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PROPAGANDA AND *THE PROMISE OF BARTY O'BRIEN*:
POLITICS, IRISH NATIONALISM, AND PARTITION
AFTER WORLD WAR II

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Humanities/Teacher Education Division

Pepperdine University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Courtenay Stallings

July 2009

This thesis, written by

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under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

July 2009

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After World War II

by

Courtenay Callie-Jane Stallings
July 2009
Dr. Darlene Rivas, Chairperson

ABSTRACT

When the United States offered Ireland the opportunity to join the European Recovery Plan (ERP) after World War II, Irish officials and leaders had a unique opportunity to move beyond Ireland's conservative political and economic isolation and, with ERP resources, to work towards European integration. However, extreme nationalism and the issue of the partition of Northern Ireland impeded even the most forward thinking Irish leaders of the time, like Seán MacBride, from fully realizing the opportunity of ERP because these leaders hijacked Marshall Plan propaganda for the purpose of promoting their own political, nationalistic agenda. Even strong proponents of European recovery and European integration, like the Irish intellectual Sean O'Faolain, were not immune to the pull of Irish nationalism. O'Faolain's 1951 Marshall Plan film *The Promise of Barty O'Brien* provides an historical and cultural lens into Ireland's struggle between modernization and extreme Irish nationalism, which was often isolationist and fervently against the partition of Northern Ireland. Despite O'Faolain's support of ERP, modernization, and integration, the film demonstrates a glorification of Ireland's agrarian and revolutionary past. Extreme Irish nationalism, the failure to break economic ties to the United Kingdom, and demands that anti-partition be a condition of membership in NATO alienated both U.S. and European officials. This thesis will expand and contribute to the existing scholarship on the ERP and Irish nationalism in the post World War II era because of the analysis of diplomatic affairs in connection with unique and significant Marshall Plan films like *The Promise of Barty O'Brien*.

DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Donald and Anita Stallings, my Irish ancestors and to the Irish people, who are strong, incredibly complex, and who I will always find fascinating.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those individuals who were instrumental in helping me achieve this final step in the master's in history degree. First, I would like to thank my thesis chairperson Dr. Darlene Rivas and my thesis committee members—Dr. Loretta Hunnicutt and Dr. Candice Ortals—for their support and encouragement. I am extremely grateful to the following people for their logistical and moral support: Judith Tapper, fellow history graduate student; Esther O'Connor, Communication Division Office Manager; Dr. Maire Mullins, Professor and Humanities and Teacher Education Division Chair; Stacey Hood, Humanities and Teacher Education Division Office Manager; Geneva Moore, Humanities and Teacher Education Division Administrative Assistant; Dr. Dana Dudley, Seaver College Special Academic Programs Director; and Leslie Seah, Seaver College Special Academic Programs Manager.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CEEC	Committee for European Economic Cooperation
EC	European Community
ECA	Economic Cooperation Administration
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EEC	European Economic Community
EPC	Economic Policy Committee (Britain)
ERP	European Recovery Plan
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OEEC	Organization for European Economic Cooperation
UN	United Nations
UNRRA	United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

During the period of the Marshall Plan, Ireland was paradoxically both peripheral and central to the success of European integration and economic recovery after World War II. The country was still producing agriculture for an economically devastated United Kingdom and the export of Irish foodstuffs were essential for sustaining the wellbeing of both nations. The complex relationships between the United Kingdom and Ireland reveal the paradox of British dependence on Ireland's economy. Despite political autonomy from the British Commonwealth, Ireland, and the United Kingdom were codependent in their reliance on the Sterling area and bi-lateral trade. The scholarship of this thesis will contribute to the growing body of contemporary research on individual European countries involved in the European Recovery Plan (ERP). Specifically, this thesis demonstrates how Ireland's foreign affairs' leaders manipulated ERP propaganda for the purpose of promoting their own political agenda. Although scholarship about ERP propaganda is quite diverse, this thesis will focus on specific media in Ireland that used ERP resources for promoting Irish nationalism. Tension among the Irish people, the British, and the Americans complicated the postwar recovery of Ireland, but the struggle among the Irish actually delayed Ireland's entrance into the European community in the immediate postwar era. This thesis will demonstrate that, despite Irish nationalism and resistance to outside cultural, political and economic influence, many Irish officials actively courted external political, and

cultural influences, but Ireland ultimately failed to realize the opportunity of ERP because Irish leaders used ERP propaganda to implement their own nationalistic propaganda to call attention to partition.

Irish nationalism and the problem of the partition of the northern counties of Ireland transected all aspects of Irish life—religious, political, economic, and diplomatic. The Parliament of the United Kingdom gave Ireland home rule when it passed the Government of Ireland Act in 1920. The entire island of Ireland became the Irish Free State in 1922. However, the parliament of Northern Ireland decided to opt-out (Article 12 of the treaty allowed for an opt-out) of the Irish Free State. The six counties in the north eventually became Northern Ireland under the sovereignty of the United Kingdom. The Irish Free State accepted this provision of partition as temporary. The declaration of Ireland as a republic in 1948 widened the effect of partition because of Ireland's neutrality and non-participation in NATO. Irish External Affairs leader Seán MacBride's strong stance against partition often caused friction with U.S. Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA) members who believed it was a distraction from ERP and European cooperation.

In 1951, the fictional feature-length film *The Promise of Barty O'Brien* was released and screened in Ireland. The film tells the story of Barty O'Brien who wanted to leave his farm to train as an electrical engineer but was prevented from fulfilling his dream by his father who embodied a rural, nationalist, anti-modern viewpoint. Barty fulfills his dream despite his father's obstinacy by participating in the ERP Technical Assistance Program. Barty O'Brien's journey is in many ways a metaphor for the

desire of the Irish people to modernize in the postwar era while retaining the traditional, agricultural legacy of their history. The film addresses the key political, economic, and social themes affecting Ireland at the time, particularly the issue of modernization with regard to the Technical Assistance Program implemented by the ERP. Despite propaganda and modernization efforts, Ireland failed to fulfill the goals of industrialization in the immediate years after World War II. Technical Assistance aid was suspended in 1952, and ECA officials were unimpressed by the political grandstanding of Irish leaders like Seán MacBride. The film is important, though, because Barty's plight was representative of the tension present in Ireland's quest for identity after independence in the modern age of the ERP (or Marshall Plan).¹ The film is a lens into the Irish experience of ERP and Barty's struggle is a metaphor for the Irish people's struggle between traditional values and modernizing Ireland. Barty O'Brien, like Irish officials of the day, was torn between fulfilling his role as farmer and becoming a modern electrical engineer by participating in the American ERP Technical Assistance Program. Like Barty, Irish officials were conflicted between clinging to the traditional agricultural, economic isolation of Ireland's past and interacting with and accepting foreign economic and cultural resources.

The chapters of the thesis are organized by topics that illustrate not only the background of the ERP and Ireland, but also the complex relationships involved in the push for modernization and integration. The initial chapter focuses on the background of the ERP and Ireland, including the historiography concerning the Marshall Plan in

¹ I will use the terms "ERP," "European Recovery Plan", and "Marshall Plan" interchangeably throughout the thesis.

general and Ireland, specifically. Historiography concerning Irish nationalism is explored in the second chapter. Traditionally, scholarship on the European Recovery Program involved the complicated bilateral relationship between the European nations and the United States, particularly in the context of the Cold War. Only recently have scholars begun to explore the ERP in a wider, more nuanced context, involving not only Cold War politics, but inter-European relations as well. Attention is now being paid to the smaller nations—particularly Ireland. Ireland is significant in the context of the Marshall Plan and the post World War II era for several reasons. First of all, Ireland was a neutral nation during World War II. This exacerbated an already complex relationship with the United Kingdom after the war. In 1948, Ireland was officially declared a republic, thus terminating the identity of the nation in relation to its connection with the British Commonwealth. However, Ireland continued to be dependent on Britain economically. After the declaration of the republic, the partition of Northern Ireland was solidified. Partition became an important issue for the Irish not only because they believed a part of Ireland was taken from them, but also because they lost the industrialized, prosperous north to the British.

In the first chapter, I will explore the background on the ERP and Ireland and focus on the historiography of the subject. I will trace the scholarship of the Marshall Plan from its original focus on the achievements of the plan to the revisionist theory that the United States was simply imposing its own hegemony on the rest of Europe by applying foreign aid in order to create an international capitalist system that would reinforce the economy of the U.S. The post-revisionists refute this theory by taking a

more complex look at the variant relationships of all nations and peoples involved in ERP. I will then discuss the current scholarship on the Marshall Plan with regard to Ireland. The background on the ERP and the historical problems associated with Ireland and the Marshall Plan will provide a context for the propaganda campaign implemented by Seán MacBride and the Department of External Affairs and the film *The Promise of Barty O'Brien*.

The film *The Promise of Barty O'Brien* was one of many films issued by the ECA to promote the Marshall Plan. However, the film is unique in that it is a full-length feature film that is a fictional piece of art in addition to being a propaganda piece. The film was written by the famous Irish writer Sean O'Faolain and was comprised of mostly Irish actors and crew. The Marshall Plan films like *The Promise of Barty O'Brien* have only recently become available. Albert Hemsing, who was an American member of the Information Division in Paris in the 1950s, recounted how difficult it was to get Congress to lift the ban on the screening of the Marshall Plan's propaganda films in America. The prohibition against the Marshall films originated in the Smith-Mundt Act, United States Information and Education Exchange Act of 1948. Even when Congress officially lifted the ban on the screening of the films in 1990, most of the public, including scholars, have had limited access to the films.² While most of

² Elizabeth Heffelfinger, "Foreign Policy, Domestic Fiction: Government-sponsored Documentaries and Network Television Promote the Marshall Plan at Home," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 28, no. 1 (March 2008), 3. The Smith-Mundt act is also known as the U.S. Information and Educational Exchange Act and was passed in 1948. The act was created to distribute pro-U.S. and anti-Soviet propaganda around the globe. The act stipulated that no propaganda would be disseminated in the United States as a protective measure for the American people. The

the films are attainable through the National Archives II in College Park, Maryland, it is difficult and expensive to obtain a copy for individual viewing, much less a film screening. However, the Marshall Plan films from the European Unit are a rich primary source for understanding this era. The film *The Promise of Barty O'Brien* is particularly interesting because it was not only a propaganda film extolling the virtues of the Marshall Plan, but it was also a full-length fictional feature film written by a prominent Irish writer and endorsed by the Irish Department of External Affairs. In many ways this American propaganda film was an Irish-issued and approved propaganda film as well. Significantly, the struggle of Barty O'Brien in the film mirrors the struggle of many Irish people and Irish officials, who were caught between clinging to traditional values versus exploring modernization and closer ties to the United States.

In the third chapter, I will explain how the ambivalent relationships with the United Kingdom and the United States impeded Ireland's quest for integration with Europe. Ireland's refusal to sever the bilateral economic ties to Britain along with its attempt to remove itself culturally and politically from Britain are evidence of the ambivalent relationship the country had with its neighbor during the postwar years. While Ireland had a history of friendly and amicable relationships with America, many Irish officials were wary of adopting the ERP because of a concern over the influx of what they viewed as crass American materialism, cultural insensitivity, and haste.

Marshall Plan films were finally available for viewing in the United States in 1990 when Massachusetts Senator John Kerry introduced an amendment to the act to allow for the Marshall Plan films to be screened in the U.S.

Chapters four and five will reveal how the expansion of the Department of External Affairs allowed the department to play a key role in Ireland's foray into international affairs, but the department's hijacking of ERP propaganda for the purpose of anti-partition propaganda alienated U.S. officials. The Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA) functioned as the administrative agency charged with monitoring how Marshall Plan funds were being implemented. The ECA worked with the local information divisions in the European countries to implement pro-American, pro-Marshall plan propaganda through radio, newspapers, exhibitions and film. Although the Department of External Affairs worked to publicize ERP, they did so according to their own political agenda by making the problem of partition an issue in propaganda media.

This thesis is arranged by the specific areas of tension resulting in Ireland's failure to integrate in the new world order envisioned by planners and most participants of ERP. The exploration of the Department of External Affairs and the film *The Promise of Barty O'Brien* will add to scholarship based on recently released and newly discovered media relating to the Marshall Plan and ERP. The film must be viewed within these contexts: Ireland's complicated relationship with Britain and the United States, its status of neutrality during the war, a push by some individuals to integrate with Europe and modernize Irish economics and culture into a more industrial society like the United States, and its quest to provide a fresh vision for itself as a new nation in the post-World War II new world era.

CHAPTER TWO

History and Historiography of the European Recovery Plan and Ireland

This chapter addresses the complex history of the ERP and the evolution of its historiography. Even though the Americans concocted the concept of the Marshall Plan, the Europeans created and implemented the official European Recovery Program. European recovery involved economic improvement through technical assistance, removing trade barriers including tariffs, and increasing consumerism. It was also a way to curtail the perceived encroachment of communism into Western Europe. The initial historiography of the Marshall Plan focused on European success as a result of American funding, resources and ingenuity. Scholars held a very American-centric view and did not initially incorporate the complex interactions between the European nations and individuals. Historians later began to look at the multilateral relationships between European countries within the context of the Marshall Plan. Recent historiography reflects a more nuanced approach that transects social, political, and economic spheres. Complex relationships existed among individuals, multilateral institutions, and countries. The problems of these complex relationships were compounded by issues of cultural and political nationalism, which both motivated the Irish ERP players and hindered them in their quest for opportunities through ERP resources. This chapter will provide background on the European Recovery Program and reveal how the research of this thesis fits into contemporary scholarship.

The ERP's goal was not only to help Europe recover from the economic devastation of World War II, but it would also provide a stronghold against the threat of totalitarian regimes. Although Ireland did not face a significant threat from anti-democratic regimes, the economy of the nation was important for British economic success and, therefore, Ireland was awarded ERP funding in the form of both loans and grants. The Marshall Plan's dual goals of economic recovery and providing a stronghold against communist regimes will provide a context for highlighting the ways in which Irish leaders attempted to align themselves with these goals while promoting their own political agenda of anti-partition.

The European Recovery Plan did not begin as a cohesive plan at all, but rather a speech by George C. Marshall at Harvard University in June 1947. Although the idea of providing Europe with a system of economic restructuring and stability in order to prevent another major war was not new, Marshall's speech marked a moment in time when key U.S. officials had deliberately decided to take action to restructure Europe and provide resources including financial aid. In the late 1940s, during the height of the Marshall Plan, the U.S. provided 60 percent of the world's foreign aid. In addition to the economic devastation of World War II, the threat of communism was a major impetus for implementing foreign funding on such a grand scale. In his speech, Marshall claimed "the remedy lies in breaking the vicious circle and restoring the

confidence of the European people in the economic future of their own countries and Europe as a whole.”³

President Truman and Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson supported George C. Marshall’s vision of providing economic resources to Europe in order to prevent the spread of communism and avoid another global war. In March, three months before Marshall’s speech to the graduates at Harvard, President Truman issued the Truman Doctrine, which stated that the U.S. would provide both Greece and Turkey with military and economic aid in their fight against the communist Soviets. Truman presented his doctrine to a joint-session of Congress on March 12, 1947. The President explained the reasons why he requested military support and money for Greece and Turkey. Truman and other U.S. officials believed that without intervention in Greece and Turkey, the free peoples of the Western world might succumb to totalitarian and, specifically, communist regimes. Truman believed the United States should take a lead role in the development of peaceful nations through the organization of the United Nations, which would

make possible lasting freedom and independence for all its members. We shall not realize our objectives, however, unless we are willing to help free peoples to maintain their free institutions and their national integrity against aggressive movements that seek to impose upon them totalitarian regimes. This is no more than a frank recognition that totalitarian regimes imposed on free peoples, by direct or indirect aggression,

³ George C. Marshall, “George C. Marshall’s Marshall Plan Speech in June 1947,” Truman Library, <http://www.trumanlibrary.org> [accessed January 17, 2008].

undermine the foundations of international peace and hence the security of the United States.⁴

Although the speech is specifically a call to action to provide help to Greece and Turkey, the speech also implies that U.S. assistance will provide a bulwark against totalitarian regimes everywhere and that support will be given, not only in the interest of peace, but also to protect U.S. security. And the international body of the United Nations would play a key role in maintaining peace and protecting democracy. International organizations like the U.N. and cooperative nations involved in European recovery would provide a stronghold against the threat of democracy. The Truman Doctrine became the first of many efforts on behalf of the U.S. government to contain communism and provide peace and security in the world. Truman is explicit in explaining the ways in which the United States will support those threatened when he exclaims

I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures. I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way. I believe that our help should be primarily through economic and financial aid which is essential to economic stability and orderly political processes.⁵

U.S. assistance in the postwar era would not only involve military resources to fight communism and totalitarian regimes, but it would also include (to some extent) financial funding in order to prevent the aggression by non-democratic governments

⁴ Harry S. Truman, "President Harry S. Truman's address before a joint session of Congress, March 12, 1947," Truman Library, <http://www.trumanlibrary.org> [accessed January 17, 2008].

⁵ Ibid.

against sovereign democratic states. U.S. officials created the Marshall Plan based on the concept that the free people of Europe needed economic, political, and military protection so that they would not fall victim to the Soviets. While the focus of economic, political, and military protection fell on nations like France and Germany because of their vulnerability during both World War I and World War II, it is significant that a neutral and more peripheral nation like Ireland would receive aid. However, Ireland's economy was intertwined with Europe, specifically Britain, and U.S. officials wanted to offer the goal of European recovery to all European nations.

