

COMMENT ON REVIEW OF SCOTLAND'S SHAME (*SCOTTISH AFFAIRS*, NO. 33)

Tom Gallagher

The first 22 pages of the Autumn 2000 issue of **Scottish Affairs** was devoted to a review of **Scotland's Shame? Bigotry and Sectarianism in Modern Scotland**, edited by Tom Devine of which I was one of the contributors.

The reviewer, Mr Owen Dudley Edwards, describes me as having written one 'of five Cromagnon Catholic essays' despite the fact that much of my chapter is devoted to criticising triumphalist, anti-ecumenical and homophobic positions taken up by Cardinal Thomas Winning and showing how, by contrast, the Church of Scotland has been refreshingly low-key and fair-minded when confronted by the retrograde views of Scotland's best-known Catholic churchman.

Michael Tumelty, the music editor of **The Herald**, argued in the edition of 19 August 1999 that the composer James MacMillan had damaged his own reputation as a result of his 1999 Edinburgh Festival lecture in which he made outspoken claims about the continuation of bigotry in Scottish society; in my chapter I criticised Tumelty for being unwilling to allow an open-ended debate on an issue previously kept under wraps, while parting company with MacMillan over at least one of his claims.

Owen Dudley Edwards claimed that I had been disingenuous to the extent of betraying my academic integrity, by 'omitting Tumelty's major reason for criticising MacMillan's lecture', namely his reference to the way he claims an article written by former **Herald** editor Arnold Kemp was distorted by MacMillan.

This point is made by Tumelty but in one sentence taking up the penultimate paragraph of his article. Most of this article refers to MacMillan's role as a public figure, how his reputation, in Tumelty's view, had been damaged by

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his lecture, and the hostility towards the composer apparently widespread in the world of Scottish music during August 1999.

Tumelty may, or may not, be on strong ground in claiming that Kemp's views were taken out of context by MacMillan, and that the latter misinterpreted the **Herald's** editorial policy on integrated schools. But on re-reading Tumelty's article I am satisfied that I did not play fast and loose with his arguments in the way the reviewer claims and that if I have betrayed my academic integrity, it is certainly not by the way I interpreted Michael Tumelty's article.

For months I was inclined to forget this tedious matter until it was pointed out to me that I ought to set the record straight, especially because of more serious charges made by Owen Dudley Edwards.

On p.8 he writes: 'MacMillan and his apologists may not agree with their fundamental outlook – though several of them sound as they do – but the IRA have every reason to thank them for increasing the camouflage of grievance in which the bombers find their best refuge'.

Later on, p.21 there is: 'Any danger that may exist of Catholic neo-fascism (and some of the MacMillianilists offer disturbing symptoms)...'

Rather than enter into a polemic with Owen Dudley Edwards, I wrote to him to ask if there was anything in my chapter which suggested that I was displaying such 'disturbing symptoms'. On 25 January 2001 he informed me that there wasn't and it is now left to me to try to set the record straight concerning the above two regrettable claims. Personally, I do not think any of 'the Cromagnon five' can be so accused and I am writing to **Scottish Affairs** primarily because of emerging enquiries on the basis of 'there's no smoke without fire...'

I do not think **Scottish Affairs** covers itself with glory by allowing such unfounded charges to be made. Owen Dudley Edwards wrote with his usual mischievous panache and wit but any editor mindful of the need to set acceptable standards in a journal of Scottish current affairs would not have allowed allusions to IRA sympathies and Catholic neo-fascism to get into print unless firm corroboration was provided.

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COMMENT FROM EDITOR OF SCOTTISH AFFAIRS

The point in the last paragraph of Professor Gallagher's comment misrepresents what Owen Dudley Edwards wrote, as is clear from the quotations which he himself uses. Dudley Edwards did not claim 'IRA sympathies' among some contributors to the book in question; the sympathies, if any, were

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claimed to be the other way around - of the IRA for some of the contributors' views. Neither did Dudley Edwards assert that Gallagher displayed evidence of neo-fascism: the reasons for his claim about some contributors to the book were given earlier in his article. Both comments were well within the normal range of fair comment, and so it would have been entirely inappropriate for me as editor to have asked him to remove them. The last thing **Scottish Affairs** would be justified in doing would be suppressing the legitimate expression of views among its contributors.