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Neither Friend nor Foe? Irish Neutrality in the Second World War

DONAL Ó DRISCEOIL

Robert Brennan, *Ireland Standing Firm: My Wartime Mission in Washington and Eamon de Valera – A Memoir*, ed. Richard H. Rupp (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2002), 182 pp., €20.00 (pb), ISBN 1900621681.

John P. Duggan, *Herr Hempel at the German Legation in Dublin, 1937–1945* (Dublin and Portland, OR: Irish Academic Press, 2003), 328 pp., €45.00 (hb), ISBN 0716527464.

Mark Hull, *Irish Secrets: German Espionage in Wartime Ireland, 1939–1945* (Dublin and Portland, OR: Irish Academic Press, 2003), 383 pp., €55.00 (hb), ISBN 0716527561.

MI5 and Ireland, 1939–1945: The Official History, ed. and introduced by Eunan O'Halpin (Dublin and Portland, OR: Irish Academic Press, 2003), 130 pp., €55.00 (hb), ISBN 0716527545.

Ireland was one of the five surviving European neutrals at the end of the Second World War; along with Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland, it had managed to remain an official non-belligerent. As Jerrold Packard points out in his comparative study *Neither Friend Nor Foe*, 'none of the five had been completely "neutral" in practice', and were all, in J. J. Lee's words, 'neutral for the power that potentially threatened them most'.[1] Ireland was a special case in a number of ways. For example, it was vulnerable to attack from either side and had to perform a particular balancing act. It was also the most defenceless of the neutrals, requiring added political and diplomatic dexterity to contribute to its survival. What is also unusual is the extent to which the pro-Allied bias of its wartime behaviour, as revealed by the historiography, is at odds with the popular perception that its policy favoured the Axis.

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1 Jerrold M. Packard, *Neither Friend Nor Foe: The European Neutrals in World War II* (New York: Macmillan, 1992), x; J. J. Lee, *Ireland, 1922–1985: Politics and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 244.

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A recently staged hit comedy musical, *Improbable Frequency*, is set in that strange other-world known as 'The Emergency', which was the vaguely bathetic Irish term for the years of the Second World War. The author, Arthur Riordan, has tapped into a view of neutral Ireland in the war years as a slightly surreal place, determinedly disengaged from the gathering global conflict, fiddling while the world burned, a hotbed of spies, eccentrics and crypto-Nazis. This characterisation has its principal roots in Allied propaganda that politicised cultural stereotypes of Irish eccentricity and mischievousness. British and American newspaper readers were frequently regaled with fabricated tales of German sailors toasting the downfall of John Bull in Kerry pubs, and U-boat commanders collecting cabbages from friendly locals in remote fishing villages and being refuelled in Irish ports.[2] In 1944, during a period of diplomatic tension between Ireland and the United States over a demand that the neutral state expel Axis diplomats, Robert Brennan, the Irish minister in Washington, was reportedly called to the State Department to explain a Reuters news agency story that 3,000 Japanese had landed in Ireland and were living in disguise! The minister's response was wearily to ask whether there was 'no limit to the credulity of Americans?'.[3] Brennan, as his memoir of his years in Washington, *Ireland Standing Firm*, makes clear, spent much of his time rebutting and correcting false and misleading stories and explaining and defending Irish neutrality. His German counterpart in Ireland, Eduard Hempel, the subject of John P. Duggan's latest book, had the rather more difficult task of explaining and defending the policies of Nazi Germany, though he was helped by a rigorous Irish censorship system that attempted to achieve a balance in war coverage and a type of moral neutrality among the Irish populace with regard to the conflict and its participants. Hempel's mission in Ireland was made even more difficult by arrival of various spies on missions that were often so bizarre that even the fertile imaginations of wartime Allied journalists would have been stretched to concoct them. They are outlined in full in Mark Hull's remarkable *Irish Secrets*, a title that could equally be applied to the fascinating account of Anglo-Irish security co-operation, *MI5 and Ireland, 1939–1945: The Official History*, edited and introduced by Eunan O'Halpin.

