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Neutrality, Censorship, and Isolation:

The Irish-Jewish Community and World War II

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Abstract

This thesis explores the experience of the Irish-Jewish community before, during, and after the Second World War, a period marked by neutrality, censorship, and isolation of its Jewish population from the crisis occurring in mainland Europe. Through census data, government records, newspaper archives, and, most importantly, memoirs, this study reconstructs the realities of Jewish life in 1930s and 40s Ireland at the peak of their population. It explores how the close-knit community navigated the challenges of a predominantly Christian country, which, like many other countries in 1938, felt they did not have the capabilities to support Jewish emigrants on the continent. Ireland's neutrality continued an already restrictive refugee policy and introduced fragile protection. Germany would break the neutrality of several other nations, and while the British Royal Navy controlled surrounding seas, the Irish Jews did not know how long that protection would last. However, this thesis also considers the broader context of Irish attitudes toward Jews and the role of Christian minorities in supporting Jewish neighbors, something celebrated by those interested in seeing Ireland's reputation as a country with minimal antisemitism history maintained.

Central to this work are memoirs by Theo Garb, David Marcus, Stanley Price, Lionel Cohen, and Nick Harris, whose firsthand accounts create an intense intersection of security, survivor's guilt, and the experience of a rare hyphenated identity. These narratives provide insight into how Irish Jews' lives changed as a result of war, how they learned of the Holocaust and reacted to news of atrocities, and how they maintained connections with global Jewry, often through family members, despite intentional barriers to information. By balancing personal testimony and official records, this thesis demonstrates how Ireland offered its Jewish citizens relative safety at the cost of isolation and limited representation. Ultimately, the memoirs used

are essential to the history of Jewish Ireland during World War II, as historians cannot fully understand this experience without putting the voices of those who lived it at the center, highlighting both the privileges and the burdens of survival in a neutral nation.

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Introduction

In 1926, Éire, the Irish language name for Ireland, held its first census after its war for independence, showcasing its sizable Catholic majority. According to the data, out of Ireland's 1926 population of 2,971,992 citizens, only 220,723 considered themselves as something other than the majority.[1] Under the header of "other religions" existed its small Jewish population of 3,686.[2] This population had seen considerable growth in the 1880s when larger populations of Jewish immigrants arrived from Lithuania due to increased antisemitism in that region. As seen in the same census reports, the population grew from 394 in 1881 to 1,506 in 1891 and nearly doubled in the next ten years as the communities across the island grew to 3,006.[3] The Jewish population was one of two religious populations from 1861-1936 to see any substantial population increase, seconded only by Baptists from 1881-1891, which grew by 55.2%.[4] By 1936, a majority of Ireland's Jewish population had settled in urban centers, with 3,643 Jewish citizens living in "towns" (1,500 or more inhabitants) and 3,359 of them living in towns in the province of Leinster, home of Ireland's capital city Dublin.[5] Dublin would quickly become home to Jewish life in Ireland, followed only by Cork, the largest city in the province of Munster, which had the second-largest Jewish population in 1936, of 273.[6] These two cities would define

[1] Central Statistics Office (Ireland), Census of Population of Ireland, 1936: Volume 3, Part 1, Table 1A, B, C—Population Classified by Religion, accessed March 30, 2025, https://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/census/census1936results/volume3/C_1936_VOL_3_Pt1_T1a,b,c.pdf.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Central Statistics Office (Ireland), Census of Population of Ireland, 1936: Volume 3, Part 1, Table 5A, B, C—Population Classified by Age Groups and Religion, accessed March 30, 2025, https://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/census/census1936results/volume3/C_1936_VOL_3_Pt1_T5a,b,c.pdf.

[6] Ibid.

Jewish life in Ireland as the nation entered times of war and neutrality that would profoundly affect its population and those that represent it.

Ireland's relationship with its Jewish inhabitants is one frequently commended. As the Dublin correspondent of the *Liverpool Weekly Post* reported in February 1939, with Nazi Germany acting as the leading voice of antisemitism in mainland Europe for half a decade at that point, "it has always been a proud thought that never in this country has the cult of anti-semitism successfully raised its leprous head."[7] Indeed, Ireland never imposed the same levels of discrimination that Jews in mainland Europe at the time were facing. However, they were not entirely immune to these troubles. Small anti-Jewish groups popped up to distribute leaflets from time to time in an attempt to sway the majority's opinion, but they found minute success, as the antisemitism movement was not well received by Ireland's citizen population. However, that mattered little when those in power held those beliefs instead. Ireland's political decision-making regarding immigration and, subsequently, refugees made it clear who, in particular, some governmental leaders believed should and should not be citizens of their country. On the public stage, "neutrality" played a key role in keeping wartime immigration under control, but the passing of laws to limit "aliens" would occur even before the war began. Yet not all politicians held these beliefs, and key players emerged as backers of Ireland's Jewish community, recognizing the population as supporters of their new nation.

When World War Two began in 1939, Ireland had foreseen these actions, unofficially announcing its neutrality two years prior when Taoiseach Éamon de Valera "declared Eire a neutral state, promising that it would be benevolently neutral as no Irish interests were at stake."[8]

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[7] "ALL-IRELAND PRIMATE CONDEMNS ANTI-SEMITISM: Nazis Active in Eire," *Jewish Chronicle*, February 17, 1939, 33.

[8] Robert Cole, *Propaganda, Censorship and Irish Neutrality in the Second World War* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 5.

Ireland's relationship with Great Britain was essential to both nations, so by claiming neutrality, they had sparked genuine worry about a "back door" for any enemy nation to exploit. While the Axis powers never successfully invaded either Britain or Ireland, Germany took advantage of Ireland's neutrality by keeping U-boats off their shores in an attempt to sink British ships. In November 1940, Winston Churchill gave a speech in which he laid out his complaints:

> More serious than the air raids has been the recent recrudescence of U-boat sinkings in the Atlantic approaches to our islands. The fact that we cannot use the South and West coasts of Ireland to refuel our flotillas and aircraft and thus protect the trade by which Ireland as well as Great Britain lives is a most heavy burden, and one which should never have been placed on our shoulders, broad though they be.[9]

Many people recognized that although Ireland remained neutral, that alone was insufficient to fend off a German invasion. On April 9–10, 1940, Germany invaded five countries with established neutrality policies: Denmark, Norway, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Belgium.[10]

Ireland's policy of neutrality was not official until October 1939. However, when war broke out in September, the Government of Ireland passed the Emergency Powers Act to maintain its neutral ambition.[11] On September 15th, 1939, the *Irish Times* outlined in detail the actions of this order, which directly limited imports of newspapers and periodicals into the country, except those under license. Any newspaper import without a license could be "detained by Customs officers or seized by the police in certain circumstances."[12] Domestic publications, too, experienced censorship, making it possible for any "authorised person" (explicitly described as the Controller of Censorship, the Assistant Controller of Censorship, the Chief Press Censor,

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[9] "Eire and Germany - Some 'Top Secret' Documents of the Second World War", PRONI D1327/20/3/38.

[10] "Neutral Countries in WWII," World Population Review, accessed February 7, 2025, https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/neutral-countries-in-world-war-ii.

[11] Cole, *Propaganda, Censorship and Irish Neutrality in the Second World War,* 21.

[12] "EIRE AND NEWSPAPER IMPORTS: Government's Censorship Powers - Food Prices to Be Controlled," *Irish News*, September 15, 1939.

and any Minister) to "prohibit the publication of any specified matter…and may require matter to be submitted for censorship before publication."[13] Posts and Telegraphs to and from places outside of Ireland also experienced censorship by authorities.[14]

Ireland did not have their own news agencies and war correspondents to provide unbiased, independent information about the war. Instead, they relied heavily on British news agencies, so any information shared with Ireland's citizens was first 'neutralised' to not act as war propaganda for the Allies.[15] In an attempt to stand "not only outside [of the conflict] but above," the Irish government established a policy of 'moral neutrality,' demanding that "both sides be morally equated, that information revealing one side be more cruel, inhuman, etc. than the other be kept from the Irish public's view."[16] This policy would continue as war raged, and as the Nazi Final Solution crushed the European Jewish population, Jews in Ireland remained primarily unaffected.

With "Irish" and "Jewish" a considerably rare combination, so to speak, there exists a small and succinct collection of historiography to explore. Using the population's stories as stepping stones creates a clear picture of Jewish Ireland during the 20th century. Looking across both historical and contemporary data, the largest recorded Jewish population in Ireland—both in absolute numbers and as a percentage of the total population—occurred in the 1930s and 1940s, peaking in the 1946 census with 3,907 individuals, or approximately 0.1322% of the national

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Nick Maxwell, "'Moral Neutrality' Censorship in Emergency Ireland," *History Ireland*, February 21, 2013, https://historyireland.com/moral-neutrality-censorship-in-emergency-ireland/.

[16] Ibid.

population.[17] As a result, these life stories almost always included something about the war and how it affected themselves and their families.

Methodology

The exploration of key sources can help answer meaningful questions about Jewish life in Ireland during censorship: What was Jewish life like in Ireland? How did their lives change due to war and its subsequent requirements? Did they have any knowledge of the ongoing atrocities? If so, where was the information coming from? How did these communities react and support Jewish communities abroad?

In answering these questions, I utilize a wide selection of both primary and secondary sources that have been collected from various locations. In order to gather online primary source material, I utilized newspaper archives for both *The Jewish Chronicle* and *The Irish Times*, keyword searching for headlines related to my research. *The Jewish Chronicle*, while being a United Kingdom-based publication, had Irish readers and writers as demonstrated by an "Éire" section in most editions. This newspaper, particularly before the war, would frequently write about Jewish relations in Ireland, making it an essential resource when researching the community.

I also had the privilege of traveling to Dublin, Ireland, and Belfast, Northern Ireland in January 2025 to explore sources in person at various libraries, archives, and museums, including the National Library of Ireland, University College Dublin Special Collections, The National Archives of Ireland, Public Records Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI), Queen's University Special Collections, and the Irish Jewish Museum in Dublin. Not only did these locations provide me with hands-on access to various governmental and police records, but also personal

[17] Central Statistics Office (Ireland), Census of Population of Ireland, 1971: Volume 9, Table 1A—Persons of Each Religion at Each Census - 1881 to 1946, 1961 and 1971, accessed March 30, 2025, https://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/census/census1971results/volume9/C_1971_V9_T1ab.pdf.

letters that shed light on direct censorship orders and the ways Irish politicians attempted to limit any immigration into their nation, particularly Jewish refugees.

However, perhaps the most important discovery made on this trip was the surprising number of Irish-Jewish memoirs available, written by those who lived during the exact period I traveled there to study. These memoirs allowed me to take a closer, more personal look into the lives of those who lived during the peak of Judaism in Ireland, and gather their stories in order to further understand Jewish life in a predominantly Christian country. Their first hand experience with neutrality, censorship, and isolation as a result of World War II introduces stories that would not be told in standard secondary scholarship.

Irish-Jewish studies is already a small historical niche, and by not including these memoirs, we miss out on the voices and experiences that bring the community's history to life. Without them, our understanding remains incomplete, lacking the personal insights and everyday realities that only firsthand accounts can offer, limiting our understanding to only what official records or conventional histories can provide. This combination of sources allows for a more personal exploration of Jewish life in Ireland, while also providing insight into the governmental decisions that shaped their experiences and those of their close-knit communities.

Chapter One: Jewish Ireland

The Jewish Community of Dublin, particularly during the 1930s, found its home on or near Clanbrassil Street. Almost all of the memoirs of those who grew up in Dublin mention this street as the heart of their community, dubbing it "Little Jerusalem," which became the name of Nick Harris' publication. Harris writes that "Clanbrassil Street was the heart of the Jewish community. It catered for all the Jewish people in Dublin, and for at least 95 per cent of them it

was within walking distance… In the 1920s, and indeed until after World War II, very few people had fridges, so they had to shop nearly every day for food."[18] This Jewish community did not cover a large area, with Clanbrassil Street only approximately 300 yards long.[19] Nonetheless, "these shops together with two or three other streets were responsible for supplying the needs of the entire Jewish community."[20] Due to Ireland's limited antisemitism, the Jewish community did not have to hide where they were, and as Theo Garb describes in his memoir, "there was never a fear of having a Jewish name displayed in large letters on a storefront; this was wonderful and not taken for granted by the community. That sense of security was remarkable considering Jewish history in other lands and what was about to take place in Europe."[21] David Marcus in his short stories book *Who Ever Heard of an Irish Jew* also described Clanbrassil Street as the community's heart, describing it as "a narrow street to which the hundreds of Jews fleeing from persecution in Poland and Russia and Lithuania came and made their own."[22] These immigrants are responsible for the significant influx of the Jewish population in the 1880s, often marked by historians as the beginning of Ireland's modern Jewish community. While these refugees came from the same region and for the same purpose, they carried with them different religious beliefs. The Irish Jewish Museum, now housed in the closed Walworth Synagogue near Clanbrassil Street, serves as a reminder of this once-thriving area. Presented in a display case entitled "An Overview," the museum describes how "[i]n Dublin, the area in the vicinity of the South Circular Road, Portobello and Dolphin's Barn became the centre of Jewish life. Hardly a street in those

[18] Nick Harris, *Dublin's Little Jerusalem* (Dublin: A. & A. Farmer 2002), 30.

