

THE IRISH TIMES

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LETTERS to the EDITOR

WORKING WIDOWS

Sir,—I see T.D.s and Senators are to get big increases in their pay, but a widow who goes back to the Civil Service and has many children has to work for the pay of a single man.

A widower has a married man's salary—why the difference? The widow has to look after her children before she goes to work, as she cannot afford to pay anyone. This country is very badly divided.

—Yours, etc.,

MARY MOLLOY

30 Willowbank,
Rathfarnham 14.

THE PRESIDENCY

Sir,—The Presidency is not a sub-department of the Government. It is a separate office, and may act in defence of the public against an encroaching majority party. The Constitution provides that the President may refuse to sign a Bill which is thought to be unconstitutional or contrary to the public interest.

Our first President, Douglas Hyde, did this on one occasion; but since then the party system has taken over, the Presidency has been used as a comfortable retirement place for elderly party leaders, and this important constitutional safeguard has become a dead letter.

No Fianna Fail President has ever refused to sign a bill for a Fianna Fail Government. Equally, no Fine Gael President is likely to act against a Fine Gael (or Coalition) Government.

There is no hope now of relaxing the grip of the party system, but it can be turned to public advantage. If a Fianna Fail Government were still in power I should advise voting for the Fine Gael Presidential candidate, because, in some crucial case, his party interest might reinforce his sense of public duty and impel him to refuse his consent to a wrongful Bill.

Since the Coalition is in power, we should vote for the Fianna Fail candidate, for exactly the same reason. This is quite irrespective of the personal merits of either candidate.—Yours, etc.,

G. F. DALTON

1 Woodlawn Park,
Mounttown,
Dun Laoghaire.

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Sir,—Mr. O Gláisné's laboured "analysis" (May 18th) of my letter of May 14th adds little of moment to the discussion.

We have made our points (twice over) and must lie on them. Hence, further reiteration may only provoke the editor into an inhibiting curtailment of space.

May I conclude with. —

*Should our new President fail
To communicate through the
traditional medium of the*

true Gael.
The interpreter by his side
Will very likely be the ghost of
Douglas Hyde.
—Yours, etc.,
JOHN MANNING.
35 Wellington Place,
Dublin 4.

THE NEW R.T.E. AUTHORITY

Sir,—I am sorry Mr. Hanna (May 19th) found my letter "miserable and carping." This was not my intention. I believe that it is important that people both North and South should understand one another. Through the generosity of *The Irish Times* I have attempted to put forward a Northern view of various topics.

Mr. Hanna's letter is a good example of North-South misunderstanding, for I do not understand how he could possibly infer from my letter that "(a) John Robb is not a moderate and (b) all 'reasonable' and 'moderate Northern Protestants' must be Unionists." First the moderates Basil Molvor, David Bates and Vivian Simpson are not all Unionists. One is in Alliance and the others in N.I.L.P. Second, I did not discuss whether Dr. Robb is a moderate or not.

The question I posed was: "Can a Northern Protestant who supports a United Ireland be expected to speak for the vast majority of Protestants who do not want a United Ireland?"

Dr. Robb can, of course, speak for a Northern Protestant i.e., himself. However, as he differs greatly from the majority of Northern Protestants on the very existence of the Northern State, it is possible that his views would differ significantly from those held by the vast majority of the Northern Protestants.

Mr. Hanna's mention of my inaccurate forecast of the Border Poll brings to mind a good example of what I mean. On the Border Poll most political commentators agreed that the Northern Protestants were very much in favour of the Border Poll. However, Dr. Robb was not in favour of the Border Poll, which he said was "an insult to any intelligent Ulsterman;" he even encouraged people to abstain in the poll.

On this important issue the only Northern Protestant on the R.T.E. authority disagreed with the opinion of the vast majority of Northern Protestants.—Yours, etc.,

A KINGSTON

10 Bladon Drive,
Belfast BT9 5JL.

THE BUDGET

Sir,—The bald Budget announcement of increased postage and telephone charges contrasts sharply with the difficulties experienced by the ordinary firm in obtaining sanction for price increases.

The reason, of course, is that the ordinary firm must submit its case to the National Prices Commission while the Post Office is subject to no such check. The Government considers that the mere statement—"the costs of these highly labour-intensive services have been rising steadily"—is sufficient justification to raise its prices by an amount decided by itself. If no more justification than that is needed, that equally labour-intensive service, C.I.E., should immediately raise its fares to whatever level it sees fit.