Irish neutrality was both symbolic and pragmatic. Symbolically, neutrality represented the young state's sovereignty and independence of action from Britain, which was a vital element of the ruling Fianna Fáil party's political project and central to the evolving ideology of southern Irish nationalism, which increasingly gave primacy to the sovereignty of the state over reunification with Northern Ireland. On a practical level, it made sense to want to avoid the horrors of war, not least because the state was virtually defenceless. Ireland, of course, had no strategic or imperialist interests under threat, while neutrality was the least divisive policy in domestic political terms, a fact underlined by the support of all the state's political parties for the policy. The war of independence and the ensuing civil war (1919–23)

2 See Donal Ó Drisceoil, *Censorship in Ireland, 1939-1945: Neutrality, Politics and Society* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996), 188–213.

3 *Irish Press*, 21 March 1944.

were still fresh in the memory, and anti-British feeling was strong at a popular level, not least in relation to the continuing British presence in Northern Ireland. There was a genuine fear that if Ireland joined the war on the British side, it could provoke a German-backed IRA revolt and perhaps another civil war. In this sense, as one Irish commentator has put it, 'Neutrality came from fear of ourselves.'[4] An alliance with Britain, standing alone up to 1941, would have left the country extremely vulnerable to German air attacks of the type that devastated Belfast, while an alliance with the Axis was never an option; not only would it have had no popular support, but it would have been strategic suicide. Hanspeter Neuhold has pointed out that the success of neutrality for a small state 'depends to a high degree on factors beyond the neutral's control'. The survival of Irish neutrality was due in large measure to luck. The invasion and occupation of the state never became a strategic imperative for either side. So long as Britain held out, Irish neutrality suited Germany, and the threat from the latter abated once the focus shifted east in 1941. The danger of Britain seizing the 'Treaty ports' that it had handed back to Irish control only in 1938 was abated by the existence of Northern Ireland (ironically, while partition was put forward as a key political rationale for neutrality, it was a central reason for the success of that policy), supplemented by a substantial level of co-operation with 'the old enemy'. Eunan O'Halpin describes this as 'a collaboration which sufficiently softened the blow of neutrality to provide the British with a tangible reason not to take by force the facilities which the Irish would not grant voluntarily'; J. J. Lee puts it rather more neatly: '[de Valera] had to ensure that Britain could not acquire by conquest much more than she gained by co-operation'.[5] Germany accepted that the close ties between Britain and Ireland on multiple levels necessitated 'a certain consideration' for Britain in Irish policy (though he never realised the full extent of that consideration), which, together with strict censorship and close attention to the public formality of neutrality, provided sufficient cover for the secret liaison.

The first historical treatment of Irish wartime policy dates back to the early 1950s, but we can only begin to speak of a historiography of Irish neutrality in a real sense from the 1970s, when researchers began utilising newly accessible British, continental European and US archives. In 1953 T. Desmond Williams published a series of articles under the title 'A Study in Neutrality' in the journal he then edited, *The Leader*.[6] They were based partly on the knowledge he acquired while editing captured German war documents and on his closeness to senior Irish diplomats and civil servants and understanding of the inner workings of the Irish Department of External Affairs, as well as on privileged access to some British files. When Williams and Kevin B. Nowlan co-edited *Ireland in the War Years and After, 1939–51* (1969), they acknowledged the continuing paucity of archival sources, but insisted

4 Garret Fitzgerald, *Irish Times*, 6 May 1995.

5 Eunan O'Halpin, 'MI5's Irish Memories: Fresh Light on the Origins and Rationale of Anglo-Irish security liaison in the Second World War', in Brian Girvin and Geoffrey Roberts, eds., *Ireland and the Second World War: Politics, Society and Remembrance* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), 134; Lee, *Ireland*, 244.

6 'A Study in Neutrality', *Leader*, 31 Jan. – 25 April 1953. Republished in *Irish Press*, July 1953.

that 'A beginning . . . must be made' in tackling this important historical episode.[7] Williams's own contribution, 'Ireland and the War', like his previous *Leader* articles, are unencumbered with footnotes, yet, while the archives – Irish and international – have widened and deepened our understanding of the nature of Irish neutrality considerably, Williams's seminal, limited work has stood the test of time remarkably well. (According to Geoffrey Roberts, he also set the template for the historical treatment of the topic, what Roberts calls 'the pragmatic, pro-neutrality narrative', of which more later.[8]) The only work of note to appear in the interim was Enno Stephan's *Spies in Ireland*, which threw the first accurate light on the propagandists' favourite aspect of wartime Ireland, the activities of German intelligence agents. Despite the usual archival handicaps, Stephan's work has also held up very well, as acknowledged by Mark Hull in *Irish Secrets* (p. 2).