[19] Harris, 45.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Theo Garb, *Emerald Ark: Memories of a Jewish Irish Youth* (self-pub., Michael Garb, 2023), 49.

[22] David Marcus, "The Clanbrassil Bagel," in *Who Ever Heard of an Irish Jew? And Other Stories* (Bantam Press, London: 1988), 117.

areas did not have its complement of Jewish families and there were seven synagogues or prayer rooms in the entire area."[23] A timeline by Ray Riven, also on display, includes how, in 1892, the Adelaide Road Synagogue was opened, intended to unite the community and close all existing synagogues. While one did close, seven remained, too many "for a community that is already declining. The successive closures that inevitably follow are marked by serious communal disputes."[24]

Even with these disputes, this Jewish quarter and their respect within the Irish community thrived. When the Adelaide Road Synagogue closed in 1999, visitors attending the closing ceremony received a pamphlet containing the history of the building and their community. The pamphlet describes Dublin's support of the synagogue's construction:

> "The synagogue, its architecture Eastern Romanesque, had been built with the support of not only the community, but of many Christian well wishers. One newspaper had stated: 'The Jews of Dublin, having always contributed to many deserving charities in the city, now ask their fellow citizens to reciprocate and help them in their necessity.' The Irish Times in March 1897 had followed with similar comments, as did the Dublin Daily Express."[25]

The 1891 census of Ireland, which still included the six counties that would later make up Northern Ireland, recorded a total population of 4,704,750, with a Roman Catholic population of 3,547,307, or 75.4% of the population.[26] With this overwhelming majority, Jewish leaders knew it was important to do whatever was necessary to limit discrimination against their people, even in a remarkably tame nation. At the Adelaide Road Synagogue consecration ceremony in 1892, the Chief Rabbi of the British Empire, Dr. Herman Adler, was touring Ireland's Jewish

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[23] *An Overview…* (Dublin: The Irish Jewish Museum, 1989), exhibition catalog.

[24] Ray Riven, "Jews of Ireland: Timeline, Clanbrassil Street," *Jewish Renaissance* 8, no. 1 (October 2008): 14-15.

[25] John D. White, "The Dublin Hebrew Congregation : Adelaide Road Synagogue, Dublin 2 : 1892-1999" (1999), 2.

[26] "Census of Ireland, 1891," *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* 55, no. 4 (December 1892): 601.

Congregations and gave a sermon to those in attendance. He ended the homily with some advice, telling them they have "come here from a country like unto Egypt of old. You have come to a land that offers you hospitable shelter." He continued, repeating what many others agreed with: "It is said that Ireland is the only country in the world that cannot be charged with persecuting the Jews. 'Alas, poor Erin!' an eloquent writer has written, 'thou art thyself an eternal badge of sufferance, the blood of my people rest not on thy head. Is it not true then that the serpents breathe not in the Emerald Isle?'" Finally, he warns them of the importance of their role as a growing community, saying, "I would beseech you to prove yourselves worthy of this hospitality by seeking to promote the welfare of the country in which you now dwell, by rigidly abstaining from everything that could conduce to hurt…your fellow citizens."[27]

A recurring theme in the research surrounding this topic is the parallel adversity experienced by both Catholic and Jewish communities in Ireland, shaped by their respective histories of marginalization. Louis Hyman, during his research preceding his publication *The Jews of Ireland: From Earliest Times to the Year 1910*, wrote to those who he believed would have any knowledge of the history of Jewish populations on the island. While he did receive some information, mainly regarding family lineage, many letters came back with little to nothing useful. However, he received a four-page letter from M. D. O'Sullivan, author of *Old Galway: The History of a Norman Colony in Ireland*, referring to his original message requesting knowledge of Hebrew families arriving in Galway in 1781. In this, she writes that "Jewish refugees would be, most likely, well [liked] by the Catholic population and Catholic clergy of

[27] John D. White, "The Dublin Hebrew Congregation," 2.

Galway at that time because they themselves were suffering considerable social and religious disabilities."[28]

As global acts of antisemitism began to appear in newspapers across the globe, *The Jewish Chronicle* covered their effects and the responses of those who stood against them. Within the publication, prior to the beginning of World War Two, Christian organizations of Ireland would denounce these offenses in support of the Jewish communities in their country and abroad. In a letter read at the half-annual meeting for the Belfast Hebrew Congregation by the Archbishop of Armagh and Protestant Primate of All Ireland, Rev. J. G. F. Day, he spoke of his "many friends among the Jewish Communities for whom [he] has the greatest regard," and that the "community has played as good citizens in the life of our country."[29] When referring to global events, he writes of his feelings of anger "at the way in which the House of Israel has been treated in many countries of Europe. … Anything I can do in the fight for liberty and goodwill, please God I will endeavour to carry out."[30] Further feelings of admiration and sympathy for the Irish-Jewish community were showcased in *The Jewish Chronicle*, including a resolution passed by the Belfast Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, denouncing "the political, social, and economic injustices inflicted upon helpless Jewish minorities in Central and Eastern Europe"[31] and a letter to Rabbi Schacter, Chief Rabbi of Belfast, by Rev. Waugh, Secretary of the

[28] M.D. O'Sullivan, "Letter from Mrs M. D. O'Sullivan," December 26, 1944, MS 80 Hyman Collection, Box 1, Folder 12, Special Collections, The Library, Queen's University Belfast.

[29] "Christian Sympathy with Jews," *Jewish Chronicle*, June 24, 1938, 30.

[30] Ibid.

[31] "Resolution by the Belfast Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland," *Jewish Chronicle*, December 23, 1938, 29.

Welfare Department of the Methodist Church of Ireland, conveying feelings of sympathy for the sufferings of their co-religionists on the continent of Europe.[32]

The Jewish Chronicle continued to report on positive Christian-Jewish relations in Ireland, including a notable statement by the United Council of Christian Churches, which represented all the principal Protestant denominations on the island. The statement, described in the following paragraph, is one of several examples of Protestant leaders denouncing antisemitism and expressing support for Ireland's Jewish communities. This alliance was not incidental; rather, it reflected a broader effort by Protestants to strengthen their own minority position by aligning with another small religious group facing severe hardship, particularly in contrast to the dominant Catholic Church. While O'Sullivan's conclusion that Catholics and Jews shared a positive relationship may have been accurate in the earlier period of Jewish settlement in Ireland, the reality changed after partition. As the Protestant population declined sharply, the prior dynamic inverted, leaving the Jewish community as one of the few enduring religious minorities.

This statement from the United Council of Christian Churches, initially published in the *Missionary Herald* under the title "Is It Right to Hate Jews?", was "sent to three of the most widely-read daily papers in Dublin. Not one of them has published it," says *The Jewish Chronicle*.[33] The statement "[set] forth in a quiet and reasonable manner the Christian attitude towards anti-Semitism," declaring it incompatible with Christianity.[34] The statement continued, referencing the stereotypical charges against Jews of cutting prices and lowering the standard of living, but saying that legislation should deal with these crimes, and "if a Jew is punished, he

[32] "The Rev. M. L. Waugh, Secretary of the Welfare Department of the Methodist Church of Ireland, in a letter to Rabbi Shachter," *Jewish Chronicle,* November 11, 1938, 36.

[33] "Irish Defence of Jews," *Jewish Chronicle*, May 26, 1939, 23.

[34] Ibid.

should be punished not because he is a Jew but because he is an unworthy citizen. This fact, inherent in the British Constitution, is explicit in the Constitution of Éire. Christian people must not regard the members of the Hebrew race with suspicion and contempt. The way of friendship and mutual understanding should be followed both by Christian and by Jew; the solution of the whole problem will be reached in this way."[35] Even while this statement does promote popular anti-Jewish ideologies, it is clear that events unfolding in Europe at the time were beginning to influence Christian populations, especially in Ireland, and made them question the ways they viewed their fellow citizens. The United Council of Christians in Belfast would follow similar lines in an approved statement, appealing to their ministers and followers to "discountenance language or behavior which may encourage unfriendliness towards the Jews," continuing that Jewish refugees were not a burden, but a great asset to the country.[36]

While Christian support for the Jewish community was valuable and celebrated, it is clear that a majority of these sources promoting a peaceful relationship came from the Protestant Churches, who also were a minority population in Ireland and were not looking to cause conflict with an even smaller religious population than their own. The Catholic Church would speak very little on the subject of antisemitism and the persecution of global Jewish populations, and the same for Catholic newspapers. The above article by *The Jewish Chronicle* referenced that three widely read newspapers refused to publish the statement against anti-Semitism. Two of the largest Irish newspapers at that point were the *Irish Independent* and the *Irish Press*, both experiencing circulation over 100,000 in the three years leading up to the statement's publication.[37] Both of these newspapers also promoted a pro-Catholic agenda, religiously and

[35] Ibid.

[36] "Irish Presbyterians Call for Aid of Jews," *Jewish Chronicle,* June 16, 1939, 29.

[37] David Robbins, *The Irish Press 1919–1948: Origins and Issues* (MA thesis, Dublin City University, 2006), https://doras.dcu.ie/18180/1/David_Robbins_20130119105250.pdf.

politically, like for example how "[d]uring the Free State period the *Independent* was characterised by a triumphalist strain of Catholicism, virulent anti-communism and strong support for the pro-treaty party."[38] While *The Jewish Chronicle* does not explicitly mention the newspapers that did not publish the article or why they did not, a Jewish-Irish reader at the time would be familiar with what the three largest newspapers were. They would also realize that the withholding of this statement by the newspapers supporting Jewish citizens was on purpose either because they did not agree with what it was saying, or because they did not want to support a statement given by the Protestant Church. In Ireland, those maintaining antisemitic beliefs often presented them under the guise of Catholic values. However, very few significant incidents would occur, even after the rise of a much larger movement in mainland Europe.

Antisemitism in Ireland

As previously referenced, throughout modern history multiple sources have referenced Ireland as a nation where antisemitism cannot thrive. Ireland's Jewish population was explicitly supported by the national government when, in 1937, under their new constitution, de Valera specifically listed and granted minority religious groups the same protections under the law as the Catholic majority.[39] However, decades before the installation of these protections, the most significant and infamous antisemitic act in Irish history occurred in Limerick in 1904. Commonly known as "The Limerick Pogrom," correspondence to Hyman included a 1948 letter from Helen Ryan regarding this event. She describes what she had learned from the Limerick librarian, that "the Jews began to come to Limerick about 70 or 80 years ago, mostly from mid-Europe, penniless and starving." These immigrants referenced would have been the same

[38] Fearghal McGarry, "Irish Newspapers and the Spanish Civil War," *Irish Historical Studies* 33, no. 129 (2002): 68–90, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30006956.

[39] Kevin McCarthy, *Robert Briscoe: Sinn Féin Revolutionary, Fianna Fáil Nationalist and Revolutionist Zionist* (Bern: Peter Lang Ltd, 2015), 103.

ones fleeing from Eastern Europe. She continues, "By hard work, and a wee bit of usury, perhaps, selling boots and shoes to the poor, they soon made well until Fr. Creagh disposed of them."[40] While this was undoubtedly a dramatic event, the term "disposed" would imply that the Jewish population vanished after these events took place. In reality, historians acknowledge that what followed Creagh's message was more of an economic boycott, even though Ryan's letter continues saying, "the pogrom against the Jews was carried out with great violence…The members of the congregation, full of good Christian spirit left the Church and ran the Jews out of their houses, burned their furniture, and did all sorts of other good works for the honor and glory of God."[41] Dermot Keogh, author of multiple Irish-Jewish antisemitism books, discussed the Limerick Boycott, as he refers to it, in great length. He believes that the use of "pogrom" in this circumstance most likely originated from the Lithuanian immigrants who had similar experiences in Europe that had initially forced them to leave. According to Keogh, this boycott also resulted in no significant injuries or deaths, another reason for history to remember this event under a different name.[42]

As a result of the boycott, five families (totaling 32 persons) left Limerick.[43] The Jewish Community in Limerick continued to exist after Father Creagh eventually left Ireland for the Philippines in 1906, and Census data from 1911 reveals that after six years, 13 of the original 26 families remained and even saw an increase of nine new ones.[44] According to an article in *The*

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[40] Helen Ryan, "Letter from Helen Ryan, Glanmire, Co. Cork," May 14, 1948, MS 80 Hyman Collection, Box 4, Folder 5, Special Collections, The Library, Queen's University Belfast.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Dermot Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth-Century Ireland: Refugees, Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust* (Cork, Ireland: Cork University Press, 1998), 26.

