



# **Forgotten Patriot: Douglas Hyde and the Foundation of the Irish Presidency**

*Brian Murphy*

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It had been a busy few days for Adolf Hitler, but Douglas Hyde had not slipped his mind ...

On 25 June 1938, Douglas Hyde became the first President of Ireland. His values stood in stark contrast to those of the continental dictator. As a Protestant nationalist and a leading figure in the language revival, he made the office an inclusive one and determined to be a president for all the people of Ireland. He also played a highly significant, but previously unheralded, role in the state's policy of neutrality during the Second World War. Hitler's fleeting fixation with Hyde was that the new presidency significantly diluted Ireland's bonds with the British Empire.

The accepted wisdom is that Hyde's transition to the presidency was a seamless process, but new research shows it only came about on foot of a late political compromise. He may have been a compromise candidate, but with his non-partisan background, he was also an inspired choice. *Forgotten Patriot* shows Hyde's considerable impact on the development and perception of the office of President of Ireland.



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