

a journal of secular opinion

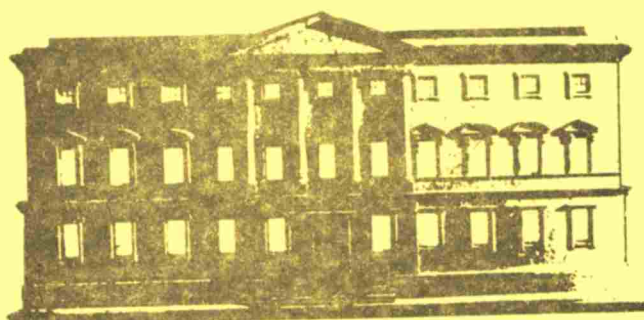
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CHURCH & STATE



A ROMAN CATHOLIC
ABORTION AMENDMENT

CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS
- THE ORIGINS

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W. S. Van Dyke

"What I'm here for is no longer a sin."

CHURCH and STATE

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Editorial

A Roman Catholic Amendment

THE RESPONSE TO THE WORDING of Haughey's anti-abortion amendment must be marked down as a propaganda victory for the Catholic Church. The fact that it is characteristically and exclusively Catholic has hardly been commented upon. The Society For The Protection Of The Unborn Child (SPUC) had prepared people for something different - for an amendment giving the foetus absolute priority over the mother. But SPUC is not the voice of the Church. It is a militant lay organisation on the extreme reactionary wing of the Catholic spectrum.

SPUC AND MARIA DUCE

The Church in Ireland has never been dominated by its reactionary wing. It has always been very prudently, skilfully and pragmatically led by the Bishops. SPUC is a present-day equivalent of what the

Maria Duce organisation was in the fifties. Maria Duce is now almost forgotten. Its aim was to make the Catholic Church the formally established state church of the Republic, and to impose legal restrictions on all other churches. (The Republican leader, Sean South, was one of its activists.)

Many Bishops gave encouragement or sponsorship to Maria Duce, and many priests participated in it, but the Hierarchy decided that the time was not ripe to implement its aims. The actual power of the Church in the state would not have been increased by making it the formally established state church, or by the signing of a formal concordat: and the anti-Partitionist aims of the church would have been hindered by such a move.

The Bishops have been described in this magazine as the most capable body of politicians in the society. Their aim is always to maximise the real social power of the Church. In most situations the power of the Church would be enhanced by a concordat or a state establishment. That is why it is a requirement of Canon Law that the Church should get itself established wherever it has the power to do so.

It had the power to do so in the Republic, and Maria Duce demanded that it should comply with the requirements of Canon Law. But the Hierarchy understood, and made the Vatican understand, that in the unique circumstances of the Republic a state establishment would not bring an increase in power, and would get in the way of unachieved aims in the North.

A time might come when a state establishment would lead to an

increase of real power, (perhaps in a drive to whittle away Northern Protestantism after unification), and it would then be implemented. But in the fifties that time had not yet come, so Maria Duce was kept on a leash.

(Of course that time will never come now. The very ambitious aims set for the Church at the first Vatican Council (1870) were scaled down at Vatican II because they came near to realisation nowhere except in Ireland. And Vatican II has had its effects on the Church in Ireland.)

The same spirit which animated Maria Duce in the fifties animates SPUC today. But there is a difference. Maria Duce was able to cite the letter of Canon Law against the realpolitik of the Hierarchy, but in the case of abortion SPUC tends to go beyond the letter of the law. The wording of Haughey's amendment is the exact letter of the law.

CONFUSED RESPONSES

The Bishops played their cards well. They let SPUC make all the running over the past year, so that people would get the idea that the Church gave the foetus priority over the mother. And then, when the official position of the Church was expressed in the wording of the amendment, it was greeted with a sigh of relief in many quarters.

The Irish Press hailed the Amendment as a statesmanlike compromise. Its editorial of November 4th 1982 quoted the favourable comment of the Catholic Bishops. It continued:

"This reaction of the Bishops of the Bishops to the proposed amendment is likely to be matched by the main Protestant Churches... The Church of

Ireland, the Methodist Church, and the Presbyterian Church have all opposed the idea of a referendum... Faced, however, with the inevitability of such a move... the best the Protestant Churches could hope for was an amendment framed in a way which was neither unduly rigid nor denominational in character... On the surface it looks as though the text of the proposal issued by the government - general in tone to the point of vagueness though it is - will satisfy Protestant concern".

The Cork theologian, Fr. Brendan O'Mahony, who caused a sensation early in 1982 by opposing the proposal to put an anti-abortion amendment into the Constitution, is reported by the Irish Press of November 3rd, 1982 as being pleasantly surprised by the wording of the amendment: he

"welcomed the fact that the text specifically referred to the rights of the mother. 'The proposed amendment certainly seems to take different views into account', said Dr. O'Mahony".

The trouble with dissenting liberal theologians is that they tend to forget what Catholicism actually is.

It was reported in the last issue of Church & State that the wording of the amendment proposed by the Pro-Life Campaign had to be withdrawn

"because it failed to meet the complications of the Catholic position. Above all it gave the foetus an absolute right to life, superseding all other considerations... This formulation was in

fact a licence to kill mothers"
(The Catholic Church & Abortion, p20).

The Pro-Life Campaign (PLAC) formulation read:

"The state recognises the absolute right to life of every unborn child from conception and accordingly guarantees to respect and protect such right by law".

Haughey's formulation reads:

"The State acknowledges the right to life of the unborn and, with due regard to the equal right to life of the mother, guarantees in its laws to respect, and, as far as practicable, by its laws to defend and vindicate that right."

It is strange that a Catholic theologian should mistake the PLAC formulation for the position of the Church, and should mistake the position of the Church as clearly expressed in Haughey's formulation for a position which *"takes different views into account"*.

If the PLAC formulation had been put to vote and inserted in the Constitution, then it could be said that the amendment was not the official position of the Church. In those circumstances the Church would have abdicated responsibility, and a lunatic fringe would have carried the day.

But the Bishops did not abdicate in favour of a lunatic fringe. They have now got a formulation which puts the position of the Church exactly, according equal rights to mother and foetus. And they conducted the affair with their customary skill.

Tim Pat Coogan may not know or care what the Catholic position is.

He is so used to explaining away the Catholicism of the state in anti-Partitionist argument that his own mind is probably as muddled on the issue as his Irish Press editorials were.

But the editor of the Limerick Leader - the watchdog of the Church in the most Catholic city on earth - has surely not forgotten his theology. Yet he writes:

"Far from being sectarian, the Pro-Life position is not even denominational" (Nov 11).

Is that a lie told in pursuit of a greater good? Or is it a symptom of disintegration in the staunchly Catholic middle class of Limerick?

Whatever the reason, the Catholic press commentators are depicting the Catholic position as being an Ecumenical position, and the Bishops are happy to see them do it. Twenty years ago the Bishops would have considered it almost as important that everybody should see that it was a distinctively Catholic position that was being put, as that a Catholic position should actually be put. But times have changed, and they are now happy to see a Catholic position being represented as an Ecumenical position for the purpose of getting adopted.

And the remnants of the other Churches in the Republic have been given such a scare by SPUC that they have almost welcomed a straight Catholic amendment.

But which Church, other than the Roman Catholic Church, accords absolutely equal rights to a pregnant woman and her foetus?

Which other Church takes no account whatever of the stage of development of incipient human life, and accords absolutely equal status to a blob of fertilised egg, an undifferentiated embryo, a fully developed but yet unborn baby, and a pregnant woman?

It is indisputable that there is a widespread feeling against abortion in Ireland. It is equally indisputable that few Irish people, when put on the spot, would agree to place on an equal footing a minute blob of matter and a woman in the prime of her life. But that is what the proposed Amendment says. And that Amendment has been approved by all the major parties. The only T.D. who opposed it - Jim Kemmy - lost his seat in the recent election. All the rest either advocate, or keep silent about, this further measure of Catholicisation of the state.

But the widespread revulsion against abortion in Ireland, is only against abortions performed in Ireland. It is a bit of sentimental self-indulgence made possible by the fact that English abortion facilities are easily available to citizens of the Republic.

WHAT WILL IT AMOUNT TO?

The Amendment will make abortion into a particular form of murder. There will be matricide, patricide, fratricide, and abortion. Thousands of people will commit murder every year. Will an attempt be made to stop this murder?

Extradition won't help, since this form of murder is legal in England. But we have seen a lot of legal ingenuity in recent years designed to circumvent the demand for extradition of IRA and INLA bombers

and riflemen to the North. Surely it would be a simple matter to make abortion committed in England by citizens of the Republic an indictable offence in the Republic. But will it be done?

Is it even conceivable that any illegal abortions performed in the Republic should actually be treated on a par with other forms of murder?

The frenzied instigators of the Amendment, SPUC, would willingly carry through all the implications of the Amendment, but they do not have the power to do so. They are able to postpone the day when operations which are openly acknowledged to be abortions can be legally performed in hospitals in the Republic, but that is all they are able to do.

The Hierarchy is more powerful than SPUC, but it is no longer able to function as the totalitarian moulder of public opinion: and it knows better than to try to carry the implications of the Amendment through in practice.

What will be left when the fuss dies down will be a more Catholic Constitution than De Valera's, but a Constitution that is no longer seriously intended to be put into effect.

It would require a fundamentalist religious enthusiasm comparable with that displayed in Iran to make the implications of the Amendment a vital force in the life of the nation - and that sort of enthusiasm is rapidly seeping out of the life of the nation.

This Catholic advance - the last Catholic advance - will

insert a piece of Catholic ornamentation in the Constitution. It will not stop the recession of Catholic social power - it will, if anything, have the opposite effect.

The Amendment is impeccably Roman Catholic. But the victory will be an empty one, achieved at the cost of rousing latent forces of opposition.

EXPERT HUMBUG

Fianna Fail, Fine Gael, and Labour competed with each other to be the best anti-abortionists during the election campaign. Dick Spring took the laurels for humbug when replying to Haughey's allegation that the Labour Party was soft on abortion:

"Mr. Spring said he had obtained legal advice, and believed that the wording of the amendment... was open to many interpretations, which would not clarify the fundamental question raised.

