

WHAT HAPPENED ON THE TWELFTH?

INTRODUCTION

During the Ulster General Strike, the Alliance Party, the SDLP, Denis Larkin, President of the ICTU, Andy Barr, his successor, The Communist Party of Ireland, the People's Democracy (remember them?), the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, and many, many more, denounced the strikers as being 'Fascists'.

Now, it's a very dangerous thing to denounce people as Fascists simply because they organise themselves to oppose a constitutional system that is being proposed against the wishes of a clear majority of the people. If all the 'democrats' and the 'liberals' and the 'socialists' call you a Fascist simply because you don't like being forced into a close relationship with a country which denies your right to exist in its Constitution; and trains generation after generation of its most spirited and energetic youth to wage 'unofficial' wars against you; and if the only people who seem to see your point of view are the Right Wing of the Conservative Party (Enoch Powell and the Monday Club), and the lunatic Fascist fringe (the National Front): you might begin to think that maybe you are a Fascist. You might even begin to behave like one, and think that the only way you can assert your point of view is to indulge in individual assassinations, toss bombs into crowded pubs, or (like the 'Ulster Constitution Party') call for the bombing of Dublin.

However, anyone who has any knowledge of the history of the Ulster Protestant community will know that 'Fascism' is a flower that cannot survive for very long in that particular soil. Despite the efforts of the so-called liberals and socialists to drive the Protestants into Fascist types of behaviour (and thus prove to their own satisfaction that they have no right to exist as a separate nation) the Strike has shown once and for all that there is no need for that kind of behaviour: that the community is sufficiently well organised, determined and united to resist any attempts to push it around; and that it can do that without indulging in a bloodbath, or mindlessly submitting to a Hitler-type 'leader'. (The candidates for this role could hardly be said to have 'led' anything since the Strike began; and the mindless assassinations and other lunatic fringe activities have declined dramatically in the period immediately following it).

But world opinion isn't going to change overnight, especially since, ever since the State of Northern Ireland came into existence, there has been a continuous campaign waged by anti-Partitionists of all shapes and sizes to convince it that the Protestants are all just

'Orange bigots'. 'Orangeism' is not very fashionable nowadays, and nor is 'bigotry'. There has been hardly any strong anti-Catholic feeling in any part of the British Isles for quite a long time (except among people with strong Ulster connections). They don't have marches on the Twelfth of July, Orange Halls or flute bands. And most English people would think it in very bad taste to say "Kick the Pope". But things haven't always been like that. Here is a piece of English anti-Catholic bigotry:

"No one can become her (the Church of Rome's) convert without renouncing his moral and mental freedom, and placing his civil loyalty and duty at the mercy of another."

THAT PIECE OF ANTI-CATHOLIC BIGOTRY WAS WRITTEN in 1874 by William Gladstone, famous Liberal Prime Minister, who was later responsible for the Home Rule Bill, and who already had the reputation of fighting for the rights of Catholics. Gladstone was writing shortly after the first Vatican Council, which had declared that the Pope was infallible, and he felt that the Church was trying to threaten the basis of civil society, and that its centralised, anti-authoritarian discipline, acknowledging an Italian cleric as the supreme authority, was incompatible with democracy and civil allegiance.

Earlier on, in 1850, when a Roman Catholic hierarchy was set up in England, there was a storm of protest. The 'Times' complained:

"We can only receive it as an audacious and conspicuous display of pretensions to resume the absolute spiritual dominion of this island, which Rome has never abandoned, but which, by the blessing of Providence and the will of the people, she shall never accomplish."

And Lord John Russell, one of the pioneers of British Liberalism, then Prime Minister, declared (in reply to a letter from the Bishop of Durham):

"I agree with you in considering 'the late aggression of the Pope upon our Protestantism' as 'insolent and insidious', and I therefore feel as indignant as you can do upon the subject."

I not only promoted to the utmost of my power the claims of the Roman Catholics to all civil rights, but I thought it right and even desirable that the ecclesiastical system of the Roman Catholics should be the means of giving instruction to the numerous Irish immigrants in London and elsewhere, who, without such help, would have been left in heathen ignorance. This might have been done, however, without any such innovation as that which we have now seen....

