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THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

SIR,—I hesitate to break into the interesting argument which appears to be developing in your columns concerning the historical background of Jesus of Nazareth, but since my name is constantly recurring I feel I should clarify one issue on which neither protagonist seems very sure. I refer to a statement which was made under my name in a popular American weekly on February 6, and which has been freely quoted since, not least by my colleagues in Jerusalem, without anybody apparently taking the trouble to confirm its accuracy or its context. I refer to the now famous, or infamous, 'pattern' statement.

In a misguided effort to educate a journalist into the significance of these scrolls for Christian origins, I told him that 'there was a well-defined messianic pattern into which Jesus of Nazareth fits.' I was referring to the remarkable correspondences we find in Qumran literature between the nature of the expected Davidic Messiah and the Church's description of Jesus, as fulfilling ancient hopes and prophecy. Thus both are scions of the House of David, both are 'begotten' of God, to both is the divine promise of the Davidic House applied: 'I shall be his father, he shall be my son,' both are looked for 'to save Israel,' and to 'slay the wicked with the breath of his lips.' These and similar correspondences indicate that the Church's description of its Davidic Messiah followed a well-defined, pre-existent pattern. There is nothing particularly revolutionary in this, and it would probably have caused no undue comment had not the American magazine misquoted the statement as 'a well-defined Essenic pattern' and placed it directly after my hypothesis that the founder of the Qumran community had met his end by crucifixion under a wicked priest of the Jews and was expected to come again as Messiah. There may possibly be something significant in this parallel, but it was not to this that my 'pattern' statement referred. In fact, the resurrected priest was quite separate in Qumran thought from the lay, Davidic Messiah with whom these Christian correspondences may be drawn. The one is a *priestly* Messiah, having in all things precedence over the other, his lay counterpart, with whom he is expected to appear in the last days.

In the New Testament, of course, there is only one Messiah, Jesus, and into the common pattern of 'son-ship' there has been infused a 'divinity' which is not apparent in Qumran. Thus the differences between the New Testament and Qumran in this matter are considerable, as I have had occasion before to point out. It might be debated whether these differences were so apparent in the thought of the very first Christians, but that is one of those problems which must await the discovery of Christian manuscripts contemporary with the first days of the Church and the latter years of the Qumran community.—Yours faithfully,

JOHN ALLEGRO

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THE CASEMENT DIARIES

SIR,—Mr. Tom Cullen's line of argument concerning Mr. Singleton-Gates, myself and the Official Secrets Act reminds me of the classic story of the foreign correspondent whose life had been threatened by terrorists while he was on assignment abroad, and who rushed back to London to inform his editor of the fact. The editor rose in all his majesty from behind his desk and pounded it with his fist. 'You go right back again,' he roared, 'and tell those so-and-sos that they can't intimidate me!'

Let me, for the benefit not only of Mr. Cullen but also of various persons on the other side of the Irish Channel who have similarly intimated that they thought I was using the Official Secrets Act as some sort of rather shabby alibi, lay it right on the line.

Not long ago I was able to study copies of what I am convinced were the seized diaries and ledgers of Roger Casement. The first draft of my recently published book took into account these documents. While—need I say?—I did not try to do more than hint at the obscenities which form a fearful threnody to these dismal documents, I did on the other hand use a good deal of the non-obscene material, which is historically fascinating, since much of it is new in regard to Casement's journeyings in the Putumayo, his stays in various European cities, his dealings with the FO, his social activities with well-known people of the day, etc.

When the completed MS was presented to my publishers their legal adviser took alarm, and the views of counsel were sought. Counsel said categorically that if the book were published in that form both the publishers and I would run a risk of prosecution under the Official Secrets Act. (Let us bear in mind that British publishing houses of repute are nowadays in no mind to run risks where the Home Office is concerned, in view of certain prosecutions which have taken place in the past few years.) Since I am a lazy man, I was reluctant to undertake a major rewrite of my book, and accordingly sought the views of my own legal adviser, whose sagacity and professional competence I hold in the highest esteem. His finding was, if anything, even more strongly than the publishers' counsellors to the effect that great risks would be involved if I were to go ahead with the book as it then was.

So there we are. While the possessors of first-class legal brains assure me that I and my associates would find ourselves in jeopardy under the Official Secrets Act if I were to set down in print all I know, I am afraid it is no use Mr. Cullen complacently writing, 'Does anyone imagine for a moment that the Home Office would actually institute a prosecution under the Official Secrets Act and risk the truth about the diaries being known, having been at pains to obscure it for forty years?' The answer to Mr. Cullen's question, as far as I am concerned, is a brisk 'Yes!' And if Mr. Cullen *et al.* hope that I am going to risk an appearance in the dock, and conceivably an unpleasant sojourn elsewhere, merely to satisfy their curiosity, then I can only say, as our American friends put it, that they must re-examine their thinking.—Yours faithfully,

RENÉ MACCOLL

Clock Lodge, Crowborough, Sussex

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SIR,—Evasiveness has no part in the deliberations and writings of Mr. René MacColl and myself. For examples in the art of evasion your correspondent Mr. Cullen should study the answers of successive Home Secretaries when questioned about the Casement diaries.

May I endeavour to enlighten Mr. Cullen on the points which confuse him? When I examined the original diaries, I had armed myself with extracts from the typescripts—time, date, place and the actual quotations. *There they were* in the originals, exactly as I expected to find them in the handwriting of Casement. Interpolation after the writing of the diaries would have been out of the question. There was no space to do so, and the slight fading of the ink was a guarantee of fact.

To the second burden. Thomson was by no means a meticulous recorder of detail. Agreed he had the 1903 and 1904 diary in his possession, and although there are lesser entries of sexual practices, they are none the less there—thirty or forty of them. The Normand forgery theory does not hold water and I have answered it in the third paragraph of my article (June 15).

I am in entire agreement with Mr. Cullen about establishing the truth about the diaries. Give me a courageous legal adviser and a fearless publisher and I will do the job.—Yours faithfully,

PETER SINGLETON-GATES

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'WOMEN IN ANTIQUITY'

SIR,—I am amazed to read (*Spectator*, June 15) a review by Virginia Graham of *Women in Antiquity* by Charles Seltman.

The review seems to me to be a complete distortion of historical fact and balance. Take this: '. . . up to the Christian era . . . women were considered equal . . . to men. Mr. Seltman presents a mouth-watering panorama of women untrammelled by social restrictions . . . all married, with extra-marital associations taken as a matter of course. In Sparta, for instance, a man would lend his wife to another man . . . so that neither adultery, bastardy, divorce nor prostitution were words to worry over. They simply did not exist.'

This is no historical description of either the ancient or the mediæval world. Adultery, bastardy, divorce, prostitution were all there, so were dreadful revenges, sexual jealousies, and inhuman tortures. What was the fate of women captives in war, or under slavery or sold for debt or fallen into a poverty that yearned for food, or as inhabitants of a city given over to rape and sack? What were the effects of plague, disease, insanitation, filth, upon the limbs, sight, skin and beauty of men, women and children? Your reviewer gives no hint of these things but sums it all up in these words: 'Intelligent, athletic, beautiful, and profoundly innocent—what magnificent human beings were our ancestors!'

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