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# JOHN JAMESON

THE WHISKEY OF OUTSTANDING QUALITY

ARKS

# John B Keane

## Compulsory Irish is achieving nothing by way of advancement of the Language

### COMPULSORY IRISH

LESS than 15% of the members of Dail Eireann have a working or fluent knowledge of the Irish language, yet successive Governments have approved of compulsory Irish in schools, have subsidised its expansion everywhere and have never shown the faintest concern for the moral welfare of citizens who are hampered at home and abroad by this compulsion, citizens who have never been permitted the luxury of deciding whether compulsory Irish is right or wrong. Certainly these Governments have a lot to answer for. They have shown an appalling indifference to a vital question over the years.

At present the knowledge of schoolchildren is spread over two languages, with the result that their general education is far from what it should be. By all means let Irish be taught in the schools, but do not deprive a boy of his Leaving Certificate because he fails in Irish.

A boy can fail in mathematics, in physics and chemistry and yet gain his Leaving Certificate. Sadly enough, however, these other subjects are far more important than Irish in this age of scientific advancement. Boys who fail their Leaving Certificate have no choice but to board the emigrant ship and of what use is Irish when these lads approach the foreman of an English factory or builder's yard in search of a job?

**worst fanatics**

Irish will be of even less use to latter-day employees of Germans, Japanese and Heaven-knows-who at home. Yet the mockery goes on year after year, and this outstanding bone of contention has never been submitted directly to the entire electorate of the country.

Suspicion is rooted deep in the minds of the majority who are not against the Irish language but are undoubtedly against compulsory Irish. It is commonly believed that those who preach and promulgate compulsory Irish are in search of lucrative positions and material advancement. In many cases this is true, but in many others it is not so, as there are many who genuinely believe in what they preach.

Another sad aspect of the Irish question is the name-changing which has taken place in recent years. People whose names are written in English on Baptismal and Birth Certificates have found it politic and profitable to sign themselves now in Irish. In this category many of the worst type of fanatics are found, fanatics who accuse those who object to compulsory Irish of being West Britons and Shoneens. If Irishmen with opinions and convictions of their own on the language question are to be labelled thus, there is a grievous sickness in the minds of a self-styled patriotic minority.

Many of our lads in the Congo do not believe in compulsory Irish but did not know that they were being true and reliable Irishmen, nor does it stop a large majority of the people from being conscientious and upright citizens of the Irish Republic. Unquestionably a referendum is the only solution but it is hardly likely, since the fanatics, who hold the more responsible positions, would never permit a vote on the subject since they know that defeat by an overwhelming majority is inevitable.

This fanatical minority is the most serious threat to the language. No real Irishman wants to see the abolition of Irish. What he wants is that the opinion of the majority should prevail. Most of those who favour compulsory Irish are blinded by the facts and will listen to no argument, no matter how convincing, that might threaten to lead to its abolition.

In every country in the world there are minority groups who insist upon imposing their convictions on the majority. We have seen what this has led to in other countries.



JOHN B. KEANE

choice was Hebrew, since all had to not believe in compulsory Irish but did not know that they were being true and reliable Irishmen, nor does it stop a large majority of the people from being conscientious and upright citizens of the Irish Republic. Unquestionably a referendum is the only solution but it is hardly likely, since the fanatics, who hold the more responsible positions, would never permit a vote on the subject since they know that defeat by an overwhelming majority is inevitable.

**no place**

If compulsory Irish ever succeeds in doing away with English, it can only breed insularity and lead to misguided and dangerous patriotism. It cannot help us internationally and it is doubtful if it will gain for us prestige or extra recognition abroad. A much more progressive step would be for the Government to prepare its citizens for entry into the Common Market by stressing the importance and urgency of the acquisition of German, French, Italian and other Continental languages.

**more desirable**

In the schools of Switzerland, while there is no compulsion, emphasis is nevertheless put on the study of German, French and English. A practical and courageous Government sees no point in encouraging the teaching of a language which is of no use outside Switzerland. In their far-sightedness the Swiss educational authorities see clearly the uselessness of Roman when the country

enters the Common Market, but sees the need for a grasp of the languages spoken by the other Common Market countries.

In Irish schools compulsory German, French, Italian and English would seem to be much more desirable from an economic standpoint than compulsory Irish. Teaching, through the medium, has proved itself a drastic failure, yet the foolhardiness of it all is continually overlooked by the authorities.