Initially, the Marshall Plan was simply theoretical and, therefore, was not a cohesive plan containing a timeline and budget for the distribution of aid. U.S. officials were adamant from the beginning that Europe would be involved in the creation, adaptation, and implementation of a plan to improve their economy and provide a system of working together. Secretary Marshall insisted the Europeans would collaborate in the implementation of the plan. In his speech, Marshall notes

it would be neither fitting nor efficacious for this government to undertake to draw up unilaterally a program designed to place Europe on its feet economically. This is the business of Europeans. The initiative, I think, must come from Europe. The role of this country should consist of friendly aid in the drafting of a European program and of later support of such a program so far as it may be practical for us to do so. The program should be a joint one, agreed to by a number, if not all, European nations.⁶

After Marshall's speech, U.S. officials believed it was more important to notify the Europeans of this plan before they informed the Americans. When Marshall's speech

⁶ George C. Marshall, "George C. Marshall's Marshall Plan Speech in June 1947," Truman Library, <http://www.trumanlibrary.org> [accessed January 17, 2008].

was presented at Harvard, the press was not even present. This might have been a strategic choice by officials to contain and control the distribution of information, particularly to the American press. However, Dean Acheson was dispatched immediately after the speech to contact the European media, in particular the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), with news of the plan. Acheson realized the importance of spreading the news of the plan to the Europeans first and foremost, because he expected there might be resistance to what the Europeans might perceive as American intervention. Acheson wanted to notify the Europeans of the Marshall Plan as soon as possible so that the initiative for the plan would come from them and not simply be a U.S. imposed operation. He also wanted to get European support, before calling on Congress and the American people to provide funding to Europe. Acheson also realized that he would be facing a resistant Congress when he asked for monies to support Europe, but if he could approach Congress with European support it might provide some leverage to get Congress to comply. Leonard Miall, a BBC correspondent, attended a luncheon with Acheson in the United States a few days before Marshall's speech. In a 1977 interview with Miall conducted by Marshall Foundation Librarian Barbara Vandegrift, Miall discusses Acheson's influence in getting the word out regarding the Marshall Plan—both to the European community and to Congress. When asked whether or not Acheson engaged in a “calculated leak” regarding U.S. aid to Europe and abroad, Miall says,

Well, yes and no. There was certainly a "calculated leak" in the sense that he was very strongly stressing to us the fact that the response must come from Europe, that there must be a European initiative. He said that he and his colleagues had been up to The Hill far too often with panaceas

for the economic ills of Europe. First, there had been UNRRA, and then the British Loan, and then the Truman Doctrine, one thing after another and each time they promised this was going to bring us peace in our time, and prosperity, and each time it had failed to do so.⁷

Acheson was very much aware that Congress was not in the mood to support another dose of what the economizers in Congress would call "Operation Rathole", because the congressional elections in the fall of 1946 had resulted in a strong Republican majority in both houses who were concerned with the budget. There was not a "calculated leak" in either of these senses.⁸ Miall explains how Acheson, at the luncheon on June 2, revealed the policies of the Marshall Plan to the European journalists a few days before Marshall's speech. As a correspondent in Washington, D.C., Miall was able to get an advanced copy of Marshall's speech and was surprised to see the similarities in Acheson's discussions of U.S. policy at the luncheon and the speech. It was clear that U.S. officials had a cohesive and somewhat united idea of what European recovery might entail and they were adamant that the Europeans were notified before the American people so that their participation in the plan would be self-chosen and not simply be imposed by a foreign entity. This was extremely significant for smaller countries like Ireland who, for the first time, were able to enter the international arena and participate with other European countries on a grand scale of recovery and possible

⁷ Barbara Vandegrift, George C. Marshall Foundation, "BBC Correspondent Leonard Miall and the Marshall Plan Speech: An Interview," George C. Marshall Foundation, <http://www.marshallfoundation.org/library> [accessed January 17, 2008]. Marshall Foundation Librarian Barbara Vandegrift interviewed Mr. Miall on September 19, 1977 at the library in Lexington, Virginia.

⁸ Ibid.

integration.

Once the Europeans were notified of the speech, the U.S. actively campaigned for European acceptance of the Marshall Plan concept. The plan needed to be approved by the Europeans and eventually Congress before it became official. After several meetings of European nations in Paris, the Europeans sent a reconstruction plan, which they developed, to Washington. After the resistance of some members of Congress in accepting the plan, it was ultimately passed, and President Truman signed it into law on April 3, 1948. Once the plan was approved, the ECA was created to carry out the plan. ECA officials would work closely with European officials. In Ireland, the ECA would develop a complex relationship with Irish leaders, particularly in the Department of External Affairs.

The first administrator of the ECA was Paul Hoffman. Hoffman believed deeply in the Marshall Plan's goal of combating communism. He also felt that the United States "as the leader of the free world... must by deeds and words make clear to all peoples our devotion to the idea of a free, peaceful and more ample life for all men."⁹ It is quite fitting that Hoffman, a former car salesman and president of the Studebaker car company, was named the first administrator of the ECA. It would take a car salesman not only to sell the idea of European recovery via U.S. financial assistance to the Europeans, but also to the Americans—particularly the American taxpayer.

Before the ECA took over, the State Department was in charge of the ERP structure. The State Department's vision included a need to see Europe

⁹ Paul Hoffman, *Peace Can Be Won* (New York: Doubleday 1951), 125.

increase in production, expand foreign trade, lower or remove all barriers to the free movement of trade and commerce and peoples, achieve financial stability and realize European unity. In other words the United States envisaged a United States of Europe in order to remake the old world in the likeness of the new.¹⁰

This idea of remaking Europe into a model like the United States—democratic and capitalistic—became the focus of the Marshall Plan during this time. There was a push, both by the Americans and the Europeans, for the lifting of trade barriers and tariffs and a move towards European integration. Free trade, lower tariffs, and increased production would prevent European countries from gravitating towards more extreme socialist, even communist, institutions with economic and political isolation from the rest of Europe and the world.¹¹

While many European diplomats and foreign affairs leaders were excited about the potential of European Recovery, some Europeans reacted with ambivalence when confronted with the Marshall Plan. Many Europeans believed that American officials underestimated European leaders' ability to recover from the physical, emotional, and economic devastation caused by two successive world wars. However, most European countries gladly accepted money, in terms of both grants and loans, from U.S. officials

¹⁰ Bernadette Whelan, "The Messages and Methods of the Marshall Plan in Ireland and Italy," in *Ireland, Europe and the Marshall Plan*, eds. Till Geiger and Michael Kennedy (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 132.

¹¹ Bernadette Whelan, "Marshall Plan, Publicity and Propaganda in Italy and Ireland, 1947-1951," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 23, no. 4, (2003): 311-318. Marshall Planners were particularly concerned about socialism and communism in Italy. While trade unions and leftists were of concern in Ireland, Marshall Planners focused specifically on Ireland's improved economy and production. Many U.S. officials and the CIA felt that Ireland was somewhat safe from the encroachment of communism because of the strong Roman Catholicism in the country.

in order to boost their country's ability to recover from the economic devastation of the war. Europeans perceived the ERP as a potential threat to their sovereignty; and, yet, many believed the plan would be a way to bring Europe back from the brink. Henry Kissinger, a German-born American political scientist, who understood the European perspective because of his background and knowledge of European political history, later acknowledged the disconnect between Europe and the U.S. at the founding of the ERP because the Americans

failed to recall the European dynamism which had launched the Industrial Revolution, the political philosophy which had spawned the concept of national sovereignty, or the European style of diplomacy which had operated a complex balance of power system for some three centuries.¹²

Many Europeans were wary and critical of the idea that the U.S. was going to save Europe from economic and political downfall. Europeans were keenly aware that the United States did not invent democracy or industrialization. After all, the Europeans first conceived democracy in Greece and expanded the concept in England. And the first industrial revolution evolved in Europe. Some Irish leaders would use this argument against U.S. officials because they feared the encroachment of U.S. culture which they viewed as crass. They mistrusted the idea that U.S. leaders would be the

¹² Denise Dunne, "The Political Legacy of the Marshall Plan: An Assessment of the Integrationist Agenda Through a British Lens," in *Ireland, Europe and the Marshall Plan*, eds. Till Geiger and Michael Kennedy (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 60. Dunne quotes Henry Kissinger as saying how unrepresentative the attitudes of "a devastated, temporarily impotent and therefore pliant Europe was compared to Europe's conduct when it was dominating foreign affairs."

saviors of Europeans, who were quite capable despite the desperate conditions following the war.

Therefore, when the United States began to promote the Marshall Plan, many Europeans, including the Irish, reacted with ambivalence. At the time of ERP, the Department of External Affairs was the foreign affairs and diplomatic department of Ireland. The Department was comprised of a dynamic group of forward-thinking diplomats and individuals who, for the most part, welcomed the ERP and the ECA officials stationed in Ireland. This openness to the ERP by External Affairs contrasts with the Department of Finance, which was less eager to dissolve the current economic structure where Ireland was dependent on the Sterling dollar and traded almost exclusively with the United Kingdom. The Marshall Plan was also attacked by groups such as the Irish Worker League, an Irish communist party who were against the capitalism of the U.S., and by Irish nationalists and individuals among the Irish intellectual elite who feared the ERP would lead to a contamination of culture by the U.S. because they perceived the U.S. as secular, pagan, and materialistic.

Scholarship regarding the Marshall Plan is diverse and complex because there were so many players involved in one of the most complicated and expensive international programs ever implemented. In many ways, the historiography of the ERP has evolved from an American-centric perspective to a Euro-centric perspective. Now, scholars are looking at the Marshall Plan through the lens of specific nations, such as Ireland. Ireland may seem like a seemingly insignificant player in the international game of postwar Europe, but it is important. In many ways, it shared a symbiotic

economic relationship with the United Kingdom. Economic success in Britain depended heavily on Irish economic success—particularly through the mass production of agriculture which was exported to the people of the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom would have been in a desperate economic situation after the war without Irish agricultural imports. However, the unique situation of Ireland—a western European country and, yet, a former colony of the United Kingdom—created enormous tension between these two economically intertwined entities. Because of this historical tension with the United Kingdom, Ireland utilized the ERP to advance its nationalistic cause.¹³ This is significant because Irish nationalism, used in the guise of ERP propaganda, caused a rift with the ECA and U.S. officials.¹⁴ Scholarship on the Marshall Plan has evolved from looking at the economic success of Europe after the implementation of ERP to exploring the individual countries involved in, and affected by, ERP.

While historians are divided on the extent to which the Marshall Plan affected European economic recovery and integration, most scholars of the Marshall Plan in the 1950s and 1960s argued that the plan was an immediate success and a great

¹³ National Archives and Records Administration of the United States II, College Park, Maryland (NARA), *Exclusive Interview to International news Service By Mr. Seán MacBride, S.C., T.D., Minister of External Affairs of Ireland, April 9, 1950*, Record Group (RG) 84, Box 1, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Dublin Embassy, Security Segregated Records, 1936-49. MacBride openly discusses Irish nationalism and challenges U.S. and ECA officials by making the issue of partition a condition for membership in NATO.

¹⁴ Michael Kennedy, “The Challenge of Multilateralism: The Marshall Plan and the Expansion of the Irish Diplomatic Service,” in *Ireland, Europe and the Marshall Plan*, eds. Till Geiger and Michael Kennedy (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 121. Kennedy recounts the complex relationship between MacBride and ECA officials. U.S. and ECA officials became frustrated with MacBride’s use of the issue of partition in ERP propaganda and in public speeches.

achievement since most Western European countries were able to make a remarkable economic recovery after the war. In 1955, Harry B. Price praised the achievements of the Marshall Plan in his work *The Marshall Plan and Its Meaning*. The work was comprised of interviews with Marshall Plan officials such as General George C. Marshall, Secretary of State; George F. Kennan, Director of the Policy Planning Staff, State Department; Harold Stein, Head, Washington Office, Committee for the Marshall Plan; and Francis Wilcox, Chief of Staff, and Senate Foreign Relations Committee.¹⁵ The problem with Price's research on the Marshall Plan was twofold. First of all, while he interviewed many individuals, the majority of the individuals that he interviewed were U.S. officials. A more thorough investigation of Marshall Plan success should have included the perspectives of more European officials. Secondly, the interviews were conducted in 1952 and 1953, barely enough time to rate the success or failure of a vast economic recovery program that began as a speech in 1947, only five years before the first interviews were conducted.

Indeed, most of the early scholarship from the 1950s and 1960s on the Marshall Plan focused on the success of European economic recovery because of the generosity and ingenuity of the United States. In many ways the early scholarship included an American-centric perspective and was very pro-U.S. in terms of interpreting the success of the ERP. However, in the 1960s and 1970s, revisionist historians challenged whether European economic success was based on U.S. ingenuity and resources alone. Some

¹⁵ Harry B. Price, *The Marshall Plan and Its Meaning* (Ithaca, New York: 1955).

scholars even claimed that the motives of U.S. officials were not altruistic when they implemented the plan in Europe. In discussing the Marshall Plan in the context of the Cold War, some revisionists claimed the United States used the war and European recovery in order to advance economic and political domination. Gabriel and Joyce Kolko accused the United States of outright imperialism because the U.S. took advantage of a weak Europe in order to exploit the continent to the advantage of the U.S. economy. They explored the social history of the diplomatic aspect of foreign policy in the years after the Marshall Plan and offered an extremely negative interpretation of U.S. intentions.¹⁶ This view could be reduced to “economic determinism” according to the scholar Bruce Cumings, and is limiting in that it does not take into account the active participation, motivations, and decisions by foreign nations and individuals.¹⁷ Postrevisionists, like John Lewis Gaddis, attacked this argument, stating that revisionists like Kolko concentrated too much on economics and ignored political, social, and cultural motivations.¹⁸ However, many European officials, including the members of the Irish Department of External Affairs, actively courted U.S. monies and aid.

¹⁶ Joyce and Gabriel Kolko, *The Limits of Power: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1954* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972).

¹⁷ Bruce Cumings, “Revising Postrevisionism, or the Poverty of Theory in Diplomatic History,” *Diplomatic History* 17, no. 4 (1993): 550.

¹⁸ John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972).

Unlike the revisionists, Scott Jackson contributed to the historical scholarship of the Marshall Plan in 1979 by taking a more nuanced approach and exploring the diverse motivations of individuals. He interpreted the events by investigating the Marshall Plan in the context of the following: American generosity, the context of the Cold War, and as a means to sustain the international economy at the end of World War II.¹⁹ His approach also differed from the scholars before him because he explored the complex motivations and relationships of governments and government agencies involved. Rather than looking at the implementation and success rates of programs and institutions, Jackson explored the individual players and their effect on the Marshall Plan. Jackson's interpretation of the Marshall Plan also reflects a shift among some historians from examining primarily U.S. officials' motivations and American perceptions to researching a variety of perspectives: Russian, British among others. Jackson explains how, in 1947, a complex network of motivation emerged. He discusses how the decisions made by disparate officials in the White House, Paris, and Moscow revealed "deep and widespread currents of thinking."²⁰

Jackson's interpretation differs widely from that of John Gimbel, who claimed that the Marshall Plan officials were not concerned with European economic recovery or the containment of communism; instead they created the Marshall Plan and ERP in order to deal with a disjointed Germany. Gimbel claimed that the ERP's purpose was

¹⁹ Scott Jackson, "Prologue to the Marshall Plan: The Origins of the American Commitment for a European Recovery Program," *Journal of American History* 65, no. 4 (1979): 1043-1068.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1068.

not to inject the entire European economy with an economic stimulus shot, but the plan was actually intended to build up the German economy specifically.²¹ Gimbel's narrow interpretation of the Marshall Plan is contrasted with scholars such as Jackson who saw the complexity in motivations and relationships of those involved. Because such a diverse group of Americans and Europeans created the program of the Marshall Plan, such a singular purpose with regard to Germany was not possible.

A postrevisionist interpretation of the Marshall Plan emerged in the 1980s and 1990s. The postrevisionist reaction developed as a result of newly released archives. Although John Lewis Gaddis did not invent the term post-revisionism, his writings on the Cold War in the 1970s and 1980s prompted an ongoing debate among scholars. Gaddis demanded a more thoughtful approach to studying the complexities of the Cold War and called on scholars to provide a more sophisticated analysis of what the revisionists called U.S. imperialism.²² He attacked the revisionist historians by advising them to rely more on archives than their own whims—such as suggesting U.S. leaders convinced the American people to advance Cold War ideology for the purpose of U.S. imperialism. Bruce Cumings reacted to Gaddis' argument by claiming that Gaddis was not a postrevisionist at all but an “antirevisionist”, because while he lambasted the revisionists, he still clung to the original Cold War orthodox views from the previous

²¹ John Gimbel, *The Origins of the Marshall Plan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976).

²² John Lewis Gaddis, “The Emerging Post-Revisionist Synthesis on the Origins of the Cold War,” *Diplomatic History* 7 (Summer 1983): 171-190.

generation.²³ Despite Cumings critique of Gaddis, Gaddis would eventually become one of the most important Cold War scholars to date. Gaddis continues to argue against the idea that U.S. imperialism alone was the impetus for the Marshall Plan and U.S. involvement in Europe after World War II. He claims that the differences between the political structures of the totalitarianism of the Soviet Union versus the democratic government of the United States affected the degree and control they wielded over other nations. Gaddis argues that U.S. leaders believed the function of government was to facilitate freedom, and although the U.S. might help regulate the economy in Europe through resources and funding, they did not, like the Soviet Union, control all aspects of it.²⁴ Geir Lundestad distinguished the United States' empire from that of other totalitarian regimes by indicating that the United States' empire was an "empire by invitation." In other words, rather than imposing its will on other nations, Americans built their empire based on American values of democracy and free-will therefore allowing a certain amount of autonomy and independence for other nations under the umbrella of hegemony of the U.S.²⁵ Although scholars disagree about the motivations and the intentions with regard to imperialism, some Europeans were wary of U.S. intentions when they implemented the ERP. As a result of newly available government archives, post-revisionist historians like Sallie Pisani utilized new archival material to

²³ Bruce Cumings, "Revising Postrevisionism, or the Poverty of Theory in Diplomatic History," *Diplomatic History* 17, no. 4 (1993), 556.

²⁴ John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2005).

²⁵ Geir Lundestad, *The United States and Western Europe Since 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

provide a different interpretation of the Marshall Plan. In a 1991 study of the Marshall Plan administration and the Office of Policy Coordination (later the Central Intelligence Agency), Pisani demonstrates how U.S. officials used the Marshall Plan for covert interventionist purposes to combat communism.²⁶

Another ongoing debate among historians was the degree of success of the Marshall Plan. Some scholars, such as Immanuel Wexler, claimed that the ERP was actually a success based on data that revealed a rise in European production and trade. However, he describes how the ERP fell short of achieving total financial stability and European integration as a whole.²⁷ Others, such as Alan Milward, challenged the idea that the Marshall Plan was even a success. Milward argued that Europe would have recovered eventually with or without the aid of the Americans.²⁸ Michael J. Hogan attacked Milward's argument by stating that there was no way that the Americans could foresee the eventual economic recovery of Europe, with or without their help.²⁹ But what Milward was attempting to do was to compare the United States' vision of European economic and political integration versus what actually happened and even

²⁶ Sallie Pisani, *The CIA and the Marshall Plan* (Lawrence: University Press Of Kansas, 1991).

²⁷ Immanuel Wexler, *The Marshall Plan Revisited: The European Recovery Program in Economic Perspective* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood, 1983).

²⁸ Alan S. Milward, *The Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1945-51* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

²⁹ Michael J. Hogan, *The Marshall Plan, America, Britain and the Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1947-1952* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

what could have happened without U.S. intervention. This vision, where the U.S. used its own nineteenth century framework of economic and political unification as a model for European recovery, underestimated Europe's ability to recover economically and maintain political stability with or without U.S. help. In many ways Hogan and Milward are both correct. Milward was attempting to shatter the syllogism that American economic aid leads to European recovery. American ERP, like Hogan suggests, did provide Europe with a foundation to build on, but Hogan often presents the Europeans as passive recipients of the generosity of the Americans rather than active members and decision makers in their own recovery effort.

In the 1990s, historians such as David Ellwood looked at the specific methods used by the U.S. to promote growth and productivity. Ellwood discusses the reinvention of American power in the context of a post-World War II and Cold War world, but he also challenges the notion that Marshall Aid policies and programs alone led to European economic recovery. Ellwood suggests that intra-European exports are what led to the European Economic Community (EEC) in March 1957 and, ultimately, the European Union (EU) in 1993. The American push for growth, the breaking down of trade barriers and European integration were important, but not as important as the Europeans ultimately choosing of their own volition to work together.³⁰ While the historiography of the Marshall Plan from the 1950s to the 1980s was American-centered and focused on the success or failure of Marshall Aid to the Europeans, Ellwood and

³⁰ David Ellwood, *Rebuilding Europe: Western Europe, America and Postwar Reconstruction* (New York: Longman, 1992), 222.

others began to look at Marshall Aid from the perspective of the Europeans within their own context of economic stability and integration.

