

Southhill



Star

Has Limerick then so barren grown/Of manhood's spirit,
blood and bone? — Michael Hogan

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A LETTER TO DR. NEWMAN

Since there are only seven more weeks to Christmas, and the exorbitant price of turkey (nearly twice what it was last year) puts it beyond the reach of many poor people and Social Welfare benefits and wages are "frozen", (which means in real terms that our income is actually **reduced**) and with the price of basic commodities going ever upwards, and with democracy being threatened by the introduction of draconian laws to curb the "Holy War" being fought by the Provos, I thought that this month I might set forth my views by writing an open letter to the Catholic Bishop of Limerick, Dr. Jeremiah Newman. So here goes.

Dear Dr. Newman,

I am writing this letter from a two-bedroomed Corporation house in Southhill. The reason I am writing to you is that you have been very vocal of late on many moral issues which affect my own and my family's existence and the future welfare of my children.

For example, by your condemnation of planned and responsible parenthood by means of contraception, you try to coerce the Irish Parliament into continuing to deny me a basic human right which is now established throughout most of the civilised world — the exceptions of course being a few notoriously reactionary "Catholic" countries. You will of course defend your right to do this on vague theological and "moral" grounds and I would readily accept that you have such a right were it not for your blatant inconsistency in voicing your opinions on other moral issues.

Is it not a moral issue, deserving of your attention, that a mere five per cent of the population of this country own seventy-five per cent of the wealth? ("Wealth" being the product of the labours of the other ninety-five per cent). Is it not a moral issue that at the present moment there are over 110,000 Irish workers unemployed through no fault of their own? Is it not a moral issue that our educational facilities are the most backward in Europe? Is it not a moral issue that some poor people who can ill afford it are still required to pay for medical services? I could go on and on but I'm sure, Dr. Newman, that you know what I mean, though I doubt that you will be capable of any real response.

Indeed, how can you be **EXPECTED** to understand the plight of your fellow Irish citizens? You live in the lap of luxury in an imposing mansion on a six-acre estate which is probably one of the most "desirable" sites in the province of Munster and is estimated to be valued at about half a million pounds (£500,000). You drive around like Royalty in a big Mercedes and have your annual Continental holidays. At the same time you preach charity and love.

Would it not be an act of "True Christian Charity" if you were to sell one or two acres of your estate and give the money to the Bawnmore Centre for handicapped children now that our capitalist Government has decided to abandon these same children? Indeed, why not sell your entire estate and go and live with the people you "love"? I'm sure the Corporation would oblige you with a house in Southhill, even though there are eight hundred families more eligible than yourself already on the waiting list. (You would of course have to run the risk of having your Mercedes kicked by wandering horses!)

Then there is the question of your oblique support for the Provisional IRA, often referred to as the "Pope's Army", and



their "Holy War" against the North's Protestant community. Did you ever stop to think that your irresponsible utterances only serve to encourage headstrong young men (already conditioned by YOUR schools) to join the Provos in their sectarian bombings and shootings and kneecappings in the strife-torn and tragic Northern Ireland.

From an electoral and democratic point of view, the Provos, like the Catholic Church, are unrepresentative of the people of this country. The people do not elect the Army Council of the Provos any more than they do the Hierarchy. Thus these two groups should not purport to speak on behalf of the people.

As a socialist I believe that all people should have the right to support and practise the religion of their choice, as well as the right to have no religion or to oppose religion. But I also believe that no religious grouping should be permitted to frustrate the social progress of a nation or to sabotage human rights.

Finally, it is said that an Irish Bishop will never go hungry and will never be told the truth. Well, I certainly have no desire that you should ever go hungry (you are always welcome to my house for a feed of packet and tripe). But I hope that in this letter I will have succeeded in breaching that formidable protective wall around your estate and in getting just a little bit of the truth across to you in the comfort of your ivory tower.

Yours sincerely,
Jack Cantillon

SINN FEIN'S CURRENT SHOCKER

In a recent issue of the "Limerick People", Sinn Fein's local monthly newsheet, there was an intriguing item under the heading, "Useful Paper". This little gem, tucked away at the bottom of the back page, was a call to utilise the waste substances in the city dump as a means of generating electricity for the area. The article stated:

Now that the energy crisis is worsening perhaps some thought should be given to making use of the vast quantities of inflammable waste being dumped in the City Dump at the Longpavement. It may now be financially viable to construct an incinerator which could produce electricity for the city. The expertise would already exist in the E.S.B. to service such a plant. Looked at in the long term it could go a long way to fulfilling some of our energy needs.

What a truly **shocking** example of Sinn Fein's thinking! — if you will pardon the pun. If this is part of their **current** policy it gives rise to a **battery** of questions and must surely be met with **resistance**.

When tackled about the affair this week, a spokesman for Sinn Fein in Limerick was at pains to **deFuse** the situation. It was pointed out to him by our reporter that even a small power station would cost several million pounds to construct and that all the waste in the city dump would not supply Limerick with even one day's electricity. The spokesman said that this was a **reVOLTING** diversion and that our reporter was obviously not **SWITCHED ON** to the true situation.

Asked to throw some further **LIGHT** on the "Limerick People" report, the Sinn Fein man **reCOILED** and stated bluntly that he would **reFUSE** to **ILLUMINATE**. "If you will just **CONDUCT** yourself for a moment", he said, "I will try to **PLUG** some of the gaps in your knowledge. The "Limerick People" is a **TRANSFORMER** of public opinion and as such must be constantly striving to, amongst other things, **INSULATE** the people against the excesses of bureaucracy. This includes trying to get them cheaper electricity". The spokesman was now into his **ELEMENT**. But not for long.

