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# The Irish Troubles

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I REMEMBER my reaction last year, when listening to Mr. Harold Wilson, the Prime Minister, on television, as he commented on the very good reception given to the British Troops in Belfast and Derry. He expressed the view, that now, because of the welcome the troops had received and the apparent readiness of the Roman Catholics to co-operate, the future peace of the province of Ulster was secured. Westminster had stepped in, a Labour Government was in control, and they would put right the evils of 50 years of Tory rule in the North of Ireland. My comment then was, 'The man is a political novice as far as Ireland is concerned'. The intervening time has, unfortunately, substantiated the criticism. Everyone, apart from some extremist elements on both sides, knows that the problem is too complex and longstanding to be solved by the temporary quelling of rioting. Now, despite the readiness of the Northern Ireland Government, admittedly under pressure, to initiate a programme of reform which would remove in time all grounds of discrimination, the minority is not content, and the troops are accused of the same violence and bias as the Royal Ulster Constabulary. Within the ranks of those opposed to the Government, differences have appeared which show their inability to provide any cohesive alternative to the Government. The simplest analysis of the Northern problem is, that, the community has been divided, since the inception of the State in 1920, into an undoubted two-thirds majority who are happy with the Constitution, and a possible one-third or less minority who are opposed to it. This unfortunate polarization of political life, which has been prolonged through the continued vocal and sometimes physical opposition of the minority, has prevented the development of genuine political life on the party bases of a normal democracy. The assured continuance, in these circumstances, of the ruling party in office, has not helped to produce the best type of government or the best type of politician. The tactics of the Opposition, on the other hand, have produced only whining critics and no statesmen.

*Preliminary Considerations*

BEFORE we discuss the major elements in the complex situation, it will perhaps help in our approach if we are aware of certain preliminary considerations. It has been a common failing in discussing Irish issues to isolate them from similar problems in the contemporary world. We must not discuss Northern Ireland in isolation from the rest of Ireland, or the unit of the British Isles, or the emerging European community. It is fatal to explain everything on the basis of an analysis of the reputed causes of the trouble in the two small areas of violence in Derry and Belfast. We have been constantly reminded by all responsible people that the violence is confined to a small minority, and that the majority of the people on both sides desire only a peaceful and just solution. There can be no doubt that the situation has been grossly exaggerated and distorted by on-the-spot reports, limited by the views of the camera, and interpreted by interviews with a few individuals involved. Liam de Paor, in his recent informative book, *Divided Ulster* surveys the history of the past before he discusses the problems of the present. He is forced to attempt much in a small book and therefore leaves himself open to the accusation of selective treatment, but his approach is the only satisfactory one because the problem is not new by any means.

Another fact which must be held in mind is that, despite proven discrimination to a certain extent, there is no law in the Northern Ireland Constitution which has in itself a denominational bias. Take, for example, the favourite catch-cry of the early days of the Civil Rights Movement, 'One man, one vote'. There were many English people who thought that Roman Catholics were not allowed Parliamentary votes. This, of course, was completely wrong. The voting referred to was in local government elections, where only rate-payers had the vote. The basis of discrimination was possession or non-possession of property. If this meant, in fact, that the majority of the Roman Catholics who are among the poorer classes in society were deprived of votes in local elections, it could not be said that this was religious discrimination on the basis of the law. The law was the same for all non-ratepayers and it had obtained in Britain up to the post-war situation. It is rather ironical that there should have been cries from the Republic about the 'One man, one vote', when in many parts of the South through the tragic failure of local government to function, the State has taken over control by appointing managers. At the present time the Corporation of the City of Dublin has been abolished because of disagreements between it and the Government, and the city is run by a Commissioner. So that here and in other parts of the South, it is a case of 'All men, no vote'. We mention this to show the insincerity of some critics, who cried 'religious discrimination' while they themselves had no vote at home. Government, and

especially local government, is not very successful in many parts of Ireland, and is rarely free from blame.

