

Dear colleagues,

I became aware of a proposal to re-name the Berkeley Library on reading an article in the *Irish Times* of 21 January 2023. I subsequently read the background information available at <https://www.tcd.ie/seniordean/legacies/berkeleyTLRWGworkingpaper.pdf> I understand the deadline for submissions is 31 January 2023.

I am a graduate of TCD, JH French/German 1983, student number 79008950. I subsequently completed a French Doctorat de 3ème Cycle in Paris, working on 17th century history of ideas (scepticism).

As a graduate, and an educated person, I am completely opposed to slavery in any of the countries in which it continues to exist. I do not in any way endorse the ownership of slaves or any other cruel practices on the part of historical figures, whether Bishop Berkeley, Cicero or the semi-historical founders and leaders of monotheistic religions.

I nevertheless disagree with the concept of eliminating their names from public view and memory. I am not on the side of the book-burners, ancient or modern.

I oppose strongly the proposal to rename the Berkeley Library, and suggest instead that a very large bronze plaque on the outer wall, beside the entrance, should provide a succinct description of Bishop Berkeley's life and works, including *inter alia* his ownership of slaves and any other facts which may be known of this imperfect human being.

I find it curious that the document made available by the University lists Bishop Berkeley's four slaves, but gives no indication of what became of them when he ended his American stay. Perhaps nothing is known; but we are told what became of his books.

Finally: the description of the Berkeley Library as "one of the College's architectural modernist masterpieces" is absurd. I remember the building as uncomfortable, leaky and cold. So far as it has antecedents, they are to be found on the island of Jersey, in the remnants of Hitler's Atlantic Wall bunkers. But I do

not suggest that the library should be demolished on these grounds. Perhaps the leakage problem has been fixed since 1983.

A university, and university students, should observe and seek to understand the past, with critical intelligence. The suggestion of erasure, rather than of education and explanation, is unworthy of TCD. I oppose it.

Yours sincerely,

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