There is an assumption of power in all the documents which have come from Rome, a pretension of supremacy over the realm of England, and a claim to sole and undivided sway, which is inconsistent with the Queen's supremacy, with the rights of our bishops and clergy, and with the spiritual independence of the nation, as asserted even in Roman Catholic times."

There you have two of the greatest leaders of English Liberalism saying things that Harry West or Bill Craig would hardly dare to say

for fear of being called a bigot. However we don't expect Russell's or Gladstone's successors, Jeremy Thorpe or Jo Grimond (or Harold Wilson, since the Labour Party to some extent grew out of the old Liberal Party) to say things like that, or even to be very happy about admitting that their predecessors said them. Why is this? Both Gladstone and Russell themselves explain it reasonably well:

Gladstone (1874): *"... I hold that our onward even course (towards religious toleration) should not be changed by follies, the consequences of which, if the worst comes to the worst, this country will have alike the power and, in case of need, the will to control."*

Russell (1850): *"Even if it shall appear that the ministers and servants of the Pope in this country have not transgressed the law, I feel persuaded that we are strong enough to repel any outward attacks. The liberty of Protestantism has been enjoyed too long in England to allow of any successful attempt to impose a foreign yoke upon our minds and consciences. No foreign prince or potentate will be at liberty to fasten his fetters upon a nation which has so long and so nobly vindicated its right to freedom of opinion, civil, political and religious."*

Both Gladstone and Russell felt that the principles of democracy, and civil and religious liberty, were so well established in Britain, that Roman Catholicism (which they saw as being opposed to those principles) could never become strong enough to constitute a serious threat. Because Roman Catholicism could not be a powerful force in British society, anti-Catholicism (or 'bigotry') died out.

In Ireland, however, the situation was different. Most of the population was Catholic, and they had not gone through the same process of historical development that produced British parliamentary democracy. The exception to this was the Protestants, mainly concentrated in the North-East. They had shared in the great battles of the seventeenth century, when Parliamentary Democracy and Protestantism had found themselves in hand-to-hand battle with Absolute Monarchy and Roman Catholicism. The final victory of Parliamentary Democracy (which ensured a smooth progress towards the peaceful elimination of Royal power) was won in Ireland, with the help of the Ulster Protestants at the Battle of the Boyne on the 12th of July, 1690. But it is only in Northern Ireland that this historically crucial event is still celebrated.

"PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY" AND "ABSOLUTE MONARCHY"

"When James, assuming right from God
Enslaved this freeborn nation;
His sceptre was an iron rod
His reign a visitation.
High Churchmen cried "Obey, obey,
Let none resist a crowned head,
He who gainsays what tyrants say
Is a rebellious round-head."
Then let us sing, while echoes ring
The Glorious Revolution,
And still proclaim King William's name
Who sav'd the Constitution."

The 'Parliamentary democracy' that was fought for at the Battle of the Boyne was very different to what we now have. The King and the Lords still had a great deal of personal power, and the 'Commons' were not so common - there were stringent property qualifications so that only those who were quite well off were allowed to vote. Nonetheless, the principle that the King's actions should be severely limited by elected representatives of his subjects, and that those elected representatives should have the right to initiate legislation, was well established. It had become well established through a century of hard struggle, the high point of which came when a King (Charles I) was executed by order of the Commons.

'Absolute Monarchy' on the other hand, was the form of Government that was emerging in France. France was later than England in uniting into one country, and well into the seventeenth century, individual aristocrats still ruled their territories like kings, running private armies, and imposing taxes on merchandise passing through them. In order to impose unity on the country, the power of the central monarch was asserted to be absolute - he had a 'God-given' right to rule, which was not to be limited in any way by any democratic assemblies (which would only have been dominated by the great aristocrats).