Our reporter suggested that, in view of the enormous capital outlay, and the one-day supply of waste materials, the writer in the "Limerick People" must have his **WIRES** crossed. Replied the spokesman: "We never claimed to be brilliant, so don't **PYLON** the agony!"

LIMERICK FAMILY PLANNING CLINIC

On the 20th June, 1975 a public meeting was held at the Royal George Hotel and was addressed by three speakers from the Irish Family Planning Association (I.F.P.A.). This was the first step towards the setting up of a family planning clinic in Limerick.

Since February 14th, 1976 the Limerick Family Planning Association has been running a non-medical clinic very successfully at Cornmarket Row. Now the clinic is moving to a larger premises at 1, Myles's St. (just off Pery Square) with a view to expanding into a medical clinic.

At present the clinic is run on a voluntary basis and as it is not subsidised by the State it relies very much on contributions and donations to carry out its functions. Non-medical supplies such as condoms, creams, jellies, foams and pessaries are readily available at the clinic. In addition diaphragms (caps) are also available on a doctor's prescription.

The family planning clinic has a wide range of leaflets and literature dealing with contraception and other health aspects. Anyone who may be interested in the services should write or call to: 1, Myles's St. (just off Pery Square near Tait's Clock). CLINIC TIMES: Tuesday, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.; Friday, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.; Saturday, 10 p.m. to 12 noon. The telephone number is: 42026.

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HOSPITAL SCENE

A hospital can be a place of harrowing scenes . . . old people, not really ill, pretending to be sick, and dreading the move to the City Home. They beg their sons or daughters to keep them, but in the end they are shipped out by Health Board ambulance, complete with their scanty possessions wrapped in a Roche's Stores plastic bag.

The harrowing scenes are almost routine, everyday incidents in the Regional Hospital at Dooradoyle. There is no time to waste on the old, the daily schedule has to be met.

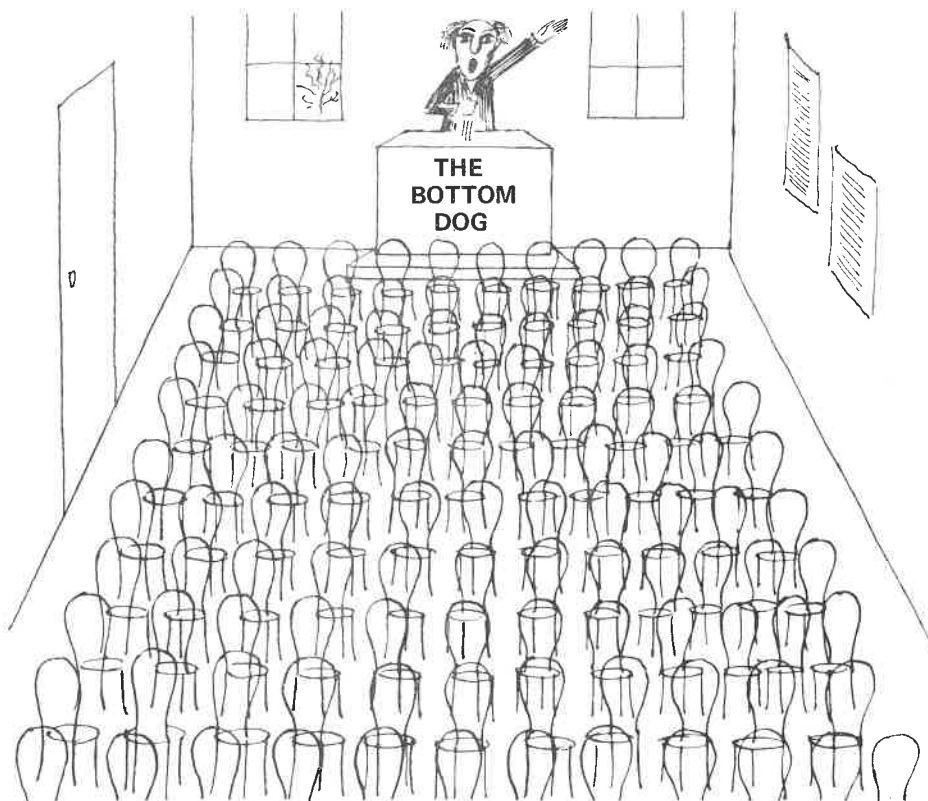
One woman recently witnessed the removal of another elderly woman to the City Home. "She had her slippers under her arm, and an orange . . . they were all she owned . . . she made no protest . . . just walked out of the ward to the ambulance".

The woman also saw one of the hospital priests in action.

"He came in one day and asked the nurse: 'Any from my parts?' Then he went to a woman from the country, and ignored me. I felt like asking him to tell whether there was one God for wealthy country women and another God for poor city women".

This priest seems to spend most of his time in the private wards. That is where the offerings for Mass are to be gathered. And money matters, even in death.

When the woman's husband came to visit her, she told him about the incident with the priest. "Jeysus", he said, "you're going Communist". She left hospital, well and fit. Her parish priest never came to see her during all the weeks. "He will come around for his dues", she said, "but I will remind him about his indifference during my term in the Regional Hospital".



Despite your indifference I shall lead you to victory! We shall triumph over injustice! We shall conquer the opposition! We shall drive out the bourgeois imperialists! We . . .

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