

Public Abstract

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The outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936 generated debate in the Irish Free State over how (or whether) the emerging nation should intervene in the conflict. Examination of the debate reveals a deeper discourse surrounding the Irish Free State's role as a small but independent power in Europe and a discussion over what kind of nation that should be. This thesis examines that debate as it took place in four newspapers. These newspapers had competing audiences and ideologies, and each had a different take on the Spanish Civil War that, in turn, shaped their perceptions of Irish national identity.