"Mr. Spring...reiterated the Labour Party's unequivocal opposition to the legalisation of abortion... In reply to questions, Mr. Spring admitted that if he had his way in government he would look for an overall review of the constitution rather than a special amendment of the kind proposed. It had not been shown to his satisfaction that the proposed amendment was necessary, he said...

"Explaining his doubts about the wording of the proposed amendment, Mr. Spring said that under it the position of the unborn child was no stronger than under present legislation, and could even prove to be weaker, given the attributing of

equal rights to the mother.

It could be challenged in the courts, and the possibility could arise that the gates would be opened to the introduction of legislation on abortion" (Cork Examiner, Nov 11, 1982).

A purely logical analysis of this statement would lead to the conclusion that Spring was an activist on the lunatic fringe: a supporter of SPUC. But it is unlikely that he is any such thing. His job as leader of the Labour Party was to take up a position that would squash Haughey's suggestion that the Party was soft on abortion, while not committing the Party to support the Amendment. The statement that the Amendment, by giving the mother equal rights with the foetus, might open the gates to abortion legislation, enabled him to do just that.

It is unlikely that a cosmopolitan Kerryman like Spring knows, or cares, what the official position of the Church is. And he certainly has too much political wit to reveal what his personal views on abortion are. Having taken over the leadership of the Labour Party on the eve of the election, he suddenly found himself in the middle of a game of humbug in which the stakes were high: and he played it like an expert.

Haughey had no comeback. How, in Holy Ireland, can you go one better than a man who complains that the rights of the foetus have been weakened because the mother has been given equal rights with it? Spring entered into the spirit of the game with unparalleled gusto and abandon.

* * *

THE ANTI-AMENDMENT CAMPAIGN PAMPHLET

A pamphlet by the Anti-Amendment Campaign, The Abortion Referendum: The Case Against, happened to be published in the first week of the election campaign. A press conference held on November 9th to launch it was poorly attended. Even the most liberal politicians thought it wiser to keep away. But it was attended by Adrian Hardiman, an adviser to Sheila de Valera. He opposed the Amendment on the grounds that nobody knew what it meant, and that it would infringe individual liberty: and he demanded better contraception facilities.

The pamphlet is made up of material by about a dozen writers, with varying viewpoints. It is more interesting than compilations of this kind usually are.

The Introduction is by Mary Holland. Ms Holland is a nationalist and a feminist. In the late sixties and early seventies she was an Observer journalist, and her reports on Ulster events made very effective anti-Unionist propaganda in Britain. In that period nationalism and feminism appeared to those who were involved in both of them to be converging forces. Ms. Holland found it easy to write about "Rome Rule" as if it were a mere Unionist bogey.

It was possible for her, and many like her, to turn a blind eye to the reality of Rome Rule in the Republic. Jack Lynch's cunning blandness made it easy for them to do so. (Lynch was probably the best anti-Partitionist Taoiseach there has ever been.)

Ms Holland now lives in the

Republic. The Republic is much less Catholic now than it was twelve or fourteen years ago, but Ms Holland is now much more acutely aware of its Catholicism than she was then.

She now writes: *"The referendum also has wide ranging implications for this country's relationship with our fellow-countrymen in the North. The official policy of all the major political parties in Ireland is the pursuit of Irish unity by consent" (What about the Unionists?!)*

"...Ulster Protestants believe that the Catholic Church exercises an undue influence on politics in the Republic... That was why they resisted Home Rule in the first place... Ever since partition the rallying cry of 'Rome Rule' has been the single most effective slogan uniting Northern Protestants... This referendum may yet prove the most effective argument Ulster Unionists put forward to explain their fears of a united Ireland. It would be quite wrong to dismiss these fears as fantasy..."

There is a considerable change of emphasis here, by comparison with what Ms Holland used to write. Her feminism seems to be undermining her nationalism.

She writes that adoption of the amendment would be *"a grave blow to those who are trying to create a more liberal and compassionate society in Ireland by changing our laws in other respects"*, for example, on divorce. We doubt this very much. Unless the amendment is carried overwhelmingly it will be tantamount to a defeat for Catholic social power. If 20% or over vote against, the monolith of Catholic

social power will have cracked.

In any case, a Catholic victory in the referendum is unlikely to exert much influence on legislation on other questions. Abortion is not comparable with divorce. Irish abortions can easily be had in England, but Irish divorces can't.

The mess which the Republic's marriage laws have caused will have to be sorted out in the Republic. Pressure from the ever-increasing number of people whose lives are being messed up by the marriage laws has already made divorce a respectable issue in the Republic. TDs now feel it safe to appear at meetings of the Divorce Action Group.

The Bishops' comments on the inadequacy of Constitutional provisions on abortion have not been generally understood. These comments do not signify that the Amendment is not as Catholic as it might be. They signify that no state Constitution could adequately reproduce the great complexities of Catholic Canon Law administered by the Church to its pious flock. Divorce is a case in point.

The Constitutional ban on divorce was approved by the Bishops, even though it made no provision for Church annulments. The result is that the Church can, and does, dissolve marriages, while the state cannot. This discrepancy could only have been prevented by taking marriage out of the sphere of secular legislation and making it exclusively a matter for the Church.

Given that there was secular marriage law, secular ratification of ecclesiastical annulment could only have taken the form of divorce. The Church preferred to put up with the discrepancy resulting

from a total prohibition of divorce than to make even the most limited secular provision for divorce, and they relied on Church hegemony over the state and the society to prevent serious friction from occurring. But the weakening of Church hegemony, and the greater readiness of the Vatican to grant annulments, have made a mess of the marriage situation in the Republic.

CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

Kevin Boyle has an article entitled, An Insult To The Constitution. Mr. Boyle, who was a Civil Rights activist in Belfast in the late sixties, is now Professor of Law at Galway University. He argues that a Constitutional amendment

"should be a more reflective exercise than amending ordinary law... In the case of the Pro-Life amendment the circumstances in which it was first introduced and adopted by the party leaders were an insult to the special character of the Constitution as fundamental law, and reflected poorly on political standards in this state. It took exactly three weeks from the launching of the Pro-Life campaign to the adoption of their proposals by all the major parties. The campaign was launched on 28 April 1981. By 15 May Fine Gael and Fianna Fail had committed themselves to it, and Labour gave general approval."

Furthermore, Mr. Boyle argues, the campaign was launched from outside the state, and has an *"international objective"*. A Constitutional amendment is being sought in the Republic in order to *"strengthen the campaign elsewhere against abortion"* - with special reference to America.

"It might be different if it could be argued that such an amendment was the culmination of social policy in this state, favouring life and young life in particular down the years".

Mr. Boyle is on weak ground here. There are of course American connections. But aren't there always American connections? However, in the vanguard of this campaign was that sound Republican priest, Fr. Faul of Dungannon. Whatever Fr. Faul may be, he is not a foreigner. And, looking back over the past ten or twelve years, Fr. Faul can claim both greater understanding of the real world and more consistency of purpose than Mr. Boyle.

Early in 1981 Fr. Faul wrote well argued letters to the papers from a Catholic-nationalist viewpoint. In one of these letters he roundly denounced a group of American-Irish politicians who were prepared to flirt with abortion in order to capture the liberal vote. These politicians should be denounced, he said, even if it meant that their support for the Republican cause might diminish as a result.

The Belfast Irish News quickly backed up Fr. Faul with well-informed editorials. The editor of the Irish Pres may have forgotten what the proper Catholic position on many issues is, but the editor of the Irish News hasn't.

So what, if the Amendment was not needed to prevent the imminent legalisation of abortion in the Republic! So what, if its purpose was to strengthen a Catholic lobby elsewhere! Was the Republic established to be sufficient unto itself? Or did it have a mission in the world? Was it not set up to be

shining example of a Catholic state to the world at large, and to assist the process of Catholicisation wherever it could?

Mr. Boyle attempts to set nationalism against Catholicism. But his nationalism is an empty form. The cultural substance of nationalism historically has been Catholicism. The two have been bound together^{ever} since the 1830s. And Catholicism in Ireland ever since the 1830s has been very much Roman Catholicism. We have not had a national church at odds with the Vatican, like the French and German Churches. The revelation of an international Catholic conspiracy is unlikely to have much popular impact. Nor are people likely to develop strong national feelings about the dignity of the Constitution.

The Catholic state was built by the Catholic nationalist movement. Nationalism is not going to be the force which will de-Catholicize the state. Mr. Boyle wishes to retain his nationalism while campaigning against the Catholic state, with the result that he rests his case on empty formalities.

His article (based on a talk given in June 1982) assumes that the SPUC formulation was going into the Constitution, and he says that it "*reflects Roman Catholic thinking and theology*". He comments: "*Labelling something as a question of human rights is mere sloganising. There are very few absolute rights, and the right to life is not one of them...*" As a criticism of the Church, this is like teaching your grandmother to suck eggs.

Mr. Boyle says: "At present there is no legal abortion here North or South". This is a

very inaccurate and misleading statement. It may serve some propaganda purpose to say it, but it just isn't true. Legal abortions are regularly performed in the North. Therapeutic abortions are done there, as they were in England for decades before the abortion act. And pregnant women are tested for abnormalities in the foetus and offered abortions if the tests prove positive, as in Britain.

When people in the North say that they are against abortion, they mean that they are against broadening the grounds for abortion. They do not mean that they are for curbing the therapeutic abortions which are actually being done.

Furthermore, there is an excellent family planning service in Northern Ireland, which is an integral part of the UK National Health Service, and through which people seeking abortions which cannot be performed in the North can arrange to have them done in Britain.

There is no parity between North and South on this issue. In the South, the anti-abortion campaign, and the Constitutional Amendment, are directed primarily against therapeutic abortion. The legalising of therapeutic abortion is held to be the crucial issue.

But in the North, therapeutic abortion is so much taken for granted that it is hardly thought of as abortion at all. And it is unlikely that an extension of the British act to the North would cause more than a slight ripple of disturbance there. (Paisley blustered for years about "*saving Ulster from sodomy*", but the legalisation of sodomy a few months ago went almost unnoticed.)