The Post Office ought to submit its proposals to the National Prices Commission like any other undertaking. At first sight, the ever-worsening telephone service would seem to demand a decrease in charges. Furthermore, it is pertinent to ask what cost-control measures are in operation now and what measures are proposed to contain these "steadily rising costs"?

An index of the Government's commitment to price control is its willingness to accept the discipline it imposes on others. The appearance of the Post Office before the National Prices Commission would be the best answer to those who suspect that this Government is soft on price control.—Yours, etc.,

BRENDAN BURKE

30 Millview Lawns,
Malahide.

ROGER CASEMENT

Sir,—Of course Professor Lyons (May 12th) is right in saying that whether Roger Casement was a homosexual or not, it does not affect his services to humanity. It is also true that many fine men, of

good conscience and integrity, have been homosexual.

But I do not agree with the professor's implication that too much fuss is being made about the matter. If the Black Diaries are authentic, then Casement was no "ordinary" homosexual but a man who was totally sexually obsessed in that way, almost to the verge of insanity. Judging by the extracts from the 1911 diary (as given by H. M. Hyde in the 1966 paperback of Casement's trial) his whole mind, nearly every waking minute, dwelt on the one subject and he wrote about that subject in the most crude detail day after day. One wonders how he could have ever got any work done at all! One wonders how he was not known far and wide as "an unsavoury character". One wonders why he did not live in fear of blackmail. Why indeed, was he not blackmailed? A tart in Piccadilly, in the old days, must have been less obvious in her business than, according to these extracts, he must have been. One wonders also how a well-educated literate man could have written such absurdities as (and this is a complete sentence): "Running and straight splendid legs and twirled round once and clasped a man round waist, holding him lovingly thus." And: "Some soldiers and one brown one of 9th gave cigarettes to." Unfortunately none of the other garbled sentences are quotable.

It is interesting to note that it is the 1911 diary, admittedly the most obscene, that Mr. Hyde chose to give extracts from, and it is of the 1911 diary that Dr. Mackey wrote: "Even a superficial scrutiny of the material forces one to the conclusion that the person responsible for the alterations had super-saturated the text with indecencies. To the medical mind, at any rate, it would be fantastic to suppose that any human being except a criminal lunatic would attempt the enormities mentioned therein, let alone record them. There is every reason to believe that this series of entries was constructed by the counterfeiter from the diarist's genuine diary and many notebooks and memorandum books dealing with the period, which gave the

correct time and place; and that the whole was then transcribed on to a new diary-book interior specially printed for enclosing in the old cover. Many months of this diary are completely blank."

I do not follow the reasoning of Brian Inglis (May 15th) when, replying to Roger McHugh (May 14th), he says that an interpolation could only be inserted at the end of a diary entry and not in the middle. If I were to write in the middle of a diary entry "I drove into the West End and spent more money than I should", it would certainly be hard to interpolate anything. Suppose, however, I put a full stop after West End and then started a new paragraph "I spent more money than I should but it was worth it", it would be child's play to insert some words implying that I had spent my money in some abominable pursuit. And diaries can have paragraphs just as letters do.

Mr. David Rudkin, in the current issue of *Hibernia*, says that he and Mr. Inglis "seem to be agreed that, short of independent forensic evidence one way or the other, the argument from psychology is our only one." Well, that's a pretty poor horse to ride, I must say.

Truth is the daughter of Time, it is said; a poor consolation to those who will be dead when she arrives. Could *The Irish Times* not accept Mr. Inglis's suggestion and, perhaps joined with others, try to promote a full, impartial and scientific examination of the diaries?

Should the worst come to the worst, which I cannot bring myself to believe for a moment, Roger Casement would still not be a wicked man, he would have been a mentally sick man.

But how very, very strange that would be, considering not a soul in "normal" circles suspected it until the so fortunate (for the British Home Office) discovery of the diaries at just the right time to help hang him. — Yours, etc.,

HAZEL DUNNE.

11 Milton Road,
London N.W.7.

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Sir,—Your correspondents, without exception, have latched on to just one aspect of the Casement saga, the homosexuality, real or spurious according to which side you believe.

But Casement, lest we forget, was hanged for treason: the question of his sexual *mores* could have only marginally helped him to the quicklime; its real value was in banking the fires of Irish indignation because of the built-in public horror of the Irish of mention of sex outside, possibly, the confessional. There has admittedly been a change in recent years but it does not, if your correspondents are to be relied on, extend to homosexuality. There can be no other reason why they put up such a desperate defence of Casement—the normal or, rather, the asexual.