[43] Ray Rivlin, *Shalom Ireland: A Social History of Jews in Modern Ireland* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2003), 38-39.

[44] Des Ryan, "Fr. John Creagh C.S.S.R Social Reformer 1870-1947," *The Old Limerick Journal*, no. 41 (Winter Edition 2005), 30-32.

Old Limerick Journal from December Father John Creagh may have found motivation for his action due to increased Irish emigration to America. He recognized that the Hebrew population in Limerick was gaining significant wealth quickly and felt that the English had never allowed the Irish to develop industries, accelerating their departure from the Island.[45] While significant wealth is undoubtedly relative, it is not surprising that this belief would spark an antisemitic experience in Limerick.

As demonstrated by these numbers, antisemitism in Ireland rarely held ground against its Jewish communities. This did not limit the attacks, however, and throughout the latter half of the 1930s, Ireland experienced multiple episodes of anti-Jewish behavior, most likely influenced by events in mainland Europe. The Dublin Correspondent in *The Jewish Chronicle* kept a close eye on these episodes and documented them when necessary, including a particular cluster of Catholic antisemitism in early 1938. The article references how "[t]here has lately been a series of dangerous attacks on Jews in Ireland. The antisemitic lectures of Father Fahy, an anti-Jewish sermon preached in a large Dublin church by a priest of the Dominican Order, and attacks in the IRISH CATHOLIC, have now been followed by an editorial diatribe in the February issue of the IRISH ROSARY…"[46] The author continues by describing the contents of the article and its series of attacks on Ireland's Jewish population. However, the short news article ends with a recognition of the struggle of antisemitism in Ireland, believing that "Irish Jewry is fortunate in having a Government in Eire which is tolerant and broadminded," and that it is "fortunate that Jews in Eire are almost all concentrated in Dublin. An antisemitic agitation on a national scale would have little, if any, political value."[47] Irish Jews' isolation from major European centers and

[45] Ibid.

[46] "Anti-Semitic Attacks in Ireland: Articles in Catholic Papers," *The Jewish Chronicle*, 18 February, 1938, 26.

[47] Ibid.

their small, dense communities presented impressive barriers to antisemitism, as they worked hard to limit any reason why they could be seen in a negative light.

A Garda Report located in the National Archives in Dublin follows additional, physical, antisemitic events in Ireland, containing original leaflets, police reports, and eyewitness statements regarding any anti-Jewish activities during this period. The folder begins in December 1936 with a swastika-marked leaflet with the title "Irish Anti-Jewish Campaign." Within its corresponding police report, Commissioner "C.S." writes that in a meeting with Chief Rabbi Dr. Herzog, the rabbi expressed that the community's concerns were high and believed that "an extensive campaign was in operation to boycott the Jews and Jewish interests [in Éire]."[48] In order to quell his worries, the police told him that the matter appeared to be exaggerated and little danger towards Jews existed in Dublin. This statement proved to be partially true. While there was little violence, in June 1937 anti-Jewish posters would appear in Dublin calling for a boycott of Jewish organizations, listing different ways they believed the Irish Jewish population was "the root of all evil," asking readers if they were aware of the various ways they believed the community was a threat to Irish society.[49]

As the year continued, this blatant antisemitic group would change titles to the "Irish Christian Protection Association," attempting to use religious fears to advance a boycott against Jewish-owned businesses. In a distributed letter containing the group's aims, they emphasized the importance of creating a Christian-only lifestyle for their nation. While there is no mention of Judaism, it is clear what they refer to when they declare their goals of stopping all support to

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[48] "Irish Anti-Jewish Campaign" (Garda Report: circulation of anti-Jewish propaganda, 1936-1940), D/JUS 2011/25/217 – National Archives of Ireland .

[49] "BOYCOTT THE JEW !" (Garda Report: circulation of anti-Jewish propaganda,1936-1940), D/JUS 2011/25/217 – National Archives of Ireland .

non-Christian groups.[50] Irish newspapers were not afraid to call out this organization for their actions, directly referencing it as an antisemitic campaign in Dublin. Henry Sinclair of Dublin wrote in the *Irish Times* that "surely these anonymous poisoners, who seek to infect the wells of our social peace with the venom of their ignorance and bigotry, must be drawn into the open and made to realise that their malefic schemes never will be tolerated within the social structure of Ireland."[51] He, like many others, believed that antisemitism could not hold weight in a nation with a long history of persecution.

Until February 1939, any antisemitic activity was produced for the general public and not specifically targeted at any individual. That changed when on February 8th, multiple Jewish homes in Dublin received letters that read as follows:

> "If you Jews do not leave this country now it will be too late next week. We will do this job more thoroughly than Germany has. You have polluted this country that is giving you a living. Get out before the bombs explode on all your property. We will whip you out of Ireland like how your ancestors were whipped out of the Temple."[52]

For such a threatening letter, the report finishes by saying that "Mr. Stein is not in fear and is not aware of any motive other than the fact that he is a Jew."[53] Later, the report adds that Stein had been living in Ireland for forty-one years and "was not in fear in consequence of the letter."[54] Another police report about the same letter received by Mr. David Vard also says that "he is not in any way afraid and does not require Police protection."[55] When the same organization, at the

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[50] "Irish Christian Protection Association" (Garda Report: circulation of anti-Jewish propaganda,1936-1940), D/JUS 2011/25/217 – National Archives of Ireland .

[51]"Anti-Semitism," *Irish Times*, December 1, 1937, National Archives of Ireland.

[52]"Threatening Letter/-Harris Stein" (Garda Report: circulation of anti-Jewish propaganda,1936-1940), D/JUS 2011/25/217 – National Archives of Ireland.

[53] Ibid.

[54] "Threatening Letter" (Garda Report: circulation of anti-Jewish propaganda,1936-1940), D/JUS 2011/25/217 – National Archives of Ireland.

[55] Ibid.

same time, also began to paint “Boycott,” “Boycott Jews,” and “Why did Irishmen die” on the walls of local Jewish businesses and firms, those interviewed expressed the same lack of fear regarding the situation, additionally declining police protection.[56] These events make apparent how little influence antisemitism had in this nation and, when it did arise, how little the population felt threatened by it.

However, antisemitism was not limited only to particular groups willing to take action, but was entrenched within the Irish government and their political decision making. Perhaps the most blatant example of this occurred in May 1943 as the world was beginning to learn more about the German atrocities committed against their Jewish populations. Oliver J. Flanagan, a member of the Irish government, while entangled in an argument that members of the Republican party who were interned at Curragh Internment Camp did not deserve to be there, began to spew antisemitism, arguing “that most of these Emergency Acts were always directed against Republicanism. How is it that we do not see any of these acts directed against the Jews, who crucified Our Saviour nineteen-hundred years ago and who are crucifying us every day in the week?”[57] As a Republican politician, Flanagan did not like to see their seemingly pro-British relationship grow as the war continued. While arguing against this outlook, he demonstrated his support for Germany, but only of their actions that aligned with his beliefs:

> How is it that there are thousands of well educated young men being forced to take the emigrant ship, not from Galway Bay or Cobh this time to take them to the greater Ireland beyond the Atlantic, but to take them from Dun Laoghaire and Rosslare to the land beyond the Irish Sea, the land of our traditional enemy, to help England in her war effort against Germany? There is one thing that Germany did, and that was to rout the Jews out of their country. Until we rout the Jews out of this country it does not matter a hair's breadth what orders you make. Where the bees are there is the honey, and where the Jews

[56] “RE: Offensive Inscriptions Painted on, or in Vicinity of, Premises Owned by Jews in the City” (Garda Report: circulation of anti-Jewish propaganda,1936-1940), D/JUS 2011/25/217, National Archives of Ireland.

[57] “Dáil Éireann Debate - Friday, 9 Jul 1943,” House of the Oireachtas, July 9, 1943, https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/dail/1943-07-09/8/.

> are there is the money. I do not propose to detain the House further. I propose to vote against such Orders and actions, and I am doing so on Christian principles.[58]

If all antisemitism within the Irish government was limited to angry arguments and opinions, it would not make too large of an impact. However, policy makers used their power to control the Jewish population as best as they could, which did impact the Irish Jewish community as refugees began attempting to come to the island.

The Refugee Policy of Ireland

In July of 1938, about forty countries and an equally large number of Non-Governmental Organizations held a conference in Evian, France, in order to discuss how to handle the growth of Jewish migration resulting from Nazi persecution. Ultimately, neither the United States, who initiated the conference, nor Great Britain, granted Jewish refugees the right to immigration.[59] While Ireland did participate in the conference, they, too, did not adopt a favorable stance towards immigration.[60] Applying the same defense as Great Britain, Ireland felt they were in no position to accept any refugees, as this problem had already stretched "their policy as far as they could in view of their own problem of unemployment," considering only the refugees "who could make a useful contribution to industrial life by starting some new enterprise."[61]

This policy was made clear in a letter sent in April 1938 from former Minister of Justice for Ireland P.J. Ruttledge to Robert Briscoe, the only Jewish member of the Dáil Éireann at the time. He began the letter by describing two aliens Briscoe had discussed with the Department of Justice. One, a Latvian girl, was being brought to Ireland for adoption and permanent residence,

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[58] Ibid.

[59] Harald Seibel, "Foreword II," in *The Irish Context of Kristallnacht: Refugees and Helpers*, ed. Gisela Holfter (Trier: WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2014), 12.

[60] Ibid.

[61] "The Evian Conference on Refugees," *Bulletin of International News* 15, no. 14 (1938), 608.

and the other, a rabbi, who had re-entered the country six months earlier, with the help of Briscoe, and was now looking to extend his permission to stay another year. Ruttledge wrote in his letter that he was "reluctant, in both cases, to grant the permission asked for, not because anything is known unfavourable to the character of either alien or of their friends here, but on more general grounds of policy and as you are so frequently asked to use your influence in these matters I think it well to give some indication of what these grounds are."[62] Briscoe, being the only Jewish member of parliament, placed on his shoulders the weight of every Jewish refugee attempting to come to Ireland, as Irish-Jewish citizens would come to him asking for any help he could provide. It is clear from this letter that these two aliens were not the first refugees to involve Briscoe's help in their attempted immigration.

Ruttledge continued in his argument against their coming to Éire, and in fact against all Jewish immigration, by arguing "that the Jewish community in this country should not be increased by way of immigration, except in cases where the immigrant is a definite acquisition to the State. So long as we have (in common with so many other countries) the problem of unemployment, I feel that it is wrong to admit aliens about whom we cannot be certain that they will not compete with our own citizens in the labour market."[63] This policy resulted from the Aliens Order Act of 1936, which determined that any alien allowed to enter the State must be able to support themselves.[64] These two factors of acceptance meant that only refugees with pre-existing wealth and business ventures could both support themselves and be an acquisition to the State, as their company could help lessen unemployment. This specification became nearly

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[62] P.J. Ruttledge, "26,555/1/4" (Correspondence of Robert Briscoe largely concerning Jewish affairs, n.d.), National Library of Ireland.

[63] Ibid., 1-2.

[64] Siobhán O'Connor, "Public and Policy Response towards the Exiles" in *The Irish Context of Kristallnacht: Refugees and Helpers*, ed. Gisela Holfter, 152.

impossible to attain as Nazi Germany's Flight Tax and the eventual ban on refugees leaving with any valuables or money systematically created "the most undesirable class of refugee imaginable, often penniless but more importantly stateless."[65]

The Minister stated what many others believed as well, that Ireland had never shown bad feelings towards its Jewish population, unlike other countries, but believed that "there are anti-Jewish groups in the country which would be only too glad to get an excuse to start an anti-Jewish campaign and those groups could get no better slogan than that the native Irish worker was being ousted by cheap imported labour."[66] As a result, he tells Briscoe that the Jewish community should be advised not to encourage further Jewish immigration and that Briscoe himself should keep that "in mind when efforts are made to secure [his] support in facilitating immigration."[67] Despite those warnings, Ireland's Jewish population would continue to grow. According to Irish Census reports on religion taken every 10 years, the Jewish population peaked around 1946 with 3,907 residents before declining 16.7% to 3,255 by 1961 and another 19.1% by 1971.[68] While Ireland persisted with their anti-Jewish immigration campaign, major antisemitic events continued in mainland Europe. Kristallnacht, a coordinated attack on German and Austrian Jews, took place on November 9-10, 1938, expediting an already mass movement of Jews out of Nazi occupied countries and into any country willing to accept them.

