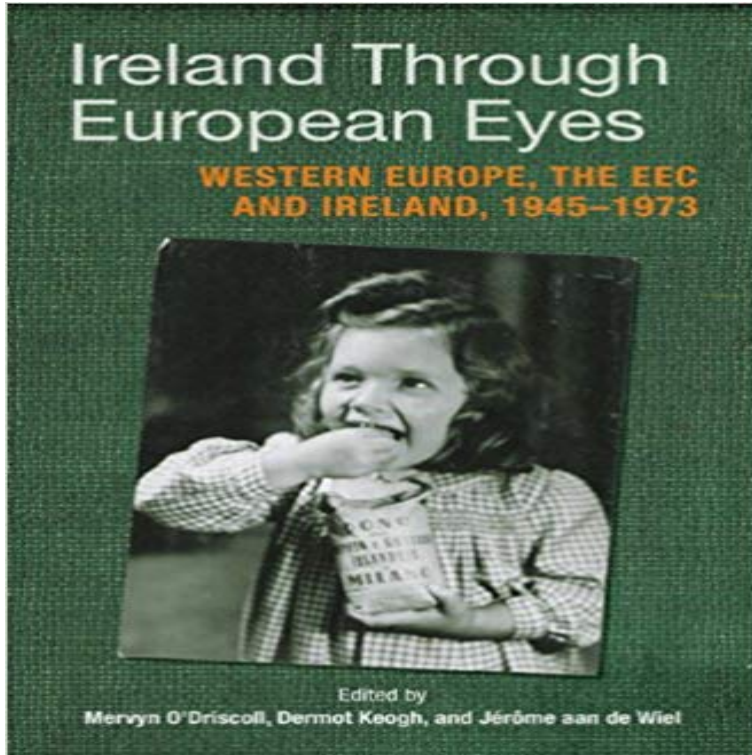


# Ireland Through European Eyes: Western Europe, the EEC and Ireland, 1945-1973



West European government sources provide a critical but sympathetic external commentary on modern Ireland. How was Ireland perceived as a nation and a state? What did European governments know, or think they knew, about Ireland and how did it factor into their calculations? The collection draws together a wide field of original sources from across Europe to illuminate this under-researched, but important area, of contemporary Irish history. It reveals how Belgian, French, Italian, Luxembourg, Dutch, and West German politicians, policymakers and commentators perceived independent Ireland from the end of the Second World War until Irish accession to the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1973. These six states initiated and sustained the integration process on the ruins of Western Europe after the Second World War. By the 1960s the EEC offered Ireland a developmental alternative to small nation state obscurity and underdevelopment. Together with the institutions of the EEC, the Six had transformed European relations and determined the fate of Ireland's application to enter the EEC after 1961. Their relationships and appraisals of Ireland mattered. The postwar analysis is placed in the context of older historical interactions. But it is in the rich and largely unexplored period from 1945 to 1973 that new and often surprising findings are revealed. Postwar Irish humanitarian relief to a ravaged continent created a long-lasting benign impression. To a degree it moderated negative European perceptions of independent Ireland in the late 1940s and 1950s as backward, isolated and removed from the European mainstream in terms of economics, society, security and foreign policy. The evolving attitudes of the Six and the EEC institutions to the Irish application for EEC membership are disclosed. Personal and cultural factors played a role as well as

political and economic calculations. This collection is based on copious untapped official sources of the Six and the EEC, in addition to Irish government archives. Its contemporary relevance promises to interest many in the field of current affairs, modern Ireland and modern Europe. Early European appraisals of Ireland as a prospective partner in the EEC is topical as today Ireland's economic and political future is rooted in the fortunes of the Euro. The study will appeal to policymakers, popular audiences and academics from many different disciplines as it is accessibly written. The issue of European relations with Ireland is a perennial one.

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