What on earth does it matter? But then, I suppose, it does. I remember the late Frank Gallagher, editor of the *Irish Press*, saying apropos a T.D. who had his pocket picked by one of the "gels" (and who foolishly complained to the Gardai and lost his seat): "One thing the Irish people will not tolerate is sexual irregularity in a leader." Frank eyed me rather coldly when I nodded agreement remarking that the people would rightly expect a leader to be on the top of his form at all times.

When railing against British perfidy *vis-à-vis* Casement (and Watergate had nothing on them!) the Irish should remember that quicklime is not just a British set-piece. Who, as Joyce demanded, flung quicklime in Parnell's eye? Parnell was no homo, but, it seems to me, homo—or hetero—you can't win with the Irish. Years ago, a Jesuit father in Farm Street with whom I was discussing some piece of sexual athletics (happy days!) complained that moral education was such in Ireland that the people were obsessed with sex and seemed to think that the only sins were sexual sins.

There must be a thought there for all those good Irish farmers who permit their brothers and sisters to shoulder their Income Tax for them. And for the politi-

cians of all parties who haven't the guts to change this real public wickedness.

Here indeed is a job for your correspondent, Frank Corrigan of Rathmines, who wrote to you: "I have worked over the years with a number of homosexuals of varying degrees . . ."

If he would get even homosexuals among farmers to pay their just taxes he would be doing something constructive—and let Roger Casement rest in peace. — Yours, etc.,

DERMOT McEVROY.

17 Avoca Road,
Tooting,
London, S.W.17.

OCEANOGRAPHY

Sir,—Your English contemporary the *Sunday Telegraph* reports today (May 20th) that a fishery research vessel from Lowestoft,

England, has experimented with deep-trawling equipment and discovered a potentially very rich fishing ground "off north-west Ireland".

This news makes one feel how deplorable it is that we have not the facilities to discover such possibilities within a few miles of our own shores. It also sharply raises the whole question of the lack of any detailed and coordinated programme for oceanographic and sea-fishery research here — the two research areas, as has been abundantly demonstrated by Professor Brian Bury of U.C.G., being inter-dependent.

The Maritime Institute of Ireland recently sent a resolution to all government departments urging support for a serious policy of oceanographic research, and the same body has in the past suggested the establishment of a Department of Marine to coordinate and stimulate the various scanty efforts towards national maritime progress at present being carried on by several separate departments, boards and organizations. Not everybody has agreed with the suggestion, but every interested comment on it has included approval for some kind of central maritime policy planning.

The importance of Iceland's dispute with Britain and West Germany lies less in the drama of trawl-cutting, gunboats and frigates and more in the question of preservation and rational exploitation of the world's resources of fish, and the Icelandic Government surely deserves credit for having posed this.

We are now in the E.E.C., and in ten years the trawlers of our partners will be fishing right into our estuaries, unless we have taken strong measures, at all levels open to us, to persuade them of the urgent need for a coordinated policy for the preservation and exploitation of fishing grounds off the coasts of Western Europe, a policy based on the long-term food needs of the world rather than on the immediate prospects of profit for companies owning fishing vessels.

Such a policy cannot be evolved without a large investment in basic oceanographic research which, it is calculated, could bring in from £6

to £10 for each £1 invested).

We are surely not going to leave that also to foreigners in ten years' time? If we do, future Irish fishermen may well find themselves confronted, not with the great opportunities which wise foresight and planning would suggest, but with the conditions of crisis and rapid decline predicted by Icelandic fishermen if they lose their dispute with Britain and Germany, and put forward by them in arguments to justify their attempted enforcement of a 50-mile fishery limit.—Yours, etc.,

J. de COURCY IRELAND.

Caprera
Grosvenor Tce.,
Dalkey.

THE BUSH REBELS

Sir,—In your issue of May 19th, you carry a review by Dervla Murphy of a recent book, "The Bush Rebels" by Barbara Cornwall. Now Miss Cornwall's book represents a not over-successful but nonetheless a serious attempt by a serious person to encounter the dynamic of a popular insurgency presently occurring in Africa. In view of this I think perhaps a few comments on Miss Murphy's approach to the review are called for.

Approximately the first one-third of her review is given to exposition of a personal theory on the function of "Tuesday's nice fresh sweat". Next we deal with another personal theory, this time concerning Miss Cornwall's capacity for understanding, "at a deep level . . . those courageous . . . men of the African jungle", this theory being "hinted at by her (Miss Cornwall's) photograph on the dustjacket". These offerings are followed by some opinions on the non-relationship between Provos and Portuguese-African guerillas before we eventually reach our first comment on "The Bush Rebels".