Recent writing on the Marshall Plan has moved beyond merely analyzing the American-European bilateral relationship. Contemporary scholars are researching the individuals and institutions of specific nations involved in, and affected by, the ERP. Scholars of Ireland and the Marshall Plan are shifting their focus from analyzing the bilateral Irish-American economic aid relationship and looking at the multi-lateral relationships that affected the ERP outcome. The emerging literature shows the importance of placing the Irish experience in its wider European context. In Raymond J. Raymond's groundbreaking work, he discussed the improbable fact that Ireland was considered for Marshall Plan Aid at all because of the country's neutral position during World War II. Because of Ireland's position during the war and its marginal place alongside the European powerhouse countries like the United Kingdom, it is remarkable that Ireland was even considered at all in the American plan for European integration and economic stimulus.³¹

The most recent scholarship on Ireland and the ERP comes from the publications of Irish ERP scholars. In the 1990s and beyond, scholars from Ireland and other European countries have united to discuss the relevance and importance of Ireland's role in the postwar recovery of Europe. Modern scholars are discussing the

³¹ Raymond J. Raymond, "The Marshall Plan and Ireland 1947-52," in *The Irish in America: Emigration, Assimilation and Impact*, ed. P.J. Drudy, *Irish Studies* 4, (1985): 295-328. See also, Raymond J. Raymond, "Irish Neutrality: Ideology or Pragmatism?," *International Affairs (Royal Institute for International Affairs 1944-)*, edited by P.J. Drudy, *Irish Studies* 4 (1985): 55-76.

history of Ireland's involvement in the ERP by viewing the plan through several lenses: the Irish government's complicated political and economic relationship with the United Kingdom, Ireland's relationship with other European countries, and Ireland's internal struggle among different factions in Irish government and society who disagreed on what type of postwar, twentieth century vision Ireland should adopt for the country.

Bernadette Whelan has written the most comprehensive study of Ireland and ERP in her work *Ireland and the Marshall Plan, 1947-57*. Whelan traces the origins of the U.S. invitation to Ireland to join the ERP, its involvement in the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC), the establishment of the plan, the loans versus grant issue of Marshall Aid, and the push for productivity, production, publicity, and propaganda in Ireland. Whelan's scholarship is important because the story of Irish involvement in the Marshall Plan has never been fully explained. Most ERP scholars have a narrow focus when interpreting the ERP and Ireland, concentrating on just economic or social or political issues. But, Whelan argues, Ireland's involvement in ERP warranted a large study because it transects the economic, social, political, and diplomatic history during the postwar decade.³² Whelan's work presents a comprehensive study of the path to economic recovery and European integration for Ireland in the years of ERP. Whelan has also tackled more specific issues involving Ireland and the ERP. She has written extensively on the publicity and propaganda of the Marshall Plan, particularly with regard to the defense and the containment of

³² Bernadette Whelan, *Ireland and the Marshall Plan, 1947-57* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000).

communism. Initially, the ERP propaganda was supposed to focus on selling the Marshall Plan to the Europeans, but increasingly and specifically after the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, ERP propaganda began to emphasize the importance of prosperity and peace as a defense against communism. Whelan asserts that, in many ways, the implementation of the Marshall Plan did not alter the outlook of Irish officials when it came to neutrality, pacifism, and partition. She states that “Ireland was neutral and partitioned when the Marshall Plan began, and it remained so when the plan ended.”³³ This thesis will build upon Whelan’s work by looking at specific propaganda media, such as *The Promise of Barty O’Brien*, in demonstrating how Irish officials prioritized the issue of partition above integration, industrialization, and consumer prosperity.

Whelan and other contemporary Irish historians are divided regarding Irish economic success and the rate of adaptation to the goals of the ERP. Troy Davis argues that Irish nationalist commentators have tended to treat official Washington as an extension of British government. Davis asserts that this view has led many nationalist historians to be critical of American Cold War policy decisions involving Ireland. Davis claims that the U.S. policies were not necessarily anti-Irish and pro-British. He suggests that issues such as partition tended to alienate the U.S. and the rest of Europe. He also argues that Washington could not be anti-Irish and pro-British since it did not even have a specific Irish policy because Ireland was not considered a major contender

³³ Bernadette Whelan, “Ireland, the Marshall Plan, and U.S. Cold War Concerns,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 8, no. 1 (Winter 2006): 94.

or even ally in the Cold War.³⁴ Whelan disagrees with Davis by demonstrating that there was a concerted effort by U.S. officials to treat Ireland as a “less favoured nation” by giving the majority of the Marshall Aid in the form of loans and not grants.³⁵ This thesis will demonstrate how Irish officials alienated U.S. officials by manipulating ERP propaganda in order to promote their own anti-partition agenda. Because of Ireland’s neutrality during World War II and since Ireland was a less important figure in Europe and in the Cold War, Ireland was not given the same priority as the United Kingdom. However, because Irish officials continually emphasized Irish nationalism and the problem of partition in ERP propaganda, they further alienated ECA and U.S. officials.

Contemporary historians challenge the extent to which Irish officials embraced integration and the push for mass consumerism and industrialization in the 1940s and 1950s. Regarding industrialization and consumerism, Whelan acknowledges the tension among the Irish who grappled with their love of American goods and media, but also despised the American propagation of “pagan, materialistic and hedonistic values.”³⁶ Till Geiger, in reviewing recently released archival material, concluded that the Irish policy makers became concerned that the United States would pressure Ireland to end

³⁴ Troy D. Davis, *Dublin’s American Policy: Irish-American Diplomatic Relations, 1945-1952* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1998).

³⁵ Bernadette Whelan, *Ireland and the Marshall Plan, 1947-57* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), 154.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 382.

its longstanding policy of economic nationalism.³⁷ However, Whelan emphasizes the importance of the Marshall Plan in ending Ireland's self-imposed isolation because of neutrality during the war. Whelan argues that Irish involvement in the ERP revealed a step toward an Europeanization of Irish foreign policy. Although Whelan recounts the reluctance of Irish officials to join the ERP, she notes that it was a crucial decision in the long run for Ireland to prepare for the eventual integration with Europe that happened with the European Community (now European Union).³⁸ Brian Girvin claims that Ireland did not improve because of American aid because Ireland's isolationist tendencies prevented the nation from reaping the benefits of ERP. Girvin argues that it was Ireland's isolationism and economic ties to Britain that prevented the country from benefiting from Marshall Aid the way that other European countries did.³⁹ Both Girvin and Whelan's arguments reveal the tension among Irish leaders who desired to integrate with Europe and, yet, still grappled with their economic ties to the United Kingdom.

³⁷ Till Geiger, "The Enthusiastic Response of a Reluctant Supporter: Ireland and the Committee for European Co-operation in Summer 1947," in *Irish Foreign Policy, 1919-1966: From Independence to Internationalism*, eds. Michael Kennedy and Joseph Morrison Skelly (Dublin, 2000), 222-246.

³⁸ Bernadette Whelan, "Integration or Isolation?: Ireland and the Invitation to Join the Marshall Plan," in *Irish Foreign Policy*, eds. Michael Kennedy and Joseph Morrison Skelly (Dublin, 2000), 203-221.

³⁹ Brian Girvin, "Did Ireland Benefit From the Marshall Plan?: Choice, Strategy and the National Interest in a Comparative Context," in *Ireland, Europe and the Marshall Plan*, eds. Till Geiger and Michael Kennedy (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), and Brian Girvin, "Ireland and the Marshall Plan: A Cargo Cult in the North Atlantic," in *Explorations in OEEC History*, ed. Richard T. Griffiths (Paris, 1997), 61-71.

But, despite the economic isolation from Europe and trade barriers, foreign affairs leaders in the Irish Department of External Affairs were advocates of increasing production and even industrialization. Publicity campaigns, such as the film *The Promise of Barty O'Brien*, reveal the promotion of mass production, machinery, and the American ideals of consumerism. The U.S. Government and European officials were extremely concerned with improving the economy, the rate of production and industrialization. The United States, through the ERP, attempted to revitalize the economy of Europe. Most of Western Europe was already industrialized and ERP would revitalize industrialization and trade among European nations. But, the goal of the ERP was not only to restore Europe to an industrialized, democratic continent, but the goal was also to create a model of consumerism like that of the U.S. United States officials wanted to produce a nation of consumers, not only of European goods but of U.S. exports as well. The Irish grappled with their love of U.S. media and their distrust of what many Irish people perceived as crass materialism and paganism.⁴⁰

Ireland is significant because it was, in many ways, a third world country in terms of industrial production. Ireland was still very much an agricultural country. Farm machinery was sparse and the most important tiller on the farm at the time was not a machine, but a horse. Since Ireland was devoid of industrial factories and, therefore, did not produce much beyond agriculture, Ireland did not have a consumer economy. The creation of the Technical Assistance Program, which became important to Marshall Plan supporters in Ireland, highlighted the need for improvement in

⁴⁰ Bernadette Whelan, *Ireland and the Marshall Plan, 1947-57* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), 382.

development. President Truman proposed his “Point Four” regarding the Technical Assistance program and how the U.S. would embark on a bold new program for using scientific knowledge and industrial progress to improve the growth of underdeveloped areas. Peter Murray’s research on the Marshall Plan and technical assistance revealed the limitations of the program because of Irish conservatism and the actual suspension of aid in January 1952.⁴¹ Technical assistance would train Irish workers to be able to improve the efficiency, quality, and quantity of their work and this would lead to Irish industrial development.

Northern Ireland contained the largest industrial area of Ireland, but the rest of Ireland lost its connection to industrialization after partition. Industrialization was a primary concern among Irish officials during the implementation of ERP. In a memo from the Department of External Affairs there was a discussion of a poster campaign not only to praise the ERP but also to show how Ireland’s “economic problem is increased by the partition of the industrial portion of the country from the rest.”⁴² Scholars, such as Denis O’Hearn, argue that British and American power impeded Ireland’s attempts to industrialize. O’Hearn even claims that, after partition, Ireland’s attempts at industrialization were hindered by U.S. companies that wanted to use

⁴¹ Peter Murray, “Marshall Technical Assistance, The Industrial Development Authority and Irish Private Sector Manufacturing Industry, 1949-52,” *National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis, NIRSA Working Paper Series 34* (February, 2008). While Ireland received technical assistance through the ERP, non-ERP nations received technical assistance through Point Four Program as a result of the Truman Doctrine.

⁴² National Archives Ireland (NAI), *ERP: Publicity Measures Under Bi-lateral Agreement*, Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), 305/57/122, 1948.

Ireland as a platform for accessing European markets.⁴³ The rise of linen production in the north compounded economic problems for the south and west of Ireland after partition. Irish industry was so heavily concentrated in the north and the agrarian economy became peripheral compared to the industrial northern sector of Ireland.

Industrialization was a key talking point of Irish leaders during this time. Irish leaders like Seán MacBride believed the twentieth century's new industrial power, the United States, challenged old industrial Europe when it began providing raw materials to Europe, causing Europe to import more than it was exporting. The industrialization of the United States in the late and early twentieth century caused a "turn of the tide" by creating a dollar deficit in Europe, where the balance of trade was disrupted when Europeans were importing more than they were exporting. The two world wars caused further chaos in the economy of Europe because there was a shortage of supplies and raw materials. After the war, Ireland was in a difficult position compared to the rest of Western Europe because the economy relied heavily on agriculture and there was a dysfunctional interdependence between the British and Irish economy.⁴⁴ The European Recovery Plan was the impetus for economic change because it would break down trade barriers and integrate Europe economically. Ireland's codependence with Britain's economy hindered attempts at economic integration. Because Ireland's economy was

⁴³ Denis O'Hearn, *The Atlantic Economy: Britain, the U.S. and Ireland* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001).

⁴⁴ John. A. Costello, Seán MacBride, J.E. Carrigan, and W.H. Taft, *Ireland's Economy: Radio Éireann Talks on Ireland's Part in the Marshall Plan* (Dublin: The Stationary Office, 1949), 1.

primarily based on agricultural production only, Irish officials, particularly in the Department of External Affairs, advocated an increase in industrialization in order to maximize land, labor, and capital in Ireland. Both Irish and U.S. officials believed that an increase in agricultural production on a mass scale utilizing industrial equipment, electrification, and the Technical Assistance Program (which are all emphasized in *The Promise of Barty O'Brien*) would modernize Ireland. A desire by many Irish officials to increase industrialization in Ireland reflects a paradigm shift in thinking at the time. The Marshall planners actively supported urban and rural workers because of this belief that high productivity, high wages, and a high consumption economy would lead to a better, more democratic way of life.⁴⁵ However, not all members of Irish society were ready to embrace the values of capitalizing on land and increasing the production of goods that are so indicative of what makes a modern society, according to the U.S. standards of the time.⁴⁶

This chapter reveals the complex history of the Marshall Plan and how a European and, specifically, Irish perspective is needed to fill in the gaps of the Marshall Plan players. David Ellwood claimed that the Marshall Plan was “more than the sum of its parts”, and this thesis will support this claim by showing the struggle of individuals

⁴⁵ John Killick, *The United States and European Reconstruction, 1945-1960* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998).

⁴⁶ Ronald Inglehart, “Globalization and Postmodern Values,” *The Washington Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (2000): 215-228. Inglehart has presided over multiple studies linking socio-economic factors and personal beliefs.

in defining the identity of Ireland within the disparate aspects of ERP.⁴⁷ Individuals in the Department of External Affairs like Seán MacBride and intellectual leaders like Sean O’Faolain embraced their national heritage but also viewed the ERP as an opportunity to integrate Europe and improve agricultural industrialization. The plan was not just about economic recovery, but about selling a new vision to Europe. That vision would involve an integrated Europe through “empire by invitation” with the guidance and leadership of the United States. European countries such as Ireland, were attempting to define what their new vision would be and how that vision would fit into industrialization and integration. In other words, would Ireland retain its conservative, nationalistic and economic co-dependence with Britain or would it accept U.S. monies and influence and work towards European integration?

⁴⁷ David Ellwood, “‘You too can be like us:’ Selling the Marshall Plan,” *History Today* 48, no. 10 (1998): 33-40.

CHAPTER THREE

Sean O'Faolain and *The Promise of Barty O'Brien*:
Irish Propaganda and Nationalism in an ERP Film

Sometimes we would get visits from "big shots." That day there were two—one from the ESB (Electricity Supply Board). They run Ireland's power. And the other from ECA. We didn't know then what those mysterious letters meant. You know, of course—Economic Cooperation Administration. It didn't mean much to me then. It did later. 'Twas the Marshall Plan.⁴⁸

The film *The Promise of Barty O'Brien* is unique because it was not simply a propaganda medium for the ERP, but it was also a full-length fictional drama written by a famous Irish writer and performed by the leading actors of the famous Abbey theatre in Dublin. The film, although a propaganda piece for the American ERP, was created for the Irish by the Irish. The film serves as a lens through which to view the struggle of many Irish people and officials between the traditional and the modern, isolationism and integration. The film illustrates the rural, antiquated, agricultural production in the Irish countryside and advocates for an increase in productivity through newer industrial farm equipment, electrification, and technical training. A young Irish farm boy, Barty O'Brian, participates in the Technical Assistance Program when he ventures to the United States to learn the special skills needed to improve production in Ireland. The film is also significant because it was created during a time when the Irish were just beginning to understand the importance of film as a medium of expression, particularly through the use of film as propaganda rather than simply entertainment. But the most

⁴⁸ NARA, *Special Media Archives Services Division (NWCS) Promise of Barty O'Brien*, Marshall Plan Film, 1951.

fascinating aspect of the film is the extent to which it demonstrates the complexities and contradictions of O'Faolain's, and ultimately Ireland's, vision of the new world order of ERP. *The Promise of Barty O'Brien* is also an example of Irish leaders utilizing ERP publicity for promoting Irish nationalism and therefore exacerbating an already complicated relationship with the United Kingdom and the United States.

Although the film *The Promise of Barty O'Brien* was not widely distributed or seen by the majority of Irish people, it opened in Dublin in 1951 to good reviews.

Kevin O'Kelly of the *Sunday Press* wrote that the film

demonstrates conclusively that good motion pictures can be made by Irish technicians....[It] is the first all-Irish propaganda movie worth serious consideration *as a movie*. The Government-sponsored films made till now have merely been highly expensive lantern lectures. They were a series of pretty pictures hooked up with a mechanized lecturer on the sound track.⁴⁹

The film was a full-length feature film running forty-nine minutes and featuring actors courtesy of the famed Abbey Theatre in Dublin: Harry Brogan as Barty's father; Eileen Crowe as Barty's mother, Doreen Mannen as Barty's sister; and Philip Flynn as Jim Byrne. The actor Eric Doyle played Barty O'Brien. The credits open with the names of the cast and crew against a backdrop of the map of Ireland and the United States with the Atlantic Ocean linking the two bodies. In large letters, Sean O'Faolain's name is shown as the screenwriter and in small letters: "George Freedland was the director and

⁴⁹ Kevin O'Kelly, Film Review, *Sunday Press*, August 19, 1951.

producer of the film”.⁵⁰ The majority of the cast and crew on the film were Irish, making it an Irish film by the Irish and for the Irish people.

The Promise of Barty O'Brien is significant not because of its success as a propaganda medium, but it is important because the film illustrates the conflicted feelings Irish leaders and many Irish people had about American foreign aid and industrialization. O’Faolain is ambiguous in his treatment of the Irish characters and modernization in this film. O’Faolain continues a long tradition of Irish nationalism and mysticism with his glorification of the peasant life of Barty and his family and, at the same time, he wrote a propaganda screenplay advocating for the benefits of modernization. While he is a proponent of industrialization in the way he emphasizes the importance of the power plant, electrification, and education to produce skilled Irish workers, his portrayal of the backwardness of peasant life is evident in the thatched roof of the family farm and in the character of Barty’s father. O’Faolain’s Irish roots in land and agrarian society are evident in the film. He explained the problem of promoting the peasant life in an earlier work, *The Irish: A Character Study*, where he declares

we are rooted in the land and in individualism. We have always feared towns and organized society. We have felt them as spear-heads of life-ways which are complex, troublesome and challenging. To-day we call those life-ways ‘foreign’ and in trying to impose a peasant life-way on the towns we try to exclude anything which the peasant (especially the Catholic peasant) does not understand.⁵¹

⁵⁰ NARA, *Special Media Archives Services Division (NWCS) Promise of Barty O’Brien*, Marshall Plan Film, 1951.

⁵¹ Sean O’Faolain, *The Irish: A Character Study* (New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1949), 166.

O’Faolain’s frustration with the peasants’ resistance to change and the complexities of modern life emerge in the character of Barty’s father. Barty’s father wants his son to become a farmer, but he challenges his son to improve his electrical training when the radio shuts down. Yet, when Barty concedes that he needs more training and confesses he wants to go to school in Dublin so that he can be an electrical engineer, Barty’s father cries out “and leave this to go to the hungry city! We would have to pay for every bite that went into your belly!”⁵² There is a sense that the city is all consuming and harsh, while the countryside is nurturing, familial, and part of Barty’s legacy.

O’Faolain has an ambivalent attitude towards urban areas. Dublin is portrayed as urban and bustling with the energy of cars and business, but it is also conveyed as overwhelming and lonely. There is a sense of community in the family at the farmhouse and even in the local pub that is not found in the big city of Dublin or in the United States. O’Faolain portrays many of the stereotypes in peasant life and peasant living in his film. The family lives in the traditional thatched roof and does not have electricity. While this was true of many contemporary farms in Ireland, Barty’s farm was an exaggeration of peasant living. Barty laments the bog where “nothing grows there but heather”⁵³ and this statement is contrasted with the image of the power plant that took over the fields. The image portrays the plant as looming, powerful, and

⁵² NARA, Special Media Archives Services Division (NWCS), *The Promise of Barty O’Brien*, Marshall Plan Film, 1951.