If the general accusation of acute discrimination, oppression, and denial of liberty is correct, there are some facts which seem inexplicable. The North of Ireland is the only part of Ireland where the Roman Catholic population has increased over the past 50 years. Permits to reside and work in the Six Counties have been introduced to prevent the flooding in of citizens of the Republic. Roman Catholics from the Republic are attracted to the North because of better pay and conditions. (The standard of living in the North is one and a half times that in the South, but only three-quarters of that in Britain.) If they have to submit to gross discrimination, why do they stay? How does the resident Roman Catholic population increase in the face of ill-treatment, while their co-religionists in the South decline in favourable religious circumstances? Are there more intolerable evils in the South?

Added support is declared to be given to the proof of discrimination in the North by comparing the turbulent lot of the minority there with the peaceful existence of the Protestants in the South. But there are great differences between the attitudes of the two communities. The Protestant five per cent in the South, despite the fact that many of them would rather have a united Ireland within the Commonwealth or the United Kingdom, loyally accept and support the State. Socially they belong mainly to the managerial and professional classes and white collar workers and have considerable influence in the business community. This, however, is not due to favourable treatment. In the early days of the State, the Protestant minority, while being invited to remain by some government statements, was under such unfavourable pressures that many left the country. In some areas, in fact, the Protestant community practically disappeared. The remaining five per cent has maintained its position despite these pressures of the past and some which still remain. A few of its number have entered Parliament. Within the accepted politics of the country, there is no opposition to the existence of the State as such. The great contrast, therefore, in the respect shown to authority and in helpful contributions to the well-being of the whole community between the minorities North and South, makes it well nigh impossible to draw parallels which are not contrasts. In recent contacts with Protestants now residing in the North, who had with their parents to flee from violence in the South, I found it very difficult to convince them that any favourable liberalising changes had taken place in the Republic. In such cases, in both North and South, we are reaping what we have sown. Protestant fears, where they exist, have not grown out of myths or fairy-tales. They are genuine, they have strong roots in experience and they cannot be treated lightly, least of all by the people of Britain with whose soldiers and for whose ideals they suffered in the past.

One other argument, which is used in calling for the severance of

Ulster from Britain and its re-union with the rest of Ireland, is based on the geographical fact that we live in one island and God made our boundaries the sea; therefore we should be one by God's geographical decree. But there are many islands whose population is divided. Cyprus is an example which springs at once to mind, divided on the basis of unavoidable political differences, to save blood-shed. Soldiers from the Republic are serving there with UN Forces to maintain partition and preserve peace. Partition in Ireland was not an imposition of the British government in 1920. It was the only solution that could be seen at the time by a government both wearied with war and with the seemingly insoluble Irish problem. The Act of 1920, though it led to a Civil War in the South more bloody than the Rebellion that had preceded it in 1916, did lead to the cessation in great measure of strife in the country as a whole. Partition was not a wholly bad thing. If an attempt had been made then to force everyone into an all-Ireland Republic, with a minority consisting of at least twenty-five per cent of Unionists, there would soon have been strife on a greater scale. If the border can maintain an atmosphere of comparative peace, and there can be the building up of mutual respect and trust, then in such an atmosphere it may be possible to move towards a genuine unity in the country. One fears, however, that the present outbreak has accentuated rather than lessened the divisions.

### *Political issues*

WHILE we have said that political life in the North has not been able to develop in the normal democratic party pattern because the very existence of the State has always been threatened, it is not easy to discover how many of the Opposition really desire an All-Ireland Republic, separate from Britain. The 'One man, one vote' cry seems of little significance now. The real issue is: 'Do all accept the Constitution and will they seek only by democratic means, to pursue political change?' The claim that the abolition of the Border is the desire of the Roman Catholics is not borne out by facts. In some opinion polls sponsored by the *Belfast Telegraph*, it was shown that only a minority of Nationalist voters, and even a smaller minority of Roman Catholic voters, want an independent All-Ireland Republic. The fact that the Republic claims now, by its Constitution, to govern the whole of Ireland including the Six Counties, and therefore does not recognise the Northern Government, is a constant irritation to the people of the North. Intervention from the South, both by ministerial statements, and by apparent ministerial support for illegal gun-running, has not helped the cause of peace. Some of the minority are committed to the policy of the violent overthrow of the Government and in this they are aided and abetted with arms and by men from the