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[65] Katrina Goldstone, "Benevolent Helpfulness"? Ireland and the International Reaction to Jewish Refugees, 1933-1939," in *Irish Foreign Policy, 1919-1966: From Independence to Internationalism*, ed. Michael Kennedy and Joseph Morrison Skelly (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), 39.

[66] P.J. Ruttledge, "26,555/1/4" (Correspondence of Robert Briscoe largely concerning Jewish affairs, n.d.), National Library of Ireland, 2.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Central Statistics Office (Ireland), Census of Population of Ireland, 1971: Volume 9, Table 1A, accessed March 30, 2025, https://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/census/census1971results/volume9/C_1971_V9_T1ab.pdf.

In November 2013, the Centre for Irish-German Studies at the University of Limerick held its 14th Limerick Conference in Irish German Studies. The title of this conference was "'Context of 'Kristallnacht': Ireland and the German-speaking refugees 1933-45 – A colloquium on German-speaking exiles, Irish helpers and the national and international context seventy-five years ago."[69] As described by the editor in the book's introduction, *The Irish Context of Kristallnacht: Refugees and Helpers* is a collection of papers presented at that conference, with a focus on the impact that the November pogrom made in Ireland and those who stepped up to help refugees in need. These papers, mainly written by relatives of those who experienced these events or who are experts in this field, help provide details of how these German atrocities affected the Irish-Jewish population, even though they were a considerable distance away.

According to these papers, Jewish refugees did not come to Ireland in only one way. Some, like members of the Scheye-Weil Family, used education to escape Nazi Germany. In 1935, Stephen Weil's father and maternal uncle attended school in England and later Ireland. According to Weil, "My uncle succeeded in arranging a rare visa to Ireland for his parents… who arrived in Dublin in January 1939; that Irish visa secured my grandfather's release from the prison camp into which he has been thrown on *Kristallnacht*."[70] These stories also demonstrate how rare an Irish visa was, and how thankful they were to be able to receive one. Klaus Unger, when writing about his father, says this:

> *Kristallnacht* was vivid in my father's memory…and it certainly propelled his departure as soon as possible from Germany. He never spoke of his experience at the Irish Embassy and how he eventually obtained a visa. However, he always expressed his eternal

[69] Gisela Holfter, "Introduction" in *The Irish Context of Kristallnacht: Refugees and Helpers*, ed. Gisela Holfter, 15.

[70] Stephen Weil, "The Scheyer-Weil Family" in *The Irish Context of Kristallnacht: Refugees and Helpers*, ed. Gisela Holfter, 25.

> gratitude for the granting of the visa by the Irish government, and for his acceptance by the people of Ireland at the time of his greatest need.[71]

This feeling of acceptance by the Irish community helped many refugees become quickly naturalized into Irish culture, as "German Jewish families who reached the safety of these shores … quickly became as much part of Ireland as their ancestors had become part of Germany in the years after 1815."[72] Stephen Weil references this date because he touches upon how, in 1818, Hamburg, Germany, established the first-ever Reform Synagogue in any major city. This new direction of Judaism demonstrated that Jews could act in similar ways toward religion as non-Jews, and "show their non-Jewish neighbors that 'we can pray like them, while remaining Jews; we are going to perform our rituals in the language and the practice of our non-Jewish neighbors.'"[73] When the descendants of these Reformed German Jews came to Ireland as refugees, they did not feel connected to the already established Yiddish-speaking Eastern European Orthodox Irish Jewish community. This difference, in turn, allowed some to naturalize quicker than others, particularly if they did not live within predominantly Jewish neighborhoods.[74] In the case of The Scheyer-Weil Family, most of their closest friends were non-Jewish.[75]

Following Kristallnacht in November 1938, the United Kingdom supported a program intended to rescue refugee children fleeing Nazi-controlled countries. When the program ended when World War II began, the United Kingdom had already safely transported over 10,000

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[71] Klaus Unger, "On Herbert Unger" in *The Irish Context of Kristallnacht: Refugees and Helpers*, ed. Gisela Holfter, 31.

[72] Stephen Weil, "The Scheyer-Weil Family" in *The Irish Context of Kristallnacht: Refugees and Helpers*, ed. Gisela Holfter, 25.

[73] Ibid., 23-24.

[74] Ibid., 26.

[75] Ibid., 25.

children ranging from three months to seventeen years of age.[76] While this initiative did not include Ireland, due to their government's disinterest in supporting the growing population of global refugees, the Dublin Jewish community began working with those in Belfast to provide support in any way they could. On the 24th of November, 1939, after the war had already begun, Maurice Solomon, a prominent member of the Belfast Jewish community, wrote a letter to the Secretary of the Aliens' Department in London asking for authority "for the transfer to Northern Ireland of 12 German-Jewish Refugees, now being maintained in Dublin…"[77] This committee, run by Solomon, had leased a 70-acre farm in Millisle, Co. Down, Northern Ireland, in May of 1939 to create a haven for these Kindertransport children. By this point, both Jewish and non-Jewish families in Belfast had been welcoming children into their homes, creating the need for a much larger and more organized site. Opening in the summer of 1939, "up to eighty people, including the children, lived and worked on the farm at any one time. In all, from the first arrivals in 1938 to its closure in 1948, well over 300 adults and children are believed to have passed through it."[78]

The Dublin Community supported this initiative through financial contributions and temporary housing for these refugees. In the letter, he describes how, at that moment, "56 young persons (male and female) are being trained in Agriculture, with a view to their immigration when fully trained."[79] Solomon references that the entire cost will amount to £2,500, but that the

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[76] Nick Maxwell, "Millisle, County down-Haven from Nazi Terror," History Ireland, February 28, 2013, https://historyireland.com/millisle-county-down-haven-from-nazi-terror/.

[77] Letter to The Secretary, Aliens' Department, Home Office (London) from Maurice Solomon, Member of Committee Refugee Resettlement Farm, November 24, 1939. Public Records Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI), HA/8/787.

[78] Nick Maxwell, "Millisle, County down-Haven from Nazi Terror," History Ireland, February 28, 2013, https://historyireland.com/millisle-county-down-haven-from-nazi-terror/.

[79] Letter to The Secretary, Aliens' Department, Home Office (London) from Maurice Solomon, Member of Committee Refugee Resettlement Farm, November 24, 1939. Public Records Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI), HA/8/787.

Dublin Hebrew community had already made a contribution of £1,000, and because "they have no facilities in Dublin for training or educating any Refugees, while we have such facilities…it is in the best interest of the Refugees that they should be taken over by us. In addition to giving us a substantial contribution, [the Dublin Hebrew community is] prepared to pay a weekly sum for the upkeep of these Refugees…income [that] will greatly assist the financing and running of the farm."[80] Through this one letter alone, it is clear that despite Ireland's isolation from large-scale immigration support, the Jewish community still found ways, both physically and financially, to support their co-religionists. When the war ended, efforts began to bring to Ireland 100 Jewish orphaned children from the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. To no surprise, the Department of Justice quickly opposed this motion "on the grounds that it had always been the policy to restrict the admission of Jewish aliens. This decision was overturned after the Chief Rabbi approached de Valera and 137 children were admitted on a temporary basis. They spent around a year recuperating in Clonyn Castle in County Westmeath."[81] Even with the war over, members of the Irish Government had no desire to help these refugee children. Once again, the Jewish community of Ireland worked hard to find ways to meet global needs in whatever way they could.

The limitation of refugees did not occur without public pushback. On February 25th, 1939, an article in the *Irish Times* defended Britain's active involvement in the refugee crisis, comparing it to ways Ireland gained from aliens throughout history. In the author's words, "Ireland has benefited to an incalculable degree from the immigration of oppressed people from other lands, as, doubtless, other lands benefited from the political refugees from Ireland."[82] The

[80] Ibid.

[81] Bryan Fanning, "Jewish, Catholic and Collaborator Refugees in Ireland." *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 105, no. 419 (2016): 365.

[82] "Aliens," *Irish Times*, 25 February, 1939. Public Records Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI).

author continues, describing that, while the standard argument against immigration is due to workforce competition, "the Home Secretary says that 11,000 immigrants have provided employment for 15,000 British workers, who otherwise would have remained unemployed. This is not because many of the refugees came with hoarded cash; but because they brought with them the essential capital in the form of skill, knowledge and foreign technical processes."[83] He finishes the article once again by referring to the history of the two islands, arguing that when the persecuted Flemings, Walloons, and Huguenots entered England and Ireland with nothing more than the skills and knowledge they possessed, "both England and Ireland would have been poorer in culture and material good had the opposition met with success…What the continent of Europe lost centuries ago these islands gained, by the influx of a large and highly-skilled body of industrial and commercial workers."[84] Despite Ireland's limited support of receiving war-torn immigrants, it is clear that some citizens of their nation understood what others did not: Ireland has always been both a receiver and giver of migrants, and thus, when they turned their back on those who needed support, they did so on their own history as well.

What complicates Ireland's relationship with refugees during this period even more is the way they responded to Catholic aliens also attempting to escape occupied Europe. According to Bryan Fanning, in his article "Jewish, Catholic and Collaborator Refugees in Ireland," while it was the policy of the Irish Department of Justice during this time to limit the number of Jewish refugees, it was not the same for Christians. While the responsibility for vetting refugees existed within the Department of Justice, they gave visas on behalf of Christians to a voluntary group, the Irish Co-ordinating Committee for the Relief of Christian Refugees.[85] The responsibility of

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[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid.

[85] Bryan Fanning, "Jewish, Catholic and Collaborator Refugees in Ireland," 362.

the group "was to assist Christian, that is Catholic, refugees from the Third Reich and its work mostly focused on refugees from Austria who had converted to Catholicism, but were still classified by the Nuremberg Laws as Jewish. A Department of Justice memorandum on 16 November 1938 endorsed the view of the committee that the state should admit Catholic refugees who had converted to Judaism, but not Jewish refugees."[86] Even after the war, Ireland allowed the admission of European Catholic refugees while continuing to limit its Jewish population – "By 1951 there were at least 846 refugees living in Ireland. Of these 242 had become Irish citizens. Two hundred and sixty five were Polish. Only a small percent were Jewish. In February 1953 a request by Robert Briscoe to temporarily admit ten families of Czech and Hungarian Jews at no expense to the Irish state−all costs would, according to Briscoe, be covered by Ireland's Jewish community−was refused."[87]

Newspapers and other manuscripts of the early-to-middle 20th century reveal that the Jewish Community in Ireland experienced minimal physical antisemitism at the hands of the Irish public and was even supported at times by their non-Jewish neighbors. The broader Irish public, particularly Protestant communities, were often among the most vocal opponents of Nazi antisemitism. This reflected their own position as a religious minority in a predominantly Catholic state, making them more attuned to the dangers of religious persecution. However, behind the scenes, the Irish Government, heavily influenced by Catholic leadership, was actively attempting to limit the growth of their population through immigration reform before, during, and after World War Two, at a time when the worldwide Jewish population needed support the most. As a close-knit community, they worked hard to support each other and to support their global co-religionists in whatever way they could. The Jewish Community in Ireland has only

[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid., 371.

gotten smaller since the 1940s and reached its lowest in 1991, with a population of 1,581. Since then, the group has been slowly growing, climbing to 2,557 in 2016, with 56% of their population living in Dublin.[88] According to Maurice Cohen, the chair of the Jewish Representatives Council of Ireland, in the five years following the 2011 census, approximately three to four hundred families had come to Ireland to set up high tech industries before returning to Israel, creating a 30% increase in their communities' population. Dublin's community increased by 10% and Cork's by 35.4%[89]

Chapter Two: Memories Through Memoirs

When the government of Ireland declared their country's neutrality and began strict censorship, news of any German atrocities came to a halt. In the papers of Frank Aiken, Minister for the Co-ordination of Defensive Measures during World War II, at the University College Dublin Special Collections, exists a February 1941 censorship report outlining all publications and news reports he and his censorship committee had blocked that month. Due to Ireland's moral neutrality, much of this censorship was of both Allied and Axis international propaganda determined to influence those within the neutral country.

However, the report also directly mentions reports of Nazi atrocities that had emanated from the United States, which the committee denied publication in Irish presses. The first mention is of the Nazi systematic mass murder of "mental defectives taken from both private and state sanatoriums throughout the Reich," coming from an American radio commentator who had

[88] Patsy McGarry, "Census figures for Ireland's Jewish population in 2016 not what they seem," *Irish Times*, 14 November 2017, https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/census-figures-for-ireland-s-jewish-population-in-2016-not-what-they-seem-1.3291389.