⁵³ Ibid.

productive. The turf is lifted by machines out of the train and loaded into bunkers.

Barty follows the journey of the turf to the furnaces where the turf is burned,

generating heat, turning the water into high pressured steam, steam that is used over and over again thanks to the big cooling tower next to the plant. It is the steam which turns the blades of the giant turbine up in the generator room where turf becomes electric power.⁵⁴

The plant fascinates Barty, but it also fascinates the viewer with its power, noise, productivity and its physical presence and dominance contrasted with the small, thatched-roof farmhouse. This contrast between antiquated and modern, Irish and international, reveal the ambivalence of O’Faolain’s vision for a new Ireland.

But this new vision for Ireland was overshadowed by the inherent images and references to Irish nationalism in the film. The issue of nationalism pervaded every aspect of Irish life, transecting religion, language, ethnicity and culture. Scholars disagree about a specific definition of what constitutes a nation—is it a shared culture, language, ethnicity, religion or border? Some scholars identify a nation as a form of morality, a shared historical consciousness, economic life, territory, language, shared cultural life, and ethnic and civic obligations.⁵⁵ Ireland, although a newly formed republic at this time, had a long history of shared language, religion, and cultural ties. The importance of religion, Roman Catholicism, lies at the heart of Ireland’s national identity and its assertion of nationalism. Brian Jenkins argues that despite England’s ability to reconcile people of the most diverse races to their rule, the Irish have yet to be

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, eds., *Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

reconciled to the union with the United Kingdom. It was religion more than any other factor that defined Irish nationalism and opposition to the Protestant English.⁵⁶

Although it was an English colony for centuries, these shared cultural ties and the oppression of the Irish by the English united the Irish. The struggle for home rule and autonomy from the English defines the overt nationalism of the Irish in the twentieth century. But the Irish political elites of the 1940s and 1950s were often at odds with nationalism because it was isolationist and, in many ways, prevented Ireland from attaining economic prosperity.⁵⁷

O’Faolain’s references to the Easter rebellion in the film play upon this political and cultural unity of the Irish in opposition to the English. Barty, the narrator in the film, recounts his experiences to an American visitor in the Shannon airport. O’Faolain is speaking through Barty’s narrative in highlighting the importance of nationalism. Easter Sunday is emphasized in two significant scenes both because of its importance as a religious holiday and for its significance to the nationalists because of the Easter rebellion in 1916. The first scene occurs when Barty leaves church after Easter Mass with his horse and carriage and rides from the town back to the farm. Barty describes the rural town:

the church stood at one end of town. Our farm was at the other. I said town, well it wasn’t quite a town but rather a village with thatched roofs on almost every house. The street was deserted on Easter Sunday—the

⁵⁶ Brian Jenkins, *Irish Nationalism and the British State: From Repeal to Revolutionary Nationalism* (Quebec: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2006).

⁵⁷ Desmond Fennell, *Beyond Nationalism: The Struggle Against Provinciality in the Modern World* (Dublin: Ward River Press, 1985).

village shop and post office all in one was closed. So was the pub, of course.... remember, it was Easter Sunday and that means a lot to us in Ireland.⁵⁸

The statement is ambiguous, and a foreigner could interpret the statement to mean the importance of the resurrection of Christ, but every Irishman (and woman), would immediately understand the significance of this statement in terms of Irish history and nationalism. The second scene occurs when Barty's father is transformed while listening to the electrical radio on Easter Sunday when he hears the Irish national anthem and the radio broadcasts the events of the Easter rebellion in 1916. Barty's father was a fighter in the rebellion and Barty looks at his father with love and pride as they recall the past. O'Faolain plays upon Irish nationalism in this scene and in other scenes from the film. Barty's father is emotionally affected when he hears the radio recalling the Easter rebellion. Barty looks at his father in a proud, loving, and reverent manner. In the scene where Barty is narrating his story to the American visitor, Gaelic can be heard from the loudspeakers in Shannon international airport revealing Ireland's attempts to get the Irish to learn the native language. This attempt by the Irish to reclaim their ancestral language demonstrates the fervent nationalism during this time—after the declaration of the Republic of Ireland.

Religious imagery and religious language are prevalent in the film, demonstrating the sense of shared cultural and religious nationalism of the Irish. The religious language and imagery are there to demonstrate the miracle of modernization, but they also serve as an important cue to bind the Irish in its shared cultural identity.

⁵⁸ NARA, Special Media Archives Services Division (NWCS), *The Promise of Barty O'Brien*, Marshall Plan Film, 1951.

But the religious symbology is intertwined with Irish nationalism and, therefore, undercuts the promotion of modernization and integration with the outside world. Several Irish officials, like Conor Cruise O'Brien, and some of the intellectual elite, like Sean O'Faolain, fought against the conflation of Irish nationalism and religion.⁵⁹ But the film is nonetheless brimming with religious imagery that is directly tied to Irish nationalism. The film is constructed as a flashback where Barty recounts his journey to the Technical Assistance Program where he ultimately reveals the "miracles" that happened to him. The film begins with Barty O'Brien returning from his technical assistance training in the United States. He encounters an American businessman at the Shannon airport and labels his opportunities "miracles." When he stares at the large portrait of Christ in his bedroom, he dreams of the plant adjacent to his family's farmhouse. Soon after this dream, he is offered an opportunity to take engineering classes in order to become a skilled laborer. He considers this opportunity to be a miracle. The final miracle occurs at the end of the film after a string of significant events. The first event takes place when members of the Electricity Supply Board and the ECA visit Barty's engineering school. The men openly discuss the technical assistance program and express regret about taking candidates only from Dublin. They talk about how they wish they had recruited someone from the countryside—someone who would take back to the country the idea of rural electrification—someone who would know all the problems of Ireland's small farmers. Barty volunteers and is taken

⁵⁹ Conor Cruise O'Brien, *Ancestral Voices: Religion and Nationalism in Ireland* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.) O'Brien recounts in his memoir the troubled connection between religion and nationalism in Ireland.

back to the American Embassy. He is informed about the Technical Assistance Program and his role in the electrification of Ireland. Barty is one of several who will be sent for training. The men ask Barty to promise them that he will come back and work with them on electrification in Ireland. Barty must also promise his father that he will return to his father's farm to work. Barty struggles to find a way to fulfill both of the promises, which he does by the end of the film when he discovers that his sister has married a neighbor and they have joined their farms creating an efficient and productive super farm, thus releasing his obligation to work the family farm for his father. He is now able to work for the electricity board and bring electrification, industrialization, and modernization to the Irish people. This is the final miracle.

The Promise of Barty O'Brien reveals the ambivalence of O'Faolain and his ilk's perception of the ERP. The film extols the virtues of technical assistance, electrification, and industrialization. However, this concept of modernity is contrasted with the glorification of the peasant. The references to the Easter Rebellion signify Ireland's continued obsession with nationalism and reflects the difficulty of the Irish people and Irish officials in the Department of External Affairs to work with ERP officials and European officials without making the issue of nationalism, specifically partition, a condition in negotiating international affairs.

The nationalism inherent in the film is prevalent in most Irish art, literature, and creative media—O'Faolain's work is no exception. *The Promise of Barty O'Brien* is one of many Irish mediums used for advancing Irish nationalism. The most extensive study of Ireland and film is in the book *Cinema and Ireland* by Kevin Rockett, Luke

Gibbons, and John Hill. The book traces the film industry in Ireland from the silent film era of early 20th century to the 1980s. The book dismisses the negative judgments of film critics that “are arrived at not on the basis of traditional conceptions of ‘artistic quality’ and ‘cinematic merit’ but, rather, according to the considerations of political complexity and formal and cultural self-consciousness.”⁶⁰ The authors of the book attempt to look at Irish film without the rose-colored glasses of nationalism and patriotism, which were indicative of Irish art throughout the 20th century. The authors’ comment,

However, it is not only the received views of cinematic quality which this discussion puts into question. For it also casts doubt upon the conventional distinction, perhaps particularly predominant in Ireland, between the merits of high art, on the one hand, and the shortcomings of popular culture, on the other. Literature has always enjoyed a privileged place within Irish culture and, indeed, it may well have been the peculiar premium placed on the written word which was, in part responsible for the shortage of enthusiasm for establishing a native film industry.⁶¹

The Irish, particularly the artists, viewed any medium which they considered popular culture to be antithetical to high culture—a long history of having “high art” representations of Irish culture through literature: stories and poetry. This tradition of high art comes from the Irish Literary Revival of the 19th and 20th century. The revival arose out of a need for the expression of an Irish identity and sense of culture in Ireland that was separate and distinct from English influences. The literature focused on Irish culture, Celtic mythology and folklore, and on the national heroes in Ireland. Irish

⁶⁰ Kevin Rockett, Luke Gibbons and John Hill, *Cinema and Ireland* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1988), xiii.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

literary nationalists like William Butler Yeats revealed the antagonisms between Catholic and Protestant and demonstrated the conflicted politics of his time through poetry and writings.⁶² Although certain periods of Irish history, like the revolt in 1798 and the Charles Stewart Parnell's fight for land and home rule, reveal an "English face of Irish nationalism" because of the unity between Protestants and Catholics, English and Irish, for a nationalist cause, the rift between religion and national heritage was the driving force of most Irish nationalist movements.⁶³ According to sociologist John Hutchinson, cultural nationalism has been a significant ideological force as a political option against the state by the intelligentsia. He defines the stages of Irish cultural nationalism from the first revival of the mid-eighteenth century, the second revival of the 1820s, and the third revival of the late 1880s that led to the Easter rebellion of 1916 and the war of independence.⁶⁴ Irish cultural nationalism is often political and religious, but it also glorifies nature. The presence of farms and small villages in Ireland distinguishes it from England. Some historians have suggested that the "natural" may have survived longer in Ireland because of a lack of development. Despite forest clearances, bog reclamations, and consolidation of some villages,

⁶² Yug Mohit Chaudhry, *Yeats: The Irish Literary Revival and the Politics of Print* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2001).

⁶³ Alan O'Day, *The English Face of Irish Nationalism: Parnellite Involvement in British Politics, 1880-86* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan Ltd., 1977).

⁶⁴ John Hutchinson, "Cultural Nationalism, Elite Mobility and Nation-Building: Communitarian Politics in Modern Ireland," *The British Journal of Sociology* 38, no. 4 (December, 1987): 482-501.

southern portions of Ireland escaped deep human penetration.⁶⁵ Irish nationalists tried to distinguish between the differences of the outside world, namely England, and the importance of Irish political, religious, and agrarian life.

Because of the emphasis on extolling the values of Irish life by Irish artists and writers as a result of the Irish cultural revival of the nineteenth century, Irish film did not become important in the representation of the realities of Irish life until later in the 20th century because of a lack of funding, lack of government support, and this view that it was tied to popular culture and therefore not worthy of artistic expression. Documentaries became particularly important in the 1930s and 1940s. Several documentaries during this period revealed the realism of poverty, unemployment and lack of industrialism in Ireland. One example is the documentary *The Irish Question* which was made in 1944. The film is an example of harsh realism in that it depicts an extremely rural and agricultural country with children running barefoot to school, and yet, it is still defined by the romantic view of Ireland and the Irish people as different and distinct. The film even claims to justify the reasons why Ireland remained neutral during World War II in that

Ireland's unhappy history under British rule was an important factor in Eire's decision to remain neutral, a decision which the freedom-loving nations of the world found difficult to comprehend. But those who would understand this proud and sensitive people today and in the future should look, not to logic, but to the poetry of the Irish.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ John Wilson Foster, *Nature in Ireland* (Kingston, Ontario: McGill Queens University Press, 1999).

⁶⁶ Kevin Rockett, Luke Gibbons and John Hill, *Cinema and Ireland* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1988), 74.

The narration furthers the stereotype that the Irish are not defined by logic, but by some mystical connection to poetry and art. It also explains Ireland's neutrality in terms of its long ties to Britain. The film explains that Ireland became neutral because the country had already been at war from the time of Norman supplantation of the Irish in the Middle Ages. Ireland had only recently thrown off the yoke of English oppression and could not afford to enter into the arena of international war in the 1940s. While Irish neutrality is somewhat understandable during World War II, the notion that the Irish people were too proud and sensitive and, therefore, must retreat from the new world order was patronizing and unrealistic. The complex interplay of postwar politics: ERP, economic recovery, diplomacy, NATO, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)—forced Irish leaders to confront the new world order of postwar politics.⁶⁷ The Irish could not afford to retreat into their poetry and romanticized history and exist in this new world of political and economic integration.

One of several documentaries utilized as political propaganda, *Our Country*, was created under the guise of a civic film, which would take a realistic look at Ireland. The film was created in 1947, and was criticized by Éamon de Valera, head of the Fianna Fáil party who were being challenged by the newly created Clann na Poblachta party. De Valera used the film as a target in order to undermine Clann na Poblachta

⁶⁷ Donal Ó Drisceoil, "Neither Friend Nor Foe?: Irish Neutrality in the Second World War," *Contemporary European History* 15, no. 2 (2006): 245-53. Drisceoil debates the extent of Irish neutrality during the war.

because they were challenging the Fianna Fáil party's sixteen year run as head of the Irish government. The film is significant as a piece of propaganda because

the film was under the banner of the Irish Civic Films in a fortnight during December 1947. Irish scenes were intercut by direct camera statements by three of the Clann's principal members, Seán MacBride, Noel Hartnett and Noel Browne. . . . Our country, it is declared at the film's opening, is your country. But the short, astringent film lists the failures of Fianna Fáil's 16 years in office: emigration continues (this 'slow bleeding death of the nation') as queues at Dublin's UK permit office are shown; an unused plough highlights the failure to increase agricultural production; a shoeless working-class boy is contrasted with images of imported luxury goods; a shop's empty shelves and signs of 'No Eggs', 'No Bacon', emphasize the shortages of even essential foodstuffs.⁶⁸

This depiction of a realistic view of Ireland was merely a propaganda piece for Clann na Poblachta even though the film did touch upon some of the key issues facing Ireland at the time: unemployment, emigration, and poverty. MacBride replaced De Valera in 1948 precisely because he and Clann na Poblachta ran such a rich political campaign through publicity and propaganda. MacBride was particularly interested in producing "objective, precise, authoritarian information for the foreign reader in order to create a climate of interest in, and sympathy for, Irish affairs—particularly his perception of the injustice of partition".⁶⁹ When MacBride became head of External Affairs in 1948, his knowledge and appreciation of publicity and propaganda became important in implementing propaganda at the urging of the ECA.

⁶⁸ Kevin Rockett, Luke Gibbons and John Hill, *Cinema and Ireland* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1988), 77.

⁶⁹ Bernadette Whelan, "The Messages and Methods of the Marshall Plan in Ireland and Italy," in *Ireland, Europe and the Marshall Plan*, eds. Till Geiger and Michael Kennedy (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 140.

Sean O’Faolain was an Irish nationalist and, at the same time, he questioned the zealous fervor and isolationist tendencies of his peers, but nevertheless, his writing was characterized by an ambivalent and complex attitude towards Irish nationalism. O’Faolain was an Irishman, a Catholic, and born in the city of Cork in 1900. He had witnessed the turbulence of the rebellion in 1916 and the Irish civil war that followed in the 1920s.⁷⁰ He represented the generation of writers after the Irish Renaissance. Unlike the literary romanticism and idealism of the Irish people during the literary resurgence of the 19th and 20th centuries, O’Faolain’s worked was characterized by a kind of ambivalence regarding the Irish ideal because

in the early Renaissance, these ideas were expressed in heroic form, as in much of the work of AE and the early Yeats. Gradually they were subjected to ironic scrutiny and even parody...yet, these ironical treatments were not indifferent dismissals of Irish idealism; in their questioning way they were spiritual extensions of that idealism. In a 1934 essay entitled ‘The Emancipation of Irish Writers,’ O’Faolain remarks: ‘Irish literature, as I feel it, has always been seeking escapes from the shattering of its ideals.’ This statement touches upon inherited idealism, realization of its failures, and yet the young Irish writer’s desire to be saved from idealism itself.⁷¹

O’Faolain’s rejection of Irish idealism transcended his writing. He also ventured into politics and journalism when he became a sort of cultural spokesman as creator and

⁷⁰ The rebellion of 1916 took place in Dublin during the week of Easter. The militant republicans staged the rebellion to win independence from Britain. At first the public did not support the rising in general, but after the members of the rebellion were court-martialed and executed at Kilmainham Gaol in Dublin, the public began to sympathize with their cause. The rebellion has become legendary in Irish history.

⁷¹ Richard Bonaccorso, *Sean O’Faolain’s Irish Vision* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 43.

editor of the newspaper *The Bell* in the 1940s. As editor of *The Bell*, he “provided a haven of encouragement for a generation of young Irish writers suffering from anti-intellectualism at home and, because of Irish neutrality during the war, dire marketing consequences abroad.”⁷² O’Faolain understood the complexities of a postwar world regarding trade, integration with Europe, foreign policy, and the importance of defense.

The same year the *The Promise of Barty O’Brien* was released, O’Faolain became embroiled in a controversy regarding United States’ intentions concerning the Marshall Plan. In January of 1951, an article was published in the *Irish Times* regarding the Technical Assistance Program. This article prompted a response in the form of a letter to all major Irish newspapers from Louie Bennett, an Irish trade unionist. In her letter, Bennett questioned the intentions of the ECA’s altruism in giving aid to Ireland. Bennett wrote her letter after a major transition in U.S. focus regarding the Marshall Plan. After the invasion of South Korea by North Korea in 1950, the U.S. focused less on the economic recovery of Europe and more on the defense of non-communist nations. The outbreak of the Korean War “had radically transformed transatlantic relations as western rearmament rather than recovery became the first priority of the Truman administration.”⁷³ In her letter, Bennett claims that “war-preparations are now the all-absorbing and dominant interest of the ruling authorities in America....are we drifting into such entanglements, or is it the deliberate policy of our government to link

⁷² Ibid., 27.

⁷³ Till Geiger, “What Does America Hope to Gain? Irish Left-Wing Intellectuals and the Marshall Plan,” in *Ireland, Europe and the Marshall Plan*, eds. Till Geiger and Michael Kennedy (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 175.

Ireland with the U.S.A. in external affairs? We are made aware that we are outside the Atlantic Pact only because of partition. But America can provide the back door to the Pact.”⁷⁴ Ireland refused to participate in NATO as long as the United Kingdom retained Northern Ireland under their control. Ireland used the issue of partition as a condition to join NATO, but the key players were not concerned whether a small state like Ireland joined or not.

O’Faolain responded to Bennett and other “like minded left-wing intellectuals” in *The Bell* by using the letter as a “polemic against the automatic knee-jerk anti-Americanism among Irish intellectuals.”⁷⁵ O’Faolain created the term “Autoantiamericanism” or “Auto-anti” to illustrate this knee-jerk reaction against U.S. motives. The debate between the auto-antis and O’Faolain made its way into the American consciousness when his writing was reprinted in an article in *Time Magazine* on May 14, 1951. O’Faolain asks the question,

What are the sources, motives or unconscious origins of Anti-Americanism? First I would put British influences...[like] The New Statesman. [It is] the British Bible of every washed-up Liberal, soured Conservative, lapsed Catholic, half-baked grammar school intellectual, the new technical boys whose knowing twang you hear on every bus, every manic-depressive Orwellite, fissurated Koestlerite, prehistoric Fabian, antique Keir Hardyite, flaming anti-Roman Catholic, like...and every other unhappy misfit, pink and pacifist, whose sole prophylactic against despair...Marshall Aid to the end of 1950 has cost every crude, rude, grasping, vulgar, selfish racketeering American fifteen shillings (\$2.10) a week out of his back pocket.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Ibid., 154.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 157.