'Absolute monarchy' reached its high point during the long reign of Louis XIV (1638 - 1715), the 'Sun King', who set up a court in Versailles which aimed to dazzle the aristocrats into submission. Louis' court became the centre of political life: the ambition of capable businessmen and statesmen was to please the King; power and influence could only be achieved through Royal favour: the arts, commerce, manufacturing industry, banking, and scientific research were all, as far as possible, centralized under the King's patronage.

On the surface, French society was very impressive. French fashion, language, taste and science became a model for the rest of the world (including, to a large extent, England) not only throughout the second half of the century, but through most of the eighteenth. The French army was the most powerful in Europe, and was fighting for the King (where previously, it would have been split up into a number of different armies, each the possession of an individual aristocrat).

During the 'interregnum' - the period in which Britain was ruled by Cromwell - the exiled royal family - the Stuarts - had been living in France, and they kept their French contacts when they returned in 1660. They were naturally very impressed by the development of Absolute Monarchy, under Louis, and wanted to imitate it. They had a lot of support in the country from people who hadn't liked Cromwell's rule - the people who had fought as Royalists in the Civil War, and people who reacted against the rigorous morality imposed by the Puritans.

Charles II's admiration for the French led him to support Louis in his attempts to make France the dominant power in Europe. The main opposition to Louis came from the Netherlands. The Netherlands had only emerged as a separate state at the beginning of the seventeenth century, but they had very quickly become the commercial centre of Europe. They were the first country in Europe to proclaim the principle of religious toleration, though the Calvinists, who had led the struggle for independence against Spain, held a monopoly of senior posts in the Government. Exiles from all over Europe settled there, bringing manufacturing and commercial skills as well as radical ideas.

The one great weakness of the Netherlands, however, was that they were reluctant to put money into building up an army and a navy. Money, they believed, should be used for making more money. And since they consisted of seven theoretically equal states (though Holland was dominant), they had some difficulty acting as a united country, even when faced with an external threat. Fear of the growth of France, however, and of France's desire to smash their commercial strength (which was obstructing her own ambitions in that direction) led to them achieving some unity under the control of the House of Orange.

In 1670, Charles II, without the knowledge of the English parliament, signed with Louis the 'Secret Treaty of Dover', which guaranteed that England would not interfere in a war between France and the Netherlands. One clause of this said that Charles would at a later date declare his allegiance to the Roman Catholic Church, and would do everything in his power to reconvert the country. Throughout the next few years, the French pursued the policy of paying the English King subsidies to enable him to rule without having to call a Parliament (whose permission would be needed before taxes could be imposed).

MAY WAS RELIGION IMPORTANT?

*"Our trade abroad, our wealth at home
And all things worth desiring
Were sacrificed to France and Rome
While Britons lay expiring;
The monarch, a Church-ridden ass
Did whate'er priests suggested,
And trotted day by day to mass
The slave of slaves detested.
Then let us sing etc."*

It is nowadays widely taken for granted that religion is a matter of private conscience. Until quite recently, however, such an idea would have seemed absurd. Religion was regarded much as we regard science today. Theological ideas were either true or they were not true: either, for example, the Son was co-eternal with the Father, or he wasn't. To allow a theologian to teach heretical ideas would have seemed as ridiculous as it would nowadays to let an astro-physicist teach that the world was flat and that the sun went round it. And to let ordinary people make their own minds up on theological issues would have been like saying that the man in the street was entitled to make up his own mind whether or not he accepts Einstein's theory of relativity. The early Protestants did not proclaim a right to freedom of conscience: they maintained that their view was right and that the Church's view was wrong, and that wrong views should be suppressed. 'Heretics' were burnt in Calvin's Geneva, Roman Catholics persecuted in England and in the Protestant states in Germany. Even in the Netherlands there was strong pressure from the Calvinist congregations to suppress other religions, and the Calvinist secular rulers probably only maintained freedom of conscience, because the majority of the people were Roman Catholic.

Where religious toleration was practised, then, in England, the Netherlands and, for a while, in France, it was because the dissident minorities were strong enough to resist attempts to impose uniformity. But wherever this happened, they would still have legal disadvantages imposed on them.