[89] Ibid.

just returned from Berlin. The report continues, describing how "tens of thousands of mental misfits have been executed…[with] these killings known only to Hitler and a few men at the top and the relatives of the victims who are told to fetch the ashes." After mentioning this publication, Michael Knightly, Chief Press Censor, writes how the Nazis must have intentionally been keeping this a secret from the public because "they know that the general knowledge of it would cause terror throughout the country."[90] Only five months later, German religious leaders began to speak openly against the Nazi eugenics program that had begun at the start of the war. Unlike the 'Final Solution,' which operated outside of German borders, "the euthanasia programme was pursued in Germany itself and involved direct interference with charitable institutions, almost all closely connected with one of the two main churches."[91] Bishop von Galen of Germany became particularly notable in his fight against the Nazi anti-Christian agenda. According to a 1942 *New York Times* series "Churchmen Who Defy Hitler," von Galen had received international approval after three "amazingly bold" sermons during the Summer of 1941 had been leaked from Germany. In these, he condemned the Nazi policy of euthanasia against people with intellectual or developmental disabilities, believing that Germany had national enemies but also an "'inner enemy,' that 'spiritually was most dangerous.'"[92] With Ireland's large Catholic population, their censorship leaders knew the importance of limiting the news of Nazi murders, particularly eugenics, to preserve their moral neutrality and prevent their population from being influenced by these anti-Christian actions. While the Chief Press Censor mentions that German populations would react poorly to the news, he does not mention how

[90] "Report for February, 1941," Frank Aiken Papers - UCD Special Collections, P104/3470 (1-2).

[91] Peter Hoffmann, *The History of the German Resistance, 1933–1945*, trans. Richard Barry, 3rd English ed. (Montreal and Buffalo: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 24.

[92] Henry Smith Leiper, "Churchmen who Defy Hiter I: Bishop von Galen of Germany," *New York Times*, June 8, 1942.

Irish citizens would react, which would most likely have put pressure on the Irish government to hold Germany accountable, undermining their impartiality and making them a new political and military target of the war.

Included as one line at the end of the paragraph is another blocked report, but this one "told of the mass execution of Polish Jews arrested as hostages for a man who escaped from the Germans."[93] Irish censorship was apparent in the ways they upheld their neutral German relationship, not by promoting German propaganda, but by denying public knowledge of their clearly stated and understood atrocities, further limiting the Irish Jewish community's ability to understand global events and forcing them to find other ways to learn.

While there was limited press on German brutality during the war, by 1939 details of attacks on Jewish citizens around the world had already been on the headlines of Irish news. Directly after Kristallnacht, the *Irish Times* reported on the events in Germany. On November 11th, 1938, under the title "Fire and Wrecking in Germany: Jews' Day of Trial – Synagogues Razed – Looting Shops – Books and Garments of Rabbi Torn to Pieces," the *Irish Times* reported the following: "Amazing reports of excesses on an unparalleled scale poured in from all parts of Germany–reports of the burning of synagogues, the demolition of Jewish stores, the plundering of private property, and the arrest of probably thousands of Jews."[94] Irish newspapers continued with reports for the following days, describing the Nazi attacks. Ireland was not unique in their coverage of these attacks, as newspapers around the world carried word of the event, sparking international backlash and protest against these antisemitic actions.[95] Nevertheless, while Nazi

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[93] Ibid., 2.

[94] "Fire and Wrecking in Germany: Jews' Day of Trial – Synagogues Razed – Looting Shops – Books and Garments of Rabbi Torn to Pieces" *Irish Times*, 12 November 1938, 15.

[95] Israel National News, "Yad Vashem to Honor Indigenous Australian Who Protested Nazis," archived March 14, 2012, https://web.archive.org/web/20120314174255/http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/138896.

Germany would continue in their mission for the 'final solution' despite international turmoil, the Irish press would not continue their coverage when the nation entered its mission of moral neutrality.

The Irish-Jewish population is unique in its distance from most large Jewish centers in mainland Europe. Their isolation from the war created a sense of safety, to a certain degree, but also of helplessness. Memoirs written by those of the Irish-Jewish population describe this feeling while also providing an understanding of what they knew regarding global attacks on Jewish populations during the Second World War.

Five memoirs in particular describe life in Jewish Ireland during the war: *Emerald Ark: Memories of a Jewish Irish Youth*, by Theo Garb, *Oughtobiography: Leaves from the Diary of a Hyphenated Jew*, by David Marcus, *Dublin's Little Jerusalem*, by Nick Harris, *Somewhere to Hang My Hat: An Irish-Jewish Journey*, by Stanley Price, and *Memoir of an Irish Jew*, by Lionel Cohen. These books all begin the same way, with the authors trying their best to remember life in Jewish Ireland, describing their experiences and interactions with their communities. They do not forget to write about their parents' and grandparents' experiences, as many of these authors were born in Ireland, with their ancestors arriving from mainland Europe. These stories describe their lives before, during, and after the war and how Ireland became their home, even if they eventually emigrated later, as many of the Jewish population did.

Theo Garb's *Emerald Ark: Memories of a Jewish Irish Youth*

Theo Garb begins *Emerald Ark: Memories of a Jewish Irish Youth* with a conversation he has had many times before, resulting from him simply opening his mouth: "No sooner do I speak than a curious look comes over their faces. The accent gets them every time."[96] Garb describes

[96] Theo Garb, *Emerald Ark: Memories of a Jewish Irish Youth*, 1.

himself in 1950, when he arrived in the United States, as one with "jet-black hair and a tanned complexion, my visage contrasted with one's perception of an Irishman."[97] No one expected someone who looked like him to bear an Irish accent, guessing England, Australia, or South Africa first, options based entirely on his appearance.[98] To him, being an Irish Jew meant that he had to deal with this conversation frequently whenever anyone questioned his heritage. The combination of Irish and Jewish counteracts the idea of Ireland being a Catholic nation, acting as the reason for the recurring confusion. Garb, like many other authors discussing Jewish Ireland, describes the history of Jewish arrival in just a few lines. Due to a straightforward historical understanding of the topic, every author tells the same few stories with the same few characters. Garb ends this history by describing where his family fits into the narrative, explaining that "by the 1900s, Ireland was well-known as a refuge for Jews. It was to this emerald sanctuary that my Father, Wolf Garbarz, came with his wife and family in the spring of 1930."[99] Wolf Garbarz, who shortened their last name to Garb, would be welcomed by Dublin's Orthodox Community, who embraced him as their cantor, allowing him to raise his family in peace without fear of religious intolerance.[100] Before he arrived in Ireland, however, Wolf Garb had been a cantor in Manchester, England. He later applied for the position at Dublin's main synagogue when it became vacant, and they invited him for a trial. When he accepted the position, he knew that "Ireland was more than a beautiful country – Hitler's rise to power was gathering steam, and Ireland, which had declared neutrality in World War I, would be a safe haven for our family, if there be another

[97] Ibid.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Ibid., 5.

[100] Ibid., 6.

war."[101] Wolf Garb was correct in his prediction of Ireland's stance, but was not correct about Ireland's neutrality during World War I. With Ireland still belonging to the United Kingdom, many soldiers fought for the British in their own Irish regiments. However, Ireland never experienced conscription into the armed forces, which was originally imposed and failed due to widespread resistance.[102] If his family had remained in Britain for World War II, they would have experienced the devastating Manchester Blitz of December 1940, as the German Luftwaffe targeted the aircraft industry killing an estimated 684 people.[103] While Manchester may have existed outside of the reach of the Holocaust, it is clear that Ireland was a preferred destination for European Jewry.

Theo Garb was less than one year old when he moved from Manchester to Ireland, where his family bought a house at "7 South Circular Road, Portobello, in the center of Dublin's tight-knit Jewish community. It was a short walk to the Greenville Hall Synagogue, where [his] father served as both cantor and bookkeeper."[104] By 1933, Wolf Garb, a passionate Zionist, had been appointed the secretary to the Dublin Branch of the World Zionist Organization and believed that one day a State of Israel would arise, but until then, Ireland "could serve as a Jewish haven and an avenue of escape from Hitler's evil grasp for members of [their] family."[105] Their home in Dublin would welcome extended family members from Poland and Belgium, increasing their household size yearly until there were nine permanent residents and numerous

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[101] Ibid., 24.

[102] David Fitzpatrick, "Militarism in Ireland, 1900–1922," in *A Military History of Ireland*, ed. Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 388.

[103] Imperial War Museums, "The Manchester Blitz," *Imperial War Museums*, accessed April 3, 2025, https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/the-manchester-blitz.

[104] Theo Garb, Emerald Ark: Memories of a Jewish Irish Youth, 29.

[105] Ibid., 61.

temporary ones.[106] The Irish-Jewish community understood its position of safety in a time of growing global antisemitism, and the Garb family, who had sizable social wealth, took advantage of that to try and save members of their family still living in Poland. With the immediate help of Robert Briscoe, Garb's father secured passage and eventual approval from Irish immigration authorities for his father to emigrate from Poland in January 1934.[107] Living in Ireland provided the Garb family with an outsider's point of view that saw the increasing global atrocities as a warning sign for the Holocaust to come. Nevertheless, their families living in both Poland and Belgium did not see the same shadow forming and many of the messages begging them to come to Ireland went unanswered: "Other than the birth of my sister, Sarah, those pre-war times offered less and less to sing about. No other family members responded to my father's pleas for them to come to Ireland. 'Why can't they see?!' he cried out many times in frustration."[108]

The housing of recently immigrated refugees, in addition to their families, brought with it news of Jewish life in Europe. These stories acted as one way for the Jewish Community in Ireland to receive unbiased information about life in Europe, and while this was still before Irish censorship began, these refugees "often told grim tales of life in their towns and villages in Eastern Europe before they fled; none of their talk was hopeful."[109] This first-hand knowledge, or "the truths of the outside world" shared with them, made it even clearer the importance of saving their families in mainland Europe, and even more devastating when their loved ones refused to come.[110] When the Nazis invaded Belgium in 1940, letters from their families stopped arriving,

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[106] Ibid., 61-62.

[107] Ibid., 62.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Ibid., 63.

[110] Ibid., 70.

and Theo Garb had to face the reality of being an Irish Jew: "Ireland's neutrality meant that my family would be safe, even as our European brethren faced increasing dangers and hardships. I took pride and solace in being Irish. However, the Jewish side of me was in turmoil."[111]

Even with Irish censorship, the Garb family relied on their radio to share news of the war, allowing them to track "the advancing German war machine" on a large map of Europe taped to their kitchen wall. Theo Garb describes this scene, remembering how the "[c]olored pins marked its battles and the retreats of the armies it faced. Each week there were more pins, and I felt the war draw closer to our Irish homeland."[112] The radio programs the Garb family listened to were most likely from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), as "little could be done [short of jamming] to stop foreign-based broadcasts. All BBC programmes were listed in Dublin newspapers, many of them reflecting [The United Kingdom's Ministry of Information] directives: 'Kitchen in War Time', 'Calling All Women', 'War Commentary'...and talks programmes with war related subjects…One such programme, 'The Land We Defend', focused on Northern Ireland with implications for Eire."[113] Irish neutrality was never guaranteed, but it provided a sense of calm when the world was not. This calm allowed Garb to have an innocent youth, and even with such calamity, he remembered some happy times.[114]

Garb does not mention Hitler's concentration camps until he begins to discuss the end of the war. There is no shock in his writing about these atrocities, just how he and his family moved forward knowing that the war was over and they had survived. His family immediately became involved in the effort to support survivors of the Holocaust and traveled to Antwerp, Belgium, to

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[111] Ibid.

[112] Ibid., 71.

[113] Robert Cole, *Propaganda, Censorship and Irish Neutrality in the Second World War*, 54-55.

[114] Theo Garb, *Emerald Ark: Memories of a Jewish Irish Youth*, 72.

look for any trace of their extended family. While Garb did not provide a date of their trip, he references his father's urgency and his questioning of a delay due to an abundance of necessary paperwork.[115] All they found was a city of rubble and, in an empty home belonging to Garb's mother's family, a rotting Shabbat dinner set on the table, waiting for a time that would never come.[116]

For many years, Garb dated a Catholic woman, mutually hiding this relationship from their families. When she proposed the idea of running away to Australia, he quickly turned it down, arguing that he had invested too much into Dublin and it would not make sense to leave.[117] However, unbeknownst to him then, this would plant the seed for his eventual departure from the island. He had friends already living in Sydney, and according to him, the Australian government at the time was fiercely promoting immigration, and "all would be welcome, Anglo-Saxon and Jews alike."[118] With the recommendation of his sister, he decided he would visit his cousins in America first, alone.[119] However, despite his plans to explore these two nations, he never left Brooklyn. He would eventually marry and have a family, and in the summer of 1973, they decided to live in Israel for one year to explore the possibility of settling there permanently. Within six weeks, the Yom Kippur War broke out, and they found themselves "running to bomb shelters for safety and volunteering for the war effort."[120]

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[115] Ibid., 118.