AN INTERESTING QUESTION

When Kevin Boyle says that *"there is no legal abortion here North or South"*, perhaps he means that the same old British law of 1861 is still in being in both territories. He does not expand on the assertion. He goes on to say that *"to answer the argument that the amendment is therefore unnecessary, the pro-life group state that the campaign is designed to anticipate any change in the law of the state which would permit abortion. They are... concerned... that the courts might find the current prohibition on abortion in the 1861 statute unconstitutional."*

Reference to the prohibition of abortion by the 1861 act raises an interesting question. If the 1861 law is still in effect in both parts of Ireland, then there are two very different interpretations of it. In the North, interpreted in accordance with liberal Protestant tradition, it allows therapeutic abortion, whilst in the South the Catholic doctrinal interpretation is applied, (which is that no abortion as such is permitted, but that medical treatment is permissible even if the side effect is destruction of the foetus - an interpretation which excludes most therapeutic abortions).

This is a matter which we will try to clear up in the next issue. But it is certainly the case that, long before the reform of abortion law in the sixties, abortions were performed in Britain under the 1861 Act. In the 30s an English doctor performed an abortion for a

rape victim, informed the police and insisted that he be prosecuted and was found not guilty by a jury.

Strictly therapeutic abortions in a physical sense were performed earlier than that, but from then onwards a much wider interpretation of "therapeutic" was adopted, and a lot of abortions were being performed by the time the law was changed.

This would seem to suggest that Mr. Boyle is not being quite fair in his description of the case made by the "pro-life group". The 1861 law was not a barrier to abortion in England, and is not in the North.

It is conceivable that a court case of the right kind might legitimise abortion under that law even in the Republic today. The Pro-Amendment lobby say they fear a judgement that the law is unconstitutional. But it is more likely that they fear that a jury might refuse to convict a doctor who performed an abortion on strong humanitarian grounds.

JIM KEMMY

The nationalist orientation of the Anti-Amendment Campaign pamphlet is clearly demonstrated by a remarkable omission. Jim Kemmy was the only TD who did not contribute to the general humbug. He was even prepared to risk his Dail seat by publicly supporting the right to abortion in a number of specific cases.

All the hypocrisy of the society turned on him, and he lost his seat. But because he opposes nationalism as clearly as he opposes the Amendment he is not even mentioned in the pamphlet. Old habits die hard.

*

KNOWLEDGE !

Church & State has been criticised for being too knowledgeable about the Church. Too much knowledge has been said to inhibit militant anti-clerical feeling. But how can there be too much knowledge of the most powerful institution in the society? We have now seen the dangers of too little knowledge - it has allowed a strictly Roman Catholic formulation to be represented as an Ecumenical compromise.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A London reader writes:

"The historical material on the Church is of great interest, it's a pity you don't have a wider circulation. Even though your conclusions on nationalism must, necessarily, be highly controversial, your work represents a very significant contribution on religion in Ireland, a debate which is sadly lacking in the Irish community in this country."

It is, regrettably, true that the Irish in Britain make little contribution to the secularisation of the Republic. This seems to be partly because most of them quickly cease to take any active interest in Irish affairs, and partly because most of those who continue to take an interest do so in the cause of anti-Partitionism and therefore try to obscure the Catholic nature of the Republic.

It would be a welcome change if, now that migration is not such a one-way track as it used to be, the Irish in Britain became more clearly secularist in their

attitude to the Republic.

As for our position on nationalism: we think that that is what enabled us to produce the material on the Church. While the magazine will continue to be conducted basically from that position, contributions from other positions are welcome.

A reader from Co. Kildare writes: *"I consider Angela Clifford's article to be first rate, and a pity it could not have much wider circulation. I hope do something for my union very soon, and it has much useful material."*

"I feel that the broadest possible united front is essential to defeat the Abortion Referendum, and therefore should your line not be a more positive one of asserting the principles of a free church in, but separate from, a free state, rather than the negative angle of a direct attack on the obscurantist religious codes? In other words, must a secular state await a secular society here?"

We do not have the resources to do much about increasing our circulation - by commercial printing for example.

There is certainly a need for a broad front of secularists, which would attempt to achieve a secular state in advance of a secular society, by bringing together all sorts of people in support of limited aims. Church & State would certainly be a participant in such a broad front. But a secularising movement consists of a diversity of tendencies, and some of those tendencies need the kind of material which is published by Church & State, but which would mostly be unsuitable for the magazine of a broad front.

CONCLUDED BOTTOM page 35

Pregnant & Unmarried

in Ireland

~ A TRUE STORY

TO BE PREGNANT AND UNMARRIED IN IRELAND is still a very lonely and terrifying situation to be in. It would be very lovely if every woman who became pregnant had the means of having her baby and rearing her baby in comfort and happiness, but that is a long, long way from the reality of the situation.

With the amount of work that can be done to improve the situation for unmarried mothers and indeed for many thousands of children, isn't it sad - or is it simply true to form - for this country that a group should be formed who want £1 million of the people's money spent in an effort to ensure that all those girls who get themselves pregnant be made to bring their pregnancies to full term, with no exceptions?

HOMES FOR BAD GIRLS

When I was a child, growing up in Cork, there was an institution there, run by nuns, called Bedsborough (aptly named, most people thought). And that was where "*bad girls*" went to have their babies and repent their sins.

Not much has been written about such institutions or about the private homes who take pregnant girls who are either thrown out of their family home or who have to leave for any other reason. I experienced both and to tell you the truth, I wouldn't wish it on anyone.

The doctor suggested to my mother that the best thing for her to do was either send me to Bedsborough or keep me in for the remaining 7½ months. She couldn't in conscience send me to Bedsborough because that was only for the "*bad girls*", and they wouldn't accept that I was bad. So I was to be kept in.

A REFUGE ?

I was 19 years old and they were as scared as I was, which was why it was a relief to all of us when we heard of the scheme which placed girls in private homes for the duration of their pregnancies. I jumped at the opportunity both for my own sake as well as my parents' and I was sent to a house in an upper class area in Limerick city.

There was another girl there when I arrived. She was about 7 months pregnant. My parents were overwhelmed at the generosity of the couple at taking in two girls. I was to discover that for the woman of the house, at any rate, her

attitude was that two maids were better than one; and the other girl was so pregnant she was becoming very slow on her feet.

UNPAID SERVANTS

They had seven children; the eldest was seven years of age. The duties every day started at about 6.00 am when the baby woke. The routine every day was clean the house, dress and feed the children (I won't describe the menu) and take them out of the house, hail, rain or snow until it was time for their tea and then to bed.

One morning we slept in and there was holy war. *"You two can have your fling when this is all over for you, but while you're in my house, you'll do the work I tell you to"*. I was mad. Work? Yes, I'll work, but I won't be an unpaid servant to anyone.

I rang the society in Cork and told them what was happening. The other girl had been too scared to do it; she was made to believe she had to be grateful just because she had a roof over her head. We were both moved out. I was sent to a doctor's house in the west of Ireland. There was little or no work to be done in this house, and the food was good.

A DIFFERENT MISERY

I had thought a lot about what I would do when the baby was born. I was too young to rear a child on my own - I had no job and no place to live. I knew adoption was best. The doctor's wife was disgusted when she heard this; she had no time for anyone who didn't either have an abortion or else keep their baby.

The doctor, who was to be my doctor while I was there, was a

miserable kind of creature. The first day I went into his surgery for a check up, I was told to take all my clothes off. I thought the request a bit strange as the doctor I attended in Limerick didn't request that. The examination was too thorough to be true and eventually, when it became obvious what he was at, I protested. He laughed and said: *"You must like it or else you wouldn't be pregnant, would you?"* I spent the next few weeks avoiding him.

I lifted every concrete block and every heavy load I could find, desperately trying to bring on a miscarriage - but no such luck. I hated accepting charity, because that was all it was, and with these feelings, and the doctor's advances I had to get out.

A CONVENT "HOME"

I was six months pregnant when I went to an institution in the Navan Road, Dublin, to be interviewed by the nuns there before they would accept me in the Home. When I arrived in the large convent building it was Rosary time, and all the girls with bumps of varying sizes and Rosary Beads in hands were descending the staircase to the chapel for evening prayers.

I felt sick. I was by then an atheist and had an intense dislike for the pious hypocrisy of the clergy. My first few minutes in the place and I knew I would crack up if I had to take prayers and holiness on top of everything else that was happening to me.

The Reverend Mother was a cold woman. She talked to me for about half an hour. She dictated her rules and I said no thanks and left. I felt totally dejected and alone and, worst of all, I felt I was a failure.

I went to a relative in Dublin, told my story and lived with them for the last two months, which were good.

A CATHOLIC HOSPITAL

There is no doubt in my mind that the "joy of pregnancy" is an illusion. There is certainly no joy in feeling movement inside you and all the discomfort of getting bigger and bigger when you have no one close enough to share it with.

The baby was born in Holles St. I had been advised not to have the baby with me in Hospital since I had decided on adoption, and therefore it would be unwise to become attached to her. After the birth I was put in a public ward, with about 30 other mothers and told my baby would be put in a cot at the bottom of my bed.

On hearing this I went to the staff-room to ask the sister, as I was advised, not to bring the baby to the ward. "We have a mother here who doesn't want her baby", she shouted back to the nurses and doctor who were in the room and also loud enough for the whole world to hear. My cover was broken: I had been pretending to be married. The shame was awful. That was advice I regretted following. I felt afterwards, and still do, that it would have been very nice to enjoy the fruit of what was a very unhappy time, even if it was for a short while.

UNMARRIEDS' REVOLT!

That day I was lying in bed, the girl next to me was an itinerant; she had just had her second. A priest walked up the ward to her, very purposefully, stopped at her bed and ⁱⁿ as loud a whisper as he could muster, told her that it was a disgraceful sin that an unmarried

itinerant woman should bring a second child into the world. She pleaded with him to be quiet. He wouldn't. My heart went out to her, I just knew how she felt, and I joined her in the battle.

When I told the priest to fuck off and leave her alone, she was a bit amazed, but something snapped in her and she turned on him and said "Yeah, fuck off for yourself ye 'oul bollocks. You don't have to feed them or rear them. I don't see why you should be so upset", and crowned it by throwing a slipper at him, on his way out. A few of the tougher women cheered as he left.

