

Subject: Query
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From: Evans, 100561,607

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OPEN LETTER

Dr G. Vaughan,
Acting Head of Department of Physics,
University of Wales, Aberystwyth,
Dear Dr. Vaughan,

Some months ago I received an initialed card in response to my detailed application for the post of Professor of Physics, advertised for any branch of physics in your Department. I have just received a letter from your Director of Personnel, with a hand-written address, suggesting that the post has been filled by Prof. Neville Greaves. I am afraid I have never heard of Prof. Greaves.

Mr Cynog Dafis M.P. for Ceredigion, wrote to me at Cornell in the early nineties asking me to keep Plaid Cymru, the Welsh Nationalist Party, informed of my various applications. The Council for Academic Fairness and Academic Standards has also been involved in my case and has been monitoring my various applications for about two years. In view of this concern, motivated by my case history and rejections for all positions at Aberystwyth over a period of twenty two years, I cannot accept the suggestion that Prof. Neville Greaves has been fairly appointed on the basis of meritocracy. Accordingly I will not recognize his claim to professorship of physics in the premier College of the University of Wales. Personally, I wish him well. I note however that his appointment is entirely underwritten by the taxpayer.

The lack of meritocracy is evident from the following facts and from the improbability that a physicist of my experience can be rejected on the basis of comparative merit over a period of nearly a quarter of a century for all positions at all levels in all relevant departments. I have produced over 500 publications in physics, and am also a fluent Welsh speaker.

1) I assume that all the candidates were Welsh speakers with over 500 publications to their credit, with in depth knowledge of Wales. In view of the fact the process is supported by taxpayers, how many candidates were there, and of these what fraction were Welsh speakers? I understand that there is no-one now in the physics department who can teach in Welsh.

2) As is the practice in Denmark and Sweden, please provide me with a report on the performance of each candidate, with detailed assessments. I am curious to know this as a taxpayer. At present the following are unknown: a) the number of candidates who applied; b) their qualifications; c) how many were Welsh speakers; d) what criteria were used to select them; e) who were short listed and why. In particular it is not known whether the process made any allowance for the fact that the Department is situated in a Welsh speaking area of Wales. In fact nothing is known about the procedure at all, except that it is all at the expense of the taxpayer.

3) Similar criticism can be made of selection procedures inside the University of Wales at Aberystwyth and elsewhere at all tenured levels. From personal knowledge of the Department of Chemistry at Aberystwyth I know that appointments to tenure were frequently unadvertized, and awarded arbitrarily, not meritocratically. There appeared to be no

advertisement. The end result is to undermine the authority of the University and its Charter, which commands it to be FOR Wales by sign manual of the Head of State. Arbitrary appointment process cannot and must not be recognized internationally. It also means that the credentials of the vast majority of sincere candidates are ignored.

4) The University is irrelevant to Welsh education. It fails to cater for the large secondary output of Welsh speakers. Its appointment procedures are secretive, privileges are protected, the Campus at Aberystwyth is saturated by students and staff whose knowledge of the Welsh heritage is minimal. It is driven by financial exigency to the extreme detriment of scholarship.

5) On the model of the Worker's College at Harlech, a new University for Wales is required as a matter of emergency. This would consist of two Colleges, one operating exclusively and entirely through the medium of the Welsh language, the other catering for the needs of the Anglo - Welsh culture represented for example in the literature of Rev. R. S. Thomas, recently nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature, and who has been a strong and persistent critic of the present "University of Wales".

6) The People of Wales is excluded from the opportunity of self government in tertiary education. Cases like that of my own show clearly over a period of years that the best scholars, literatii, artists and scientists in Wales are likely to be arbitrarily excluded from its only University because positions are awarded arbitrarily in a type of masonic ritual. This is in clear breach of international norms in scholarship, with the result that the University cannot be accredited internationally.

The result is that the level of attainment OUTSIDE the closely guarded walls of the University is often considerably higher than anything on offer inside. There is no one inside the University who has the remotest chance of a Nobel Prize in literature, and in its 120 year history, it has never produced a Nobel Laureate. The reason is that it does not choose its staff on the basis of meritocracy, and excludes real talent. For every member of staff inside the university, there are a hundred talented Welsh speakers who are excluded from any opportunity of participation. The atmosphere on each Campus is entirely foreign to Wales. The Welsh language is rarely if ever heard.

7) An incoming Free State Government in Wales should suspend funding for a period of three years, while carrying out a state of emergency review of the University. It is not clear whether this closure would have any effect at all, at present, on the Welsh economy apart from the relatively small number employed directly by the University. It is unclear whether the University actually attains a level of education that approaches the level already inherently attained by the Welsh People through independent effort, self-teaching, and traditional self-reliance. In other words the University of Wales as presently constituted is a great white elephant treading all over the culture of Wales and her People. It is the arch-typical colonialist institution.

Yr Eiddoch yn Gywir Iawn,

(Athro M. W. Evans).

Copied R. C. T. Fletcher, Director of Personnel; dsj@aber.ac.uk