Patrick Keatinge, in *The Formulation of Irish Foreign Policy* (1973)[9] and *A Place among Nations* (1978),[10] put a political scientist's shape on the study of Irish foreign policy, including its wartime neutrality. In the first scholarly survey of modern Irish history, *Ireland Since the Famine* (1971), F. S. L. Lyons memorably and influentially depicted the war years primarily in terms of Irish isolation: 'It was as if an entire people had been condemned to live in Plato's cave, backs to the fire of life . . . When after six years they emerged, dazzled, from the cave into the light of day, it was to a new and vastly different world.'[11] The extent to which new research has shifted this image is reflected in the title of the most recent collection of essays relating to the topic, *Ireland in World War Two* – the 'in' of the title a deliberate statement by the editors against the isolationist depiction: 'Ireland, in spite of its neutrality, did play a role in the global conflict and in this sense was very much "in" the Second World War and affected by it. Rather than remaining in "Plato's cave", untouched by the war, all elements of national life were shaped by it.'[12]

The journalist Joseph T. Carroll's *Ireland in the War Years 1939–1945* (1975)[13] was the first full-length account, based on the recently released British War Cabinet and associated papers, press reports and interviews with participants. Private papers were also coming on stream in this period, as well as German and US state archives. Carolle J. Carter and T. Ryle Dwyer were the first to utilise these sources and helped to broaden the scope of enquiry.[14] A landmark publication was Robert Fisk's *In Time*

7 'Preface', in Kevin B. Nowlan and T. Desmond Williams, eds., *Ireland in the War Years and After, 1939–51* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1969), ix.

8 Geoffrey Roberts, 'Three Narratives of Neutrality: Historians and Ireland's War', in Girvin and Roberts, *Ireland and the Second World War*, 167.

9 Dublin: IPA, 1973.

10 Dublin: IPA, 1978.

11 p. 551.

12 Mervyn O'Driscoll, 'Concluding Thoughts', in Dermot Keogh and Mervyn O'Driscoll, eds., *Ireland in World War Two: Neutrality and Survival* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2004), 285. Because the author of this essay is a contributor to this volume (Donal Ó Drisceoil, 'Keeping the Temperature Down: Domestic Politics in Emergency Ireland', 173–86), it is not directly reviewed here.

13 Newton Abbott, 1975.

14 Carolle J. Carter, *The Shamrock and the Swastika: German Espionage in Ireland in World War II* (Palo Alto: Pacific Books, 1977); T. Ryle Dwyer, *Irish Neutrality and the USA, 1939–47* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1977).

of War: Ireland, Ulster and the Price of Neutrality, 1939–45 (1983),[15] which utilised every source available at that time to present a lucid and gripping account of Ireland, North and South, in these years. Despite the archival avalanche in the intervening years, and the explosion, relatively speaking, in the historiography, no single book has emerged which treats the experience of the island of Ireland in the war years with such aplomb. Fisk was the first to take the issue of wartime censorship seriously, recognising its role as 'neutrality's backbone'. He made use of new material from Irish, Northern Irish and British state archives, as well as private papers and diaries and interviews with surviving key participants. His emphasis on Ulster and partition in analysing Irish policy in terms of origins, implementation and outcomes echoed that of John Bowman in *De Valera and the Ulster Question, 1917–1973* (1982).[16]

Ronan Fanning's brief survey, *Independent Ireland* (1983), emphasised the secret realities of wartime co-operation with the Allies in its treatment of the period, giving the list of co-operative measures prepared by the British dominions secretary for the cabinet and pointing to the equally close co-operation with the United States, to the extent that the Pentagon recommended that three of Ireland's highest-ranking officers be awarded the US Legion of Merit for 'exceptionally meritorious and outstanding services to the US' in 1943–5.[17] The previous year Fanning published the very useful 'Irish Neutrality – an Historical Overview' in *Irish Studies in International Affairs*,[18] a new journal that was the forum for publishing much of the ongoing research on Irish foreign affairs in general. Whereas Stephan and Carter had studied German espionage activities, the in many ways more important diplomatic dimension was not brought to light until 1985 with John P. Duggan's *Neutral Ireland and the Third Reich*,[19] based mainly on British and German sources. Duggan's recent book is largely a reworking of this publication.