There was a girl across the ward who confided in me that she wasn't married either. She was about the same age as myself and from Wexford. When she discovered she was pregnant she was, as she said herself, lucky enough to have £300 saved. She took a small cubby hole flat in Dublin and pretended to her parents that she was going to London and wrote letters home via a friend she had there. For six months her only pleasure was television and the only one she spoke to was the man who came to collect the money for it. She didn't dare go out for fear of being seen.

A SAD MOTHER

One day about ten of us were collected into a little room to fill out the birth certificates for our babies. The mothers seemed so happy and full of chat. I envied their happiness and wished I could run away from it all. The girl sitting next to me didn't look happy either and her dress indicated that times were hard for her. Her night-dress was torn and she wore a shabby overcoat over it. She stuck out like a sore thumb in contrast to the

frills of everyone else. She looked no more than twenty-two or three, she was so frail. "Is this your first?" I said to her by way of conversation. She turned her face up to me. Her eyes were swollen from crying. She was very thin and very pale. "Oh God, no missus, 'tis me seventh". What could anyone say to that?

My pregnancy wasn't very nice but I know that there are many, many women who would tell worse tales.

**A NEW START SPOILED
BY A PRIEST**

I went to London shortly afterwards to get away from it all and to recover. I stayed for about a year. Then I applied for and got a job in a small hotel in a holiday town in the West of Ireland. My past, however, was to be discovered by a local priest who launched a campaign to have me barred from the town.

Conditions in the hotel were very bad. We often worked an 18-hour day with no overtime money. I was fired for being involved in strike action. It was January, work was scarce and I was broke. I moved in with the guy I was going out with and within a week I got a promise of a job from the matron in the hospital to start the following April. Rather than create any gossip in town by living with a man, I left that week for Dublin planning to return in April.

One day a letter arrived which said the following:

"Dear Miss ----,

"For quite sometime now I have had more than a passing interest in your well-being. I presume you know me, though we probably did not meet in church.

"I like most others was interested in the life in Chalet No.2

(my boy-friend's house).

"This letter is not an effort to humble or humiliate you, it is an effort to state a position of fact which impinges on the whole moral well-being for a community at a time when it appears you have applied for a post of responsibility within the community.

"I am chaplain to the hospital. The matron asked me if I knew you. I have asked her to hold over a decision (on the job) just yet. The easy and truthful answer at the moment is no! she cannot be allowed back, least of all to a hospital.

"Should you wish to ring me use the name Mary Murphy. I may not be in house, the need for discretion. Please acknowledge receipt of this letter - we'll know where we stand. Mary Murphy wants to hear some more or Mary Murphy wants to meet you or Mary Murphy says drop dead!!

"Why the hand of friendship from me to you? For the sake of your good mother who is blissfully ignorant of your lifestyle.

Beir Bua is Beannacht."

THE REJOINDER

I was stunned. I took the letter to two solicitors seeking their help. Neither were willing. I could get no help or advice from anyone as to how I should deal with this priest whom I discovered had spread the word around the employers in the town in order to prevent my getting work there.

I eventually wrote the following to him:

"I was shocked and horrified both by the tone and content of your letter. The tone suggests a presumption of authority over me which I strongly object to, not be-

cause you are a priest but because you used your role as a priest to do cheap detective work on behalf of an employer.

"I object to the content because it suggests that I am unfit for the job for which I applied because of the suggested events of my past life which, even if true, is of no concern to you or to the matron of the hospital.

"I expect from you a full explanation of your role as a priest in this whole affair. I shall have to think seriously of what further steps I must take to protect my own good name and to prevent the recurrence of this sort of thing for anybody else.

"Yours -----."

Several letters went to and fro after that all in the same vein. One stated:

"Because I have befriended you, you would wish to dig your teeth into me. Someday I hope to meet you in Dublin and you can do just that."

I did get a job in the town with an American company and I stayed there for another year. Your man never had the courage to look me in the eye. Neither did he, needless to say, give me the opportunity to take a bite out of him.

SPUC'S "CONCERN"

With all the talk out of the SPUC people and the so-called concern for life, as far as I am concerned, they are of the same type as that priest was, and do not know what concern is.

It would be very lovely if every woman who became pregnant had the means of having her baby and rearing her baby with happiness, but that is a long, long way from the reality of the situation.

The Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child people have no idea of the true situation for, if they did, they would have more than enough to occupy themselves with in improving the situation that exists rather than fighting for a sectarian amendment to the constitution which will benefit no-one and only create trouble in the long run.

I have no intention of ever becoming pregnant again, but if I do I can assure you it won't be for long.

M.G.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND ABORTION

- the article of that name which appeared in the last issue of CHURCH & STATE is now available as a pamphlet. PRICE 50p + postage.

Write to: P. Maloney, 26 Church Avenue, Roman Street, CORK.

RYAN, REASON and ROME RULE

THERE WAS A TIME IN IRELAND, AND NOT VERY LONG AGO, WHEN IT WAS VIRTUALLY UNTHINKABLE TO INTERVIEW A BISHOP ABOUT ANYTHING OF ANY IMPORTANCE - indeed in most cases about anything at all. When the Bishop had something to say, he issued a Pastoral Letter and this Letter was read out at every mass in every church in the diocese the following Sunday.

Occasionally, the press might get a preview of the letter. But there was no question of any interview on the basis of it. There was no need for an interview. The pastoral letter was sufficient unto itself. Some subject required the Bishop's comments. He gave his comments and any necessary instructions in the Pastoral Letter. If there was more to be said on the matter he simply wrote a longer letter, or he wrote another letter. Everyone knew that. It was obvious.

All believed in the same thing and all knew where the source of truth on anything lay. Why want to question the thing? That would merely make the source of truth questionable; and since it was patently not questionable, it would be sheer mischievousness - if not worse - for questions to be asked.

RYAN'S INTERVIEW

The most significant aspect of the Interview with Archbishop Ryan of Dublin with the Sunday Press (5th September 1982) was the fact that it (and others like it) took place at all.

For the paper which is dedicated to "*the glory of God*" to question the Bishop on matters of substance and for the Bishop to answer these questions is a sign of the times. It is a sign that the times are "*a-changin*" and that the readers of the Sunday Press may be finding the source of truth questionable.

Ryan by no means got a rough ride. Indeed, the interviewer came close to fawning at times. Yet the Archbishop, merely by being forced to answer specific questions, got into difficulties. Catholicism is very much a religion of faith. Interviews, no matter how fawning, involve the use of reason if they are not to be utterly disjointed and make complete asses of both interviewer and interviewee.

FAITH AND REASON

But faith and reason do not belong to even the same plane. They operate on entirely different levels. And when they ever begin to get mixed up one must inevitably dominate the other. Reason excludes faith. And faith is entirely

unreasonable.

Catholic faith is not some mystical cult which operates outside of, or as an escape from, the world of reason. Catholicism is a mass faith and insists on intruding into the world of reason. It imposes its dogmas on the daily lives of people and expects these dogmas to be accepted as a matter of faith by reasonable people suspending their reason.

People have faith in the Church. The Church makes pronouncements and the people obey because they are reasonable enough not to imagine that they can apply the rules of reason in the area of faith.

Of course the conflict gets the better of them all the time, and they constantly act reasonably and against their faith. They sin. They feel guilty about their sin. And this helps them to decide "properly" the next time a conflict arises.

REASON TAKING OVER

Reason, however, is becoming more and more self-confident. This is to be expected in a world where people can more and more control their lives and need to behave reasonably in order to do so. Even the Church has had to make concessions to reason and this has been a great help to people who might previously have felt guilty about using their reason.

And now the point is reached where instead of the reasonable actions of people being judged by how they accord with the teachings of the Church - by their sinfulness or otherwise - the teachings of the Church are beginning to be scrutinised according to the standards of reason.

No doubt many interviewers of Bishops are so sure of their faith that they imagine that the teachings of the Church are perfectly reasonable and that this fact ought to be pointed out.

DIVORCE

Ginnie Kenneally, who conducted the Interview with Ryan, asked him about divorce. Among other evils of divorce, the Archbishop pointed to the financial problem of

"large numbers coming onto social welfare because of non-payment of promised support after divorce".

Ms. Kenneally pointed out that deserted wives and children cause a financial burden on the state also, and the Archbishop had no answer to that. When he ventured beyond his church's morality he got stuck.

But the interviewer did not even need to come back at the reply from the Archbishop. He exposed himself merely by having to state his position baldly and in an atmosphere of reason.

ABORTION

On abortion he was asked about possible exceptions to the Church's ruling, and replied:

"This idea of exceptions is exactly the way abortion was introduced in other countries, and it's clear that once you move away from the strict principle there is no stopping the tide of abortion. In the present state of modern medicine there is simply no need for such exceptions."

The interviewer did not comment on that. She did not need to. Maybe she was too embarrassed to. That statement says a host of things.

Ryan admits that given half a chance, his flock would be aborting all over the place. He must think that abortion is good fun - like many of the other things he bars. But it's interesting that he is admitting that there is no serious opposition to abortion from the 'flock' itself.

Then we have the complete ban on exceptions - in spite of the fact that the Church already acknowledges two of them - hysterectomy in the event of cancer and the removal of an egg fertilised in the fallopian tube - admittedly, in the latter case, the Church insists that the unfortunate woman must be in actual agony and actually risking death before the operation can begin.

Finally there is the notion that modern medicine ensures that the choice between the death of the foetus and the death of the mother need not arise. Well we've just seen two examples. And apart from the Archbishop lying in print, is he suggesting that at some previous time when medicine was not so advanced, that abortion was alright? One wonders what other terrible sins the advance of medicine will bring in its train!

ROME RULE

Then the Archbishop 'defended' the Church against the charge of Rome Rule - largely by excusing it.

But if he continues to give interviews like this it is unlikely that we will be experiencing Rome Rule in Ireland for a whole lot longer. The interview made for very heartening reading indeed!