Another cogent argument which must of itself defeat the present system is the unfairness found at all levels of competitive appointments where a written and oral knowledge of Irish is called for. How can the Department of Education be so blind to the injustice of a Gaeltacht-born candidate entering into unfair competition with a boy who comes from a home where no Irish is spoken? This alone makes compulsory Irish unjust and seriously hampers students not lucky enough to be born in a Gaeltacht area.



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# THE TEENAGE MENACE

A voice from the Misunderstood Generation

"Teenager" title an excuse for misbehaviour

"We like Elvis - and Strauss"

DEAR SIR.—As an individual of the unfortunate misunderstood generation, I have a right to object to the insinuation that we are all (or even the majority) a lot of silly one-track-minded "little kids".

It strikes me that when Mr. Keane was collecting the trump-card for his article, he picked the most shallow-minded teenager he could find. I agree with him, there are plenty of such people everywhere, but the public must agree they are not in the majority.

This may not be a consoling thought, but we are the adults of to-morrow. The half-wit who shouted "Spit on me, Cliff!" is certified and I can assure you we don't all wish for such degradation from another human being. As a possible explanation for this behaviour, I would suggest inferiority complex. She must have had a deficiency in her up-bringing and is more to be pitied than ridiculed.

The average Cliff fan sees him as good-looking (it might not have occurred to Mr. Keane but a "baby-face" can be quite appealing) young actor with a wonderful voice—nothing more.

I am a nurse and work in a community of people from all over the World—Nigeria, Jamaica, Canada, Burma, India. The majority are English but about 25 per cent are Irish. I would be very ashamed if any of my colleagues should read that article.

To summarize the whole thing, Mr. Keane is living in the past and wants everybody else there with him. He hasn't a hope, not the way he is trying anyway.

In his plays, he has ridiculed the Irish, made them sound crude, vulgar and uneducated. As you know that is untrue. It may be amusing for those in Ireland, but they don't have to live it down.

Young Disgusted Tralee Girl.

DEAR SIR.—I am one hundred per cent with John B. Keane and I fully share his views on the "teenage menace." I trust parents will give some thought to his comments.

"The title 'teenager' is one which I find irritating. Such a title seems to be an excuse for youngsters to behave in a most outrageous fashion completely ignoring good manners and a code of proper behaviour.

The amusing (to that proper word) thing is that parents seem frightened to exercise control for fear of giving their offspring a "complex." There's a lot to be said for a good old-fashioned licking with a strap!

The sight of a boy dressed in lured tattered suits with wide, padded shoulders and a narrow trouser, a bright green shirt with shoes mounted on rubber platforms, makes me cringe. Actually, the overall effect is ridiculous. Looking at the girls in their suicidal high heels and painted pussies, makes me wonder what has happened to the well scrubbed Miss O'Leary gone by.

I understand that by dressing in such a fashion that the teenagers are "expressing" themselves.

When they are not "twisting" in a snack bar to the beat of a pop record, they are wandering in large groups around the streets, conversing on the look-out for some mischief to get up to. The girls wander along arm in arm, singing something from the "hit parade," while the boys stouch along talking and laughing loudly among themselves or shouting and cat-calling at passers-by.

If I had my way, I would round up the girls and give them a good wash and some truly feminine clothes to wear, and after a shower treatment for the boys, I would send the lot packing to the country turning for some months where they would find plenty of opportunity to "express" themselves in the right way.

Yours,  
Mary McCarthy,  
Clontarf,  
Dublin

DEAR SIR.—We are two 18-year-olds who would endeavour to enlighten Mr. Keane that the majority of teenagers to-day, as well as being fans of "Elvis" and "Cliff" etc., thoroughly enjoy Strauss, Handel, and the work of many other great composers.

The aim of the majority of teenagers to-day is to make Ireland proud of the Congo Troops, and not to display such ignorance, immorality and uncouthness as we are subjected to by some of our Irish playwrights.

Twist a "roll" when not taken too far will never corrupt the minds of those who hear and see it. "Daddy-O" and "Way out man" are innocent words compared to those taken from some of our Irish plays. We both work in a bacon factory and assure Mr. Keane that the sales of pigs heads have increased considerably over the recent years.

Two Round Squares,  
Leith,  
Tralee.