⁷⁶ *Time Magazine*, “Anti-Auto-Anti,” May 14, 1951.

O’Faolain challenges the auto-antis by claiming that their anti-Americanism comes from their own prejudices and preoccupations. Most importantly, O’Faolain challenges them by implying that their anti-Americanism is derived directly from the British. The idea that the Irish would derive or copy anything from the British in 1951, just a few years after officially declaring Ireland as a republic, would seem absurd and insulting to the Irish. However, O’Faolain was trying to make an important point by reminding the Irish of their own ties to the United States. After all, the U.S. was a former British colony just like Ireland. O’Faolain “attributed such ungratefulness on the part of the Irish public to their reliance on Britain as the primary source of international news.”⁷⁷ Bennett’s retaliatory mimic of O’Faolain’s statement above demonstrates the annoyance with any claims that the Irish are influenced by British anti-Americanism. She asserts, “I am anti-British, anti-American, anti-Russian and pro-Irish.”⁷⁸ Bennett is also representative of a theme in Irish culture of the 20th century of pursuing a non-aligned third way for Ireland between the huge powers of communism versus capitalism. Bennett saw the struggle between the U.S.S.R. and the United States as a struggle of evil superpower conflict. She envisioned Ireland as a David in a sea of Goliaths

⁷⁷ Till Geiger, “What Does America Hope to Gain? Irish Left-Wing Intellectuals and the Marshall Plan,” in *Ireland, Europe and the Marshall Plan*, eds. Till Geiger and Michael Kennedy (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 158.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 167.

struggling to maintain its position as a country concerned with Christianity, humanity, and anti-materialism.⁷⁹

Another critic of O’Faolain, the writer Hubert Butler, also represented the predominant *left-wing intellectual* view that O’Faolain was advocating a policy of cooperation with the United States, which would ultimately undermine peace. Butler argued that intellectuals (like O’Faolain and Butler) should “preach universal love and the abolition of frontiers and other spiritual things, while it is the duty of the state to punish him and confine itself to the realist task of defense.”⁸⁰ Butler believed O’Faolain was a traitor against his own kind—the writer intellectual—because O’Faolain had abandoned his lofty pursuits of peace and spirituality by venturing into politics and foreign affairs.

O’Faolain became increasingly disillusioned by these attacks from the Irish left-wing nationalists. He had originally set up *The Bell* to provide a kind of dialogue on Irish culture and current affairs. However, because of the debate between his critics and himself, he expressed an

obvious annoyance with an almost automatic rejection by many Irish nationalists of any form of foreign involvement in Irish domestic affairs even if they are as well-intentioned and potentially beneficial as the American ERP grants. By claiming the high moral ground, in his view many Irish observers displayed an extreme naivety about international affairs or the true nature of the Cold War.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Ibid., 163.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid., 161.

What is interesting about O’Faolain’s debate is that he was remarkably silent about what the Irish government specifically should do about the current domestic and international situation.

O’Faolain’s ambiguous feelings about the Irish can be found in a book he wrote in 1949, two years before the film *The Promise of Barty O’Brien* debuted. The book *The Irish: A Character Study*, was written as a reaction to the Irish nationalist’s sense of himself or herself as distinct, special, and therefore different and apart from the rest of the world. In the preface to the book, O’Faolain explains

this book is not a history of political events, although some political events are described briefly in the course of the main narrative. It is, in effect, a creative history of the growth of a racial mind; or one might call it a psychological history; or, if the term were not far too large and grandiose, the story of the development of a national Irish civilization; although what has happened in the Irish mind is not an undisturbed local expansion but a complex process of assimilation at the end of which Ireland enters, with her own distinctive qualifications, into the great general stream of European culture.⁸²

O’Faolain attempted to dispel the myth that the Irish are racially and culturally pure.

He traced the roots of Irish culture, the mythology derived from the Irish kings, the influence and inculcation of the Celts, the Vikings, the Normans and the Anglo-Saxons

in order to dispel the myth of cultural and racial purity in Ireland. O’Faolain claimed,

“all our histories are nationalist, patriotic, political, sentimental.”⁸³ O’Faolain expressed

ambivalence about this Irish experience of their past—he both praised certain aspects of

⁸² Sean O’Faolain, *The Irish: A Character Study* (New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1949), vii.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, viii.

Irish history but also condemned the idealization of Irish nationalism. He described the rebel tradition of Ireland in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century: Wolfe Tone, Daniel O’Connell, the Young Irelanders, Fenianism, and Charles Stewart Parnell. O’Faolain claimed “that all these men deprived Ireland of as much as they gave to it: They choked the critical side of their minds, they were good rebels in proportion as they were bad revolutionaries, so that their passion for change and their vision of change never pierced to organic change.”⁸⁴ O’Faolain took a great risk in challenging the iconic figures of the rebels in Irish history. He also attacked other facets of Irish culture and history, including Irish literature, which he claimed had two main problems—provincialism and nationalism. O’Faolain explained

the dangers need no underlining. Herbert Read speaks of the writer’s roots being sunk deeper in the soil where the outlook is confined, and Irish literature amply illustrates what he means; but Irish literature also illustrates what he means by the confined outlook, for this word “soil” will readily suggest to us how soon a yawning boredom may follow the constant repetition of over-familiar peasant motifs. One need go no further than the Abbey Theatre to see how easily this repetition exhausts the soil, and our interest.⁸⁵

He cautioned writers against clinging to provincialism and the idealism of nationalism. He claimed that

man is a thinking animal, and writers are supposed to think more intensely than other men, and when they have depicted all the usual local rural themes—land-hunger, match-making, sexual-repression, the farcical side of village-life, political jobbery, nationalist fervours and nationalist disillusionments and so on—they naturally want to turn, with the

⁸⁴ Ibid., 127.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 174.

turn of their thoughts, to those other issues which the world's wider stage brings to their notice.⁸⁶

O'Faolain was acutely aware of the problems that provincialism and nationalism posed for the Irish people. However, at the same time, he was part of this tradition of cultural nationalism and it is apparent in his screenplay of *Barty*.

The issue of nationalism revealed the contradictions in Irish society and identity during this period. Modernization Theorists in the 1950s argued that nationalism and the formation of nation-states implied inevitable processes of assimilation. In many ways, Ireland was a newly formed nation-state in the twentieth century, but it was still very much economically and culturally tied to the United Kingdom. Miroslav Hroch emphasized the role of regional elites and the uneven economic development within states, arguing that local elites whose interests were threatened by larger markets and global forces often encouraged the spread of nationalist sentiment to protect those interests.⁸⁷ Hroch argued that nationalist movements developed in three stages:

First, nationalist movements assume an apolitical, folkloric character; second, they are taken up by literate elites wishing to inculcate the "national idea" and organize the masses; and third, nationalist movements then truly gain mass-based support.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Ibid., 175.

⁸⁷ Miroslav Hroch, "From National Movement to the Fully-formed Nation: The Nation-building Procession in Europe," edited by G. Balakrishnan, *Mapping the Nation* (New York: Verso, 1996).

⁸⁸ Ibid., 79.

The development of Ireland in the nineteenth and twentieth century seems to follow this model. However, many, including the cultural elite like O'Faolain, had a different, more progressive, less nationalistic vision of Ireland. The romanticization of agricultural, peasant life contradicted the goals of O'Faolain and forward-thinking members of the Department of Foreign Affairs. While state formation and politics form a major impetus for nationalism, so do national consciousness, identity, and symbols.⁸⁹ This period of nationalism and the ERP reveal the struggle and contradictions inherent in the film *The Promise of Barty O'Brien*, which both extols Irish life and also advocates the modernization and industrialization promoted by the Americans.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 506.

CHAPTER FOUR

Working Together? Ireland's Ambivalent Relationship with the United Kingdom and the United States

The issue of Irish nationalism in *The Promise of Barty O'Brien* and other media reveals the complex history of Ireland in relation to the United Kingdom. In many ways the relationship between Ireland and the United States was also complicated because of the historical connection between the Irish people and Irish Americans, but Irish neutrality during the war and the “special relationship” between the United Kingdom and the United States reinforced tension in Ireland’s official relationship with the U.S.⁹⁰ Ireland’s complex economic and historically colonial relationship with the United Kingdom became an issue concerning Ireland’s search for integration and modernization with regard to ERP. The Irish increasingly identified with being European (rather than only Irish) and, therefore, considered their nation culturally superior to the crass commercialism of the United States, thus compounding the

⁹⁰ The United States and the United Kingdom are said to share a special relationship because of their shared history, politics, and culture. This relationship became especially strengthened after World War II, when Britain, a diminished empire, relied on the U.S. for foreign aid and defense against communism. See Alan Dobson’s work on the shared political goals of the countries: Alan J. Dobson, *The Politics of the Anglo-American Economic Special Relationship* (New York: St. Martins, 1988); John Baylis highlights the importance of defense and shared enemies in John Baylis, *Defence Relations 1939-1980: The Special Relationship* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1981.) A recent dissertation by Robert Hendershot claims that the U.S. and the United Kingdom will always be close despite differences in politics or defense strategy because they share a cultural connection. See: Robert M. Hendershot. *Family Spats: Perception, Illusion and Sentimentality in the Anglo-American Special Relationship* (Mount Pleasant: Central Michigan University, 2008).

complicated relationship between the countries. The perception of U.S. dominance also created tension between European nations and the U.S. Because the U.S. was a superpower during this period, the simple nature of its ascendancy created a sense that the country was trying to dominate the world even if this was not the intention of U.S. officials.⁹¹

Despite the shared connection between the United States and Ireland, in many ways their relationship became strained in the 1940s and 50s. Ireland's neutrality during the war became an obstacle to what type of aid, if any, Ireland would receive from Marshall Aid funds. The concept of neutrality has always been a major component of modern, Republican Irish thought. Irish neutrality became an aspiration of many key Irish officials and it arose out of the spirit of the Locarno Treaties in 1925. Éamon de Valera believed strongly in neutrality and, despite antagonism toward the British, he also believed that Ireland should not be used as a base to attack the United Kingdom.⁹² This policy of neutrality, which became official during the event of World War II when both Britain and the United States went to war, led Ireland to become a pariah state after the war. Since Ireland's economic interests were linked to Britain and the two economies were interdependent, with Ireland disproportionately reliant on British markets and imports, Irish neutrality was not economically justifiable, despite

⁹¹ Alfred Grosser, *The Western Alliance: European-American Relations since 1945*, trans. Michael Shaw (New York: Vintage Books, 1982).

⁹² Raymond J. Raymond, "Irish Neutrality: Ideology or Pragmatism?," *International Affairs* (Royal Institute for International Affairs 1944-) 60, no. 1 (Winter 1983-1984): 31-40.

being morally justifiable for many. United States officials during the Truman and Eisenhower administrations held a certain amount of contempt for Ireland since it did not participate in the war.⁹³

The strained relationship between the United States and Ireland regarding neutrality is visible in the correspondence between U.S. ECA officials and Irish leaders. Carrigan, the Chief of the ECA Mission to Ireland and an Irish descendent, attempted to smooth over the tension between U.S. and Irish officials when an article appeared in the *Irish Independent* stating that Ireland was included in ERP because she was an economic boon to Britain despite her neutrality during the war.⁹⁴ Con Cremin, Assistant Secretary of External Affairs, submitted the minutes of a meeting after the paper came out to Carrigan voicing his concern that Ireland would be treated unjustly and unfairly because of its neutrality. The minutes state,

It is difficult to see why Mr. Lawrence should single out Ireland for remarks of the kind attributed to him as compared with, e.g. Sweden, which is also receiving a loan at the present time. The peculiarity of these remarks is enhanced when one remembers that the Bizone is receiving ECA Aid. Finally, to choose the moment of signature of a Loan Agreement to imply that a special exception was being made in favour of Ireland, although neutral in the war, seems particularly *mal á propos* and is not calculated to lessen the risk of misrepresentation and resentment among the general public.⁹⁵

⁹³ Brian Girvin, *The Emergency: Neutral Ireland 1939-45* (London: Macmillan, 2006).

⁹⁴ NARA, *Article from the Irish Independent, "Ireland Got 'Escape' Clause in Aid Loan," November 28, 1951*, RG 469, Box 1, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Office of European Operations—Ireland Division.

⁹⁵ NARA, *Cremin to Carrigan, November 2, 1948*. RG 469, Box 1, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Office of European Operations—Ireland Division.

Irish officials were wary about the ways in which the United States would implement the ERP funds. The correspondence between U.S. officials and Irish officials underscores the minefield of diplomacy and negotiation involved in order to get Ireland on board with ERP.

The Irish perception of American intentions was also complicated. Many Europeans, including the Irish, liked to distinguish themselves from Americans, who they viewed as materialistic and uncultured. Many perceived the Americans' attitude towards Europe as condescending. They resented the idea that the United States was elite, more progressive than Europe, and generally superior. The idea of "American Exceptionalism", the belief that the U.S. was not only unique but also superior, guided U.S. policymaking in the twentieth century. There are different types of exceptionalism, but the more dominant strand is that of the missionary nation, as represented by the ideas of manifest destiny, imperialism, leader of the free world, and the new world order. Europeans, including the Irish, resented the United States because of U.S. perceptions of superiority over Europe. The U.S. not only exported foreign aid, but also American culture. American exceptionalism is one of the most important concepts underlying modern theories of American cultural identity.⁹⁶ This belief in the messianic role of American policy and culture alienated and angered Europeans. W.B. Stanford of Dublin lambasted the Americans' verdict that ERP productivity was too slow in relation to European unity at the third session of the Consultative Assembly of

⁹⁶ Deborah L. Madsen, *American Exceptionalism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998).

the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. Stanford emphasized the cultural and spiritual differences between Europeans and the United States. He asked if

the Americans would like all the European Gothic cathedrals to be streamlined into functional skyscrapers. Would they like Shakespeare and Dante to be reduced to official condensations in some "Reader's Digest?" Cultural and religious matters, he said, were as dynamic in European affairs as economics and sociology.⁹⁷

The tension between officials such as Stanford and the U.S. ECA representatives is indicative of the complicated relationships between the nations. The Irish Workers' League threw a leaflet at the American Ambassador to Ireland as he passed through the streets of Dublin, that read "the American imperialists and their British stooges are doing everything to involve all countries in their devilish aims".⁹⁸ An article in the *Irish Independent* revealed the cultural differences between the U.S. and Europe: "the American representatives do not seem to understand what it means to be a European. They do not seem to understand what we live for, and, sometimes, die for."⁹⁹ Men like Carrigan had to navigate the minefield of U.S. and Irish relations during the implementation of the ERP. Although Carrigan was well-liked by Irish officials

⁹⁷ NARA, *Article from the Irish Times, "Irish Delegate Hits at Americans," November 28, 1951*, RG 84, Box 1, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Dublin Embassy, Security Segregated Records, 1936-49, 1950-52.

⁹⁸ NARA, *Leaflet from the Irish Workers' League, April 13, 1950*. RG 84, Box 1, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Dublin Embassy, Security Segregated Records, 1936-49, 1950-52. The leaflet was thrown at the American Ambassador to Ireland as he passed through the streets of Dublin.

⁹⁹ NARA, *Article from the Irish Times, "Irish Delegate Hits at Americans," November 28, 1951*, RG 84, Box 1, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Dublin Embassy, Security Segregated Records, 1936-49, 1950-52.

because of his good nature and his Irish heritage, many Irish leaders, like Stanford, distrusted U.S. intentions and the materialistic culture of America.

While Irish leaders were suspicious of U.S. intentions with regard to ERP, everyday Irish workers were also concerned about the implementation of the ERP. In 1950, the Irish Workers' League threw leaflets at the American Ambassador as he was walking through the streets of Dublin. At least one young man was arrested in the incident. The leaflet was a call to action against U.S. imperialism. Interestingly, the pamphlet makes a distinction between U.S. officials and the American people. At the beginning of the leaflet, it states "greetings to the great American people—but not to the men of Wall Street."¹⁰⁰ The pamphlet urges the Irish to fight the American imperialists and the British stooges and claims "we want peace, improved living conditions and a genuine fight to end Partition *without conditions*."¹⁰¹ While many Irish, including the Irish Workers' League, were wary of American and British intentions, Ireland was nonetheless dependent on both nations to support its economy.

Although Ireland tended to distance itself politically and culturally from the British, it was still economically tied to Britain, but this posed problems for Irish officials who, now that Ireland was officially politically independent of the British, wanted economic independence as well. Yet British involvement in the Marshall Plan

¹⁰⁰ NARA, *Leaflet from the Irish Workers' League, April 13, 1950*. RG 84, Box 1, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Dublin Embassy, Security Segregated Records, 1936-49, 1950-52. The leaflet was thrown at the American Ambassador to Ireland as he passed through the streets of Dublin.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

became a major factor in Ireland's decision to economically integrate with Europe since the Irish economy was so dependent on the British economy. The ECA Loan Director, Mr. Lawrence, stated in Washington that despite her wartime neutrality, "Eire was included in the ERP because she was 'almost an agricultural adjunct' of Britain."¹⁰² Ireland's economic ties and agricultural exports to Britain were precisely why the ECA provided Marshall Plan funding to Ireland in the first place.

Contrary to most people's perception of the Marshall Plan, the impetus for the plan was not solely economic, but also institutional and political in nature. The goals of the Marshall planners were much more ambitious than economic recovery. They wanted to create a postwar world that would not fall victim either to the extremism of the inter war years or the scourge of communism.¹⁰³ Britain's decision to participate in the Marshall Plan had profound consequences for Ireland. The policy of the Marshall Plan proved to be a pivotal moment in Britain's postwar relations not only with the United States, but also with Europe and, in particular, Ireland.

However, the British attitude towards integration was ambivalent at best. Because of the "special relationship" between Britain and the United States, Britain anticipated that they would benefit even more from the Marshall Plan than their

¹⁰² NARA, *Cremin to Carrigan, November 2, 1948*, Record Group 469, Box 1, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Office of European Operations—Ireland Division. The file includes the newspaper clipping where Lawrence makes this claim.

¹⁰³ Denise Dunne, "The Political Legacy of the Marshall Plan: An Assessment of the Integrationist Agenda Through a British Lens," in *Ireland, Europe and the Marshall Plan*, eds. Till Geiger and Michael Kennedy (Dublin, Ireland: Four Courts Press, 2004), 34.