CONOR LYNCH

ATHEISM 200 Years ago

"We make a Deity ourselves, fall down and worship him. Its the molten calf over again. Idolatry is still practised. The only difference is that now we worship idols of our imagination; before of our hands" (p36).

"...if evil and pain are good and necessary now (in this life), why will they not always be so? (p22)

"...people who are moral will not deny they would be so though there were not a god, and there never yet has been a civil lawgiver, who left crimes to be punished by the author of the universe..." (p2)

These ideas appeared in the first British atheist work, which appeared in 1782. It was An Answer To Dr. Priestley's Letters To A Philosophical Unbeliever by Matthew Turner of Liverpool, who was a pioneer of medical research and played a leading role in establishing the place of ether in medical treatment.

Quotations supplied by DAVID BERMAN

Jeremy Bentham's Analysis of RELIGION

ON THE 150th ANNIVERSARY OF JEREMY BENTHAM'S DEATH it seems appropriate to comment on his work as a freethinker, particularly as his three critiques of religion are, as Mary Mack notes in her Jeremy Bentham (1962), "among the most submerged of Bentham's writings..." (having been) "excluded by Bowring from the Collected Edition".

Bentham himself published only the Church Of Englandism And Its Catechism Examined (1818). The other two works were edited and arranged from his manuscripts by Francis Place and George Grote, who published, respectively, Not Paul, But Jesus (1823) - which argues that the spiritual message of Jesus was perverted by St. Paul - and the Analysis Of The Influence Of Natural Religion On The Temporal Happiness Of Mankind (1822), which exerted a profound influence on John Stuart Mill.

The Analysis, Mill writes in his Autobiography (1873), "contributed materially to my development and was one of the books which by the searching character of its analysis produced the greatest effect on me" (p70). Mill's high opinion is confirmed by J M. Robertson, who describes it "as the most stringent attack made on theism between d'Holbach and Feuerbach".¹⁶

Yet despite such tributes, the Analysis has been out of print for more than 100 years.

MORALITY & RELIGION

Religious writers argued that morality required a religious infrastructure. Against this some philosophers argued that an unbeliever could be moral, and that a community of atheists is possible. The Analysis, however, takes the war into the enemy's camp, showing how difficult it is for a believer to be a useful or happy member of society.

And yet it does more than merely reveal the many-sided miseries of religion. It is a comprehensive attack on religion, although this may be overlooked by those who fail to see behind the disguises it employs as protection against prosecution.

Thus the writer, who signs himself as *Philip Beauchamp*, claims that he is not attacking revealed religion or the clergy who profess it (pages 6 and 11); his target, he says, is natural religion: the belief in an omnipotent and incomprehensible Being. However, intelligent readers would have

recognised this defensive ploy, widely used by free-thinkers such as Collins, by David Hume in his essays on miracles and immortality and, more recently, by the poet, Shelley, in his Refutation Of Deism (1814).

"JUG" DIAGNOSED

Bentham's complete attack on 'Jug' - his nickname (from Juggernaut) for religion - has three prongs: religious belief is shown to be (1) irrational, (2) naturalistically explicable and (3) pernicious.

Let us first consider (1). Religious beliefs are irrational because they are "extra-experimental" (p87), by which Bentham means something similar to Karl Popper's notion of non-falsifiability. An extra-experimental belief is one which

"precludes you from applying the process of refutation, and thus detecting any falsehood whatever" (p90).

As belief in "God cannot be founded on experience" (p87), no empirical evidence can either prove or disprove His existence.

Similarly, believe in Divine design (p87), miracles (p89), the justice of trial by ordeal (p93), and the existence of witches (p91), are all extra-experimental. There is no way of falsifying them. It is in this sense that there is no point in considering whether they are true or false (p5). Yet to detach experience from belief is to unhinge the mind, producing a "thorough depravation of the intellect" (p91), or "phrenzy" (p106). No possible belief can be rationally rejected if extra-experimental belief is accepted.

NATURAL EXPLANATION OF GOD

This indictment is damning, but Bentham does not rest his case there. He tries to show how religionists acquire their crazy extra-experimental beliefs. In this second prong of his attack on "Jug" he argues that we endow God with moral and intellectual perfections, such as goodness and wisdom because we are intimidated by His power.

Because we fear Him, we flatter Him as we would a powerful human tyrant (p29-31). We convince ourselves that He is benevolent just as a Roman sycophant might persuade himself that Caligula was a god.

To argue that the Deity is really good, and that the evils in His creation arise because the material He has to work with resists His good intentions, would imply not only that He is comprehensible but that "his power only extends to the production of the already existing amount of good." (But if) "He can produce no more good...it is vain to trouble ourselves about Him" (p24).

So Bentham shows that our belief in God's endearing attributes actually arises from our desire to flatter a capricious and powerful despot. Next he subjects to genetic analysis the key attribute of omnipotence. Some men appear to perform astonishing deeds, and, continues Bentham,

"we ascribe to the man who astonishes us by an incomprehensible feat, the ability of astonishing us still more by a great many others. Nay, the power, which we are led to conceive as exerted, seems to vast

Quotations from Bentham's "Analysis" come from Edward Trueloves 1875 Edition.

to be ascribed to him alone. We, therefore, introduce an omnipotent accomplice into the scene..." (106).

So our belief in God's goodness stems from our fear of His power, which in turn is rooted in our amazement at wonder workers, for whom Bentham also offers a naturalistic basis.

Of course, to identify the non-rational origins of a belief is not, as such, to show that it is mistaken. Yet in the case of extra-experimental beliefs such as genetic refutations are not, I think, fallacious. For if the believer has no reason or evidence for his belief, then I can see no reason why the genetic analysis should not be accepted as the correct explanation of his belief. 'You do not really believe in God because of some mysterious faith' - Bentham is, in effect, telling the believer - 'your fideism is explicable as the natural outcome of certain psychological tendencies'.

RELIGION IS PERNICIOUS

Finally, there is the third prong of Bentham's assault. Belief in "Jug" is not simply irrational and naturalistically explicable: it is also pernicious. It produces the greatest unhappiness for the greatest number. Hence even if God did exist, it would be better for our happiness in this life if we did not believe in Him. This is Bentham's central argument.

Religious belief is

"impotent for the purpose of resisting any temptation, and efficient only in the production of needless and unprofitable misery"

(p62).

had the ultimate honour of having a pub called after him in London.

Thus devotion to God is measured by

"the amount and intensity of pain which you...gratuitously inflict upon yourself" (p64).

Bentham lists: fasting; celibacy; abstinence from repose, cleanliness, personal decoration and mirth; gratuitous surrender of property, time, labour and honours (p65).

Predictably, he dwells on

"the universal prevalence of religious hatred" (p76f).

More characteristic is his reply to the common objection that only "posthumous apprehensions" are able to prevent the "secret crime". He said:

"To say that earthly laws do not actually perform this, is merely to affirm, that governments are defective and ought to be reformed" (p61).

In short, Jug's all-seeing God is to be replaced by Bentham's architectural plan for universal inspection - the Panopticon. An apparent supernatural necessity points to a real need for social reform or scientific insight.

DAVID BERMAN

Note

① J. M. Robertson: Short History Of Freethought (1906), p376. Robertson altered his assessment in History Of Freethought In the 19th Century (1929) p86-88.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Bentham, who helped to found the 'Godless' London University, and is preserved there in mummified form, has now

Church and State in Western Europe ~ the Origins

part one: GREECE and ROME

Constantine's Conversion

ANY ATTEMPT TO ACCOUNT FOR THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF CHURCH/STATE RELATIONS IN WESTERN EUROPE must begin by explaining the most important single event in that story - the "conversion" to Christianity of the emperor Constantine. This is a very vexed question the academic consensus on which has been stated by A.H.M. Jones in "Constantine And The Conversion Of Europe" where he says:

"The debate still goes on whether his conversion was a matter of policy or of religious conviction... no historian who understands the mood of the age in which Constantine lived can entertain any serious doubts" (that his conversion was a matter of religious conviction, JK). "To be a rationalist in that age Constantine would have been an intellectual prodigy, and he was, in fact, so far as we can discern him, a simple-minded man. And even if, by some freak of nature, he had been a sceptical freethinker, he would not on any rational calculation of his interest have chosen to profess Christianity. The Christians were a tiny minority of the population; and they belonged for the most part to the classes of the population who were politically and socially of least importance, the lower and middle classes of the towns." (p79).

(It is indicative of Jones' approach, and academia's selective blindness to the real world, that on page 44/5 he writes: "As Christianity percolated into the upper ranks of society, the objections to holding office began to fade, and a council of Spanish bishops, on the eve of the great persecution, ruled on what conditions Christians might hold municipal offices and the provincial high priesthood of the imperial cult - an indication of how secular this cult had become. Christians became provincial governors, and were even to be found occupying high positions at the imperial court" (Page 79, where are you?).

Moreover, though the conversion was a matter of genuine religious conviction "it was not a spiritual experience. Constantine knew and cared nothing for the metaphysical and ethical teaching of Christianity..." (p102). What happened was that, as reported by Eusebius in his "Life Of Constantine", one afternoon while marching about with his army Constantine and all the boys saw a wonderful sign in the sky - a cross of light superimposed upon the sun.

For some strange reason Constantine, an initiate of the Mithraic sun-cult, took this to be a sign, not from his own Mithras, but from the Christian God and when, in hoc signo, he conquered, became a Christian and promoted Christianity in the empire. Thus the Church was associated with state power as the result of a "*fortuitous meteorological phenomenon*" (according to Jones: "*a rare, but well-attested form of the halo phenomenon*" (p97)).

Npw, I must confess that I don't find this academic consensus very convincing. It is difficult to believe that Christianity's conquest of state power had nothing to do with its organised strength and the peculiar relevance of its doctrines to the social requirements of the late empire but was, rather, a result of the psychological inadequacies of a "*simple-minded*" individual (which Constantine most certainly was not).

If Jones' view were correct it would be impossible to account for the persistence of the social and political bond which was forged by Constantine - or did every subsequent emperor similarly see some "*fortuitous meteorological phenomenon*"? No, an explanation of the conversion of Constantine has clearly to be sought in policy and in the social, spiritual and political context within which that policy was determined upon. This must necessarily take us back, in the first instance, as far as Homeric Greece - an extremely crucial period in the formation of a specifically European social and cultural identity.