Dermot Keogh utilised the gathering stream of Irish archives, combining them with work in European and American archives, to produce *Ireland and Europe 1919–1948* (1988).[20] In the same year Ryle Dwyer augmented his earlier work with *Strained Relations: Ireland at Peace and the USA at War, 1941–45*,[21] which utilised newly available US intelligence files, as well as the papers of David Gray, US Minister in wartime Ireland, to enhance considerably our understanding of this crucial dimension. Keogh's *Twentieth Century Ireland: Nation and State* (1994)[22] incorporated much of the new research facilitated by the increasing availability of wartime material in the Irish Military Archives, and the National Archives of Ireland under the National Archives Act, 1988, which introduced a thirty-year rule with regard to government files. Among the monographs to emerge from this new Irish material was my own

15 London: Deutsh, 1983.
16 Oxford: Clarendon, 1982.
17 Ronan Fanning, *Independent Ireland* (Dublin: Helicon Books, 1983), 124–5.
18 Vol. 1, no. 3, 1982.
19 Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1985.
20 Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1988.
21 Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1988.
22 Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1994.

Censorship in Ireland, 1939–1945: Neutrality, Politics and Society (1996).[23] J. J. Lee's *Ireland 1912–85: Politics and Society* (1989)[24] was too early to benefit from much of this material, but this did not prevent him from presenting a brilliantly penetrating analysis of Irish policy in its domestic political context, almost all of which stands up in the light of subsequent archival knowledge. Trevor Salmon, a political scientist, brought a whiff of controversy to the issue with his polemical *Unneutral Ireland: An Ambivalent and Unique Security Policy* (1989),[25] in which he challenged Ireland's claim to neutrality in the war years and after, and also rejected the consensual view, encapsulated by Fanning and Keatinge, that Irish nationalism before and the Irish state after 1922 had a 'neutral tradition' which provided the foundations for its wartime policy. Salmon's thesis was founded on an alternative interpretation and framing of existing knowledge, rather than new sources. For Salmon, the partiality shown by the extensive co-operation with the Allies, the 'asymmetrical nature' of military preparations and expectations, the lack of 'due diligence' with regard to defence and the permitted contribution by the state's citizens to the Allied war effort meant that Ireland should be more accurately described as a non-belligerent rather than a neutral. The main work on the crucial area of intelligence was being undertaken by Eunan O'Halpin, whose work is presented in *Defending Ireland: The Irish State and its Enemies Since 1922* (1999).[26] Richard Doherty led the way in the study of the direct military involvement of Irish people in the war,[27] while the Irish military dimension was well treated by the contributors to a special edition on the Emergency of the military history journal, *The Irish Sword*, and in John P. Duggan's 1991 history of the Irish army.[28]

A perceived lacuna in the historiography – the relative neglect of the experiences of Irish citizens who contributed to the Allied war effort (up to 200,000 in all) through military service or war work in Britain led to establishment in 1995 of the Volunteers Project, under Brian Girvin and Geoffrey Roberts. *Ireland and the Second World War: Politics, Society and Remembrance*[29] arose from the project, and although its focus is broader than the volunteers, that topic forms the core of the book. The publication is also notable for the essay by Geoffrey Roberts, 'Three Narratives of Neutrality: Historians and Ireland's War', which challenges the primary approach of the existing historiography of Irish wartime neutrality, which could be summed up by Dermot Keogh's answer to the question put by the *Irish Times* in 1994, 'Were we

23 Cork: Cork University Press, 1996.

24 Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

25 Oxford: Clarendon, 1989.

26 See also, for example, Eunan O'Halpin, 'Army, Politics and Society in Independent Ireland, 1923–1945', in T. G. Fraser and Keith Jeffreys, eds., *Men, Women and War: Historical Studies* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1993); 'Intelligence and Security in Ireland, 1922–45', *Intelligence and National Security*, 5, 1 (1990), 50–83.

27 Richard Doherty, *Irish Generals: Irish Generals in the British Army in the Second World War* (Belfast: Appletree Press, 1993), *Irish Men and Women in the Second World War* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999), and *Irish Volunteers in the Second World War* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002).

28 *The Irish Sword*, 19, 75/76 (1993–4), and John P. Duggan, *A History of the Irish Army* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1991).