[116] Ibid., 120.

[117] Ibid., 199.

[118] Ibid., 203.

[119] Ibid., 204.

[120] Ibid., 217.

Theo Garb's book tells just one of many stories of Irish Jewish life in Ireland during World War Two. The war is not his main focus, but he realizes the importance of his story in sharing with the world that one can be Jewish and Irish and that one does not have to choose. Though he eventually decided to leave the island, he remained connected to his past by giving talks about his life in Ireland at synagogues, libraries, and special interest clubs. In 1995, he would return to Ireland for the last time with his son, thanks to a gift from his son's friend for his 35th birthday.[121] He concludes his memoir by recognizing how little he returned to the nation of his youth but arguing that "we are descended from wanderers. Rarely do we manage to return to Ireland, our beloved emerald ark. Even so, we honor our twin heritage of faith and love of country, and the memory of those who have bestowed upon us a rich heritage."[122] Garb's writing clearly shows the impact the nation made on him and how he felt supported by it in times of immense trouble. Through his experiences housing refugees, he learns of the terrible events in mainland Europe at a young age, requiring him to come to terms with how Ireland saved him and his family yet limited opportunities to so many others. His story is similar to others who decided to write them but unique in his experiences as a child of considerable social wealth in Dublin and his familial connections to mainland Europe at the time.

David Marcus' *Oughtobiography: Leaves from the Diary of a Hyphenated Jew* and *Who ever heard of an Irish Jew? And other stories*

Marcus begins Chapter One of his memoir *Oughtobiography: Leaves from the Diary of a Hyphenated Jew* with three memories: The first is his learning of the Ireland-Northern Ireland border, believing that one day there would be no border between the Jewish people and their

[121] Ibid.

[122] Ibid., 218.

home in Palestine.[123] The second was the day after *Kristallnacht*, when he read the accounts of the attacks in Irish newspapers, making it very clear that he "was different, that to be different was to be vulnerable, and that to be vulnerable was to be expendable."[124] The third, which he considered the worst of all, was when military analysts believed one particular day in the Spring of 1940 had the best conditions for Nazi Germany to use Ireland, particularly Cork, Marcus' home, as a landing pad for their eventual invasion of Great Britain. He describes his intense fear, writing that he "spent all the previous night sitting up in bed, staring at the clear, starry sky and waiting in terror to hear the streets resound with the rumble of tanks and the stamping of storm trooper's boots."[125] Bernard Share, in his book *The Emergency: Neutral Ireland 1939-45*, shares one reason why this particular story had held strong within Irish communities:

> Irish myth has a habit of proving stronger than mere reality. 'Ireland is known to have a heavy rainfall and consequently low clouds and very frequent damp and foggy weather', Admiral Raeder reported to his Fiihrer on 3 December 1940. Hitler, who had other things on his mind, apparently decided to invade Ireland only on request—from the Irish. During the previous summer he had ordered his information media to spread the story that a German invasion of Ireland was imminent, and it was believed both in the Swiss Chalet Restaurant, Merrion Row Dublin and in more conventional intelligence centres in Britain, where contingency plans were in readiness.[126]

The Nazi propaganda machine was constantly churning in Ireland, particularly through the radio. Through multiple means, fake radio programs were created in an attempt to persuade Irish citizens to ally themselves with Germany and away from Great Britain. From December 1939 to August 1941, all broadcasting from the German radio program "Irland-Redaktion" was in the Irish language only, in an attempt to mobilize any nationalist, anti-British listeners. However, the

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[123] David Marcus, *Oughtobiography: Leaves from the Diary of a Hyphenated Jew* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan Ltd, 2001), 1.

[124] Ibid.

[125] Ibid., 2.

[126] Bernard Share, *The Emergency: Neutral Ireland, 1939-45* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan Ltd, 1978), 8.

number of individuals who spoke fluent Irish and also had access to radio sets was limited, so the station eventually switched to English after August 1941.[127] German radio broadcasting evaded censorship similar to the programming that Garb listened to in his home — Little could be done besides jamming the signal.

At one point during the war, an invasion from either side of the conflict could have been possible. Share writes that after "the Dunkirk evacuation Britain's General Montgomery had been asked to prepare plans for the seizure of Cobh, and, inevitably, Cork, for use as a naval base in the anti-submarine war in the Atlantic."[128] With possible threats coming from both sides, it was not surprising that there was German sympathy found on the island, particularly by those historically anti-British like the Irish Republican Army (I.R.A.). On May 19, 1939, *The Jewish Chronicle* reported that the Dublin police had investigated reports of the spreading of German propaganda among former members of the I.R.A. in County Donegal.[129] The contents of the letter were mainly antisemitic and had been issued directly by the Department of Propaganda of the Third Reich, signed by Propaganda Minister Dr. Joseph Göebbels.[130] With Ireland actively maintaining relationships with Germany during the war, German Ambassador Eduard Hempel attempted to promote German sympathy, particularly amongst pro-German Irish-Americans, and assured de Valera that Germany would support Ireland if Britain were ever to use force to acquire Irish ports (which de Valera raised doubts about out of fear that any acceptance of aid would

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[127] David A. O'Donoghue, *Hitler's Irish Voices: The Story of German Radio's Wartime Irish Service, 1939–1945* (PhD diss., Dublin City University, 1998), 21.

[128] Bernard Share, *The Emergency: Neutral Ireland, 1939-45*, 8.

[129] "Nazi Propaganda Among I.R.A.," *The Jewish Chronicle*, May 19, 1939, 18.

[130] Ibid.

violate their neutrality).[131] Hempel would also regularly report to Berlin on activities in Dublin, which turned into propaganda material supporting their cause:

- *3 June*: 50,000 IRA equipped with US arms were ready to move against England, once Germany launched its final attack.
- *28 and 30 June* (via the clandestine station calling itself the New British Broadcasting Company): references to German invasion plans including landings in Ireland, and hints that plans for an invasion assisted by Irish fifth columnists were in place.
- *3 July*: discussion of Irish distrust of the British.
- *5 July*: Eire feared a British invasion.
- *6 and 7 July*: Britain was concentrating troops in the west of England and had made preparations for entering Irish ports.
- *11 July*: Germany followed developments in Eire only out of concern that Eire neutrality be maintained.[132]

Through Nazi propaganda, information about a possible German invasion spread quickly throughout the country during 1940. However, even without Germany's informational influence, de Valera had already begun preparing his country for war, if it ever arose. On June 1st, 1940, he delivered a speech, which the *New York Times* reported on the following day:

> Premier Eamon de Valera, warning tonight that Ireland is "in immediate danger," said that the nation had only "days, not weeks or months" in which to prepare against the threat of embroilment in the European war. Speaking to the nation in a radio broadcast, he said "it would be futile to believe that our will to be neutral will save us." "We must be realists," he continued, "and realize that when great nations are in conflict, the rights of small nations mean nothing to them. The only thing that matters to them is securing an advantage over the other and if small nations like ours can give such an advantage, then our neutrality would be violated and the country made a cockpit of war. Our homes would be levelled and our people slaughtered"…He appealed to young men to volunteer for duty in the armed forces, and for both young and old to join security forces.[133]

Through this speech, de Valera does not hide the looming threat of invasion from the Irish people but instead encourages them to support their nation in a time of need and survival. However, even though this fear was widely recognized by the Irish public and its political leaders, "Eire

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[131] Robert Cole, *Propaganda, Censorship and Irish Neutrality in the Second World War*, 51.

[132] Ibid., 52.

[133] "DE VALERA WARNS OF PERIL TO IRELAND: Calls on Nation to Prepare to Repel Invasion," *New York Times*, June 2, 1940.

authorities had categorically denied the BBC facilities in Dublin to report on the situation [of invasion]" in the summer of 1940.[134]

Marcus's memories help the reader understand the mindset of an Irish Jewish youth and describe the balance and connection between being both. As he writes at the end of the book's introduction, "That inner me was formed by two things – music, and the ongoing trauma of having to juggle a hyphenated heritage of being both Irish and Jewish."[135]

David Marcus grew up in Cork, providing him with a different experience than most Irish Jews who found their larger community in Dublin. For more than 60 years, Marcus would be a "major figure in the Irish literary landscape" and "considered the most important literary editor in Ireland during the second half of the twentieth century."[136] With this level of recognition, it makes sense for his memoir to have his career as a writer at its center. However, he was born in 1924, and he gives some space to discuss his early memories of the war and Irish neutrality. By 1945, he was living in Dublin but returned to Cork that year and faced a city that he felt had not changed. In Chapter Five, he writes about his experiences and his feelings about Irish neutrality, censorship, and the end of the war:

> The largely isolated nature of my student days both at UCC and King's Inns had produced an arrested adolescence. My ignorance was akin to that of the Irish public under the joke of national censorship, the Irish government's *cordon sanitaire*. The population had been generally kept in the dark about the war engulfing Europe. But not all of us. Not Ireland's five thousand Jews. Since Hitler's takeover of Germany in the mid-thirties the reports of mounting anti-Semitism outrages had not been very seriously regarded by world governments, and later even the stories of Hitler's Final Solution had similarly been discounted. But again not by Ireland's Jews. Cork's four-hundred Jews knew, knew from letters and messages smuggled out, what was happening to their co-religionists in

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[134] Robert Cole, *Propaganda, Censorship and Irish Neutrality in the Second World War*, 71.

[135] David Marcus, *Oughtobiography: Leaves from the Diary of a Hyphenated Jew*, XIV.

[136] "David Marcus," Irish Jewish Museum, accessed February 16, 2025, https://jewishmuseum.ie/jews-of-ireland/prominent_people/david-marcus/.

> Germany, knew that the five thousand Jews of Ireland had been marked down for slaughter in due course.[137]

Despite the fact that Marcus overestimated the Irish Jewish population at the time, he could not make it any clearer in his writing that the Jews in Ireland were well aware of the level of violence and death brought upon Europe's Jewish population. Nevertheless, he does not go into any more detail about specific memories of learning about this information or how he felt about it at the time, just once again repeating the memory of him waiting for the Nazi invasion of Cork that night in 1940. To him, "*Kristallnacht* had been a single incident and in another country. But the Nazi Blitzkrieg that overran Europe" was a threat to him and his family, and he would not forget that even after the war had ended.[138]

Like Garb, he had to carry the weight of the fact that with Ireland's isolation, he and his family did not face the level of destruction that many other of his kin did. His family was unharmed, his city was undamaged, and streets and buildings were untouched. His distance from the war granted him a future that he was to take advantage of, but he could not do so without an understanding and recognition of the past.

> The long nightmare that had passed could never be forgotten, but it had to be put on the back burner of my mind alongside the other burners, the crematoria of Auschwitz, Dachau, Belsen, Buchenwald. I had a way to find, a new bridge to build. I examined where the manacles of war — what the government had termed the Emergency — and of misdirected study had brought me in the previous five years, and I recognised that what I had gone through had been my own emergency from which I now had to emerge.[139]

In creating these connections between history and his life, he demonstrated how he had to move forward as an Irish Jew, forever recognizing that hyphenated heritage. In 1988, he published a collection of short stories titled *Who ever heard of an Irish Jew? And other stories*. This title asks

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[137] David Marcus, *Oughtobiography: Leaves from the Diary of a Hyphenated Jew,* 33-34.

[138] Ibid., 34.

[139] Ibid., 35.

the same question that plagued Garb many times when sharing his identity, with him even mentioning the same question directly in his writing.[140] In the story with the same name as the title, the main character, an Irish Jewish boy, is applying for a job at Levin Brothers Limited in London. For once, it is not his religion that sets him apart, but where he is from, as the company employed over 200 people, all Jews, and according to the boy, "that was more Jews under one roof than the whole community I had lived in all my life."[141] While this is most likely not a true story of David Marcus' life, it is clear that being both Irish and Jewish defined who he was. In just the first few pages, the boy has multiple interactions at this new job that question this relationship, culminating in one asking why, if he was from Ireland, he was working for the Jews? "'That's simple,' I answered. 'I *am* a Jew.' For the first time the smile vanished — momentarily. Then it blazed back, skittish giggles bubbling from between his huge lips. 'What's the joke?' I asked. Gary closed the gate behind me and pressed the button…His look was one of childish delight and discovery, 'Man,' he sang, his words dancing with incredulous laughter, 'who ever heard of an Irish Jew?'"[142]

Stanley Price's *Somewhere to Hang My Hat: An Irish-Jewish Journey*

Stanley Price begins his memoir with an in-depth description of early Irish-Jewish history, with more depth than in the memoirs previously mentioned. Chapter Two is focused entirely on their early immigration history, with great detail put into it, including seemingly any reference made about Irish Jews prior to the 20th century. When two million emigrants left the Russian Empire in 1882, two thousand arrived in Ireland, including his four grandparents. [143]

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[140] Theo Garb, *Emerald Ark: Memories of a Jewish Irish Youth*, 2.