European contemporaries and were sorely disappointed when the Marshall planners treated them no differently than France, for example. British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin informed Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs William Clayton that “he had strong reservations about America’s new policy of providing aid to Western Europe as a regional bloc, arguing that this would effectively mean that Britain would be treated as ‘just another European country’”.¹⁰⁴ In fact, Britain’s Economic Policy Committee (EPC) created an ambiguous policy called the “doctrine of limited liability” also known as the “recognition of the point of no return.”¹⁰⁵ This policy of “limited liability” was Britain’s way of reassuring itself that it would not become involved in the economic affairs of continental Europe beyond the point of no return. However, no one could pinpoint when or where exactly the point of no return could occur. The doctrine of limited liability did become an issue in Britain’s involvement in the OEEC. The OEEC was created in 1948 for the purpose of administering the Marshall Plan in Europe. The purpose of the organization was to restructure a war torn Europe, but it also helped integrate European economic policies. The OEEC provided the foundation for economic integration and, to some extent, political integration when Americans Averill Harriman and Paul Hoffman decided to appoint a director general and conduct ministerial meetings. Harriman served as U.S. Coordinator of the European Recovery Program, one among many political positions where he had great influence, and Paul Hoffman served as the first administrator of the ECA.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 40.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

The British strongly objected to this notion of economic integration, much less political integration in any form. Interestingly, American efforts to create a political organization in the OEEC failed, but the experience of the OEEC laid the foundation for future institutions of integration such as the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and the EEC.¹⁰⁶ The problem of economic and political integration was evident throughout the latter twentieth century. Even during the establishment of the European Union, nationalism emerged despite the globalization of the European economy. National identities proved to be an obstacle to European integration even at the end of the twentieth century.¹⁰⁷

Britain's continual refusal to be integrated with continental Europe came to a head with regard to the 1950 Schuman Plan, an integrationist plan developed by France that would exclude the British. The French, recognizing that Britain was a reluctant participant in European integration, developed an integrationist plan without the country. The Schuman Plan was created to facilitate an incremental liberalization of trade and market integration by combining the French economic and military security. Therefore, the first step towards supra-nationalism in Europe arose from a French need

¹⁰⁶ Denise Dunne, "The Political Legacy of the Marshall Plan: An Assessment of the Integrationist Agenda Through a British Lens," in *Ireland, Europe and the Marshall Plan*, eds. Till Geiger and Michael Kennedy (Dublin, Ireland: Four Courts Press, 2004), 51.

¹⁰⁷ Anthony D. Smith, "National Identity and the Idea of European Unity," *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-) 68, no. 1 (January 1992): 55-76.

to secure its military and economic interests in German and French coal and steel production.¹⁰⁸

Britain's refusal to participate in the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was a crucial turning point in Britain's postwar history. This was the first time that Britain declared publicly that it was against a federal Europe. Many historians claim that British officials could not have made a greater attempt to commit to integration in the OEEC and the ECSC because they were obviously no longer the powerful global empire of the prewar era. However, it was not unthinkable that Britain's empire had vanished in 1947 when the nation still held worldwide interests across the globe.¹⁰⁹ Although it was probable that Britain could regain its world power status after the war, the doctrine of limited liability should have been reevaluated—especially by the time of the Shuman Plan. Even though Britain was a reluctant participant in European integration, its participation was significant because the country agreed to work not only with the United States but also with continental Europe.

The Marshall Plan was important because disparate European nations were able to work together and because it was a joint endeavor between Europe and the United States. Europe was able to garner much needed economic aid and stability after the war. The United States benefited from the plan because it guaranteed that communism via the Soviet Union would not creep in the ERP countries' quarters. However, American leaders underestimated the power of a united Europe. While not all, several

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 55.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 58.

U.S. officials believed Europe was comprised of backward, conquered people who desperately needed assistance and guidance to survive in the brave new world of the U.S. and Soviet superpowers.¹¹⁰ This U.S. perception of Europeans further complicated Britain and Ireland's relationship with the Americans. But the issue of partition and the legacy of colonialism exacerbated an already strained relationship between British and Irish officials.

What distinguished the Marshall Plan from earlier American aid programs was that the planners decided to get rid of the idea of case-by-case aid. Instead, they adopted the idea of a coherent west European strategic concept. Even though, by 1947, the United States had spent over \$9 billion in a variety of aid programs on the European continent, European industrial and agricultural production was still much less than that of the prewar era.¹¹¹ The strategy of this coherent economic aid was deeply rooted in the foundations of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. The idea of a coherent west European strategy included the European nations working together toward some type of integration. Because Ireland's economy was bound to Britain, the reluctance of the United Kingdom in accepting integration proved another obstacle to Irish leaders, particularly in the Department of External Affairs, who wanted to pursue integration with Europe. But the idea of a united Europe was an evolving

¹¹⁰ Denise Dunne, "The Political Legacy of the Marshall Plan: An Assessment of the Integrationist Agenda Through a British Lens," in *Ireland, Europe and the Marshall Plan*, eds. Till Geiger and Michael Kennedy (Dublin, Ireland: Four Courts Press, 2004), 60.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 37.

concept and the terms of European integration and European unity were widely interpreted and loosely applied.¹¹² United States officials believed that the Marshall Plan would act as insurance, essentially preventing communism from enveloping Europe. American officials believed that some type of integration of Europe was needed to secure an undivided Europe and protect the western European countries against the encroachment of communism. However, the interpretation of the word integration varied greatly.¹¹³ Europeans were excited about the economic advantages of integration if it meant the removing of trade barriers, removing tariffs, and allowing the free flow of goods among the devastated countries of Europe.

Ireland's role in the Marshall Plan reveals its complicated and often strained relationship with Britain. In 1948 the British head of the Finance Division of the Treasury, Otto Clark, claimed "it is more important to us that Eire should receive adequate aid than it is for Eire herself."¹¹⁴ In his statement, Clark reveals the need for

¹¹² Ibid., 38. Dunne notes that the 1948 Authorization Act stated that "It is declared to be the policy of the people of the United States to sustain and strengthen genuine independence in Europe through the assistance to those countries of Europe which participate in a joint economic programme based on self-help and mutual cooperation."

¹¹³ Ibid., 38. Dunne quotes Edmund Hall-Patch, the leader of the British delegation to the Committee for European Economic Co-operation (CEEC) in his report to the Foreign Office in 1947 as saying "every American, Official or unofficial, with whom I have come in contact had a different interpretation of the word integration, in fact the American interpretation of integration was as diversified as the interpretation of the word democracy."

¹¹⁴ Daniel Davies, "It Is More Important to Us that Eire Should Receive Adequate Aid Than It Is For Eire Herself," in *Ireland, Europe and the Marshall Plan*, eds. Till Geiger and Michael Kennedy (Dublin, Ireland: Four Courts Press, 2004), 66.

Ireland's economy to flourish—particularly agricultural production and exportation of agriculture to Britain—since the economies of both countries were so co-dependent. In February of 1948, a coalition government led by John A. Costello replaced the Fianna Fáil government led by Éamon de Valera. Seán MacBride, part of this new coalition and leader of the radical republican Clan na Poblachta party, became the new minister for the Department of External Affairs. MacBride immediately set out to distance Ireland from Britain and tackle the issue of partition, which became linked to the politics of Ireland's role in the ERP. Because of Ireland's historical dependency on trade with Britain, Irish leaders looked to Marshall Aid as an option to close the dollar deficit after the suspension of the dollar-sterling convertibility in August of 1947.¹¹⁵ The ECA had decided only to offer loans to countries that it assessed could repay the loan without difficulty. Irish leaders wanted to bypass this requirement by convincing the ECA that Ireland could not repay any loans once it could no longer draw from the sterling area dollar pool. But ECA officials rejected this argument since currency convertibility could not be achieved as earlier planned. Indeed, the total sum of Marshall Aid to Ireland was \$148 million and only \$18 million of that money was issued in grants.¹¹⁶ The historian Raymond J. Raymond argued that Ireland received more loans than grants than any other ERP country because of its neutrality during the

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 79.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 69.

war.¹¹⁷ Ireland was in a difficult position regarding the ERP loans: the government was confronted with the complication of its economic links to Britain and the Irish-American Lobby in the U.S., who were attempting to make partition the central issue in Irish affairs with regard to Britain and the U.S. To make matters worse, the Americans enlisted British assistance by asking them to threaten to block Ireland's access to the sterling area dollar pool if it continued to finance its dollar deficit by running down its sterling balances and, in turn, the British took advantage of the dispute between Irish and ECA officials by supporting Irish officials' cause to get grants instead of loans.¹¹⁸ If Britain could have united with Ireland in its cause to receive grants by implying that Ireland was not in a position to pay back the loans, this might have furthered British foreign economic policy with regard to the sterling area.

But, what finally distanced Ireland and Britain with regard to the Marshall Plan was the conflict over the increasing economic integration of Europe when the Americans attempted to raise the status of the OEEC by increasing the power of the executive powers in the Council of Ministers by appointing a strong director general, the Belgian Prime Minister Paul-Henri Spaak.¹¹⁹ MacBride became extremely supportive of Spaak and the increasing power of the OEEC in integrating Europe, much to the dismay of the British and French officials who believed Spaak was a firebrand

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 68. Many view the loan of Marshall aid to Ireland instead of grants, as a punishment because of Ireland's neutrality during World War II.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 69.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 72.

and unqualified for such a high position in the OEEC and, therefore, were not in favor of his appointment.

Interestingly, when MacBride initially took office, there was no indication that he would become such a staunch supporter of European unity. One of the reasons MacBride supported integration was he saw an opportunity to garner American support to use against the British. MacBride was attempting to make Ireland a greater player in the international arena by his many policy proposals in the OEEC such as increasing Irish exports like agriculture and wool, but he also wanted to use this opportunity to gain American support of anti-partition. It is ironic that this proposal came from a country so concerned with self-sufficiency and so dependent on a single export market.¹²⁰ But, this is also indicative of Ireland's struggle for identity in a postwar world—desiring a stake in the international economy, and, at the same time, struggling to protect her own national economy in the face of partition and debt from ECA loans. When Ireland did not join the North Atlantic alliance because of the issue of partition, it cost Ireland the remaining \$1 million of technical assistance and \$18 million of potential grants as Marshall Aid turned into military assistance because of the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950. Ireland became less and less strategic in American foreign policy.

The complex relationship with Britain and the United States illustrates Ireland's struggle with how, and to what extent, the country would economically and politically integrate with Europe. This tension is prevalent in the Department of External Affairs'

¹²⁰ Ibid., 75.

rise to a position of power in the postwar world. The ambivalence regarding relinquishing the old nationalistic, conservative means of living can also be found in the tension between the Department of External Affairs and the Department of Finance. The complex relationships between nations, and within the nation of Ireland, demonstrate the problems of integration in the years after the war. These complex relationships and the problems of working together were compounded by Irish officials' desire to inject nationalism in their promotion of the ERP in order to highlight the problems of partition. Like O'Faolain's struggle between nationalism and European integration in his writings and, specifically, in *The Promise of Barty O'Brien*, Irish officials also could not divorce themselves from Irish nationalism, which was ever present in Irish thinking and in international diplomacy.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Rise of the Department of External Affairs: Pushing for European Integration and Irish Nationalism

The traditionally accepted historical analysis of Ireland's involvement in the Marshall Plan is that Ireland was a reluctant participant in the ERP. Many officials in government were wary of U.S. intentions regarding Marshall Aid and Irish leaders were concerned about U.S. hegemony in the postwar era. They were also wary about economic and political integration with Europe. Despite the tendency of many Irish leaders to fear outside aid and influence, a group of Irish officials in the Department of External Affairs were actually proponents of foreign aid and even European integration. The Department of External Affairs became a major participant during postwar diplomacy and participation in the OEEC. The Department of External Affairs rose from a small department to a major player in the game of distributing ERP aid. However, the Department's push for integration and cooperation with the United States was ultimately limited by Irish conservatism and nationalism. Like Barty's struggle between traditional, national values and the desire to train in the technical assistance program in the United States, Irish officials in the Department of External Affairs were excited about the unique opportunity of ERP, but also like Barty, Irish nationalism and, specifically, partition consistently emerges in Irish thought and policy.

The Department of External Affairs was essentially the foreign affairs and diplomatic office for Ireland. External Affairs was created in 1919 as the Department of Foreign Affairs to advance Ireland's political interests. In 1922, the department was

renamed the Department of External Affairs and it would retain that name until 1971, when the department reclaimed its original name of Department of Foreign Affairs. Initially, the Department was primarily concerned with political interests, but after the implementation of the ERP and the opportunities of ECA funding and European economic integration, leaders in the department increasingly had to grapple with both political and economic issues. The opportunities afforded by the European Recovery Plan and the change in leadership of the Department of External Affairs from a more conservative group of individuals to a more progressive group of charismatic foreign affairs officers increased the importance and role of the department during this time.

The Department of External Affairs' desire to accept foreign aid from the ECA conflicted with the more conservative tendencies of the Department of Finance.¹²¹

While the Department of External Affairs managed diplomacy and foreign affairs, the Department of Finance in Ireland administered the public finances of the country and the collection and expenditures of the revenue of Ireland. The Department of Finance initially rejected the loans offered by the ERP and, instead, asked for grants.

Department of Finance officials mistrusted the idea that Marshall aid would save Ireland from economic destruction and, therefore, they believed that if Irish officials were going to accept any aid at all, it would be in the form of grants and not loans. The conservatism of the Department of Finance was directly contrasted with the

¹²¹ Gary Murphy, "An Exercise that had to be Undertaken: The Marshall Plan and the Genesis of Ireland's Involvement in Integration," in *Ireland, Europe and the Marshall Plan*, eds. Till Geiger and Michael Kennedy (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 81.

personalities in the Department of External Affairs. The “acerbic” governor of the Central Bank, Joseph Brennan, and Secretary of the Department of Finance James McElligott argued against accepting any aid except if the money was given in grants. They argued that Ireland did not have the dollars to pay back the ECA. McElligott retorted the Irish “cannot expect any measure of salvation from the Marshall Plan.”¹²² The tension between the two departments reveals the desire for External Affairs to take advantage of ERP opportunities versus the conservative realism of Finance to secure Ireland’s market in a tenuous economy.

The departments displayed vastly different attitudes, but it was the important role that individuals played in the acceptance and implementation of the Marshall Plan that made the Department of External Affairs unique among Irish government agencies at the time. The role of the European Recovery Plan in Ireland was important because it allowed the Department of External Affairs to essentially come to the fore in the Irish administrative system once Éamon de Valera was replaced by Seán MacBride as minister and F.H. Boland was appointed secretary. Although, in the short term, Irish leaders in departments like Finance and conservative Irish leaders resisted European integration, the increasing importance of the role of External Affairs in its duties to the ECA allowed it to provide a foundation for eventual integration in the EEC.¹²³ The need for diplomats and foreign affairs agents to administer and cooperate with the ECA elevated the importance of the Department of External Affairs and caused the

¹²² Ibid., 95.

¹²³ Ibid., 101.

department to expand during this period. External Affairs would also play an important role in Ireland's history because it was comprised of some brilliant and dynamic individuals.

The Department of External Affairs increased both in size and importance from 1945 to the 1950s. Although Ireland experienced six years of neutrality during World War II, the Marshall Plan provided a way to force External Affairs' operations into foreign economic policy when it was invited to join in the planning and implementation of ERP resources. Although the focus of the leaders of External Affairs was not only on integration at this point, this expansion and the changes in leadership in the department created the beginning of a more international outlook among Irish diplomats and foreign affairs leaders.¹²⁴ This European (though not necessarily integrationist) outlook began to emerge in the Department of External Affairs following World War II.¹²⁵ Michael Kennedy describes a "brainstorming" conference held by External Affairs on Tuesday, September 11, in 1945, which was an unprecedented event in External Affairs' short history and marked the beginning of the department's postwar expansion. Minister of External Affairs Éamon de Valera led a conference that brought together at secretary level the key actors who would oversee Ireland's slow engagement

¹²⁴ Till Geiger, "The Enthusiastic Response of a Reluctant Supporter: Ireland and the Committee for European Co-operation in Summer 1947," in *Irish Foreign Policy, 1919-1966: From Independence to Internationalism*, eds. Michael Kennedy and Joseph Morrison Skelly (Dublin, 2000), 222-246.

¹²⁵ Michael Kennedy, "The Challenge of Multilateralism: The Marshall Plan and the Expansion of the Irish Diplomatic Service," in *Ireland, Europe and the Marshall Plan*, eds. Till Geiger and Michael Kennedy (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 102.

with Europe during the late 1940s and 1950s.¹²⁶ Part of the discussion was the significant role that diplomats could play in highlighting the importance of Ireland and its struggles. J.P. Walshe, Secretary of External Affairs at the time, referred to Irish diplomats as “Apostles for this country” who should look for every opportunity, whether by talks or lectures or personal contacts, to do the work for which they have been sent abroad.¹²⁷ Although Walshe would remain secretary for a short time because of his health (he was replaced by F.H. Boland in 1946), his words reveal the desire for Irish External Affairs to increase the level of diplomatic activity abroad.¹²⁸ However, it is clear that after the war, External Affairs was not entirely sure about the place it would occupy in the new world order.¹²⁹

Two important changes in the Department of External Affairs affected Ireland’s involvement in the Marshall Plan and built upon the desire of the 1945 conference attendees to include a place for Ireland in the post World War II new world order. The first change was the appointment of F.H. Boland to Secretary of the Department of External Affairs in 1946. Walshe and Boland had extremely different

¹²⁶ Ibid., 106.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 107. Kennedy quotes Walshe from NAI DFA Secretaries’ Files P100, September 1945.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 107. Walshe, a former Jesuit Seminarian, uses Christian language to describe Ireland’s role in the international scene.

¹²⁹ Joseph Morrison Skelly, “Ireland, the Department of External Affairs, and the United Nations, 1946-55: A New Look,” *Irish Studies in International Affairs* 7 (1996): 63-80.

personalities and experience in international affairs.¹³⁰ Boland's experience in international affairs placed him in a unique position where he could utilize his diplomatic experience to earn respect for Ireland in the international community. Boland was considered an outstanding diplomat during his stint in External Affairs. It was his experience in the department's League of Nations section from 1934 to 1936 and his experience from 1936 to 1938 as head of the foreign trade section of the Department of Industry and Commerce that allowed him the knowledge and expertise to be able to establish a place for Ireland in the new economic and international order in Europe. These experiences allowed him to understand diplomacy and international commerce, which would have a profound affect on Irish foreign policy. Boland also created a more complex interface between senior and middle management in the department, expanded Ireland's overseas missions, appointed (for the first time) a diplomat at the rank of ambassador (Walshe as diplomat to the Vatican in 1946), strengthened the Irish high commissioner's office in London, and strengthened the Irish Consulate in New York in preparations for Ireland's eventual inclusion in the United Nations.¹³¹ When Ireland failed to gain admission to the United Nations in August of

¹³⁰ Michael Kennedy, "The Challenge of Multilateralism: The Marshall Plan and the Expansion of the Irish Diplomatic Service," in *Ireland, Europe and the Marshall Plan*, ed. Till Geiger and Michael Kennedy (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 108. Kennedy describes Walshe as "mercurial and overzealous" and Boland as a "resourceful technocrat whose cool and calm manner was very much a foil to Walshe's personality."

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 108-114.

1946 following a Soviet veto, the department began to reorient their foreign policy away from an Anglo-American Atlanticist focus and began to look towards Europe.¹³²

The biggest challenge for Boland and the Department of External Affairs came in 1947, when Boland led the department at Paris during the multilateral negotiations that would prepare a joint plan for the economic reconstruction of the European continent. The Paris conference would be Ireland's first involvement in postwar multilateral diplomacy and it would be one of the key events of the Marshall Plan. It also marked a turning point in Irish diplomacy. Boland and his increasingly technocratic department faced their first major challenge in the Marshall Plan—multilateral European diplomacy.¹³³

External Affairs not only played an important role in the diplomatic arena, but also had to increasingly confront issues dealing with economic matters. In 1948, a Department of External Affairs' memo revealed the urgent need to organize and expand the department's role. The memo states “any inefficiency, delay or lack of attention in dealing with ERP may have very serious results on our national economy.”¹³⁴ The Department of Finance did not value the emerging international systems of integration

¹³² Ibid., 112. Ireland finally gained admission to the United Nations in December 1955.