The reason why governments felt this to be necessary (after all, nobody nowadays gets penalised for believing that the world is flat) was that, in the days before newspapers or television, the Church was the most important means of social communication. It was the Church

that taught people how to behave in society - what kinds of behaviour were 'good' and what kinds of behaviour were 'bad'. And different theological viewpoints encouraged different sorts of behaviour. According to the classic Roman Catholic view, society should be seen as a pyramid - a hierarchy - with everyone from the king to the peasant fulfilling their allotted task in a fixed social scale. For the 'common people', it emphasised the virtues of obedience and humility, and discouraged ambition and jealousy. For the rulers it emphasised the virtue of 'charity' (generosity). Of course, society never conformed to the Church's model, but it was necessary to assert such ideals at a time when the vast majority of people had no chance of improving their conditions, and all power, wealth and influence was concentrated in very few hands (and usually gained through inheritance or conquest, rather than through hard, productive work).

In these circumstances, the local priest became the centre of his community and he could control that community in the interests of the Church and the State, who could supply him with orders. He got his power from the fact that by administering the sacraments and hearing confessions, he was the only means by which the souls of his 'flock' could be saved, and of course, he knew their secrets.

The Calvinist/Protestant/Puritan concept of things was different. They divided the world into two classes - the elect and the non-elect. The elect were chosen by God to be 'saved', and they were all equal, whether King or tradesman. The divisions in society were a matter more of social convenience than of divine decree. The minister was not superior to his congregation - he was simply more of a specialist in the knowledge of God. Congregations had the right to choose their own minister, and could sack him if they didn't like his teaching. The virtues that were emphasised were hard work, individual initiative and plain living (thrift). These were virtues that made sense to men who could rise in the world through their own efforts - small craftsmen and shopkeepers who, by hard work and saving money, could invest in ever larger projects with a fair chance of becoming wealthy. These men saw obedience to the priesthood as a badge of slavery, and the generosity of the rich as a waste of capital that could be used to increase the productive capacity of the whole society.

The two world views seemed to be incompatible. On the one hand, the Roman Catholic Church wanting society to be centrally controlled through the suppression of individual initiative and ambition; and on the other hand, the Puritan view that the active man should be allowed a free rein for his enterprise. It was difficult to see how either view could 'tolerate' the other.

THE "GLORIOUS REVOLUTION"

*"By cruel Popish politics
Were Protestants affrighted
When to convert poor heretics
New Smithfield fires were lighted.
But hope soon sprang out of despair;
So Providence commanded.
Our fears were all dispersed in air
When valiant William landed.
Then let us sing etc"*

Charles II died in 1685, proclaiming himself on his deathbed to be a Roman Catholic. He was succeeded by his brother, the Duke of York, James II, who was already a Roman Catholic. Throughout Charles' reign, there had been various efforts to exclude James from the succession. Those who wanted to exclude him were called 'Whigs', and those who supported the divine right of Kings 'Tories'. (The Whigs were superseded in the nineteenth century by the Liberals who later split, one faction joining the Labour Party; the Tories are still with us). The Exclusion Bills failed because Charles refused to call Parliaments or to ratify their decisions. He could only afford to do this because of the French subsidies.

James embarked on a policy of giving key posts to Catholics, setting up Catholic institutions in London, inviting a Papal Nuncio, and even setting up an Ecclesiastical Court. In 1687, he made a 'Declaration of Indulgence', granting liberty of public worship to both Protestant and Roman Catholic Dissenters, and suspending the laws that kept them out of public office. But very few people, especially among the Protestant Dissenters, believed that this meant that James believed in liberty of conscience. Only two years before, Louis XIV had revoked the Edict of Nantes, which had given a limited toleration to the French Protestants - the Huguenots. The whole weight of Catholic theory was against the idea of toleration, and it was obvious that James was clearing the way for the establishment of a new Catholic ascendancy (even the Pope thought he was going about it a bit rashly). In 1688, James' Queen bore him a son, James Edward, opening up the prospect of a Catholic dynasty being established in Britain. William of Orange, James' son-in-law and next in succession if James was excluded, was invited over and took England with very little difficulty, in what became known as the "Glorious Revolution."