[141] David Marcus, *Who Ever Heard of an Irish Jew? And Other Stories* (London: Corgi Books, 1991), 11.

[142] Ibid., 13.

[143] Stanley Price, *Somewhere to Hang My Hat: An Irish-Jewish Journey* (Dublin: New Island, 2002), 29.

Price's parents were born in Dublin and split his childhood between there and London, where he was born, and his father worked as a house surgeon at Bethnal Green Hospital.[144] While he does not mention his birth year, Price writes that he was born one year after his parents married in 1930, making him around 8 years of age when the war began.

He does not spend too long discussing the war but does describe his early experiences with Nazi V-1 rocket attacks in London. These rocket attacks began on the 13th of June, 1944, and would last until the 27th of March, 1945.[145] In a close-call encounter, he remembers his father's reaction, "*In drerd zollen ze vervin!"* (May they rot in hell!).[146] Immediately after, Price wonders, "Had he said it in Yiddish because it helped him identify with his fellow-Jews? He obviously knew what was happening to them not so far away on the Continent."[147] With his father splitting his time between Ireland and London, it is almost unavoidable that he was up to date on information regarding Nazi attacks on Jewish populations from easily accessible, non-censored news.

When news of Polish death camps first reached Britain by the end of March 1943, their press, too, attempted to limit the spread of this information as seen by the BBC broadcasting German atrocities to Europe only and not on their Home Service.[148] Only Polish newspapers like the *Polish Jewish Observer* and *The Jewish Chronicle* covered this news, and on April 16, 1943, *The Jewish Chronicle* wrote:

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[144] Ibid., 70.

[145] The National Archives, "British Response to V1 and V2," The National Archives, May 1, 2024, https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/british-response-v1-and-v2/#:~:text=The%20people%20of%20Britain%20called,hook'%20students%20into%20the%20lesson.

[146] Stanley Price, *Somewhere to Hang My Hat: An Irish-Jewish Journey*, 110.

[147] Ibid., 111.

[148] Michael Flemming, *Auschwitz, the Allies and Censorship of the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 173.

> A three-day pogrom marked the final stages of the liquidation of the Cracow ghetto, it was revealed in a report received in official Polish quarters in London this week…During those three days many Jews, including women and children, were slaughtered by German soldiers and the S.S. when the entire population of the suburb of Podgorze, where the ghetto was situated, was rounded up. Those left alive were loaded into cattle trucks—'death wagons,' the report calls them—and transferred to the notorious camp of Oswiecim, which was recently converted into a death camp for Jews and equipped with all the implements necessary for mass execution.[149]

Official British mentions of Oswiecim, later referred to as Auschwitz, would not occur until *The Times* reported on 8 July 1944 that the Nazis had sent 400,000 Hungarian Jews to the camp, with a majority put to death in gas chambers.[150] Within a week, *The Jewish Chronicle* published a front-page story with those exact details, but going even further to reference a dispatch from Geneva that between the "two notorious death camps in Poland, Birkenau and Oswiecim (Auschwitz), over 1,715,000 Jews were exterminated between April, 1942, and April, 1944."[151] No matter how hard the British government tried to limit information about Auschwitz, Jewish newspapers like *The Jewish Chronicle* provided its readers with as up-to-date information as possible. Assuming Stanley Price's father was a reader of *The Jewish Chronicle*, he would have had access to all of this knowledge before a majority of the British and Irish populations.

Price, too, recognizes the role Ireland played in the safety of his family, believing that both sides of his family had been "historically and geographically fortunate, blessed with a sort of cosmic good luck. In choosing Ireland, my grandparents had enabled their families to sidestep the worst horrors of the century: the pogroms, two World Wars, and the Holocaust."[152] When he journeyed to Jerusalem later in life, a young *chassid* approached him, offering to say a memorial prayer for those in his family who had died in the Holocaust. When he told him his family had

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[149] "Pogrom in Cracow: Ghetto Liquidated," *The Jewish Chronicle,* April 16, 1943, 7.

[150] Michael Flemming, *Auschwitz, the Allies and Censorship of the Holocaust,* 246.

[151] "The Toll of the Death Camps: 1,715,000 Jews Butchered," *The Jewish Chronicle*, July 14, 1944, 6.

[152] Stanley Price, *Somewhere to Hang My Hat: An Irish-Jewish Journey*, 111.

lost no one, "[h]e stared back at me incredulously. Was it possible there was a European Jew who had lost no one in the *Shoah*? The odds were entirely against it. He then realised I was English and changed his tack. He would say *kaddish* for a loved one lost fighting the Nazis. I had lost no one that way either, and I briefly experienced 'survivors' guilt.'"[153] Only in Ireland was it possible for someone to lose no one in an atrocity that took so many lives.

While Stanley Price may have been too young to understand the impact of Irish neutrality, he writes about his father's acceptance of it. Despite such an intense hatred of Germans, he maintained a good attitude towards neutrality, with the author believing it was "based more on personal considerations than principle, given that Irish neutrality offered his family a haven."[154] Even after de Valera personally went to the German Embassy in Dublin to express his condolences on the death of Hitler, his father still admired him when he became President in 1959.[155] This move by de Valera caused international outrage and backlash, particularly among Irish Americans who felt this to be a traitorous decision. As a result, de Valera received countless letters of disapproval and disappointment.

Lionel Cohen's *Memoir of an Irish Jew*

When beginning his memoir, Cohen makes it very clear to the reader that he was well aware of his Irish and Jewish identity: "I was born into a Jewish family, or, more correctly, into an Irish family whose parents were Jewish."[156] Born in 1922 during the Irish Civil War, he too came of age during a period of Irish Jewish prosperity and was old enough, when the time came, to understand Ireland's neutrality and its role in the war. Like author David Marcus, Cohen also

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[153] Ibid.

[154] Ibid., 119.

[155] Ibid, 119-120.

[156] Lionel Cohen, *Memoir of an Irish Jew* (Cork: Cork City Libraries, 2021), 1.

grew up in Cork, away from the large Jewish center in Ireland. According to Cohen, throughout his upbringing, the Jewish community in Cork numbered around 400, or approximately 40 families.[157] However, he writes that as he grew up, he would "wonder if three quarters of the population of Cork… [were] Jews because one heard the Jews being mentioned so often in conversation by others. But this was par for the course as I found out in later life and indeed in some quarters still is. An old saying still comes to mind and it went, 'Where do the Christians get all the money that the Jews take from them?'"[158] When discussing antisemitism in Ireland, he felt it was more important to keep a comedic frame of mind — "I often think how much truth there was in an old story of this man beating up an old Jew. When remonstrated by a passer-by and asked why he was doing it, he replied 'well, they crucified Christ.' 'But that was two thousand years ago,' the passer-by said. 'Well,' said the other, 'I only heard about it the other day.' So, you either took it with a sense of humour or else you let these things fester inside you."[159]

Cohen continues, describing in detail what life was like for him in Jewish Cork. Because the community was small and tight-knit, they did not have the luxury of having a street of entirely Jewish shops like those in Dublin. They did not even have a Jewish butcher (Dublin had two) but instead relied on a non-Jewish butcher to prepare the meat and save it for the community after the local Jewish minister's assistant had killed it.[160] Despite its small population, the community had a social club for younger Jewish citizens, frequently hosting lectures, including that of Vladimir Jabotinsky, a Zionist leader and Israel pioneer. Cohen remembers being particularly entranced by his messages, as Jabotinsky explained that if Jews

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[157] Ibid., 6.

[158] Ibid.

[159] Ibid., 7.

[160] Ibid., 7.

wanted their independent state, they must be willing to fight for it.[161] The Cork social clubs would host visits with other clubs from Dublin or London, which would be exciting events for such a small community.[162]

Besides the mention of how, at the time of Jabotinsky's visit, "stories were beginning to come out of Germany about the treatment of Jews there and the odd refugee passed through Cork on his way to America or elsewhere," as well as how the Jewish population of Ireland did not foresee the wrath of Hitler, Cohen does not begin to discuss the war or its impact until about nine months after it had started.[163] As he describes in the following passage, the reason for this is that he felt like very little had been different since the start of the war.

> Beyond the fact that things were running short in Ireland and rationing of fuel and clothing had begun, life in Ireland had not changed all that much. There was censorship and very little news which might affect our neutrality was allowed through. The government, in its wisdom, had decided that, if at all possible, Ireland would not become embroiled in the war. How much of that attitude was coloured by our relationship with Britain and how much was genuine desire of de Valera and his colleagues to keep us from the horrors of war is a moot question now.[164]

By May 1940, when the war in France began and British and French soldiers were evacuated at Dunkirk, suddenly an invasion of Britain became a real possibility, and Ireland could no longer rely on Britain for any guarantee of help if the island were to face Nazi threats. As a result of de Valera's 1940 speech, which called for the young men of Ireland to come forward and defend the country from those who might seek to take away its independence, Cohen joined the Irish Army, along with 60,000 others who volunteered during 'The Emergency.'[165]

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[161] Ibid., 36-37.

[162] Ibid., 38.

[163] Ibid., 37.

[164] Ibid., 56.

[165] Ibid., 58.

The memoir continues with his life, eventually becoming a sergeant in the army and later moving to the new state of Israel to join their army. Instead, he got assigned to The *Kedmah* due to his skill as a naval radio officer, serving as chief radio officer for a ship that would bring mainly Jewish tourists from around the world to Israel for the first time.[166] When reflecting on his life and experiences in Ireland, he is thankful for how they treated him and his family and how he believes that the state tried its best to look after its citizens.[167] However, he is not so kind when discussing de Valera, and he believes that "[de Valera] was the cause of keeping this state years behind other European States, especially after the Second World War…"[168] To him, Ireland today is entirely different from the one he knew then, and he is happy that these changes have occurred. In his own words, "I have two loyalties: one to Ireland, the country of my birth, and one as a Jew to Israel. I have no hesitation about saying this and have proved my loyalty to both by volunteering when needed."[169]

Cohen spends little time during his memoir discussing the war and his experiences living during neutrality. However, he, unlike any of the others who eventually wrote a memoir, actively volunteered during the war and did not live at home within the Jewish community. Cohen, of all people, should not have felt the same level of guilt that others may have experienced because he actively supported his country and was willing to defend it if necessary. When he does speak on Ireland's safety from the grasp of the Holocaust, he writes, "It was difficult to convey our feelings. People like Elizabeth who had survived the Holocaust would have been more affected than people like Henry and me who had lived in countries where Jews were free. Nevertheless,

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[166] Ibid., 186-187.

[167] Ibid., 319.

[168] Ibid., 322.

[169] Ibid., 323.

the common bond was there, and all of us, even those who had not experienced active persecution, were aware that at best Jews were tolerated."[170] Through this quote, Cohen recognizes the safety that Ireland provided him and his family. However, on the other hand, he understands that their existence was truthfully only ever tolerated and that in no way was Ireland actively attempting to grow their small Jewish population.

Nick Harris' *Dublin's Little Jerusalem*

The purpose of this memoir is not to tell the story of Harris's life but to include his story in the larger picture of the life of Dublin's Jewish community. Harris's parents arrived in Dublin in the early 1900s from Lithuania, thinking they had arrived in America but in fact had been dumped in Ireland by the ship's captain.[171] Harris was born in Dublin in 1915, just off South Circular Road. At the time, fifty-eight houses were on the street, with seventeen Jewish families.[172] The Dublin Jewish community would be his home for over eighty-six years.[173]

With such a tight-knit Jewish center, "Little Jerusalem" became a space not only for shopping but for ways of sharing information with the community and spreading awareness of events for the public: "For young people in the 1930s, Clanbrassil Street was our centre. We were forever going to the various shops asking for permission to stick up notices for dances or meetings. It was the only way we had of communicating information to the community at that time."[174] The community was self-reliant, rarely needing to go beyond its borders for daily essentials. Before the outbreak of World War II, the community saw growth from skilled Jewish

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[170] Ibid., 180.

[171] Nick Harris, *Dublin's Little Jerusalem*, 1.

[172] Ibid., 12.

[173] Ibid., ix.