This concerns the "grim fact that the West is to blame" for there being "no alternative to warfare in Portuguese Africa". If the West did not supply arms to Portugal, via NATO, then Portugal "could soon have been forced to the conference table". The second substantive point concerns the fact that "a revolutionary does not question the source of his arms" and since the West would not supply PAIGC with material "the East and certain others were the only ones who helped". That this Eastern aid to "those courageous, selfless and courteous men . . . the true heroes of Portuguese Africa" has "been pretty effective" stimulates Miss Murphy to ponder fearfully on "how readily the Easterners will withdraw, when their presence is no longer required" because (?) the PAIGC "revolutionary methods bear all the hallmarks of unstinted outside advice and organisation".

Now, no attempt is made to indicate why the West, at least

objectively supports Portugal in this struggle. Yet if this point is not to be discussed, then why is it raised? A second feature here is Miss Murphy's touching view of the "Eastern" spectre; she concedes the victory of PAIGC over NATO-provisioned Portugal and yet fears that these "true heroes" will in some way be the worse off for "unstinted outside advice and organisation". In previous contexts Miss Murphy has made rather similar noises about the evils of the East but not yet to my knowledge has she explained the precise nature of this "yellow fire" nor why she believes it to exist. Again, if she wishes to raise such an issue I feel we might reasonably expect some discussion on it.

And so, having indulged in personal trivia for half the review and having raised, but failed to discuss, two points which are, in any event, essentially external to the life and times of a bush rebel, Miss Murphy concludes with some patronising remarks about "hope for the independent negro countries of the future", given certain provisos and "despite President Amin and his like".

In short, the triviality of her review is manifest. The purpose of this letter is to request Miss Murphy to re-review the book in question, this time treating it in a serious manner by making a definite attempt to come to grips with the philosophy which informs FRELIMO and PAIGC insurgencies, and with which Miss Cornwall is concerned. And, if in generous mood, she might also discuss the points mentioned above, since it was she who raised them initially.

—Yours, etc.,

HUGH NEARY, Sch.,
3.32 Trinity College,
Dublin, 2.

ANTI-APARTHEID MOVEMENT

Sir,—If Mr. R. P. Edwards (May 19th) failed to detect a note of irony in my suggestion that he list all African-owned corporations in Lesotho and Botswana he is even less sensitive than I thought.

His suggestion that, as secretary of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, it is not my concern to ask ques-

tions is monstrous. I am perfectly entitled to elicit information and to establish motive. Since its foundation this movement has played its part in an international struggle against a regime, dominated by former Nazis, which has pursued a most cruel racialist programme against the vast majority of the citizens it purports to represent. Throughout the years our policy has been under constant attack through Mr. Edwards' voluminous contribution to your correspondence columns. His motives, at least, are clear. And why should we complain? Every time he and his ilk take pen in hand it amounts to a most effective fund-raising and recruitment drive on behalf of the Anti-Apartheid Movement.

Our members frequently have the privilege of directly associating with men and women who have undergone unspeakable suffering because of apartheid. It is remarkable how invariably one is impressed by the fact that such experiences have totally failed to diminish their dignity as human beings, nor have they even embittered them against those who tried to humiliate them. Their attitude is in contrast to Mr. Edwards' petty and oh so repetitive jeers from the sideline. — Yours, etc.,

BILL MEEK,

Hon. Secretary.

The Anti-Apartheid Movement,
173 Barton Road East,
Dundrum,
Dublin 14.

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Sir,—Running through the writings of your correspondent, Brian J. Goggin (May 17th) is the assumption that racial factors explain the traditional supremacy of peoples who are predominantly white. Quite apart from the lack of evidence linking racial classification and civilised attainment it should be noted that your correspondent's view is not shared by all such peoples. In fact it is confined largely to those cultures influenced by the vogue of the private study of scripture introduced by the Reformation.

In his "Study of History" Arnold Toynbee draws attention to the picture in the Old Testament from Joshua to the Books of Kings. These books describe the struggle of the chosen people to conquer Palestine, destroying or subjugating the indigenous peoples in the process. Settlers overseas from Europe found natives who usually differed in race and in religion and way of life. Such of those settlers who were steeped in the Old Testament, particularly the books above-mentioned, rapidly identified the natives with the indigenous Palestinians and themselves with the chosen people and proceeded to exterminate or subjugate the natives. One outcome was that the natives were seen as essentially inferior if not evil and because of the difference of race segregation on the basis of race became an article of faith and an undisputed part of the way of life. Thus generally the worst racial problems were created by the English and Dutch settlements overseas. The greatest tragedy was that the English and not the French got the upper hand in North America and in India during the eighteenth century.