South. The situation is further exacerbated by statements of some English MPs that the Westminster Parliament should override the democratically elected Parliamentary government of Northern Ireland. Now, with the virtual disappearance of the Nationalist party in the last election, and the attempt to form a new opposition containing very diverse elements, it is clear that there is no genuine political alternative to the present Government. The rebel elements on the Unionist side reveal the same lack of political maturity and statesmanship found amongst the members of the divided parties of the Opposition.

The troubles in the North have inevitably thrown up new political persons of varying significance. Miss Bernadette Devlin, who is at present, we hope, quietly resting in prison, is one colourful personality. She claims to be a Socialist Republican. At first she took the House of Commons by storm, by her youthful femininity and vocal ebullience. Since then she has succeeded in offending by violent criticism, not only the Government and the Churches of the majority, but even more so, the Roman Catholic Church, and her anti-Unionist political partners. Time will show whether she is more than a non-returning comet or even a damp squib. Her appearance, however, as a young undergraduate, from an ordinary Roman Catholic background, who is violently anti-Establishment reveals that there is such a factor in Irish politics North and South. It has links with the same significant phenomenon in the student world everywhere. Bernadette and her extreme Left-Wing associates threaten the survival of the Opposition in the North, and menace the Church-State Establishment in the South.

The choice before thoughtful Roman Catholics has become very difficult. Father Desmond Wilson, a leading Roman Catholic priest from the Falls Road area, lamented in a recent article that the appearance of the Leftist element in the Opposition meant that many Roman Catholics would probably vote for the Government as safer to live with than the new Communistic group.

While Mr. Paisley has created difficulties for the Government and is a scourge to official Unionism, Presbyterianism and Orangeism, this is his chief significance. He mimics Protestant tactics and slogans of the past, but there does not seem to be any real political ability. The same may be said of his theological and religious outlook. As the Orange Order has come in for much criticism, it is very important to remember that Mr. Paisley is not a member of the Order, although he can get some members of it to take part in his processions. He and his followers confuse the issue by wearing sashes, but they are not Orange sashes. He is obviously a gifted mob orator, at his best in a turbulent situation. He has succeeded in gaining election to the Parliament at Stormont and Westminster through appealing to the fears and irritations of many Protestants. He attacks with equal vigour Papists, Presbyterians, and Protestants. His activities have

been a gift, to the Roman Catholic Church and the Opposition, for propaganda purposes. It remains to be seen whether he will treat the new Conservative Government at Westminster with any greater respect than the late Labour Government. While he says some things that need to be said, he is the most unfortunate person, from the Protestant point of view, to say them. Ecclesiastically, it is impossible to place him. He denies the principles of Presbyterianism in that he is the perpetual Moderator of his denomination, and therefore, is a virtual Bishop. He quotes the Westminster Confession to find a term of abuse for the Pope, but omits any reference to its teaching that the members of the Reformed Church should obey the civil authorities, even though they be of a different religion. He has forsaken the status of an ordained minister of the Word and Sacraments by becoming heavily involved in politics. By English law no episcopally ordained cleric may enter Parliament. It is a pity that the Northern Government had created a precedent by accepting Presbyterian clergy into Parliament and into ministerial rank. Mr. Paisley has no sense of ecclesiastical discipline or respect. He not only seeks to interfere with the affairs of the Church of England, but he is building churches without any regard to the existing churches of the Reformation in the area, and his congregation must consist of people taken from them. His emergence is perhaps more of religious significance than political, and it is, therefore, a mistake to rate too highly his power in the latter realm.