In 1689, James invaded Ireland, where he had built up a Catholic army, hoping to use it as a base to conquer England. A Protestant community was developing in the North East of Ireland, where Scottish Presbyterians had come over early in the century, supporters of Cromwell had settled after 1660 to be free of the rule of Charles II, and, recently, some Huguenots had arrived to escape Louis XIV. They provided the only local opposition to James, mainly in holding the city of Londonderry against him.

The Battle of the Boyne was where James was finally defeated. It meant that there was no chance of a French-type civilisation being established in Britain, and that Britain joined (and eventually led) the Alliance that kept French expansion in Europe under control. The French system, brilliant as it seemed to be, became such an obstruction to the development of French society that it had to be burst apart in the great Revolution of 1789. Britain at that time was preparing for the "Industrial Revolution" made possible chiefly by the Dissenters, whose political rights had been limited even after the Glorious Revolution, but whose ideas on the importance of individual initiative and hard work created new societies in the Netherlands, America, and Northern Ireland, and eventually, in the nineteenth century made Britain commercially, industrially and militarily, the most powerful country in the world.

The French Revolution, which, for a while, promised to clear Absolute Monarchy off the scene in France, was enthusiastically supported by the descendants of the men who defended Londonderry in Ulster. One of them, Henry Joy, editor of the Belfast News Letter, one of the leaders of the 'Volunteer' movement, and uncle to the United Irish leader Henry Joy McCracken (though Joy was a much more substantial political figure than his more romantic and famous nephew) summed up his feelings about the 1688 Revolution during a series of great political debates held in Belfast in 1791-2:

"It is the fashion of the hour, and as ridiculous as most fashions, are, to deprecate the Revolution of 1688 - and to despise the securities for our liberty which that great transaction afforded. That Revolution expelled a Prince from the throne for attempting to govern without law. It preserved the spirit of freedom in these countries, which burst out again in America ninety years afterwards; and travelling back communicated its flame to Gallic slaves (in the French Revolution), converted in these latter days into free men and become the hope of the world."

CONCLUSION

WHY IS RELIGION STILL IMPORTANT ?

"From all who dare to tyrannise
May Heaven still defend us,
And should another James arise
Another William send us.
May Monarchs great o'er Britain reign,
With highest worth distinguish'd;
But those who would our annals stain
May they be quite extinguish'd.
Then let us sing etc"

In Ireland, a society with a long history of independent activity behind it, finds itself in conflict with a recently emerged society that has very little history of its own. The Irish Catholic nation only began to develop in the O'Connellite agitations of the mid-nineteenth century. One of the 'national heroes', Pádraig Pearse, showed his awareness of the problem when he told the inaugural meeting of the Irish Volunteers in 1913:

"The history of the last hundred years in Ireland might be described as the hopeless attempt of a mob to realise itself as a nation."

The main substance of its 'history' was mythology. The culture that the Gaelic revival was trying to revive was a primitive 'heroic age' culture, with hardly any intellectual, speculative or political content. It was as though England were to base her historical view of herself upon heroic epics such as 'Beowulf'. The Ulster tramp poet, Julius Lecky McCullough Craig, summed it up when he said:

"No Home Rule we require, nor division of John Redmond's school -
It is a dream of the past ages, of great giant Finn MacCool."

The development of the nation co-incided with the development of the Church from a poorly organised, scattered institution, whose links with Rome were very tenuous, to a highly organised and centralised, wealthy, energetic body closely tied to Rome. The Irish Catholic Church is the most impressive achievement of the Irish people (and it is very impressive, in terms of sheer organisation and speed of development; it indicates what the Irish people will be able to do once they grow out of their Catholic and Gaelic Revivalist mentality).