29 Girvin and Roberts, *Ireland and the Second World War.*

right to stay neutral?': 'Ireland was neutral during the Second World War. This is a fact. What ought or might have been is secondary to the task of examining that complex reality . . . The question would be much better phrased as "Why and how was Ireland neutral during the war?"'[30] Roberts argues that the pro-Allied bias of Irish neutrality has been exaggerated and that de Valera's '"constructive ambiguity" was not only a matter of policy but of principles and values as well'.[31] He puts forward an anti-neutrality narrative, based on a counter-factual 'what might have been', and even 'what should have been', scenario. The most recent publication on the issue is very much in the 'why and how?' vein, and greatly adds to our understanding of planning and preparation, Irish diplomacy, and the importance of the 'home front'.[32]

Of the new books under review, only Hull's and O'Halpin's add to our knowledge. Brennan's memoir was previously published in the *Irish Press* in 1958, though its republication in this format is welcome and useful. The publication of Duggan's book is less understandable. His *Neutral Ireland and the Third Reich* (1985)[33] was a reworked and expanded version of his D. Litt. thesis on Eduard Hempel and the German legation. In the absence of substantial Irish archives, it made good use of available German and British sources. *Herr Hempel at the German Legation, 1937–1945* is another reworking of the original thesis, which differs only superficially from the 1985 book. It takes account of neither the Irish material that has been released since the 1980s nor any of the published work based on that material; he does gratuitously add five or six titles to his bibliography, which remains effectively that of the 1985 book, but makes no use of them in the text. In light of this, the claim in the blurb that the book throws 'valuable new light on Ireland's neutrality in World War II' is obvious nonsense. Of course, the original thesis and book did throw valuable light, and Duggan deserves our thanks for his work on Hempel and his contribution to our understanding of Irish–German relations and Irish neutrality. The pity is that the book was not updated, rather than retitled and partially rewritten to no great effect. Proper citations are at least reintroduced, having been presumably removed at the behest of the publishers in the earlier publication. Duggan's prose is always a distraction, however, with nuggets such as 'A subversionary streak in a mission has a chameleon quality which allows myopia' (p. 231) always keeping the reader alert. Speaking of myopia, one wonders again if Duggan has allowed his obvious regard and sympathy for his subject (the book is dedicated to Hempel's widow) to obscure him from the reality that Hempel was, however upstanding, professional and so on, a cog, however small, in the murder machine that was the Third Reich.

Duggan bases his portrait of this conservative, old-school career diplomat, whose membership of the Nazi party was nominal and careerist rather than ideological, mainly on the minister's reports to Berlin. As mentioned, he presents us with a

30 *Irish Times*, 3 June 1994.

31 Girvin and Roberts, *Ireland and the Second World War*, 169.

32 Keogh and O'Driscoll, *Ireland in World War Two*. As only an overview of the historiography is sketched here, I would refer readers to the references and bibliography in this volume for the most comprehensive, up-to-date listings.

33 Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1985.

decent man caught between a rock and a hard place, attempting to implement Nazi foreign policy while observing the diplomatic protocols required by Irish neutrality, at a time when German diplomacy lacked unity and was subject to interference from several competing, often maverick, agencies. He strove for objectivity in his reporting and clung, as far as he could, to the traditional trappings of protocol in his diplomatic work, something that endeared him to de Valera and obviously endears him to Duggan also. Further, 'Hempel's appearance of correctness was an essential component in keeping up the facade of Irish neutrality, which paradoxically, permitted "a certain consideration for Britain"' (p. 230). Hempel was 'sometimes pushed, sometimes pulled, sometimes inclined to go, into the grey area of spying and subversion' (p. xiii).

Mark Hull makes it clear that Hempel was a disappointment to the various German intelligence agencies. *Irish Secrets* is the result of extensive work in the archives by a historian with a crucial qualification: a background in military intelligence. His grasp of the area gives the book a reassuringly authoritative feel, something that is missing from Carter's *The Shamrock and the Swastika*, one of the previous treatments of this topic. As well as having a surer grasp of the topic, Hull has the advantage of much new intelligence material, particularly from the Irish Military Archives and the Public Record Office in London. The book has a chronological structure. It begins with a look at the structure of German intelligence, the diplomatic and political ties between Ireland and Germany in the prewar period, prewar German intelligence contacts with Ireland, and the various potential fifth-columnists in the country. The core of the book is his detailed treatment of German agent activities during the war, and Irish and British counter-intelligence activities. He also looks at the Irish in Germany, and tells the story of German agents in custody and their continuing threat to Irish security. Ultimately, the German intelligence effort in Ireland was a systemic and organisational failure, often bordering on farce: 'Hazy objectives, inter-agency rivalry, poor personnel screening, and dubious leadership, combined with an efficient Irish and British counter-intelligence system, proved to be hurdles that were simply too high to be overcome by German Intelligence' (p. 278).