It should be noted that racial segregation cannot be derived from the canon of any of the Protestant religious founders such as Luther, Calvin or Zwingli and more than it can from the Council of Trent. It was just that Catholic policy discouraged the widespread study of scripture and hence settlers from France, Spain and Portugal did not have a warped interpretation of certain parts of the Bible to impose on conquered peoples.

They did quite frequently treat subject populations barbarously, but they did admit such populations to Christianity and then intermarry with them. It may also be noted that by and large the churches of the Reformation, which as an unintended by-product has created racism, are the more active in opposing racial prejudices.

Today in Europe racism is found mainly in those cultures influenced by the private interpretation of scripture in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries though not in all of them. It is comparatively absent in France, Spain and Italy. In the earlier sixties a coloured man, Gaston Monnerville, was President of the French Senate and, hence, Deputy President of the Republic. In Britain, by comparison, only one coloured man has entered Parliament and he, Learie Constantine, only because Wilson recommended him for a peerage.

A critique of the theory which links racial factors with the development of civilisations can be found very well set out in the work to which I referred above, Toynbee's "Study of History" (Vol. I pp. 207-249). He sketches an interesting thesis in the same volume (pp. 465-7) to the effect that the English

have been particularly ruthless in exterminating the established populations in conquered countries. We should know.

With reference to the eloquent support of the Rhodesian chiefs for the Smith regime, the Pearce Commission found that the people as a whole had a different view. The British Government would like to have the Rhodesian problem out of the way and have hardly appointed that Commission specifically to present a report which leaves the problem unsolved.—Yours, etc.,

MICHAEL J. NAGLE

38 Rathfarnham Park,
Dublin 14.

* * *

Sir,—It strikes me that some of your correspondents, in particular Comdt. Brennan-Whitmore ("The white man's European civilisation," "Christian civilisation"), Mr. Gardiner ("Europe's faith in the worth and sublimity of its own especial genius"), and Mr. Goggin ("Western civilisation," "White Supremacy") must take a rather restricted view of this civilisation. Certainly, it has achieved much of which we can be justly proud. But this European "civilisation" is also that one which twice this century, has resolved its differences in war, which has murdered, among others, six million Jews, on racial grounds. This Western "civilisation" is that one which produced, and used, the atomic bomb, and continues its research into more sophisticated means of mass destruction. This Western "civilisation" (in which of course I include the Soviet Union, although this may be at variance with the thinking of your correspondents) continues to waste vast sums on space exploration. This Christian "civilisation" is that one which has also manifested itself in the blood-letting of the Crusades, the Inquisition, and numerous religious wars. Might not perhaps a little of the humility, which is supposedly the duty (if not always the most obvious practice) of those who proclaim that Christian civilisation, be called for?

To Comdt. Brennan-Whitmore I would like to address two suggestions. Firstly, that he should read

the other contributions to this correspondence before flying into print. If he would take his own advice of May 3rd, and refer to the issue of April 23rd, what will be amply demonstrated is that he will find, sandwiched between his own letter and that of Mr. Edwards, one from a Mr. Moore, in which he will find the offer "I would be happy to give them a picture of what life is really like out there." Mr. Murphy, on April 27th, even said that "like Mr. Moore (April 23rd) I have first-hand knowledge of this frightful system at work . . ." Perhaps the Comdt. should realise that he is not alone in his views, and avoid assuming that his views are being bowdlerised.

Secondly, that, having given us on May 19th a potted version of his racial theories, whereby "the human race is divided into five categories on the basis of colour . . . the Black and the Red. Over thousands of years of existence the last two have never shown any desire, much less aptitude, to cease to be man the hunter and become man the settler. It is man the settler who creates civilisations," he considers a little the writings of some of his predecessors in the field. Perhaps the following extract might serve as a starting point?

"B 4 Racially valuable non-Germans of the Bohemian-Moravian area (in particular Moravians with their different tribes). *Racially valuable* are those inhabitants of the Protectorate with whom or with whose kinsfolk Slavonic racial characteristics do not predominate . . . In this connection it should be noted that Slavonic racial characteristics, apart from Mongol types, are, for instance, a disorderly, careless family life with a complete lack of feeling for order, personal and domestic cleanliness, lack of any ambition to advance oneself."

(From the classification to be found in "Vorschläge zur Vorbereitung der Umvolkung im Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren, document No. 11-1189g, Office of the Reichsprotektor of Bohemia and Moravia, Prague, November 30th, 1940).—Yours, etc.,

PETER O'NEILL,

343 S.C. Road, Dublin 8.