¹³³ Michael Kennedy, “The Challenge of Multilateralism: The Marshall Plan and the Expansion of the Irish Diplomatic Service,” in *Ireland, Europe and the Marshall Plan*, eds. Till Geiger and Michael Kennedy (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 114.

¹³⁴ National Archives Ireland (NAI), *Submission to the Government Concerning Inter-Departmental and Staff Organisation Required for the Administration for the European Recovery Plan*, Department of the Taoiseach (DT) 5337B, 1948.

and economic ties because they were wary of displacing Anglo-Irish financial trade with the sterling area with a new, possibly tenuous international economic system. However, the Department of External Affairs was cautiously looking towards Europe and utilized the negotiations within the Committee for European Economic Cooperation (CEEC) and Marshall Plan aid as a way to determine and change Ireland's economic relations with Europe, the United States, and, effectively, the United Kingdom. External Affairs' involvement in the CEEC allowed the department to take over many of the areas that the Department of Finance had previously controlled, thus affecting the future and direction of Irish economic policy.¹³⁵

The second major change in the Department of External Affairs was the appointment of Seán MacBride as minister of the department. The change in government in 1948 replaced de Valera with John A. Costello. Costello appointed MacBride as minister. MacBride was a highly regarded lawyer, onetime chief of staff of the IRA, and a "politician with some daring, though unorthodox, views on the development of Ireland's international position."¹³⁶ MacBride was influenced by the troubled relationship between Ireland and the U.K. His father was executed after his involvement in the Easter uprising of 1916. MacBride fought in the Anglo-Irish War, the guerrilla war against the British fought between 1919 and 1921. MacBride was

¹³⁵ Michael Kennedy, "The Challenge of Multilateralism: The Marshall Plan and the Expansion of the Irish Diplomatic Service," in *Ireland, Europe and the Marshall Plan*, eds. Till Geiger and Michael Kennedy (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 114.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 119.

imprisoned for IRA activities on numerous occasions. MacBride founded the republican and socialist party Clann na Poblachta in the hopes that it would replace Fianna Fail as the majority party in Ireland. He was instrumental in his involvement in the Republic of Ireland Act, which led to the official Declaration of the Republic of Ireland in 1949. This act of independence solidified Ireland's breaking away from the United Kingdom and the British Commonwealth.

Despite the fact that MacBride was politically charged, his fervor regarding the engagement of Ireland in European affairs was in tune with the rest of the Department of External Affairs. MacBride established a separate ERP Section in External Affairs in 1948 and, under MacBride, the department as a whole increased and expanded from five to seven divisions.¹³⁷ The Information Division, headed by the famous Irish government figure Conor Cruise O'Brien, was set up to influence international public opinion about the issue of partition.¹³⁸ The division would also work with the ERP and the Cultural Relations Divisions to publicize Ireland and her foreign policy abroad. The Information Division also implemented and carried out campaigns to publicize and praise the ERP (in accordance with a bilateral treaty with the United States).¹³⁹ ECA worked with the information division and officers in each country to provide funding

¹³⁷ Ibid., 119.

¹³⁸ Conor Cruise O'Brien, *Memoir: My Life and Themes* (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2000).

¹³⁹ Michael Kennedy, "The Challenge of Multilateralism: The Marshall Plan and the Expansion of the Irish Diplomatic Service," in *Ireland, Europe and the Marshall Plan*, eds. Till Geiger and Michael Kennedy (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 121.

for the creation and distribution of ERP propaganda through press releases, posters, photographs, newsreels, radio, film, and other media. MacBride utilized these media, which were intended to promote ERP, in order to highlight the issue of the partition of Northern Ireland. MacBride had experience in the creation of propaganda during his political campaigns, and he used this knowledge to manipulate ERP propaganda to draw attention to the partition of Ireland, which he believed was a political, cultural and economic blow to the Republic of Ireland.

In addition to his passionate nationalism, Seán MacBride was also a dynamic leader in the Department of External Affairs. He worked well with ECA officials in leading the way for Ireland's involvement in ERP. In a speech for the ECA Head of Mission to Ireland Joseph Carrigan, MacBride admits the obstinate and conservative nature of the Irish and, yet, reveals a pleasant working relationship with U.S. officials like Carrigan. MacBride reveals that the Irish

are a conservative people who are not in particular anxious to move with the times and that hate to be told what to do or how to do it. I, therefore, had visions of squalls perturbing the placid life of our relations with the United States of America. Far from such fears being realized I found, on the contrary, that within a short space of time I had given to Joe Carrigan full permission and encouragement to address as many public meetings and gatherings as possible.¹⁴⁰

However, MacBride was also a nationalist at heart and the issue of partition became the centerpiece in his attempt to promote ERP. In an interview to the National News

¹⁴⁰ NARA, National Archives and Records Administration of the United States II, College Park, Maryland, *Speech made by the Minister for External Affairs, Mr. Seán MacBride, S.C., T.D., at the Farewell Dinner to His Excellency Mr. Joseph Carrigan, ECA Head of Mission to Ireland, July 19, 1950*, RG 469, Box 1, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Office of European Operations—Ireland Division.

Service in 1950, MacBride begins the interview with Cold War rhetoric related to the “struggle between democratic rule, on the one hand, and political dictatorship on the other hand.”¹⁴¹ The rhetoric shifts to the discussion of democracy and the abuse of democracy because of Britain’s partition of Northern Ireland. MacBride claims that

the partition of Ireland and the occupation of a portion of Ireland by British forces against the will of the overwhelming majority of the Irish people is a flagrant violation of the basis upon which democratic rule and freedom depend. If it is permissible for Britain to claim jurisdiction over and to occupy a portion of our country, and therein to set up and support an administration against the will of the overwhelming majority of the Irish people, why does it become a heinous offence when Russia or Germany does likewise in Europe.¹⁴²

While MacBride did have some success in the European sphere, his continual attempt to make the issue of partition and the ending of partition a condition for Irish membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) became an annoyance to U.S. and European officials. This unfortunately backfired on him and the department because he overestimated Ireland’s importance to the Americans and the British. Irish membership in NATO was not a major factor in the United States and Britain’s perception of international security.¹⁴³ This exclusion of Ireland in NATO underscored

¹⁴¹ NARA, *Exclusive Interview to International news Service By Mr. Seán MacBride, S.C., T.D., Minister of External Affairs of Ireland, April 9, 1950*, RG 84, Box 1, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Dublin Embassy, Security Segregated Records, 1936-49, 1950-52.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ Michael Kennedy, “The Challenge of Multilateralism: The Marshall Plan and the Expansion of the Irish Diplomatic Service,” in *Ireland, Europe and the Marshall Plan*, eds. Till Geiger and Michael Kennedy (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 121.

the still relative unimportance of Ireland with regard to the “big players” of the United States and Britain. The Treaty of Brussels in 1948, a precursor to NATO, was established by the United Kingdom, France and the Benelux countries in order to provide a united defense against the encroachment of communism. These countries eventually included the United States because they needed its military prowess for defense. Since the establishment of NATO was both a European and, in particular, a British initiative, and therefore, the exclusion of Ireland revealed not only the peripheral importance of Ireland to the U.S. and Britain, but also the tense relationship between Britain and Ireland. Ireland’s fear was not limited to wariness of U.S. empire building, but they were also skeptical of British intentions.

The Irish government and the Department of External Affairs had to figure out a way to work with U.S. and yet, sustain independence. Some conservative leaders, like de Valera wanted political and economic isolation for Ireland—this policy contrasted with ERP goals of integration and intercontinental trade and tariff relief. Irish leaders also had to discern how to publicize the problem of partition without alienating the United States and Great Britain. The issue of Irish nationalism emerges in ERP propaganda such as the film *The Promise of Barty O’Brien*, discussed in chapter two, but leaders like MacBride also injected issue of partition in other propaganda media, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

Propaganda and Politics: Partition, Nationalism and ERP

Many ECA officials, including Hoffman, believed the United States had an important responsibility in distributing propaganda explaining its position as the leader of the free world. However, ECA officials were uncomfortable with the word propaganda. Propaganda often had (and has) a negative connotation. The U.S. Congress was particularly reluctant to use the word propaganda since it was such an effective tool of coercion used by both Mussolini and Hitler in establishing totalitarian, fascist regimes before the outbreak of World War II. This hesitance to use propaganda changed when a group of United States senators visited Europe in late 1947. They were dismayed and overwhelmed by the power of Soviet propaganda, which was seen as yet another threat in the Cold War.¹⁴⁴ U.S. officials recognized that they had to utilize their own propaganda to stymie the flood of Soviet ideology in the free world. However, in lieu of using the word “propaganda,” U.S. officials used the word “information” instead as a comfortable term for the distribution of information regarding the Marshall Plan. But the overarching purpose of ERP propaganda was to assuage European fears of economic instability by demonstrating that Europe could recover from the economic devastation of the last war by embracing democracy, capitalism, free trade, and consumerism. According to an early ERP publicity campaign, which ran the slogan “you too can be like us,” Europe’s economy would recover if it adopted U.S. ideals of

¹⁴⁴ Bernadette Whelan, “The Messages and Methods of the Marshall Plan in Ireland and Italy,” in *Ireland, Europe and the Marshall Plan*, eds. Till Geiger and Michael Kennedy (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 132.

democracy and free trade. This European adaptation of a U.S. model would counteract any leanings towards the Soviet model. At least, this was the goal of ECA officials.

The bilateral Economic Cooperation Agreement authorized the use of propaganda with the full support of each participating country's signatures. Funds for publicity and propaganda came "from the five percent cut which the ECA extracted from each country's counterpart fund along with the ECA's own budget for the purpose."¹⁴⁵ ECA worked with the information division and officers in each country to create and distribute propaganda through press releases, posters, photographs, newsreels, radio, film, and other media. European recovery propaganda was given priority in France, Italy, and the German Bizone because of the raw economic and unstable conditions after the war. Ireland was in the third tier of priority for propaganda. The CIA did not consider the problem of communism in Ireland a serious threat because they believed that Irish Catholicism would prevent infiltration by anti-religious communists.¹⁴⁶ Even though the U.S. government did not perceive Irish citizens as a threat to democracy and capitalism, nonetheless the State Department in the U.S. was concerned that the United States needed to be credited with Marshall aid as a means to demonstrate the power and preference for the right side—democracy, freedom, and capitalism. Secretary of External Affairs Boland agreed that the ERP countries should be reminded from time to time that the United States is furnishing their

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 137.

aid.¹⁴⁷

Until 1948, the State Department was in charge of the ERP and, subsequently also in charge of publicity for the program. When ECA personnel finally arrived in Dublin in 1948, they immediately began to tightly control publicity for ERP and ensure that Irish officials were executing the information in a timely and efficient manner. Since there was no official Information Division within the ECA mission in Dublin because of the low threat of communism compared to countries like Italy, William H. Taft was assigned the position of information officer until Clement R. Hoopes took over in 1950. There was a tremendous amount of pressure placed on the Irish officials and the ECA officials for Europeans to meet and fulfill their ERP obligations, particularly with regard to publicity. The ECA needed to reassure the U.S. Congress that the aid they voted for with regard to ERP funds was indeed being used in an efficient and effective way. Congress and other U.S. officials also needed reassurance that the fight for democracy, the perception of a strong, benevolent America was winning in the war against communism.¹⁴⁸

When Seán MacBride replaced Éamon de Valera as minister for External Affairs in 1948, there was a major shift in the publicity campaign for the ERP because MacBride wanted to promote the ERP and enthusiastically advocated promotion

¹⁴⁷ NARA, *Boland to Chapin, February 8, 1948*, Record Group 84, Box 16, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Dublin Embassy, Security Segregated Records, 1936-49, 1950-52.

¹⁴⁸ Bernadette Whelan, "The Messages and Methods of the Marshall Plan in Ireland and Italy," in *Ireland, Europe and the Marshall Plan*, eds. Till Geiger and Michael Kennedy (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 138.

through propaganda media. Internal documents from the Department of Foreign Affairs in Ireland in 1948 and 1949 reveal a push to publicize the ERP to the public. A letter from the ECA information officer, Taft, indicated that the publicity of the ERP was insufficient and the members of the External Affairs would “be expected to publicize the programme in other ways.”¹⁴⁹ ECA officials were worried that “as far as the public was concerned, ECA has now lost its novelty and the natural tendency from now on (as happens with all administrations) will be to carp and criticize.”¹⁵⁰ Assistant Secretary of External Affairs Con Cremin feared that ECA officials believed Ireland was not doing enough to publicize the ERP to its people, so he and MacBride launched a new, more “sophisticated, specialised, and targeted ERP information campaign.”¹⁵¹

MacBride, Cremin, and others began to focus on using new media to publicize the ERP. In the memo regarding OEEC propaganda from the Department of External Affairs in 1949, Irish officials discussed the reasons for implementing publicity. They not only wanted to highlight the ERP to the Irish, but they were also interested in using the publicity campaigns to further Ireland’s own agenda in competing with the British and focusing on the issue of partition. Britain’s production of “Getting on Together,” a publicity pamphlet, which extolled the virtues of Marshall Plan Aid created a sense of

¹⁴⁹ NAI, *ERP: Publicity Measures Under Bi-lateral Agreement*, DFA 305/57/122, 1948.

¹⁵⁰ Bernadette Whelan, “The Messages and Methods of the Marshall Plan in Ireland and Italy,” in *Ireland, Europe and the Marshall Plan*, eds. Till Geiger and Michael Kennedy (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 138.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 140. MacBride, who had just won the election against De Valera in February 1948, had run an effective and innovative election campaign. He carried this interest in publicity further in his role in External Affairs.

urgency among External Affairs' officials to create their own successful propaganda campaign. The pamphlet was widely praised by the ECA officials. The memo describes how

Britain has issued a considerable amount of publicity and was very proud of the production of "Getting on Together." The proposal (of Sir Stafford Cripps) to hold this exhibition was intended to enable Britain to "show off" to other countries. This renders it all the more important that publicity work should be undertaken without any delay.¹⁵²

The urgency for Irish officials to create a competitive piece of propaganda increased when the Council of Ministers in Paris held an exhibition of ERP publicity materials. The Council urged all ERP country members to participate in the exhibition. Not to be outdone by the British, the Department of External Affairs wanted to create a greater piece than the critically acclaimed British work of "Getting on Together." But more than anything, they also wanted to take advantage of the publicity campaign by highlighting the issue of partition. In the same memo, there is a discussion of a poster campaign not only to praise the ERP but also to show how Ireland's "economic problem is increased by the partition of the industrial portion of the country from the rest."¹⁵³ MacBride consistently emphasized the problem of partition in ERP propaganda and directly to the media. In an interview with the International News Service in 1950, MacBride stated that

¹⁵² NAI, *ERP: Publicity Measures Under Bi-lateral Agreement*, DFA 305/57/122, 1948.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

in many respects the problems affecting Ireland's economy are very different from those affecting the economy of other nations, which have participated in the Recovery Programme. We only gained control of our own affairs, after our War of Independence, in 1921. Until then, for reasons which are obvious, the development of our economy has been stunted.¹⁵⁴

Although the poster campaign would be used to compete with the productions of other countries as a sort of advertisement of "Irish imagination and art,"¹⁵⁵ the campaign would also show how the partition of Northern Ireland hindered Ireland's ability to invigorate its economy and, subsequently, the European economy. MacBride was concerned that Ireland would be overshadowed by Britain and in a memo in 1950 he argues that the Irish officials "feel that we are entitled, despite Britain's strength, diplomacy and propaganda, to the friendly help and support of the democratic nations."¹⁵⁶

The Department of the Taoiseach, the head of the Irish government led by John Costello during this period, was also concerned with how the Department of External Affairs would handle publicity. In 1949, there was a memorandum on the creation of an official news agency that would present general information about Ireland to the

¹⁵⁴ NARA, *Interview to International News Service by Mr. Seán MacBride, S.C., T.D., Minister of External Affairs of Ireland, April 9, 1950*, Record Group 469, Box 1, Record Group 469, Box 1, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Office of European Operations—Ireland Division.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ NARA, National Archives and Records Administration of the United States II, College Park, Maryland, *MacBride to Miller, December 27, 1950*, Record Group 84, Box 1, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Dublin Embassy, Security Segregated Records, 1936-49, 1950-52.

world (and vice versa) and give special attention to the issue of partition. The memorandum expressed concern that “direct propaganda would not be published by newspapers, but carefully selected news items will be published.”¹⁵⁷ The government linked the problems with the economy directly to partition. Northern Ireland contained the industrial section of the nation and the issue of partition heightened not only the nationalist urge to retain all of the counties in Ireland in the Republic, but also the impetus of the economists to retain the money-making industrial sector.

Irish and ECA officials utilized new media to publicize the ERP, including radio. In 1949, a series of talks concerning the ERP occurred on Radio Eirann, the public service broadcaster of Ireland. The talks were lead by Seán MacBride, Minister for External Affairs, J.E. Carrigan, Chief of the ECA Mission to Ireland and W.H. Taft, III, assistant to Carrigan and information officer. The talks were actually published that year and placed into circulation with a forward by John A. Costello, Taoiseach of Ireland. Costello, in his forward, discussed the importance of ERP aid despite the fact that Ireland was small and seemingly insignificant in relation to other European countries. He says

While there may be definite limits to the part Ireland can play in influencing the international economy the improvement of our own economic system is a matter largely within our power. The future prosperity of Ireland, however, is dependent to a considerable extent on the success of attempts now being made to restore the international economy. Because of our small size as a nation we may not be a determining influence in the success of these attempts, but through our

¹⁵⁷ NAI, *Organization of the Department of External Affairs*, DT 5337B, 1949.

participation in the plan for European Economic Co-operation, we are enabled to play a not inconsiderable role in assisting them.¹⁵⁸

Radio broadcasts allowed Costello, MacBride, and the ECA officials to convince the Irish that ERP aid was necessary and vital to not only the prosperity of the Irish economy, but also to the European—even world—community at large since all economies were intertwined. Costello placed extra emphasis on the plight of the Irish farmer when he discussed the problems of chronic under-investment and under-employment in Ireland. Costello said that these conditions are

the result of under-investment in the past, may have been partly caused by the fact that the Irish farmer, unaided by State assistance, has been incapable of providing himself with the capital necessary to improve substantially the productivity of his land. It is a great campaign for the elimination of these conditions of under-employment that the Irish Government needs the aid which the bold and generous policy of the American Republic has lent us.¹⁵⁹

Costello advocated for the Irish farmer because farming was the single greatest economic sector of Ireland at the time. The talks emphasized the dire situation of Ireland's economic conditions. While Carrigan and Taft discussed the importance of ERP aid in relation to Ireland's economic growth, Taft chose to emphasize how tourism and efficient industries using high-quality raw materials and craftsmanship would bring in dollars, and Carrigan emphasized how better research and education in agriculture could increase production and, therefore, economic growth in Ireland. MacBride began

¹⁵⁸ John. A. Costello, Seán MacBride, J.E. Carrigan, and W.H. Taft, *Ireland's Economy: Radio Éireann Talks on Ireland's Part in the Marshall Plan* (Dublin: The Stationary Office, 1949), 1.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

the talks by discussing Europe's economic problems because of the lack of a balance of trade.