To sum up about the political situation, the present troubles were at first apparently about the denial of some civil rights and the general accusation of discrimination. It is now clear that the movement contained varied political groups with bigger motives than those immediate concerns. It included anarchists and extreme left-wing elements, as well as the IRA. All such groups are enemies of Constituted governments North and South, and use violence to overthrow democratically elected institutions. Some traced the cause of the troubles to the partition of the country. Very few would now say that this is either the chief or the immediate issue. Apart from the agitation of political adventurers, there is undoubtedly great unrest and dissatisfaction amongst the poorer elements of the Northern population. Some would say this is true of Protestant communities as well as Roman Catholic. These problems are social and economic.

### *Economic and Social Conditions*

NORTHERN IRELAND is a depressed part of the United Kingdom. It contains the only industrial city in the whole country, Belfast, and like similar places in Great Britain, its heavy industries of ship-building and engineering have been adversely affected in post-war years. The

unemployment rate is higher than in any other part of the United Kingdom. As in the Republic, development providing new jobs in industry, takes place on the eastern sea-board nearer to Britain. In the North, Derry, and other counties to the west, have suffered a continual decline economically and socially. With unemployment high and many living on the dole, housing problems have become acute. The very large families of many of the Roman Catholics, where there is unemployment, poses a great problem to the housing authorities. If the comparatively much larger numbers in Roman Catholic families have been advocated as part of a political take-over programme, it can be appreciated that some Protestant rate-payers and authorities retort. 'We are being asked to subsidise improvident people who have large families and who aim to swamp us. We won't help them to do it. Why should we not allocate houses to Protestants who have smaller families and are more provident?' The problem of poorer people with large families living in wretched housing is well-known in the Republic. We believe that an examination of the Irish population in the ghettos of many British cities and towns would reveal a similar pattern. Mr. John Hume, MP, who is claimed to be the most moderate and statesman-like of the new leaders in Derry, produced a documentary film on that city, shown on BBC and the television medium throughout the world, in which pictures of the worst areas, both of devastation and housing, were shown. He did not show the areas of growth and development in new housing. Writers in the Roman Catholic paper *The Standard*, which does not favour the North, have again and again written about our disgraceful conditions in the South, and also complained of the very distorted representation of the happenings in the North as they have been portrayed both on our television and in our newspapers. Speaking at a 'Think-In' at Maynooth College, the chief Roman Catholic seminary, in 1969, Mr. Declan Costello, TD said, 'Irishmen, all of them Christian, most of them Catholics, have been guiding the affairs of this part of the country for nearly half a century, and yet we have social conditions here which should scandalise and rebuke a Christian conscience.' Not far from where I write, near the very centre of the city of Dublin, there is a crowded area of flat and tenement dwellers which presents great social problems. Many articles have appeared on this and similar areas in the city. One such speaks of the children who had never seen grass. A school to deal with some of the many children who are suffering mentally from the effects of disturbed homes and malnutrition, has been financed by a Dutch Association with help from the Department of Education. On a wall near to the huge Roman Catholic church which sits in the centre of the area, there are slogans such as 'Long live Chairman Mao' with the hammer and sickle etc. Of the three young social workers who were helping in the school, one who had worked in the North spoke enviously of the social services there, which, she said, were not only better than in the



South, but much better, she thought, than in Britain. In particular, the career guidance and home-help services were excellent, and anyone in trouble had access to a social worker. It is hard to convince the emigrant, leaving the Republic, either to go to the North, or to Britain, that he is going to somewhere of great spiritual and moral danger, when he knows that he and his family, will be much better off through the care and compassion of social services in such places.