The effect of the Church is described by an American, Paul Blanchard, in his book "The Irish and Catholic power". The following extracts are taken from the chapter 'Fanaticism and Moral Childhood' and for the most part consist of his general comments, leaving out the many examples he gives of the phenomena he describes:

"Moral immaturity is systematically cultivated by the priests. From their point of view, the mature mind is often a disturbed and rebellious mind, while the childlike mind, if directed by the Church, finds happiness and security in obedience. For the purposes of an authoritarian Church, perennial immaturity may be the key to heaven.

The devices which the Catholic priests use to keep the Irish people in a state of moral childhood are not unlike the devices which priests use elsewhere; but in Ireland almost all the people take them seriously. The voices of doubt are not raised publicly. Even among the intellectuals one does not hear in Ireland the ridicule of relics, shrines, and indulgences heard in Italy or in the Latin American countries. When the alleged right arm of Saint Francis Xavier was flown from New York to Dublin in 1949 for exhibition, it was estimated that 100,000 persons headed by the President of the Republic crowded the church and highway to venerate it.....

"The moral decisions of the priests are almost always made on the basis of an appeal to clerical authority; they themselves are treated like children by their bishops and, in turn, they treat their parishioners in the same manner. 'In the 1500 years during which the Gaelic nation has been Catholic' boasts one Catholic writer, 'there has never been a native schism or heresy.'.....

"The moral world which the priests build for their parishioners is itself something of a 'limbus puerorum', rather like a house of blocks, neatly arranged in uniform and graded segments. (note: the 'limbus puerorum' is where, according to Catholic teaching, the souls of children who have died before having the chance to be baptised end up) All moral answers are supplied with great precision; nothing is left to the moral imagination. It is assumed that the Catholic mind craves definiteness and authority. Lying, the people are told, is not a mortal sin, but only 'essentially evil' and a 'venial offence'. Such a formal classifying of 'in inevitably leads to carelessness about those offences which are graded as minor. A priest may win as much money as he pleases through the Irish sweepstakes, but he may not - under Rule no. 47 of the Maynooth Statutes - attend a horse race or watch it from 'a nearby place', without risking ipso facto suspension.....

"The pattern of penance and forgiveness is similarly traced out in elementary fashion..... The people are told that the dates and physical settings of their acts of contrition determine how effective those acts will be in heaven, and they are also told that the priests have exclusive power to set the dates and the places which will be so honored. In the whole process of forgiveness, mechanical acts play a

ishment due to sin in purgatory is granted to any relative of a young priest who goes to the priest's first mass after confession. A 50-day indulgence is granted for kissing the ring of a bishop. The use of the rosary beads in prayer is assumed to secure extraordinary results: By using the rosary under rules laid down by the Dominican Order, a devout Irish Catholic through prayers, visits, and the counting of beads can gain in a single year - according to my reckoning - 434 plenary indulgences for sin, plus 557 years of remission in Purgatory, plus 47,500 special days of remission in Purgatory to almost 700 years in one fruitful and repentant year in this world. The Irish Catholic people are encouraged by their priests to occupy their days in such repetitive exercises in order to escape the penalties of Purgatory. The official booklet *How to avoid Purgatory* says:

"Those who say the little ejaculation: Sacred Heart of Jesus I place my trust in thee one hundred times a day gain 30,000 days Indulgence. Those who say it 1,000 times, as many do, gain 500,000 days Indulgence each day. Nothing can be easier than to acquire the habit of saying this little prayer all day long, countless times each day."

"The priests teach nominally that a good citizen should serve humanity, and they themselves set a good example; but they tend to exalt above all other servants of humanity the apostle of Catholic ritual who spends endless hours in going through the forms of ecclesiastical contrition. Their latest national hero is the pathetic former drunkard Matt Talbot, who was regarded by many of his fellow-workingmen as mentally unbalanced. For twenty years the Dublin priests have been trying to make him into Ireland's first modern saint in order to use his memory and his relics in the fight against drinking - and against leftist tendencies in the labour movement....."

