflected in this historiography of Ireland. Because Eire refrained from the war—a war in which determined the fate of democracies throughout Europe—it was only after the movement towards Irish revisions that historians began to study Ireland during the Second World War in earnest. Otherwise, Ireland’s lack of participation would reflect poorly upon the nationalistic interpretations of Irish history.

The policy of neutrality had many benefits and consequences, yet what is even more important is that Eire was able to survive the Second World War. In retrospect, Ireland was never invaded by the Germans, the British won the Battle of the Atlantic, Eire’s policies and people favored the Allies, and Eire was able to survive the war as a technically neutral nation, unified under this policy. Whether or not Eire’s entry into the Second World War would have altered the outcome of the war will forever be debatable, however, the policy of neutrality did affect this tiny island nation thereafter. Criticisms towards Ireland continued, especially after de Valera paid condolences to the German Minister, Eduard Hempel, following Hitler’s death. Ireland did not join the United Nations until 1955, the Irish people had difficulties confronting the realities of the Second World War, and Partition as well as Ireland’s sovereignty apart from Great Britain was further cemented.
During the Second World War, Ireland was a small nation on the edge of the European continent, but her policies attracted a variety of opinions and criticisms. Irrespective of what motivated the Irish, American correspondents as well as newspapers, they all display how differing perspectives on the same policy, one in which was supported by the majority of the nation, could form and evolve. Most importantly, they illuminate the experiences and agendas of individuals as well as nations in time of war. Irish men and women saw the conflict as Britain’s, and supported the neutrality while still sympathizing with the Allies. From the first hand experiences of war correspondents, they had a duty to report on what they found most important to American audiences. At times this was urging Ireland to relinquish her ports or neutrality altogether, and at other times it was persuading the American public to support the United States involvement as well. All in all, they never could or would agree upon Eire’s neutrality—they each perceived Ireland’s dilemma in the Second World War from their own respective angles.
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