


conservative strategy, which aimed to challenge the Whig government by focusing on Ireland (195). Roszman argues that the conservatives achieved some success in associating the Whig Party with Ireland and particularly Irish agrarian crime (227).

Roszman's third argument approaches Irish agrarian violence as a means for the Irish people to maintain sovereignty from British rule and British impositions of justice. This argument is closely tied to Roszman's keen application of underutilized source material. In contrast to previous historical research on pre-Famine agrarian violence, which relies on government correspondence and Outrage Papers, *Outrage in the Age of Reform* is supported by Reports of Outrage. This form of daily correspondence between Dublin Castle and Whitehall provide Roszman with both greater detail on specific incidents of Irish agrarian violence as well as insight into correspondence among various government officials. His methodological approach to the source material through the creation of a database, which he visualizes through the inclusion of tables and figures, helps distill the information and further his argument. By drawing on the Reports of Outrage and supplementing it with additional sources such as newspapers and correspondences, Roszman argues that acts deemed by the British government as "outrages" were a means for some Irish poor "to resist the imposition of British sovereignty and to assert their own local conceptions of justice" (80). In other words, "outrages" were an alternative system of justice recognized by both the British state and Irish peasants. Another intervention this work achieves is the decision to look at instances of everyday violence as opposed to the majority of existing historiography on Irish agrarian violence, which prioritizes times of unrest. Roszman contests that this historiographical emphasis has left instances of everyday violence under-researched. He maintains that understanding everyday agrarian violence as opposed to periods of unrest can help us to better understand the lived experience of pre-Famine society.

Through *Outrage in the Age of Reform*, Roszman argues for viewing Ireland's agrarian violence as integral to influencing the British political narrative in this pre-Famine period. His multi-faceted argument is a rich and important contribution to existing scholarship. In focusing on this period, he demonstrates how "Ireland was not simply John Bull's other island, adrift across the Irish Sea" (285), and how Ireland played a prominent role in the age of reform. Ireland shaped Britain's reformist policies, influenced definitions and actions of justice, and exposed British imperial concerns.

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ERIN KATE SCHEOPNER. *'Miserable Conflict and Confusion': The Irish Question and the British National Press, 1916–1922*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2022. Pp. 288. \$143.00 (cloth).

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In *'Miserable Conflict and Confusion': The Irish Question and the British National Press, 1916–1922*, Erin Kate Scheopner analyzes how the British press reacted to the transformation of Ireland between 1916 and 1922. Whereas academics traditionally rely upon archives in order to read the shifts in Irish public opinion of the time, the minute and exhaustive analysis of eleven British newspapers belonging to four categories—"partisan" (strongly connected to a political party or a cause such as Irish nationalism or Ulster Unionism), "settlement" (supporting any resolution or compromise), "pro-government" (resolutely committed to the government and in favor of the British presence in Ireland) and "pragmatic" (uncommitted to any

political line but concerned with international public opinion)—highlights the prominent role of the press in shaping public opinion, steering governmental decisions toward the search for a solution to the “Irish Question.”

Following Easter Week 1916 (chapter 1), newspapers advocating a compromise between Ireland and Great Britain anticipated the need to hammer out an agreement with the Irish, while the partisan and pro-government press “was unsurprisingly critical of the insurrection and its potential to threaten British interests” (37). When George Lloyd convened the Irish Convention in 1917 to appease Irish public opinion, British newspapers were again split as to what the future administration of the island ought to be. On the one hand, the pro-government and settlement strands backed the Irish Convention, expressing fears of “political chaos,” while on the other hand the partisan and pragmatic press remained critical and insisted on the need to restore order. In the aftermath of Sinn Féin’s resounding victory at the December 1918 General Elections (chapter 2), the British realized that the Ireland of John Redmond had definitely ceased to exist. Within Great Britain, demands emerged for the implementation of a successful way out of the impasse. British public opinion deplored the situation in Ireland, fearing it could compromise Britain’s postwar international reputation and endanger Anglo-American relations. Similarly, the principles advocated by the Treaty of Versailles resonated in the British press and were deemed incompatible with how London administered Ireland. Pro-government and settlement newspapers urged Westminster to find a solution to the stalemate whereas partisan and pragmatic strands unconditionally supported the prior goal of the restoration of law and order.