"Although Matt Talbot lived during some of the most critical years of the Irish labour struggle, he made no contribution to the labour movement beyond the payment of union dues, and never attempted to take part in labour reforms. When he dropped dead on a Dublin street in 1925, it was found that for fourteen years he had been wearing around his body and legs, underneath his clothing, heavy cart chains like the chains commonly used by automobiles to prevent skidding, until the chains had become embedded in his flesh. Their apparent object was to prevent sexual sin. Talbot has now been made by the Irish priesthood in both Ireland and America, the most important symbol of man's conquest of alcohol by holiness. "There was packed into Matt Talbot," says Father Dolan, "everything that was best in Irish character."

Blanshard was writing in 1953, thirty years after Independence. The situation is now improved to the extent that it is possible to get half the Dail to vote in favour of allowing married couples to use contraceptives. However 'moral childhood' is still very much manifest in

the cults of drink, violence (the Provos' activity resembles the tantrum of a child that can't get what it wants) and fantasy (the Official IRA's notion, for example, that the Snankill Rd Protestants are going to 'rediscover' their gaelic heritage and join the struggle against 'British Imperialism').

It is because Catholic Ireland has had so little conscious political, economic, religious or intellectual history that the Church was able to get such a grip. Ireland is the only European Catholic country (including Spain and Portugal) which has not yet generated an anti-clerical movement strong enough to gain control of the state. It is one of the few Catholic countries that has no 'concordat' (agreement setting out the Church's rights) with Rome. Jean Blanchard, a french Catholic, in his 'The Church in Contemporary Ireland' (Eng ed. 1963) explains why:

"Ireland, for obvious historical reasons, has never had a concordat. Nor has she one today. Neither the hierarchy nor the civil power see any necessity for one. The heritage of modern Ireland is such that there is never any occasion for difficulties to arise between the nation and Rome. What purpose would it serve to draw up a code of relations when there is never any conflict?"

Of course the Church is not always identifiable with monarchy, and the South is formally a democracy. But the form of government bitterly opposed by the Church was that of King James II, who began his reign in 1685, and that the Church should not reconcile itself to realities it could not overcome. But this was not due to any native social development, as the Irish were contented, it was largely fortuitous, as Michael Collins, a hero of the resistance to Britain before the Treaty, explains in 'The Path to Freedom':

"If we still had a descendant of our Irish kings left, we would be as free under a limited monarchy, with the British gone, as under a Republic The British form of government was monarchical. In order to express clearly our desire to depart from all British forms, we declared a Republic. We repudiated the British form of government, not because it was monarchical, but because it was British."

In fact, the most important influence on the political form of the new free state which came into existence in 1922 was Britain, which drew up a democratic and secular constitution for it. The result was a democratic republic with a powerful Church working to develop among the people a mentality appropriate to the middle ages (even Connolly, who is held up as the very embodiment of progressive socialism, idealised pre-mediaeval Gaelic Ireland)

A society of this sort could make no more sense to the Ulster Protestants than it would to anybody living in any other part of Britain.

Faced with attempts on the part of that society to take them over, the Ulster Protestants fell into defensive ways of thinking which seem highly reactionary to British politicians who aren't prepared to go to the trouble of thinking about it. The Orange Order and 'bigotry' flourished, and the Battle of the Boyne retained its significance.

Since the ending of protectionism in the South in the late fifties however, new industries are coming in, a working class and a managerial class are developing, people are thinking less about their own souls and more about the standard of living; the Church is having to run ever faster in order to keep ahead. Coupled with this is a recognition of the existence of two very different kinds of society in Ireland, an acceptance of the two nations view, which has been pioneered and fought for most consistently by the British and Irish Communist Organisation and the Workers Association. The viciousness and desperation of the Provisional IRA's bombing campaign is the thrashing about of a dying animal. As soon as they stop they know they've had it: the 'Republican' cause is lost (in point of fact, granted the social realities of Ireland, it could never have won). This being the case, the days of 'Orangeism' and 'bigotry' are numbered. The Battle of the Boyne, however, will always remain one of the most significant battles in European history - a battle between submission to the Church, and faith in human activity that still has to be finally fought out within Catholic Ireland.

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