Why then, if there are such good services, is the Bogside area of Derry such a source of trouble? Miss Nell McCafferty, who was brought up there, and is a graduate teacher, has written some very informative but disturbing articles about the stone-throwing hooligans from it who have done much of the damage in the city. She describes many of them whom she knows very well. They are young lads who are social mis-fits, usually with unstable home backgrounds. 'Oxo is 16 years old, unemployed, and lives with his uncles and eight cousins, boys. His parents are long since separated. He has done very little in the way of steady work and is living on £2 10s. on the National Assistance. He spends all day, every day, and all night, every night, in an ice-cream parlour, listening to the jukebox, and drinking many cups of Oxo.' Another she describes as follows: 'Jerry is anti-policemen, anti - B - men, anti - soldier. He is anti - old - people - in - the - Bogside - complaining - about - the - disturbances. He is fed - up being called a hooligan; fed - up standing around; fed - up fighting and getting nowhere; fed - up being asked what he does not know. . . .' 'I wish I was 11 years old again, when I didn't know about girls, or drinking, or Catholics, but I do know now, and I have to do something about it.' 'Throwing stones gives me satisfaction, that is all, that is why I do it.' Eddie, twenty-one years old, and considered to be a leader, confesses, 'I hate all policemen, especially Catholic ones.' Eddie wishes he were a mercenary in Rhodesia. 'The Bogside is not really behind us, because they know the Protestants had a raw deal.' Probably one could find similar types in certain areas of Belfast, amongst the Protestant roughs. John Hume and other leaders, had a meeting in the beleaguered Bogside, during the last flare-up, to appeal to the youths to stop stoning the troops. Many of the women also appealed for a cessation of the conflict, saying they were all of them suffering from nervous collapse and the smaller children were being badly affected. But before the meeting was ended, many of the youths went away to stone and taunt the troops again. From a religious point of view, the greatest tragedy then was that, although the Bogside had gone to Mass after the previous night of rioting, there was no word from the Cathedral pulpit to give them real advice because the priests are not being listened to either in present circumstances. The Bogside, much of whose housing is palatial compared with similar areas in the South, cannot now complain of lack of such facilities because the work of house building has proceeded at such a rate in the city of Derry,

that there are now more than enough houses for all. But who can solve the problems of the Bogside and other areas of Northern Ireland where social causes, created in the main by the people themselves, produce young people who are discontented because of the hopelessness of their situation? They have a very definite sense of inferiority and are easily convinced that someone other than their own community is responsible for their plight. This leads us to the great issue, not only of Irish life but of life everywhere, the religious and spiritual condition of the people.

### *Religious Responsibility*

ALTHOUGH the Northern situation is admitted to be very complex, commentators and writers of all sorts readily slip into the habit of describing the opposing parties as Catholic and Protestant. Some of them, at the same time, deny that the issue is basically religious. Yet they use the denominational labels and perpetuate confusion. It is true that most, if not all, of those who have resorted to violent opposition, are Roman Catholics. Amongst the Protestants, the small element which has retaliated with violence consists of extremists who are often non-churchgoers. The Republican news media, both the television and the newspapers, have been very biased in their reports. The BBC has also at times fallen into very unbalanced descriptions of the situation. The word 'Protestant' has always the prefix 'extremist' added to it, whereas the people of the Falls Road and the Bogside are Catholics.

The chief target of criticism has been the Orange Order. It has been described as an extremist body. Accounts of its meetings and services have been distorted to make it look like the survival of some strange half-Christian society. No doubt there are, in such a large organisation, some who react to violence with violence and others who are ignorantly biased. The members, as a whole, and I speak from experience, are decent upright men from every class of society. Their marches, which are mostly church parades, are very orderly and peaceful. In the villages, the Orange Hall has been for generations a meeting place for the local men, and it is often the place where the different Protestant denominations hold their larger meetings. The political influence of the Order is through the ballot box; and because of its numerical strength, any government would consult its leadership on issues that concern its members, just as the government in Britain might consult the representatives of the trade unions. It is well to remember, in the present sustained attack on the Order, that the Church of Rome has, over a longer period, denounced the Masonic Order, and I imagine there are more Bishops, both in England and Ireland, who have benefited from membership of the latter order than of the former.