In these talks, MacBride discusses the industrialization of Europe since 1850. He mentions the turning of the tide in industrialization between Europe and the United States. As a colony of the British, the United States provided raw materials to the industrial world and, later, became an industrial power itself. The industrialization of the United States caused this "turn of the tide" by causing a dollar deficit in Europe due to an imbalance of trade. Europeans were importing more than they were exporting and this created the imbalance. The two world wars caused further chaos in the economy of Europe because there was a shortage of supplies and raw materials in Europe.

MacBride states that some countries, including Ireland

overworked their soil and thereby reduced their productive capacity. The absence of fertilisers, and feeding stuffs, over a period of years, may take much longer to mend, in terms of livestock and crops, than a direct hit on a factory by a bomb.¹⁶⁰

MacBride stressed the importance of farming because it was such a vital aspect of the Irish economy. The exhausted soil and antiquated farming techniques placed Ireland at a disadvantage as an exporting company. The talks were broadcast to the public, but MacBride and the other Irish officials were keenly aware that they were also appealing to ECA officials in their publicity campaigns. If they could convince the ECA to invest in the farming industry, it would revitalize Ireland's economy.

In his second talk, MacBride discussed the problems of the interdependence of

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 5.

the Irish and British economies. Because Ireland belonged to the sterling area, most of its financial dealings with the outside world occurred through London. This did not present a problem until 1947 when the reserves of the sterling area began running out, and it ceased to be convertible. Because of the depreciation of the purchasing power of the pound sterling, Ireland was unable to import materials such as fertilizers, feeding stuffs, and machinery. This had a serious effect on its productive capacity in farming and, therefore, the export of foodstuffs to Europe and abroad. MacBride credits the ECA and the ERP program for providing loans to the Irish government for the purchase of these import items, which, in effect, would allow Ireland to become an exporting nation again.¹⁶¹

In his last talk before the American ECA officials' turn, MacBride placed particular emphasis on the importance of land, labor, and capital in Ireland. MacBride explained that, as a nation, Ireland's first task must be the utilization "to the full of the natural resources that God, by His providence, has placed at our disposal."¹⁶² The goal, MacBride said, is that every acre, every parcel of land in Ireland will be productive. The Minister of Agriculture, Dillon was directly responsible for the operation of land productivity in Ireland. Dillon is quoted by MacBride as stating that "our ultimate objective is to secure the rehabilitation of every acre of arable land in Ireland so as to

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 9. At this time, Ireland did not know what amount of the ECA funds would be presented in loans or grant money. MacBride points this out in his talks.

¹⁶² Ibid., 12.

ensure that the men who work upon it will get a fair return for the work they do....”¹⁶³

Although MacBride placed particular emphasis on the importance of land and the cultivation of land, he ended his portion of the talks by explaining that he did not want to deemphasize the importance of industrial development. He went on to explain that the success of an industry depends on the availability of raw materials. MacBride explained how Ireland needed to increase timber production, which would lead to building numerous other industries for the creation of artificial silk, rayon, cellulose, paper, cardboard, etc. MacBride also explained that there was a need for an increase in the production of electrical power. He says that while waterpower is being explored,

plans have been adopted, and are being carried out, for the erection of turf-burning generating stations in some of the bog areas. In that way, it will be possible to convert our turf into electric current and to bring heat and power thus generated to the points where it is required. This is by far the most efficient and economic way of utilising our turn. I have sought to give you an outline of the way in which Ireland can rehabilitate herself economically and help Europe at the same time.¹⁶⁴

The turf, or peat, historically has been an important resource in Ireland. When the peat is cultivated from the bogs and dried out, it makes an excellent source of fuel. Even though peat was used in Ireland at the time for fuel, MacBride advocated its cultivation on an industrial scale and, in particular, as a source of industrial power. This move towards electrification and mass production of peat is evident in the film *The Promise of Barty O'Brien*, where Barty is evidently fascinated by the looming power plant and the

¹⁶³ Ibid., 13.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 15.

efficiency of the machinery. Barty's ultimate goal is to leave the farmhouse and retain a job in electricity so that he can play a role in the electrification of Ireland, which will ultimately lead to the industrialization of Ireland and improve the country's economy by allowing the production of materials, not just agriculture, for European intercontinental trade. This push towards mass production was in accordance with the plans of the ECA officials and the participating European countries. The ERP countries' goal was to mass-produce needed materials for the other European countries. Unlike the Soviet Union, industrialization would exist in conjunction with free trade among ERP nations. Ireland's economy would benefit from the production of materials, but the European economy would also improve. At least, that was the goal of the European Recovery Plan.

When Clement R. Hoopes took over as information officer in 1950, he took advantage of a wider range of communication media to publicize the ERP. In Ireland, this new media would focus on the importance of the farming community since this was the strongest economic sector in Ireland at the time. The importance of farming and the increase in agriculture production with the use of new and more efficient machinery is evident in media like *The Promise of Barty O'Brien*, where Barty's father's farm is joined with another farm and the horse is replaced with a tractor. During this period, the horse was the most prevalent "machine" on the farms of Ireland so in the push to increase agricultural production, Irish leaders and ECA officials also demanded the implementation of modern, efficient farming machinery to counteract the slow, antiquated farming involving the horse and plow.

Many ECA officials believed the farming community had been neglected in publicity and information, despite the Radio Éireann talks and other public documents.¹⁶⁵ Carrigan used the radio again in 1950 to emphasize the importance of research and education in agriculture in a program titled “What Marshall Aid is Doing for the Irish Farmer.”¹⁶⁶ Also in 1950, a concerted effort was made to target Irish women and children through radio programs and art exhibitions. The publicity campaign also targeted the Irish public through concert and musical performances.

The year 1950 also marked the outbreak of the Korean War, which caused a change in the focus of ECA publicity. U.S. policy began to place the importance of military needs over European economic reconstruction. However, U.S. policy and, in particular, ECA publicity, still focused on the vulnerability of “free Europe.” In 1950, the ECA Information Division in Paris recognized the changed circumstances due to the war and communist threat to the free world. It produced an outline acknowledging the change in focus of ECA:

- (1) Marshall Aid and military assistance are good for you because they give you—as Europeans—a fighting chance to make Europe strong enough to discourage any aggression.

¹⁶⁵ Bernadette Whelan, “The Messages and Methods of the Marshall Plan in Ireland and Italy,” in *Ireland, Europe and the Marshall Plan*, eds. Till Geiger and Michael Kennedy (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 143. Attention was also given to the industrial and business community, trade unions and women and children. Since Ireland contained such a widespread farming community, ECA officials emphasized the importance of reaching out and publicizing to the farmers.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 143.

- (2) But—this strength can only be achieved through unity. As separate, rival powers, the nations of Free Europe are weak, are dangerously exposed.
- (3) Productivity must increase because more food, more machines, more of nearly everything is needed to make Europe so strong it will be unassailable.¹⁶⁷

The ECA publicity campaign continued to place a strong emphasis on productivity.

ECA officials relied on the Anglo-American Council on Productivity, the ERP

Technical Assistance Program and the ERP Productivity Program to increase European production levels. The idea was that an economically strong Europe would fend off the falling dominos of Communism. Free trade, foodstuffs, electrical power, and increase in imports and exports would create a strong economy in Europe. In other words, Europe would become like the United States—industrial, free traders, capitalistic, and free.

In this latter stage of the ERP after 1950, film became the chosen media for the dissemination of publicity and propaganda. Albert Hemsing recounts his experience in the Film Unit in the *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*. Hemsing dismisses the controversy over using propaganda to promote the ERP when he claims that

It is almost pointless to quibble about what propaganda is. In today's media-saturated environment ECA-MSA's information activities would count as an exercise in public diplomacy, a term now regularly used by

¹⁶⁷ David Ellwood, “The Marshall Plan and the Politics of Growth,” in *Shaping Postwar Europe: European Unity and Disunity, 1945-1957*, eds. Peter M. Stirk and David Willis (New York: St. Martin's, 1991), 25.

the US Information Agency to explain its mission, and even by the Department of State.¹⁶⁸

According to Hemsing, the propaganda films were merely tools of diplomacy and served to highlight the different needs of the participating countries as well as the generosity of U.S. support. Hemsing describes the films as having different purposes and serving different countries. However, despite the variety of the types of films, he divides them into seven categories: “straight forward reports on one or more ‘one country’ aid projects intended for the citizens of that nation...films reporting to all the ECA nations...European unity, free trade and international cooperation...anti-communist Cold War propaganda...productivity and technical assistance themes...mutual security, i.e. strengthening NATO’s defenses...and films for American television.”¹⁶⁹ The fifth category of productivity and technical assistance applies to films like *The Promise of Barty O’Brien*.

In his memoir, Hemsing recalls the generous funding and process of making a film through the ECA. Hemsing worked in the Information Division at the ECA’s headquarters in Europe from 1948 to 1955. The Information Division in Paris was located across from the American Embassy by a park near the Avenue des Champs Elysses. A film could be proposed in a couple of different ways. The mission chiefs from each country receiving Marshall Aid could propose a film to support a local need

¹⁶⁸ Albert Hemsing, “The Marshall Plan’s European Film Unit, 1948-1955: A Memoir and Filmography,” *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 14, no. 3 (1994): 269-297. Hemsing was one of the original members of the Marshall Plan’s European Film Unit.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 271.

or a major project. The Information Division chiefs would also propose films that might be suited for general ECA nations. In fact, the Film Unit in Paris proposed many of the films since the department was comprised of European filmmakers who had experience and expertise in making films.¹⁷⁰ Lothar Wolff, the first chief of the Film Unit, described the working philosophy of the unit in 1951:

All of them [the films] were prepared for Europeans by Europeans. European producers—numbering some of the world’s outstanding documentary specialists—were allowed by their American supervisors in ECA’s motion picture section to tell the Marshall Plan story in the style most appreciated by their fellow Europeans...if their pace seems somewhat slower than Americans are accustomed to, and if the propaganda content seems perhaps too subtle, it should be remembered that these techniques are considered most effective for transatlantic audiences.¹⁷¹

Wolff stressed that the films are not merely *American* propaganda films created for the purposes of furthering *American* needs, but they are truly for *Europeans by Europeans* as a way of promoting projects, aid, and defense. He implied that the European audience was more culturally nuanced and sensitive than an American audience. This demonstrates a European view that the Europeans are more cultured than the United States. This cultural clash between the U.S. and Europe is evident in several areas of the implementation of the ERP.

The Marshall Plan films were distributed in several different ways. Since television barely existed in Europe, non-theatrical (16mm) film became the best vehicle

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 273.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 274.

for showing the films. The United States Information Service (USIS), a division of the State Department, kept a film library at each American Embassy to allow for easy access and distribution of the films to local ECA countries. Theatrical distribution was also a popular way to distribute and screen the films since it could target larger groups of people who could view the films at their local movie house.¹⁷² When the Marshall Plan formally ended in 1952, the Mutual Security Agency (MSA) inherited the Information Division and further utilized the propaganda machine for NATO and other military purposes.¹⁷³ Film became a valuable medium through which to publicize American aid and contributions from the U.S. to ensure European security.

The propaganda films issued by the ECA demonstrate the Marshall Plan's foray into new media for the publicizing of American aid. However, *The Promise of Barty O'Brien*, like other publicity campaigns by the ECA in Europe, further demonstrates how these films were made for Europeans by Europeans. In the case of *Barty*, the film was in many ways an Irish film made by the Irish for the Irish. The film *The Promise of Barty O'Brien* and other media in Ireland were used to highlight and promote ERP. The media show how Ireland was attempting to work with the United States to promote U.S. aid and, at the same time, use the medium of propaganda to highlight the political agenda of partition and play upon Irish nationalism. Although the film was not

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 270. Hemsing describes how the Korean War had increased the sense of threat from the Soviet Union.

distributed to a wide audience, it strategically targeted Irish officials and U.S. ECA officials.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion: How Nationalism and Anti-partition
Prevented Ireland From Fully Benefiting From ERP

*The story of Irish involvement in the Marshall Plan has never been fully explained mainly because it transects the economic, social, political and diplomatic history in the period 1947-1957....*¹⁷⁴

*Ireland was neutral and partitioned when the Marshall Plan began, and it remained so when the plan ended.*¹⁷⁵

Despite the efforts of the filmmakers of *The Promise of Barty O'Brien* and Irish proponents of integration and modernization, such as O'Faolain and MacBride, Ireland failed to reap the benefits of ERP aid and fully integrate with Europe after World War II. A lack of industrialization, failing to break economic ties to the United Kingdom, and making partition a condition of membership in NATO revealed the limitations of Irish leaders' attempts to enter the international political and economic arena. The isolationist tendencies of many Irish officials reflected the conservative nature of the Irish who preferred to isolate Ireland from the rest of Europe by relying on Ireland's conservative, agricultural, and nationalistic heritage. Irish leaders grappled with their isolationist tendencies and nationalistic fervor, which often took precedence over economic and cultural integration with the European continent. The European Recovery Program provided an opportunity for Irish leaders to participate in world affairs, but the

¹⁷⁴ Bernadette Whelan, *Ireland and the Marshall Plan, 1947-57* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), 18.

¹⁷⁵ Bernadette Whelan, "Ireland, the Marshall Plan, and U.S. Cold War Concerns," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 8, no. 1 (Winter 2006): 94.

issue of partition continually alienated the superpowers. Although Irish leaders were enthusiastic about participating in integration and welcoming cultural and economic resources, Ireland ultimately failed to meet the expectations of modernization and integration inherent in both the film *the Promise of Barty O'Brien* and the ERP's goals.

While the ERP essentially ended Ireland's self-imposed isolation because of their neutrality during the war, Irish leaders were still resistant to European integration. Ireland's economic ties to Britain isolated Ireland from economic integration with Europe. The issue of partition prevented Ireland's inclusion in NATO and frustrated ECA officials' attempts to implement ERP. Although Ireland did experience a Europeanization of Irish policy in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the impediment of political and economic nationalism prevented international cooperation in these early years after the war. Ireland would eventually pursue integration with Europe in the form of the European Community and is currently a member of the European Union. The problem of nationalism and the partition of Northern Ireland prevented the kind of electrification and industrialization envisioned in *The Promise of Barty O'Brien*. Northern Ireland contained the largest industrial area of Ireland, but that connection to industrialization was lost after partition. The Department of External Affairs and individuals like F.H. Boland and Seán MacBride were pivotal in working with the ERP towards a new vision of Ireland and European cooperation, but the Department of Finance and nationalistic organizations like the Irish Workers' League compromised their efforts. In addition, Irish leaders continued to make partition a political issue when discussing and promoting ERP. Even though MacBride increased and expanded the

Department of External Affairs from five to seven divisions and created the Information Division to influence international public opinion about Ireland and the ERP, his continual attempt to make the issue of partition a condition for Irish membership in NATO led to Ireland's loss of important economic aid that would have increased electrification, agriculture production, and industrialization.

ERP officials wanted to increase manufacturing, wage labor, income levels, and occupational diversification. Irish leaders in the Department of External Affairs emphasized the importance of industrialization because the Irish economy relied heavily on agriculture, but the dysfunctional codependence of the British and Irish economy and the conservative economic and political nationalism of Irish leaders prevented economic integration with the continent and forced the continuance of economic, and conversely political, isolation from the rest of the world. The issue of partition prevented Ireland's entrance into NATO. This not only cost Ireland the remaining money for technical assistance and potential grants, it also demonstrated a failed opportunity to work within the international arena and show that a small, seemingly peripheral nation could participate in international decisions and even defense.

Irish leaders and the Department of External Affairs took advantage of the ERP publicity campaign in order to highlight the issue of partition. ERP officials pressured the Information Division to utilize funds specifically to publicize the importance of ERP and American generosity, but MacBride and other Irish officials actively used these resources to highlight the problem of partition and use the forum of newspapers, radio and film to argue against partition. Rather than pleasing the ERP

officials, this proved to be another annoyance to U.S. leaders who had invested a great deal of money in the ERP propaganda campaign. In radio broadcasts, Irish officials linked the problems of the economy directly to partition. Northern Ireland contained the industrial section of the nation and the issue of partition heightened not only the nationalist urge to retain all of the counties in Ireland in the Republic, but also the impetus of the economists to retain the money-making industrial sector. Irish leaders tried to work with the United States to promote U.S. aid and, at the same time, use the medium of propaganda to highlight the political agenda of partition and play upon Irish nationalism.

Although Irish leaders and individuals alienated U.S. officials because of the partition issue, the cultural exchange, and fear of cultural exchange, further complicated the relationship between the United States and Ireland. Many were critical of “American Exceptionalism” and the idea that American culture was far superior to European culture. Europeans often equated American culture with being materialistic, mass-produced, and without heart. While Americans valued popular culture, the Irish, particularly the artists, viewed any medium which they considered popular culture to be antithetical to high culture and against what the Irish are about—a long history of “high art” representation of Irish culture through literature: stories and poetry.

Sean O’Faolain’s writing was characteristic of a kind of ambivalence regarding the Irish high culture. While O’Faolain attacked the Irish romanticism of the country’s agrarian past and the sensibility that Ireland was distinct, special, and spiritually more exalted than the rest of the world, he ironically portrays the agrarian romanticism and

the importance of nationalism in *The Promise of Barty O'Brien*. The film publicizes the importance of ERP, technical assistance, electrification and industrialization. However, it also glorifies and romanticizes the rural Irish peasant in O'Faolain's treatment of Barty's family and their humble farm and perpetuates Irish nationalism through several references to the Easter Rebellion, which appeal to the Irish nationalist.

O'Faolain and Ireland's continued obsession with nationalism reflects the difficulty of the Irish people and Irish officials in the Department of External Affairs to work with ERP officials and European officials without making the issue of nationalism, specifically partition, a condition in negotiating international affairs. Despite Irish nationalism and resistance to outside cultural, political, and economic influence, many Irish officials actively courted external political and cultural influences, but Ireland ultimately failed to meet the expectation of modernization inherent in both the film *The Promise of Barty O'Brien* and the ERP's goals. Ireland was in a unique position during this postwar, new world order. Despite neutrality during World War II, political, and economic isolation, and antagonism towards U.S. intentions, Ireland became a part of the European Recovery Plan and actively tried to work with Europe while also attempting to figure out their identity as a post-colonial, newly-independent (albeit partitioned) nation. But the issue of extreme nationalism and partition prevented Ireland from fully benefiting from ERP in the immediate years after the war. Economic nationalism and isolation forced a mass emigration of the Irish people to the United Kingdom, the United States and elsewhere. Ireland did not actively pursue integration

until the 1960s and 1970s, when Ireland finally joined the European Community (EC) in 1973.¹⁷⁶

The Promise of Barty O'Brien provides some context for illustrating the ambiguous relationships of the U.S. and Ireland, nationalism and a move toward industrializing a country that was very much still mired in the nineteenth century. But it is this very temporal displacement, this living in the past, and this romanticizing of an agrarian lifestyle that prevented Ireland from emerging fully from isolation and impeded industrialization. After all the efforts of MacBride and the Department of External Affairs to use the ERP to confront the issue of partition, Ireland was neutral and partitioned when the Marshall Plan began, and it remained so when the plan ended.

¹⁷⁶ The European Community evolved into the European Union in 1993.

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