FROM AGAEMEMNON TO ALEXANDER

Stereotypes to Individuals And Back

Greek society in the post-Mycenean Dark Ages (9th - 8th century BC) was not composed of individuals - distinct moral/intellectual identities capable of independent activity in the world. Agaememnon, Achilles and Odysseus were well-bred pedigree stock, whose bearing and behaviour proclaimed them to be champions and sires of champions. Their loyalty was to their bloodline (genos = family) and stable (oikos = household). Their activity in the world was determined by custom and the categorical imperative to demonstrate their breeding.

The society composed of these undifferentiated gene-pools generated a value-system which described the prize stock as agathos (= good), esthlos (= noble) and aristos (= best).

Those values were absolutely concrete; the agathos man was not simply good, he was good at things (most particularly at fighting); his nobility was obvious in the success which attended his every endeavour. The agathoi, esthloi, aristoi, were good (skilful), wealthy, courageous and above all, in every sphere, successful. An unsuccessful agathos was a contradiction in terms - failure was aischron (= shameful), a loss of time (= honour), which could only be redeemed by fresh success.

The agathoi were distinguished from the kakoi (or deloi = bad). A craftsman was kakos (and Achilles in Hades could think of nothing more miserable than to be one), which necessarily implied the kind of ugly deform-

ity that characterised the kakos craft-God, Hephaestus.

The values were absolutely antithetical. Kakoi, who were ugly, poor, cowardly and ill-born; BAD in every sense of the word, could not be agathos, brave, wealthy, beautiful and well-born; could not be GOOD in any sense of the word.

But the principle characteristic of European society throughout history has been its relative lack of rigidity. Over the next few centuries (to the 5th century BC), in response to commercial development which was tending to impoverish the old aristoi while enriching the kakoi, the idea of the good was extended and given a moral content, being both internalised and abstracted.

Development Of Individualism

The course of this revolutionary development can be seen in Hesiod, a horrible little nouveau riche kakos, trying to redefine agathos to include him and his, and Theognis, an impoverished aristos, trying to redefine agathos in such a way as to remain within its ambit. Thus Hesiod associated the idea of the good with the idea of the just (= dike).

Initially to be just was to deliver a socially acceptable formulation of time-honoured custom. Then in Hesiod justice was personified as a daughter of Zeus, accordance with whom would lead to prosperity for the community, neglect of whom would lead to disaster. Hesiod was not well-born but he was wealthy and behaved in accordance with justice - he was therefore agathos (even though he engaged in manual labour which the traditional agathoi regarded as utterly shameful (aischron)).

Theognis was an aristos, who had to face the fact that success in the world was no longer the prerogative of aristoi. Kakoi were demonstrating skill (= arete; the content of agathos) and achieving success in the world. Theognis therefore redefined agathos exclusively in terms of good birth and "nobility of soul" - the latter involving internalisation and abstraction of a very high order.

This process led to two significant developments - the activity in the world of Periclean Athens, an agathos state; and the emergence with Socrates of a subjectivity so highly refined as to disintegrate individuality. Both occurred in the context of the Peloponnesian War between revolutionary Athens and Reactionary Sparta.

Suppression of Individualism by Internalisation

The citizens of 5th century Athens, unlike the traditional agathoi were individuals. In consequence of several centuries of progressive abstraction the rule of immutable custom had been replaced by the rule of law made and unmade by citizens in the council and assembly. Arete was beginning to be defined in something approaching the modern sense of virtue and any responsible Athenian citizen could share in the arete of the agathos state. As an Athenian he was wealthy, aggressive, courageous, beautiful, strong and

successful. All that the traditional *agathos* had been he was, and more - for the activity of the state and his behaviour within it were dependent on conscious decisions arrived at by himself and by individuals like him.

Thus, the consequences of the process of abstraction were wholly beneficial. The consequences of internalisation were much more ambiguous. On the one hand the possibility of interesting moral dilemmas was raised which immeasurably enriched the inner life of individuals (for instance, in Homer, Orestes was held up as a model for all young *agathoi* to emulate, for, his mother having murdered his father, he straightaway, automatically, thoughtlessly, kills her. When Euripides and Aeschylus went to work on him in the 5th century, Orestes had developed guilt traumas and all the other psychological impedimenta attendant on an individual sense of moral responsibility.)

So far, so good; in the hands of Euripides the internalisation of values played a progressive social role in facilitating the production of individuals. In Socrates, however, the internalisation of values was entirely destructive.

This can perhaps be best illustrated in the striking contrast between Pericles' Funeral Oration (in Thucydides' "Peloponnesian War") and Socrates' remarks (reported by Plato in the "Phaedo") on his own impending doom. Speaking in praise of the Athenians who died in the first year of the Peloponnesian War, Pericles expressed a glorious affirmation of life in death. He articulated the fifth century's celebration of a socially determined individualism operating in the world to absorb its every aspect and transcend its every limitation. In Plato's *Phaedo*, however, Socrates articulates the fourth century passivity and withdrawal from the world. At the moment of his overdue and well-deserved execution, Socrates asserted the primacy of death in life; welcoming, with exaggerated relief, the ultimate passivity following the final withdrawal, (he asked that a cock be sacrificed to Asclepius in gratitude for his recovery from the disease of life - but life has not yet recovered from Socrates).

The expansive self-confidence of the fifth century in which individuals engaged culturally with Aeschylus, Euripides, Sophocles and Aristophanes; politically with Pericles; intellectually with Socrates and the Sophists (no doubt laughing all the while) became the sterile conformity of the fourth century which favoured only the mass-production of drones.

(Artistic originality died a horrible death - in 387 "*the performers of tragedy first restaged an old play*"; in 340 "*the performers of comedy first restaged an old play*"; in the 330's Lycurgus enacted "*that bronze statues of the poets Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides be erected, that their tragedies be written out and kept in a public depository, and that the secretary of the City should read them through for comparison to the actors; it should be unlawful to depart from the authorized text in acting*" (quoted, Davies: "Democracy And Classical Greece", p172).

After Athens' defeat in the Peloponnesian War the traditional

agathoi had their revenge - Plato wrote ecstatically about the social merits of the beehive; Aristotle, while defining humanity in 5th century terms as involving independent activity in the world, restricted the possibility of becoming human to the well born who could be trusted never to behave in any way independently.

Thus, after the disastrous conclusion of the Peloponnesian War the traditional agathoi reasserted themselves in a successful affirmation of the propositions that virtue = nobility of soul = withdrawal from the world, social passivity and luxurious absorption in undifferentiated subjectivity.

Shortly after Sparta's victory, the moribund city-states gave way to Macedonian hegemony and the fusion of east and west in the states that succeeded Alexander's conquest of the known world. In circumstances in which the city-states (and hence their citizens) no longer had any freedom of action the trend initiated by Socrates was further developed by Epicureans, Stoics, and Cynics. With the Stoics, "nobility of soul" became insistence upon "the absolute sufficiency of good will and upon the ultimate worthlessness of all else" (R. Warner: "The Greek Philosophers", page 168).

Chrysippus speculated about a world-state founded on the principle of universal subjection, ruler and ruled alike, to an immutable natural law (thus abolishing the possibility of individual development even within the ruling class). Epicurus wrote: "The most unalloyed source of protection from men, which is secured to some extent by a certain force of expulsion, is in fact the immunity which results from a quiet life and the retirement from the world".

(It is typical of academia's predilection for turning reality on its head that this disintegration of individuality is described as individualism! For instance: "Man as a political animal, a fraction of the polis or self-governing city-state, had ended with Aristotle; with Alexander begins man as an individual. This individual needed to consider both the regulation of his own life and also his relations with other individuals who with him composed the 'civilised world'; to meet the former need there arose the philosophies of conduct, to meet the latter certain new ideas of human brotherhood." - Tarn and Griffith, "Hellenic Civilization", p 79. Long live the rugged individualism of the worker ant!)

THIRD CENTURY CRISIS TO CONSTANTINE

Growth of Individualism in Rome

The 5th century BC upsurge in the development of individuality, the first revolutionary episode in the formation of a specifically European social and cultural identity, was smothered in an effusion of undifferentiated subjectivity. (Undifferentiated in the sense of being constructed only in terms of itself rather than of activity in the world - that is, chaotic, unrestrained; in Nietzsche's usage, ill-constituted.) From the period of the successor states on, while Greece degenerated into semi-oriental morbidity, the forcing ground of European development moved westward to Rome.

Though Roman citizens, particularly from the establishment of the

Principate, did not have the extent of freedom of action of citizens of Periclean Athens; though their capacity for independent activity in the world was relatively limited, it was extensive enough to justify a description of them as individuals. And from the 2nd century BC through to the 2nd century AD, during its most vigorous period, Rome was in the business of producing individuals throughout the world by a gradual extension of citizenship to deserving communities (i.e., those which demonstrated their absorption of Latin culture - thus Claudius enfranchised the Anauni) and individuals (e.g., following military service).

Most interesting in this context is the Roman use of slavery as a mechanism for the progressive integration into society of new personnel the previous basis of whose social existence was destroyed by enslavement, remoulded in the network of associations generated in his owner's household and finally re-established on a new basis through recognised manumission procedures. These freedmen were not full citizens (they couldn't vote or hold public office) but their sons and descendants suffered from no such legal liabilities. Moreover, freedmen were uniquely free spirits. Though they were obliged to observe a patron/client relationship with their former owner they were not in any way bound by family honour, inherited codes or caste customs.

At the beginning of the 3rd century AD a decisive break was made with the classical past. Caracalla's edict, Constitutio Antoniniana, promulgated in 212, extended Roman citizenship to virtually all the inhabitants of the empire. Whatever the immediate motives for this massive extension of the franchise, it clearly embodied a recognition that the institutions which had channelled the empire's expansion and provided its underlying principle had gone into terminal decay. The dual sense of imperial mission and provincial striving which had provided justification and purpose for Rome's world domination was admitted to be no longer operative. After 212, in place of the socially useful distinction between citizen and non-citizen, new distinctions arose within the supposedly free body of citizens; between honestiores and humiliores, noble and humble, landlord and serf.