On the ordinary social side, the Order at its field-days provides a genuine get-together for the community when all take part and the bands and banners are gay. There is no other association in the British Isles so successful in keeping alive important traditions and so interwoven with the total life of the community. I have heard Roman Catholic priests, from the North, express their liking for the colourful Orange parades and processions, while of course they dislike the attitude of the Order towards their Church. The Order, as such, was formed in 1795 to safeguard the Protestants against attacks which had been made upon them. There were in existence other groups, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, which were lawless and had been engaged for years in attacks and reprisals. The Orange Order sought to maintain the law, to uphold the Protestant faith, and the Protestant succession to the throne, and from the beginning inculcated a charitable attitude to the Roman Catholics. No man who was known to be a persecutor or a bigot was to be allowed to join. At first the members in the main were of the Established Church. Many Northern Presbyterians at that time were violently opposed to the British Government. Ireland had its independent Parliament, and when the vote for the Union of Great Britain and Ireland took place in 1800, the majority of Orange Parliamentarians voted against the Act. On the other hand, the Roman Catholic bishops were in favour of the Union and supported it. Two Church of Ireland bishops voted against it. Historically, therefore, there is no inevitable link politically between the Order and Unionism. The link is forged by consideration of the circumstances of the time.

The report of a Parliamentary Commission, on the condition of the people of Ireland, published in 1825, contains the statements of Daniel O'Connell, the lay leader in the campaign for Catholic Emancipation. He admitted under examination that up to the period of Rebellion of 1798, it had been customary for Roman Catholic gentlemen, present at any function, to join in the loyal toast to the pious and immortal memory of William III. When he was asked why was this done, he said it was because they, as well as the Protestants, believed in liberty. It is rather ironical that the victory of William over James at the Boyne was welcomed at the Vatican, because it was to the Papal advantage in Europe that the powers of Louis XIV of France, who was in league with James II, should be curbed. Again in 1798, the Roman Catholic church leaders were fearful of the principles of the French Revolution and the possibility that Wolfe Tone, a nominal Protestant and leader of the Rebellion, should introduce them into Ireland. In fact the Roman Catholic hierarchy, has on most occasions, and sometimes with a vehemence not equalled by any Protestant, denounced rebellious uprisings. There was the famous remark of Bishop Moriarty of Kerry about the Fenians who rose in 1867 that 'Hell was not hot enough, and eternity not long enough for the punishment of such'. Perhaps

enough has been written to show that the Orange Order and the old Protestant Ascendancy were not all always wrong (in their political views), even in the eyes of the Roman Catholic Church.

How can any thoughtful man today with the hind-sight which the passage of time gives, commemorate a rebellion which, if successful, would have meant victory in the over-running of Europe by France of the Revolution and Napoleon? Who can celebrate with enthusiasm a rebellion which, if it has been successful, in the midst of a most terrible struggle in Europe, would have meant victory for the Germany of the Kaiser? Who can praise the neutrality which caused grave loss of life to the members of the Merchant and Royal Navy who were safeguarding Europe, including all of Ireland, from the terrors of Hitler?

As we have already shown, many Roman Catholic leaders are very much aware of the development of Left-Wing Revolutionary movements in the whole of Ireland. This may explain the comparative silence of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in the present troubles. The real danger in Ireland is not the confrontation between Protestants and Roman Catholics on religious grounds. This can be conducted, in increasing measure, in peaceful ways. Since Vatican II, the religious situation has undoubtedly been transformed, at least in so far as it is now possible to meet together and talk. The danger spots are the neglected areas where the local people are conscious of their declining standards of living, and the consequent dissolution of their families through emigration. Only last Sunday (September 6th, 1970) one heard the astonishing sound on the television news of some of the people of Galway openly criticising and revolting against their Bishop and the cheers of the crowd in their support. The Bishop of Galway, Dr. Browne, is very much a bishop of the old school whose word has been law to the whole community in his Diocese, but his days of power are numbered. He had criticised the people in an area of the city because they refused to allow another itinerant (Tinker) family to live amongst them. They retorted, that the Church, and the Bishop in particular, had not shown any example in helping, and they had unoccupied land, on which houses could be built and money to do the work.