## BOSH!

SIR.—Just because John B. Keane has written a few plays doesn't mean to say he is an authority on Education, people or teenagers. "The Teenage Menace" indeed! That puts the tin hat on things. What are teenagers? A pack of animals? A group of mentally deficient people who have to wait for time to cure their ailment? Bosh! Each generation went through the same phase and there was always something new. Take the "Roaring Twenties," as they are referred to. Didn't the teenagers of then go wild over the "Charleston"? And those same teenagers are now our parents!

I would like to inform Mr. Keane that I have met and spoken to Cliff Richards during his recent visit to this country and some other young pop singers and they were all very nice young men.

Wherever did Mr. Keane find the teenager who supposedly answered those questions? Who does he expect will swallow that rot?

It will be interesting to see how Mr. Keane's children behave when they reach their teens. Will he practise what he preaches?

Yours,  
One who believes in the TRUTH.

## ASTONISHED

DEAR EDITOR.—I was absolutely astonished at Mr. Keane's opinion of Irish teenagers. I wonder, if he actually regrets the fact that he is not one of the "narrow-minded delinquents," due to the fact that he is no longer a teenager.

It is amazing that in this modern age, with such high standards of education, that there can be found such an ignorant teenager as the one interviewed by Mr. Keane. I wonder what appealed to him in this girl, whom he considered "an average teenager." I doubt if this girl ever existed.

It takes all kinds to make a world, and because one hysterical teenager wished to be spat on by Cliff Richards during his recent visit to Ireland, does not mean that we all follow her pattern.

"Cliff Richard fan,"  
Lobercannon,  
Tralee.

## no necessity

The question is ripe for argument in the Dail but our Dail members do not seem to care. Most of them, when questioned on the subject, will admit instantly to being against compulsory Irish, but some unseen and very potent force makes them tongue-tied and noncommittal when they occupy their seats in Dail Eireann.

A strong argument put forward by those who endorse compulsory Irish is that the Jews succeeded in restoring Hebrew as the spoken language of the young Jewish nation. This was, in fact, a strong economic necessity rather than a true and patriotic feeling for the restoration of Hebrew.

Before the birth of the Jewish nation, when Jews from all quarters of the world were being illegally shipped to the homeland and congregated in vast camps and compounds, a chaos ensued that would put the confusion at the Tower of Babel to shame. These Jews came from countries as far apart as Peru and Lithuania, Australia and Norway, which left them without a common denominator of expression. They were assembled from every country on the face of the globe, and they brought with them the languages of those countries. A means of communication understood by all had to be established. The obvious

## A boot for the parents, too

DEAR SIR.—I thoroughly agree with John B. Keane that a good, hard size eleven in the pants might be a cure for the modern menace of teenageism.

However, I think that some parents should get a dose of this same medicine to bring them to their senses and make them live up to their responsibilities. Too much delinquency is the result of parental pampering. If a number of teenagers got less pocket-money and had to seek permission before they went out at night we would have less hooliganism and conscientious people would have less fears for their growing-up daughters.

If the menace goes uncontrolled there can be little hope for the moral, let alone the economic salvation of Ireland.

Yours,  
Michael Bradley,  
Limerick.

## Adults encouraging The Menace

DEAR SIR.—I fully support J. B. Keane's statements on teenagers and was more than pleased to read such an article in The Kerryman.

However it is my sincere view that adults are merely encouraging teenagers to dress and act as they do by lavishing too much attention and interest on them.

They should be treated as rather silly children who still have a lot of growing up to do. They can be considered capable of taking their place in Society. Obviously at present they cannot be relied upon to think or act for themselves.

In the mean-time parents and responsible bodies should treat their actions with amusement, but from time to time should let young people know in no uncertain manner that the world is not their own private bear garden.

Yours,  
Round Square,  
Killarney

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## SOUND TALK!

DEAR SIR.—Sound man, John B. Keane, about time somebody took those crazy, mixed-up teenagers in task. God be with the days not so long ago when teenagers used to hang out between a good game of hurling or football after school, and all they do is stand around street corners and up against shop windows, spitting "form" as they put it. If they have their way they'd have every factory in the country turning out "pop" records and such like. If I had my way I'd oulta a teenager pocket and send the lot of them into space. And good riddance!

Outraged,  
Tralee.

## MR. KEANE'S TEENAGE FRIEND STUPID

A CHARA.—Mr. Keane's 17-year-old friend, must be abnormally stupid, because on putting the same questions to members of the same age group here to Ballybunion, and some even harder questions, I got the correct answers in almost every case.

"Ballybunion Teenager."

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