The issue of German espionage was the one, according to the memoir of Robert Brennan, Irish minister in Washington, that was 'doing us most damage in the US' (p. 42). Countering the steady stream of hostile propaganda about Irish neutrality in the US press, particularly the notion that Ireland was a hotbed of German espionage and a key support for German U-boats in their attacks on British and US shipping in the Atlantic, was one of his main tasks. Brennan believed that the stories emanated from 'one source in Dublin' (the US legation). He gave press interviews, wrote to the papers and called on editors; while he was in many ways fighting a losing battle, he felt he succeeded at least in 'modifying the attitude of most of the Washington and New York dailies' (p. 37). He had built up an impressive network of friendly contacts not only in the media, but also among the American church, political and business elites, with a particular focus on the Irish–US connection, which were vital to his task of defending and explaining the Irish position to the US government, press and public. Prior to official US entry to the war in December 1941, he made

persistent but futile attempts to secure US arms, munitions and ships. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, Brennan's position became more difficult, not least because, as he notes, 'whenever America is at war, the average citizen of the US takes the view that it is a crusade. They are fighting not for any territorial aggrandisement or colonialism. They are simply fighting for right and against wrong. They cannot understand why every right-thinking people is not with them' (p. 60). The so-called 'American Note' of February 1944, demanding the expulsion from Ireland of Axis diplomats because they represented a potential security threat, was delivered in this general propagandist context. As is well known now, and was well known to the US and British authorities at the time, nothing was leaving the country via this source that was not monitored by the British and Irish intelligence services. Indeed, as *MI5 and Ireland: The Official History* makes clear, the decodes of German intelligence and diplomatic traffic from Ireland were factors in determining British policy and actions. This publication reproduces the full text of a secret document prepared at the end of the war, detailing the history of British Intelligence's Irish section, which was made available to researchers in 1999. It is edited by Eunan O'Halpin, the leading historian of Irish defence and security policy, who provides a succinct introduction, explanatory comments and references to relevant primary and secondary sources.

'The Dublin link', as it is referred to, began following the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1938, which involved the withdrawal of British garrisons from the Treaty ports of Queenstown (Cobh) and Berehaven in Cork and Lough Swilly in Donegal. That agreement made Irish wartime neutrality a practical possibility. On announcing Irish neutrality, de Valera had added the rider that Ireland would not be allowed to be used as a base for attack against the United Kingdom, which provided the political justification for the wartime co-operation. Pragmatic justification was rooted in Irish dependence on the British defence shield in the absence of sufficient Irish fire-power. The document states that Irish neutrality was 'friendly', and it was friendly principally because it was 'defenceless' (pp. 30–1). Owing to Ireland's location, Britain was bound to include it under its defensive umbrella in its own interest, to prevent a German invasion or attack through the back door. (The British military estimated that the Irish army could offer meaningful resistance to a German invasion for a maximum of ten days.) The secret reality of Anglo-Irish security and intelligence co-operation is now being fully appreciated; Hull's book is a further contribution to the picture in this regard. If de Valera's condolence visit to Hempel on the death of Hitler (see Duggan, *Hempel*, pp. 218–20) epitomises the public facade of Irish neutrality, the role of the Irish intelligence services in the cause of the Allied war effort (in a war where intelligence was far more crucial than ever before) was a central component of its actual partiality. The MI5 document makes it clear that, on balance, 'Eire neutral was of more value to the British war effort than Eire belligerent would have been'. A belligerent Ireland would, for example, have conscripted the hundreds of thousands who, instead, helped maintain the British war economy. It would also have been a drain on British resources in terms of defence. The war of words between the 'old enemies', played out on the wartime and immediate postwar political and media stages, was essentially a phoney war.