Politically, the social disintegration of the empire was reflected in a long series of civil wars between rival military claimants to the purple. The lack of a constitutionally effective law of succession allied to the decay of unifying principles resulted in a particularly unstable form of military despotism. With the decline in senatorial power and prestige constitutional forms were abandoned altogether. The Senate ceased to legislate in 280 and lost its share in the formalization of the emperor's power in 282. Effectively the "Conscript Fathers" became nothing more than the Roman city council. At the same time urban life generally decayed and all sense of civic duty in the provinces disappeared. Civic service, which had been an honour to be sought became, with the organisation of curiales charged with personal liability for collection and payment of taxes, an onerous obligation to be avoided.

Throughout the third century the proportion of non productive as against economically engaged members of society increased. In the wake of plagues, civil wars and frontier disturbances neither the economy nor indeed the population was capable of reproducing itself. Inflation, which led to the

Government refusing to accept its own debased coinage as payment of taxes, was an economic sign of fundamentally social disorders. To maintain production at even a reduced level the state had to organize industry and commerce, through the Merchants and Artisans Guilds, on the basis of hereditary castes. Effective bondage of supposedly free peasants was recognised in Diocletian's census regulations and extended in Constantine's edict of 332.

Growth of Totalitarianism

Clearly in seeking to break out of the "third century crisis" the Roman state was becoming increasingly totalitarian. Things had fallen apart, the centre had failed to hold but, rather than mere anarchy being loosed upon the world, a new centre sought to assert itself and reunite the civil, social, political, military and religious life of the empire under its own close and undivided control. The totalitarian ideal, thus stated, is incapable of realisation but clearly, from at least the mid-third century on, the emperors were consciously striving to attain it.

The central role which religious policy played in their efforts to establish total control did not mark any really radical break with imperial tradition. Since the establishment of the Principate, when Augustus as Pontifex Maximus (= Chief Priest), organised the imperial cult as part of the public worship of the state, religion had played an increasingly vital role in imperial policy. During the third century, religious principles and political activity were particularly closely linked. Jacob Burckhardt, one of Nietzsche's few friends, has shown (in "The Age Of Constantine The Great") that the military/political revival which began with the accession of Decius (249-51) was directed by a clique of Illyrian generals which appointed and disposed of emperors, without lengthy civil disturbances, on the basis of essentially military, but also religious criteria. The clique's activity was inspired, in part at least, by the cult of Mithras. In 274 the Illyrian emperor, Aurelian, imported Mithraism into the State religion as the cult of Sol Invictus (= the Unconquered Sun). Until the triumph of Christianity this religion was the principal official imperial cult.

Aurelian also imported the oriental ideal of sacred monarchy from Sassanian Persia. Emperor worship was more fully developed and promoted by Diocletian who, introducing the oriental ritual of the "sacred" household, assumed the character of god-king. Jones' strictures on rationalist free-thinking being inimical to the spirit of the age notwithstanding, I cannot imagine that the otherwise very practical and level-headed Diocletian seriously considered himself to be divine. He introduced the worship of the sacred king, in response to perceived social needs, as a matter of conscious policy.

Nonetheless, this third century attempt to establish a thoroughgoing totalitarianism still suffered from the very grievous lack of a universal ideology capable of providing a new principle of unity to replace the old Roman civilising traditions and municipal institutions which had long since decayed. Mithraism was a very suitable form of worship to bind together a military caste but was not, with its extremely rigorous series of initiations

and ordeals, capable of being transformed into a mass religion. Nor was emperor-worship divorced from any overall sustaining and purposeful religious framework capable of commanding the positive enthusiasm of masses of people.

Traditional polytheism was certainly not a purposeful religious framework. J.G. Frazer ("The Golden Bough") and Robert Graves ("The White Goddess" and "The Greek Myths") have demonstrated the essential parallelism of Mediterranean cults which had its origins in the primitive system of animistic determinism which developed as community of agricultural and pastoral concerns evoked a unity of response throughout the pre-classical world. That parallelism facilitated the tolerance inherent in Rome's traditional polytheistic religion. There was rarely any difficulty in assimilating foreign forms of worship to the Olympian cults. Rome's tolerance extended even to the culturally exclusive, monotheistic Jews because, as Gibbon explains ("Decline & Fall Of The Roman Empire", Chapter 16), the Jews, as a nation, were paying perfectly proper respect to the ways of their ancestors - something the Romans had no difficulty whatsoever in appreciating. Until the mid-3rd century even Christianity was generally tolerated.

That toleration however should not in any way be seen as a virtue. It was nothing more or less than a sign of weakness. Well before the beginning of the third century the traditional religion had ceased to have any meaning for the governing class of the empire. By the beginning of that century it had little hold on the emotions and sympathies of the urban masses. Only in the countryside where the principal events of the agricultural cycle were still celebrated in antique ritual did a mythology derived from animistic determinism have any relevance to spiritual and social life. By and large the debased and long-discredited stories about the doings of Gods and Goddesses had no intellectual, emotional or, above all, moral appeal. The toleration of the later Roman Empire, like the toleration displayed by the Church of England, sprang essentially from lack of conviction. It was socially worthless.

Polytheism moreover had no coherent doctrinal system; no developed view of human purpose, moral values, the nature of sin, the role of guilt or the possibilities of redemption. It also had no co-ordinated system of organisation. Religious ceremonies were directed by amateur priests, men of wealth and social standing who derived little or no material benefits from their office and had no sacerdotal ambitions. The traditional religious system, because of its lack of organisational discipline and any coherent doctrine was incapable of generalising anything more than the vaguest world view. It certainly could not hope to generate a universal sense of shared identity and common purpose: the orthodoxy upon which a totalitarian state could achieve a mass base.

But most fundamental to the ultimate failure of polytheism was its inability to cater to the spiritual needs of the time. The third century, as Burckhardt clearly demonstrates, was characterised by a striving for specifically religious unity. This striving was expressed in, though not achieved by, the cross-fertilization of mystery cults, the growth of syncretic paganism, philosophical monotheism and the spread of the quasi-monotheistic Mithras cult.

It was accompanied by a definite feeling that the world was physically shrinking, culturally and morally declining and by a sense of sin which was altogether alien to the spirit of the early empire. The religious framework which had been adequate to express the social unity and imperial mission of an optimistic, expansionist age was incapable of coping in any way with the problems of pessimism and contraction. Individualism once more being disintegrated, undifferentiated subjectivity was yet again loose in the world.

The particular severity of the anti-Christian persecutions mounted by Decius and Diocletian was a direct result of the effort to establish total control of society. Obviously an aspiring totalitarian state could not afford to tolerate the existence of an alternative, well-organised and supremely self-confident centre of social power. The Christian Church was just such an alternative centre. Decius and Diocletian were, however, wrong to assume that Christian social power necessarily had to be smashed. It was possible, given the political and social imperatives governing the situation, for the state to neutralise the Christian alternative by absorbing it (while, in symbiotic ecstasy, Christianity absorbed the state). All in all Christianity was perfectly equipped to cope with both the spiritual and political imperatives of the third century. Both organisationally and doctrinally it was precisely what the situation required.

Christianity And The Roman State

Doctrinally, Christianity laid great stress upon sin, guilt and the possibility of redemption within, and the certainty of damnation without, the community of the faithful. All these doctrines were peculiarly apposite at a time when social disintegration was leading to a dramatic expansion in the inner world. Roman society had only recently discovered sin in the personal as against error in the social sense. To put it another way; the third century was a boom time for the kind of psychological traumas that could not be purged by vigorous social activity or healthy adherence to the ways of the ancestors - the comforts of an active routine were entirely illusory in an age in which custom and tradition were decaying, disintegrating and being annihilated by the force of changing circumstances.

People were shifting their attention from the social context in which they acted and concentrating instead upon themselves. In the process they discovered interesting and exciting problems, the existence of which had never previously been suspected (and it is no accident that, when Christianity had properly organised this explosion of raw subjectivity, St. Augustine became the first person in the world to find himself interesting enough to write about).

In any event the problems and traumas which these products of a social atomisation were eagerly discovering could best be solved or mediated within the context of redemptive Christianity. Christianity's sense of the essential badness of human nature caught the degraded spirit of the times precisely. Christianity was, moreover, refreshingly vigorous in its denunciation of man's imperfection. While, as Peter Browne points out (in "The World

Of Late Antiquity") it portrayed social dilemmas in eschatological terms as moments in the great struggle between the forces of good and evil, it also, and perhaps more importantly, laid a very satisfying stress on individual human responsibility for the evils of the world.

No pagan, however malicious, could possibly have conceived of Hell in the vigorous, self-satisfied and altogether personal terms which Tertullian used in writing about the Last Judgement: *"How shall I admire, how laugh, how rejoice, how exult, when I behold so many proud monarchs, and fancied gods, groaning in the lowest abyss of darkness; so many magistrates, who persecuted the name of the Lord, liquefying in fiercer fires than they ever kindled against the Christians; so many sage philosophers blushing in red-hot flames with their deluded scholars; so many celebrated poets trembling before the tribunal, not of Minos, but of Christ; so many tragedians, more tuneful in the expression of their own sufferings..."* etc. (quoted Gibbon, Ch.15).

Thus, Christianity offered a vigorous aggressive means of mediating the psychological distortions resulting from the social disintegration of the third century. It answered the spiritual needs of the time and also, perhaps more crucially, offered a basis for the creation of a new social unity. Despite existing for the most part in an official limbo (more probably because of that) the Christian Church had generated a formidable organisational structure which, ignoring class, cultural and racial distinctions, constituted a self-sufficient state within the boundaries of the imperial state.

The Christian state was, in fact, more coherent, disciplined and effective than the Roman one. While the Roman empire, in the third century could, in the long term, hope only to contract gracefully, the Christian commonwealth was aggressively expansionist. Unlike the other oriental mystery cults it was able to think in terms of expansion because, having rescued it from Jewish particularism, St. Paul had inspired it with a universal mission. As far as Christianity was concerned, barriers which the other cults deliberately erected between themselves and the world existed only to be broken down (and the universality of Paul's thought was surely not unconnected with his Roman citizenship).