[174] Ibid., 44.

tradesmen arriving from Britain to join a company or begin a business. They were lucky, as the Irish policy towards aliens at the time was very restrictive, with many of those refused later dying in the Holocaust.[175] However, Harris shares stories of refugees he met who had successfully arrived in Ireland, but that was years before the war, and they had come under the pretense of setting up factories of varying clothing articles.[176] Without a doubt, the Dublin community welcomed these individuals into their homes as they understood the significance of their journey.[177]

To Harris, life in Dublin during the war went on as usual. It does not seem like he and his family were overly involved in learning about the news of the war and knew very little about Jewish persecution. He writes that after the war's end, "people all over the world were shocked at the pictures shown of concentration camps. In Dublin, the feeling was very much the same." Due to Ireland's neutrality, the Jewish population "had been able to live our lives in comparative comfort, without knowing what was really going on. Ireland had been under very strict censorship and even news of the progress of the war was not fully reported."[178] While it is entirely possible that some Dublin Jews were aware of the Holocaust and others were not, this statement directly contradicts what other memoir authors wrote about their level of knowledge. This quote also argues against his description of the Dublin community's ability to communicate effectively — it is interesting to see that news of the Nazi atrocities gathered from non-Irish sources had not been widely shared within the population.

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[175] Ibid., 180-181.

[176] Ibid., 178-179.

[177] Ibid., 179.

[178] Ibid., 183.

Dublin Jewry did, however, take immediate steps to provide post-war support to Jewish communities abroad. In May 1945, they started the Jewish Children's Rescue Fund for orphaned and homeless victims of the Holocaust.[179] After only remaining open for a year, they had raised a total sum of £20,000, given to organizations who had guaranteed that the money would be used for the help of children only. Harris writes that the community's response was massive, almost "as if each and every person felt a guilt that they wished to purge…they gave generously, even non-Jews responded to such a worthy cause."[180] This feeling of guilt may have arisen for a few reasons. One, it may have been because of their nation's lack of support for the global Jewish refugee crisis. However, in many ways, there was nothing the population could have done to change the work of the government, and even Robert Briscoe understood that. Secondly, the guilt may have stemmed from the fact that the population did not attempt to find ways to learn about the Nazi Final Solution or believe in full that something so horrendous would be happening behind the world's back. However, while Harris argues that the Dublin Jewish population lived in general comfort without recognizing the severity of the antisemitic persecution abroad, what exists in the Irish Jewish Museum in Dublin is a printed program titled "Intercession Service on behalf of Suffering and Massacred Jewry held in the Synagogues of the Jewish Community of Eire, on Sunday 7th Feb. 1943 at 3 P.M." Next to it, a pamphlet for a similar style event, titled "Day of Fasting Mourning and Prayer for the Victims of Mass Massacres of Jews in Nazi Lands", held in London on 13th December 1942. More than likely, Irish Jewish community members also attended that service. With well over two years remaining in the war, these artifacts are proof that at least some members of the Dublin Jewish community, if not most, truly understood that some level of mass destruction was occurring. Finally, the third and most logical

[179] Ibid.

[180] Ibid., 184.

reason is that the guilt originated from Ireland's physical isolation from the war, which saved them from the horrors that their family and co-religionists had to face in Europe. Their experience can most directly be compared to British Jews, including those in Northern Ireland, who, while saved physically from the horrors of the Holocaust, served in the British Army and experienced German bombing attacks all over Great Britain. Irish Jews remained wholly protected from that.

When Harris published this memoir, only one member of Dublin Jewry had been confirmed to have died in the Holocaust, Ettie Steinberg, murdered in Auschwitz in 1942 with her husband and three-year-old son. They had moved to Belgium and then to Paris in 1939 in an attempt to avoid Hitler's war machine.[181] Today, researchers confirmed that there were three other Irish victims of the Holocaust, all of whom had been born on the island and returned to Europe with their families when they were children.[182] When news reached the Irish Jewish community of Ettie Steinberg's death, the entire population experienced debilitating sadness.[183] This death, in many ways, was the closest the Holocaust ever got to the shores of Ireland.

Conclusion

When the author's stories exist in one space, the life and priorities of an Irish Jewish citizen at the time become apparent. During the war, with no significant threat or immediate necessary action, it became easy to forget about life outside. Yet this security came at a price: as

[181] Ibid., 182.

[182] New Research Reveals Three Previously Unknown Irish Holocaust Victims – The Irish Times," accessed February 19, 2025, https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/new-research-reveals-three-previously-unknown-irish-holocaust-victims-1.3772670.

[183] Nick Harris, *Dublin's Little Jerusalem*, 182.

Theo Garb's memoir reveals, the silence that followed unanswered pleas to relatives in Poland left a lasting sense of helplessness and survivor's guilt. Having a hyphenated identity of Irish-Jew was felt by many who had worked hard to become naturalized citizens. In a country with little to no public antisemitism, this became a much easier task to accomplish. Jewish citizens practiced freely without concern for their community, a rare sight throughout history, particularly during the 1930s. However, this acceptance of peace and comfort did not come without a loss of morale, as their co-religionists faced extreme hardship in mainland Europe. In a quote about the life of Herbert Unger, his son writes about the compromises his father had to make:

> I think that he spent his whole life protecting his children from the horrors of what Germany had become in his youth and the even worse, unspeakable horrors that the Germans and their friends had perpetrated on so many millions of their fellow human beings. I think that perhaps he felt that his Germany had been destroyed utterly, and that as a naturalised Irishman he could observe Germany in the post-war events unfolding there objectively, even remotely, as just another curiosity in a life in which there were much more pressing things to be concerned about.[184]

For many Irish Jews, life remained undisturbed, save the minimal impact of rationing and limited travel outside the nation.

The stories told in these memoirs do not make it entirely clear how effective Irish censorship was in limiting information about the Holocaust. For example, Irish citizens still had access to British broadcasting, as demonstrated by Theo Garb, who relied on the radio to learn about the war and its progress towards Ireland. However, while war reports were not necessarily blocked, the BBC actively limited news about the Holocaust by denying information from being shared to their British and Irish listeners. Even with these clear barriers in place, the stories told in these memoirs demonstrate how Irish Jewish populations refused to remain uninformed.

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[184] Klaus Unger, "On Herbert Unger" in *The Irish Context of Kristallnacht: Refugees and Helpers*, ed. Gisela Holfter, 32.

Whether it was from refugees housed in their houses sharing stories of pogroms or by receiving smuggled-in letters from mainland Europe, at least some members of the Jewish community received accurate information, which could be effectively shared within their close-knit communities through social groups, religious organizations, and events specifically focused on these global atrocities.

Even if these populations did know what was occurring globally, there was little they could do to make an impact. Especially in Ireland, which successfully remained neutral, their Jewish population did not have enough political influence to generate large-scale refugee missions, but instead held a more supportive role of short-term housing and financial maintenance for their co-religionists in Belfast. While Robert Briscoe was occasionally successful in bringing in Jewish refugees, clear messages sent to him demonstrate the political pushback and societal pressure he faced when supporting his community.

In the years immediately following World War II, the global Jewish population began their "aliyah" or "ascent" to Israel, including those in Ireland. According to a table presented by the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, 784 Irish residents immigrated to Israel from 1948 to 2010, with the most considerable number being 157 and 152 in 1972-1979 and 1980-1984, respectively.[185] While a mutual understanding and connection once existed between the Irish and Israeli populations in their historical resentment against the British, their current relationship is one of hostility and tension. In 1957, the Irish government established formal diplomatic ties, with both countries in 1993 agreeing to open embassies.[186] For many years up to that point,

[185] Central Bureau of Statistics (Israel), *Immigration to Israel 1948-2011*, Table 5, https://web.archive.org/web/20131022013551/http://cbs.gov.il/publications12/1483_immigration/pdf/tab05.pdf.

[186] Greer Cashman, "Chairman of Israel-Ireland Friendship League: Israel must continue to engage with Ireland," *The Jerusalem Post*, January 8, 2025. https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-836645.

Ireland was the only EU country not to have an Israeli embassy.[187] In 1990, then Deputy Foreign Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, lobbied in Ireland for the creation of this embassy, using the argument that "a natural feeling of sympathy towards Israel among the Irish people" had existed for some time. However, the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Gerry Collins, responded to this by arguing that the Irish people did not like seeing Irish UN peacekeepers die in Lebanon from attacks blamed on Lebanese militias supported by Israel. In the end, Robert Briscoe's son, Joe Briscoe, along with the notion that Ireland should not "lag behind either in the intensity or intimacy of diplomatic contacts with Israel," convinced the government to finalize plans for embassy construction.[188] However, this did not end foreign relation issues, as Ireland's consistent support for the Palestinian causes has been a great source of friction. Notably, in December 2024, Israel closed its embassy in Dublin, citing Ireland's "extreme anti-Israel policies."[189] Subsequently, in January 2025, Ireland announced its declaration of intervention in South Africa's genocide case against Israel at the International Court of Justice.[190]

With this current relationship in view, writers are looking to Ireland's history to determine if the country has always carried these values. Simon Sebag Montefiore, in his article "The Deep Roots of Irish Antisemitism" in *The Free Press*, attempts this research by referencing some key events that could convince a reader of longstanding antisemitism in Ireland. The article references continued pro-Nazi feelings by Francis Stuart, an Irish broadcaster who worked in Berlin promoting Nazi propaganda, a mention of de Valera's Hitler death condolences, a

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[187] Mark Brennock, "Israeli embassy opens in Dublin," *The Irish Times*, January 29, 1996.

[188] "Binyamin Netanyahu lobbies for embassy during visit to Ireland as a rising star politician in 1990," *The Irish Times*, December 29, 2024.

[189] Sophie Tanno, "Israel closes embassy in Ireland, blaming 'extreme anti-Israel policies,'" *CNN*, December 15, 2024. https://www.cnn.com/2024/12/15/europe/israel-ireland-embassy-closure-intl/index.html.

[190] Max Saltman, "Ireland joins genocide case against Israel at International Court of Justice," *CNN*, January 7, 2025. https://www.cnn.com/2025/01/07/middleeast/ireland-genocide-israel-icj-intl-latam/index.html.

discussion of Ireland's current actions regarding Israel, and, of course, the Limerick Pogrom, which his family endured.[191] These events in isolation can certainly generate an argument for longstanding Irish antisemitism, but what is ignored is the nation's ability to support and protect their Jewish citizens during a period of immense devastation on a global scale. However, while this may defend Ireland's actions in the past, what is occurring now can be considered new, and getting worse. In October, 2024, before the removal of the Israeli embassy, former Ambassador Elrich wrote a statement regarding recent acts of antisemitism in Ireland. In this, he references an increase in anti-Israel initiatives, as well as protests of aggression against Israel and Zionism and "the parading of the terrorist flags of Hamas and Hezbollah in the streets of Dublin and elsewhere…Alarmingly, school textbooks in Ireland which demonise Israel and the Jewish religion have been published in distributed throughout the country for years."[192] On top of this, the statement mentions physical altercations with members of the Jewish population, which have continued into 2025.[193]

This relationship, while marked by recent international turmoil, does not limit the once positive experience Jews faced in Ireland. While the safety of Ireland's shores may have restricted the non-Jewish population's knowledge of continued antisemitic devastation, the Irish-Jewish population utilized multiple routes of information to ensure that they remained

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[191] Simon Sebag Montefiore, "The Deep Roots of Irish Antisemitism," *The Free Press*, December 17, 2024, https://www.thefp.com/p/the-deep-roots-of-irish-antisemitism.

[192] Dana Erlich, "Ambassador Erlich's Statement Regarding Antisemitism in Ireland," Embassy of Israel: Dublin, December 10, 2024, https://new.embassies.gov.il/ireland/en/news/291124.

[193] Colm Keena, "Israeli Man Spat at When Confronted by Two Women in Dún Laoghaire Bar, Online Footage Shows," *The Irish Times*, March 15, 2025, https://www.irishtimes.com/ireland/2025/03/15/israeli-man-spat-at-when-confronted-by-two-women-in-dun-laoghaire-bar-online-footage-shows/.

Conor Gallagher, "Jewish Student Attacked in Dublin Nightclub in Suspected Hate Crime amid Fears of Rising Anti-Semitism," *The Irish Times*, November 30, 2024, https://www.irishtimes.com/crime-law/2024/11/30/jewish-student-attacked-in-dublin-nightclub-in-suspected-hate-crime-amid-fears-of-rising-anti-semitism/.

informed. However, while being informed was quite easy, feeling the guilt of isolation was not, with Irish Jews experiencing survivor guilt due to their lack of involvement in the war and the Holocaust.

Ultimately, the history of Jewish Ireland during World War II is one of paradox: while spared the direct horrors of the Holocaust, they felt the weight of isolation and of the knowledge of what their co-religionists were experiencing abroad. Without the memoirs of Garb, Marcus, Price, Cohen, and Harris, the emotional realities of the Irish Jewish community would be hidden, reduced to statistics and official documents. As Ireland faces new challenges in its relationship with Jewish citizens, the history of the Irish-Jewish community during World War II reminds us why it matters to resist indifference and value the strength of community.

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