Following the passage of the Bill for Restoration and Maintenance Order and the reports of “atrocities” committed by the Black and Tans/Auxiliaries, divisions intensified during the summer of 1920 (chapter 3), with public opinion becoming more insistent in its demand that the government grant “a dominion status for the whole of Ireland” (108). By then, the British press and public opinion had turned into “an important and necessary consideration for British decision-makers” (128). With the December 1920 Government of Ireland Act (chapter 4), the British acknowledged that Ulster Unionists would never consent to a Home Rule Ireland. At that time, a shift occurred within the press; with the exception of the partisan strand, all newspapers favored a compromise, openly questioning the “morality and effectiveness of the government’s Irish policy” (159). They nonetheless acclaimed the King’s appeal to and Lloyd George’s invitation to Irish leaders in July 1921, voicing their hopes for a reconciliation between the two islands. While retracing step by step the negotiations which would lead to the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in December 1921 (chapter 5), the majority of British newspapers supported the line of the government, resolutely condemning de Valera’s stance of refusing a dominion status for Ireland, holding its breath in fear that Dáil Éireann would not ratify the Treaty.


Far from any simplistic Irish-nationalist historiography, which tends to portray British public opinion as insensitive and detached from the situation in Ireland, Scheopner’s book demonstrates that the press did not hesitate to criticize either Lloyd George’s administration of Ireland or Carson’s unflinching refusal to sanction any constitutional settlement for a united Ireland, or indeed trenchant or idealistic republican demands either before and in the aftermath of the Anglo-Irish Treaty. Furthermore, it confirms that British society felt that the “Irish Question” posed a threat to the unity of Great Britain and the British Empire as a whole. Scheopner convincingly demonstrates that the Irish Question in 1917 and 1918 was fueled both by century-old ideologies and misconceptions and by the immediate international situation, which demanded that Ireland assist the British Empire in its hour of need.

While Scheopner’s choice to begin the study with the 1916 uprising attests the well-entrenched (and perhaps misleading) conviction that it was the rebellion which operated as a turning point in the history of Ireland, it could have been interesting (from the perspective of a First World War historian) to chart how the British press reacted to Ireland’s exemption from military service in January 1916. Interestingly, her research gives an eyesight into what

the British public really did know (or did not know) during all those years. Indeed, it is symptomatic that the rise of republicanism (chapter 1) is treated as a direct consequence of Easter Week 1916. Arguably, British national newspapers and their correspondents could not always apprehend what was being shouted on election platforms during the four by-elections in 1917 and did not have access to confidential reports drafted by RIC inspectors. Consequently, the author's research may tend to suggest that the "Irish Question" (more precisely the decline of constitutional nationalism) was being debated and played out as a national and domestic political affair of competing aspirations for Ireland, whereas it was perhaps the fear of being railed into the wartime imperial machinery and being compelled to fight which precipitated Sinn Féin's accession to political hegemony in Irish nationalist opinion.

As to the Irish War of Independence (1919–1921), Francis M. Carroll has insisted on the importance of American money in financing the conflict and forcing the British to call for a truce (Francis M. Carroll, *America and the Making of an Independent Ireland. A History*, 2021). Here Scheopner points to the weight of public opinion and the willingness to pressure Westminster to negotiate with the Irish representatives. It is interesting to notice that during the months of the Paris Peace Conference and in its aftermath, the press regularly compared the Irish with other European stateless peoples and did not hesitate to castigate the behavior of British troops in Ireland, further indication that postwar British political culture was haunted by the memory of the First World War.

Academically rigorous, non-partisan, exhaustively researched, and supported by ample evidence, Scheopner's first monograph deserves commendation for its dedication to archival research and dealing with the Irish Revolution as seen through the prism of British public opinion. At the crossroads between History and Media Studies, the book addresses crucial issues hinging on the relations between the press and politics and invites future scholars not to neglect the prominent role of the press in conflict resolution.

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MICHAEL SNAPE and STUART BELL, EDs. *British Christianity and the Second World War*. Studies in Modern British Religious History 45. The Boydell Press: Woodbridge, 2023. Pp. 242. \$99.00 (cloth).

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The history of Christianity in Britain during the First World War is an established field, but the same is not true for the Second. *British Christianity and the Second World War* goes some way to filling this gap. The discrepancy, as Michael Snape argues in his introduction, is due in large part to the assumption that Britain was a secular society by 1939. Snape provides examples of this belief, from the work of A. J. P. Taylor, Angus Calder, John Stevenson, Paul Fussell, and others. The editors aim to show that religion was still socially significant during this period, and they succeed. The book therefore makes a valuable contribution to the history of both the parts of its title.

Several contributors show the continued purchase of religion at a national level. In "The British State and Spiritual Mobilization during the Second World War," Philip Williamson looks at the work of the Religious Division of the Ministry of Information, at the empire-wide and multi-faith days of prayer that it organized, and the earnest support of the king and queen for such ventures. He argues that the use of the language of Christian civilization used by Winston Churchill and other government ministers was sincere, with the religious