The majority of Roman Catholics in the South have little sympathy with many of the disruptive elements in the North. Some of them including priests, have been very critical of the unfair presentation of news on the radio and the television. Admissions by priests in the North, that, it was their people who were causing the trouble and starting many of the riot situations, were not publicised. During the time of the riots in August 1969 a Dominican priest, who was giving the nightly religious epilogue talks on the Republican Television, was not allowed to give one talk because in it he suggested that there was bias in the presentation of the news. It is sad to think that some members of the government and Parliament have adopted a similar

approach in distorting facts. We cannot wonder that this sustained attack on the law-abiding majority in the North, for there is no record of the North ever attacking the South, by leaders in the South who have permitted and even connived at attacks across the Border for many years, should harden the attitude in general of the Northern people. They have been further disappointed by the lack of any clear statements from the Roman Catholic Hierarchy supporting the Constitution and the forces of law and order, whether RUC or British Army. Time may show that the real problem today in Ireland is not partition, not even the measure of discrimination that may have been practised in the North, but the unsettled conditions socially and spiritually of the great mass of the younger generation of Roman Catholics in the whole country.

There are two issues upon which the Protestant people must press for change. They are major obstacles to peaceful co-operation. Both have to do with the implicit claim of the Roman Catholic church to legislate by Canon Law without respect for the laws of the state. In other words, a great problem in Ireland, North and South, is the unresolved one of the relationship between Church and State. The Church of Ireland was dis-established in 1870, the Roman Catholic church had for many years campaigned for it. The Establishment, they said, was the great cause of unrest and disaffection. Contrary to the official teaching of the Church, they sought the separation of Church and State. Now, we have the Roman Catholic church, which claims a superior authority to legislate on moral and religious issues, trying to live in a Republic whose basic principles are supposed to give equal rights to all churches. In the North, the same church confronts a government whose basic laws have been moulded by the liberal Protestant tradition. The two issues on which Roman Catholic Canon Law is seen to interfere are those of education and marriage. This last week the Pope consented, at the request of the Irish Hierarchy, to lift the ban on the attendance of Roman Catholics at Dublin University. If you went to Trinity without episcopal dispensation up to now, you committed mortal sin. There was a danger in Trinity, it was said, to the faith of the Roman Catholic because of the presence of Protestants, both students and teachers. The ban was not placed at the request of the people, and for generations Roman Catholics have sought to have it lifted, but it could only be lifted by the one who imposed it, the Pope. In the South, most of the educational institutions, schools and colleges, are under the direct control of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy, and the religious orders. Everyone is calling for improvement in our educational system. One recognised barrier to progress is that, in the ordinary national schools the local parish priest is the sole manager. There is a call from teachers, and educationalists, and many of the priests, to change to a committee management as in the ordinary British school. There has been opposition to this very necessary

change from the hierarchy. In a recent statement, a leading Roman Catholic cleric pointed out that, apart from other considerations, the change would mean a change of ecclesiastical law. Again this is law not made by any democratic body within the state, but Roman Canon Law.

In the other matter of marriage, the issue becomes most acute when there are mixed marriages. For many years, through a Supreme Court decision, the requirements of the *Ne Temere* decree had the force of law as against the Protestant party. In other matrimonial cases, the requirements of Canon Law and the decisions of the Roman Rota were quoted. We have, therefore, the anomaly of people living in bigamy according to the laws of the state, who are yet in the eyes of the Church and therefore, presumably of God, living in holy matrimony. Some cases have been brought to court which have revealed the conflict between state law and Canon law. Penalties, where they have been enforced, have been greatly lightened through the plea that in the eyes of the Church, the person had done no wrong. Here is a whole area which would have to be rectified in any state where there is due regard for the will of the people, and where there is, as there would be in a United Ireland, a considerable Protestant minority. Ultimately the people of Ireland, Roman Catholic and Protestant, if they seek a common democratic government, must face the claim of the Roman Catholic pontiff to infallible authority on Faith and Morals. Such a problem is not unique to Ireland, but beneath all the turmoil it is at the very root of the country's unrest, and to that extent is a continuing contributory cause to the ills of Ireland.