Its hierarchical structure, its independent financial arrangements and welfare system and its disciplinary framework of spiritual rewards in the next and both temporal and spiritual punishments in this world provided the Christian Church with a strong and flexible organisation capable of virtually unlimited expansion. Decius and Diocletian were thus beating their heads against an especially solid brick wall. They would have been better advised to do as Constantine later did and try to absorb the alternative centre of social power; to associate Christian vigour and discipline with imperial objectives.

Detente was impossible. Christianity had either to be crushed or absorbed. Decius and Diocletian attempted the impossible. Constantine, on the basis of a more informed judgement (taking into account his predecessors' failures) succeeded in accomplishing the possible.

Recognising that Christianity had the spiritual appeal to mobilise the diffuse emotional energies of masses of people; the intellectual skill to mould millions into a uniform orthodoxy and an organisational structure capable of directing those unified energies towards consciously determined objectives (in short, the virtues of an organised subjectivity) Constantine began the association of church and state. Christianity which sought control over men's minds needed the power of the state to regiment dissenters. The state which sought to control men's activities needed the spiritual and emotional appeal of the church to engage their minds in a unifying sense of common purpose. Church and state shared totalitarian aims. Each needed the other; nothing was more natural than that they should coalesce.

Thus Constantine, acting as one of Hegel's "*World-historical individuals*" with "*an insight into the requirements of the time*", associated himself with the only force capable of meeting those requirements; the only force capable of providing the sense of common identity and shared purpose upon which a stable, socially unified, culturally homogenous state could be built. The only way in which he could bind the Church to his objectives was by converting albeit cautiously, even ambiguously, to Christianity. His conversion cannot, therefore, be seen as anything other than a matter of policy.

It is significant that Constantine's conversion did not result in the immediate establishment of Christianity as the religion of the state. The so-called Edict of Milan in 313 (a set of instructions to provincial governors regarding a policy already in force) merely confirmed Galerius' Edict of Toleration of 311 and granted "*to all men unrestricted right to follow the form of worship each desired*" (Quoted, Lewis & Reinhold ed. "Roman Civilization", Vol 11, p603).

Constantine in no way displayed the reckless zeal of the convert. On the contrary he acted with the moderate caution appropriate to a statesman anxious to inaugurate a revolutionary process with the minimum of fuss and bother. Having confirmed the admission of Christianity to legal status, Constantine was concerned to strengthen its position within the state. He granted the clergy all the privileges enjoyed by pagan priests; exempted them from taxation, office-holding and military service and granted the Church the right to inherit property. More importantly, he established the power and privilege of episcopal courts.

By the end of his reign the position was that:⁽¹⁾ "*The decision of a bishop had to be accepted as final in cases concerning people of any age;* (2) *any civil case could be transferred to the episcopal court at any stage of the proceedings, even if the opposing side did not agree;* (3) *the decisions of the episcopal courts had to be sanctioned by civil judges.*" (Vasiliev, "History of The Byzantine Empire, p53). Clearly Constantine was aiming both to increase the attraction of Christianity to potential converts and to integrate the Church into the state structure.

Though Constantine did not become a fully paid up member of the Christian church until he accepted Baptism on his death-bed, he saw to it that

his heirs were raised as Christians. He also played a leading role in doctrinal/organisational affairs. His convening of the Council of Nicaea again shows his concern for the Church's strength in unity and his aim of placing it within the sphere of imperial control.

Constantine did not, however, prohibit the practice of paganism in any major way. There was no need for him to do so. Having recognised and patronised Christianity, the victory of the stronger over the weaker party was patently inevitable (though Christianity was professed by probably less than a tenth of the population of the empire, that tenth was incomparably well organised and superbly disciplined and was the dynamic and purposeful element within an essentially static and decaying society). Soon after, Christianity's continuing success was recognised in Constans' Edict of 341 forbidding pagan worship.

After Julian's foredoomed effort to re-establish polytheism, Christianity's triumph was finally enshrined in Theodosius' Declaration of 380 that:

"It is our desire that all the various nations which are subject to our Clemency and Moderation should continue in the profession of that religion which was delivered to the Romans by the divine Apostle Peter... as for the others, since, in our judgement, they are foolish madmen, we declare that they shall be branded with the ignominious name of heretics, and shall not presume to give to their conventicles the name of churches. They will suffer in the first place the chastisement of the divine condemnation, and in the second the punishment which our authority, in accordance with the will of Heaven, shall decide to inflict"
(Quoted, H. Bettenson: "Documents Of The Christian Church", p31).

Shortly after this, St. Augustine, basing himself on the text, *"Compel them to come in"*, inaugurated the glorious era of Church-directed, state-enforced inquisitions (against Donatism in the first instance).

C O N C L U S I O N

Western Europe's peculiar line of development began when the general pool of Homeric Greece fragmented into the individuality of the classical age. When that individuality was disintegrated in the aftermath of the Peloponnesian War, in Alexander's world-state, a raw undifferentiated subjectivity (which had been adumbrated in, and typified by, the proto Christian, Socrates) gained the upper hand.

The development of a relatively free individuality was then promoted at Rome, which because of the more restricted scope it offered individual initiative was able to sustain an incomparably more stable course of development over a much greater period of time than had proved possible in the riotous

conditions of Periclean Athens. The Romans, moreover, had only the most superficial subjectivity. Roman culture was, initially, exclusively legal and political; literature and art were mysteries which they appropriated, complete with the subjective apparatus proper to their appreciation, from the Greeks. Thus, when, in the course of the third century crisis, individuality began once again to disintegrate and raw subjectivity once more cavorted unrestrainedly in the world, it was a more tenuous growth than the previous outbreak; less securely attached to the individuals it sought to absorb. It was in this context that Christianity burst out of the cracks in the woodwork.

Christianity had initially emerged out of Judaism - the Jewish national religion being the purest form of subjectivity ever seen in the world. Rescued from that particularism and imbued with a unique sense of universal mission, Christianity retained basically Jewish characteristics as a form of organised subjectivity.

But going far beyond Jewish particularism, it developed the capacity, and actively sought, to organise all the subjectivity in the world as a social power to subordinate the world.

This was not the raw, undifferentiated, socially dysfunctional subjectivity of the Hellenistic world. It was, on the contrary, constructed in terms of very effective activity in the world.

This, which justified the 4th century association of church and state, was also the origin of the conflict between the two. The Church was in and of the world only because it sought to dominate the world; that necessarily involved the subordination of the empire to sacerdotal aims.

NEXT: PAPACY, EMPIRE AND BARBARIANS

EDITORIAL concluded:

We will, in a future issue, give some thought to the question of a free church in a free state.

The names of these readers have not been published as we were not sure whether they wished them to be.

JOE KEENAN

In future we will take it that writers of letters to Church & State don't mind their names being published unless they indicate otherwise.

What is CHURCH & STATE?

CHURCH & STATE is a quarterly magazine which has the aim of assisting the growth of a powerful secular and liberal opinion in Ireland.

The Republic of Ireland is a uniquely Catholic state. The social force of Catholicism is far greater here in the late twentieth century than it has been in France or Italy since the Middle Ages, or in Spain since the 18th century. France, Italy and Spain all developed popular anti-clerical movements in the 19th century, and they all had periods of anti-clerical government.

Italian nationalism made the Pope *"the prisoner in the Vatican"* between 1870 and the 1920s. Anti-clericalism was a component part of Republicanism in Catholic Europe. Clericalism was bound up with monarchism, and with political reaction in general. Clerical triumphs were therefore comparatively short-lived. Large sections of the society always resisted clericalism, even in the moments of its greatest power.

Clericalism in Ireland was a very different sort of thing. It was intimately bound up with the rise of nationalism. It was popularly based. Republicanism was not a centre of resistance against it. From the 1920s to the 1970s the Catholic hierarchy was a sort of parallel state which supervised the functioning of the secular government.

The Protestant remnants in the society could not be a centre around which popular resistance to

clericalism developed. To the extent that they attempted to oppose the enactment of Catholic legislation in the twenties, they tended to unite Catholics against themselves rather than to generate anti-clericalism amongst Catholics.

The other Catholic nations of Europe have complex cultural heritages, bequeathed by Kings who limited the power of the Church in order to increase their own, by aristocrats who disposed of Bishoprics as family possessions, and by bourgeoisie who made freethinking a principle. But Catholic Ireland has a very simple minded Catholic-nationalist heritage. The nation and the Church are comparatively recent constructions in Ireland. Their foundations were laid in the 1820's by the very Roman Catholic politician, O'Connell, and the very nationalist Archbishop, MacHale.

This simple Catholic nationalist heritage is the greatest obstacle to the growth of secularism and pluralism. We have no Voltaire and Rousseau in our national culture, no Locke and Mill, no Frederick the Great. The present generation is the first in which there has been serious disquiet about the supervision exercised by the Church.

CHURCH AND STATE is a product of this discontent, and is a forum for the further development of it.

CHURCH AND STATE aims to assist the growth of a well-informed secularist public opinion by giving expression to the general secularist viewpoint that developed in Europe; by explaining the history of Catholic clericalism in Ireland; by drawing attention to the individuals who resisted the growth of that clerical-

ism in Ireland - for example, Thomas Moore, author of "Moore's Melodies", and the Parnellite, M.J.F. McCarthy; and by commenting on the particular issues through which the demand for secular reform is developing at any particular moment (divorce, education, etc.)

Winter 1982/1983

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THE PAMPHLET REFERRED TO IN THE EDITORIAL: "The Abortion Referendum - The Case Against" is issued by the Anti-Amendment Campaign, P.O. Box 1285, Dublin 7. Tel: 01- 308636. Price £1.75.

WHY NOT JOIN the Divorce Action Group. For further information about the Group and its activities, write to

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M.J.F. McCarthy: A Belligerent Liberal (An account of the lone bourgeois liberal (developing within Catholic Ireland) who consistently opposed the growth of clerical power from the fall of Parnell to the foundation of the Free State. His commentary on the 'miracles' of Knock is included. Published to mark the Pope's visit to Knock. 24,00 words. 80p plus postage.

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