

EDITOR'S NOTE

A Double Welcome

I first came to know of Robert Drinan when I was an undergraduate at Boston College and he was the dean of the university's law school. We hadn't met then, but at the time Father Drinan's reputation as a leader and scholar was such that just to be in Boston was to hear about him. Which probably explains why, when he decided to run for the United States Congress in 1970—his first bid for office—he won handily.

I remember the elation on campus. For most of us, having just arrived at voting age, it was our first election; and we were swelled with the sense that through a fundamental civic action we had produced an unambivalent good. It appeared that the so-called "system"—the same system that gave us the war in Vietnam and the invasion of Santo Domingo—could, in fact, work. And if it did not work perfectly, it worked often enough and well enough to ensure that men of integrity and good will would always be acknowledged to lead us. If subsequent elections have shaken that belief, they have not shattered it.

Once in office, Congressman Drinan did not disappoint his constituency. An opponent of brutality and corruption in Uganda, of apartheid in South Africa—in short, of the suppression of liberty and the debasement of human dignity anywhere and everywhere in the world—Congressman Drinan employed his extraordinary legal skills, indefatigable energy, and compassionate Christian ethics for the betterment of government and the governed.

Father Drinan recently resigned from politics in obedience to Pope John Paul II's declaration that Catholic clergy should not hold political office. At about the same time, Cardinal Madeiros of Boston issued a statement, read to all parishioners, calling for the defeat of

legislators "who make abortions possible"—a thinly veiled attack on the liberal candidate endorsed by Drinan to replace him in Congress. The candidate won nevertheless.

For some—like Wilson Carey McWilliams, who addressed this issue in his "Under Cover" column not long ago—the cardinal's action was perfectly correct. For others, it invoked the time when the bishops and priests of Ireland condemned the separatist Parnell from the pulpit. According to the hyperbolic Irish, shortly thereafter Parnell died "of a broken heart." I am happy to report that Father Drinan, despite his absence from the House of Representatives, is of very sound heart indeed. Not one to waste time licking wounds, he is currently visiting professor of law at Georgetown University Law Center. And he is, to our very good fortune, the newest member of the *WORLDVIEW* Editorial Board. In this rare instance, the government's loss is our gain.

Completing this "double welcome," it is a pleasure to announce a new Contributing Editor, Kofi Awoonor (his latest contribution to be found in this very issue). Recognized internationally as one of Africa's leading writers, Kofi is currently Chairman of the English Department and Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Cape Coast in his native Ghana. In addition, Kofi has spent a number of years in American universities, including the State University of New York at Stony Brook (1969-75) and the Center for African Studies of the University of Florida (1979-80).

The intervening period was not nearly as pleasant. On January 13, 1972, the Ghana military seized control of the government, thus ending three years of civilian rule. The National Redemption Council formed to head the new government immediately suspended the constitution, banned political parties, abolished the Supreme Court, and dissolved the National Assembly.

In the summer of 1975, Kofi—an active opponent of oppression—left the sanctuary of a U.S. university and returned home. Some months later he was arrested, accused of harboring an enemy of the state. For this "subversive" act the author of *Breast of the Earth* and numerous volumes of poetry spent the next two years in a Ghanaian prison. Without the persistent efforts of an international group of scholars and statesmen Kofi's fate might well have been bleaker.

Now with a popularly elected president at its head, Ghana is a freer and more stable country than it was a few years ago. And Kofi—judging from his most recent letter—is hard at work writing, teaching, and "spending interminable hours in committee meetings." Freedom, as Kofi well knows, demands its price!

And so to Robert Drinan and Kofi Awoonor—two men of truly global worldviews—all of us extend a hearty welcome and look forward to their valuable contributions in the years to come.

—J.T.

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