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Responding to the Challenge of Political Violence: The Catholic Hierarchy in Northern Ireland (1921-1972) and the Basque Country (1936-1975)

PhD

2010

Nicola Rooney

Declaration

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Summary

This thesis will examine the response of the Catholic hierarchy to political violence in Northern Ireland (1921-1972) and the Basque Country (1936-1975). These were critical years in the political development of both societies that saw the foundation and consolidation of two regimes without historical precedent – the Unionist Government in Northern Ireland and the Franco dictatorship in the Basque Country. Although very different in nature, both regimes emerged against a backdrop of violent conflict centred on contrasting national identities. The new political power consolidated its position through the imposition of structures that impeded the participation of the minority community in the running of the State. The growing alienation of the minority communities, who perceived the machinery of the State to be a threat to both their identity and security, would culminate in the outbreak of devastating cycles of guerrilla warfare and State violence that would dominate the latter years of both regimes.

The most obvious commonality between the two conflicts is their longevity, made possible by the degree of popular sympathy with the aims of the anti-State forces within their own communities. A further common feature, however, is the influential position occupied by the Catholic hierarchy in both societies, which has led to Church leaders being apportioned a share of the blame for the emergence and continuation of these paramilitary organisations. Significant weight has therefore been attached to responses to political violence from the ecclesiastical authorities – both within and beyond their own religious communities.

The challenges faced by the Catholic bishops in responding to the violence, and to the transformations and societal divisions it engendered, exhibited marked similarities, despite the considerable political, historical and cultural differences between the two conflicts. Ecclesiastical policy in both regions was conditioned to a significant extent by the unique demands such circumstances placed upon episcopal leaders. The Catholic Church has both shaped the relations of the minority community with the State and been shaped in turn by its interventions in that area. One critical difference

however makes this comparison particularly instructive: in Northern Ireland the Church's followers belonged almost exclusively to the alienated minority community, in opposition to a predominantly Protestant state, while in the Basque Country both sides of the political divide identified with the Catholic Church, with the result that the ecclesiastical authorities had an equal duty of pastoral care to all.

Drawing on a wide range of ecclesiastical and secular sources, with a view to assessing the impact of the public statements, declarations and interventions of the ecclesiastical authorities, this thesis examines the critical factors that determined how the Catholic hierarchy responded to political violence. The extent to which the influence of the ecclesiastical authorities shaped attitudes to the violence within their own communities is assessed, together with the manner in which this influence was perceived beyond their religious community.

For the Catholic hierarchy the question of political violence straddles the boundary between spiritual and political issues, drawing ecclesiastical leaders into the political arena. Such interventions invariably expose the bishops to challenges, often emanating from a variety of different ideological viewpoints, as the parties to the conflict question the limits of episcopal authority. Although providing a moral analysis of the means and objectives governing the use of force by both State and anti-State forces is only one dimension of the bishops' complex and wide-ranging pastoral role, it is nevertheless a key responsibility of episcopal leadership in divided societies.

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conflict. In addition to making available this valuable research material, Fr. Aguirre himself provided detailed background information on key issues and consented to be interviewed for this study.

Personal interviews with two key protagonists contributed greatly to the chapters on Northern Ireland. The insights of Bishop Edward Daly were of considerable significance given the perspective he brought as someone who was active as a priest during the period under study and went on to become a member of the hierarchy. Monsignor Raymond Murray is widely known as a leading activist on human rights and social justice issues and his willingness to share personal experiences of working with prisoners and campaigning on behalf of victims of violence in Northern Ireland is greatly appreciated. Thanks are also due to the Archdiocese of Armagh and the Diocesan Secretary, Fr. John Connolly, for permission to consult the papers of Cardinal William Conway (1963-1977). As this archive is not yet fully open or catalogued this consultation would not have been possible without the assistance of the archivist, Seamus Savage, and his impressive knowledge of the Cardinal's vast archive. His willingness to facilitate researchers and provide prompt responses to all queries are deeply appreciated.

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Nicola Rooney

Dublin, October 2009

Abbreviations

AAA	Armagh Archdiocesan Archives
DAA	Dublin Archdiocesan Archives
BOOB	Boletín Oficial del Obispado de Bilbao
BOOSS	Boletín Oficial del Obispado de San Sebastián
BOOV	Boletín Oficial del Obispado de Vitoria
ETA	Euskadi Ta Askatasuna
ICD	Irish Catholic Directory
IPP	Irish Parliamentary Party
IRA	Irish Republican Army
OPE	Oficina Prensa Euskadi
PNV	Partido Nacionalista Vasco
PRONI	Public Records Office of Northern Ireland
UVF	Ulster Volunteer Force

Introduction

Writing about the political violence in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country, the journalist Paddy Woodworth has rightly noted: 'These are the only two conflicts in western Europe where an armed group has had the consistent support of a substantial sector of the electorate.'[1] An exploration of the reasons for this support reveals numerous points of commonality between the two cases arising from the alienation of a minority community from the State. One common feature that has yet to be examined in a comparative framework is the prominent role of the Catholic Church, accused in both cases of contributing, through both actions and omissions, to the development of the popular support that made possible the campaign of guerrilla warfare waged against the State by the Irish Republican Army and the Basque *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (Basque Country and Freedom). Such has been the extent of the Church's influence in both societies, and the involvement of ecclesiastical authorities in the conflicts, that the Church has been accused of being part of the problem, if not a key protagonist and instigator. While the prominence of the theme of political violence in the media has prompted investigations by journalists of the role of the Church,[2] which can at times result in a temptation to sensationalise and even overestimate the extent of its influence,[3] there has been to date a lack of objective academic analysis of this crucial question.

This thesis seeks to address this deficit by analysing the response of the Catholic hierarchy to the challenge of political violence in Northern Ireland,[4] from the creation of the Northern Ireland state in 1921 until the prorogation of the Northern Ireland parliament in 1972, and the Basque

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[1] Paddy Woodworth, 'The Basque Conflict and Ireland', *History Ireland*, 9.3 (Autumn 2001), pp. 41-47 (p. 46).

[2] See for example: Martin Dillon, *God and the Gun: The Church and Irish Terrorism* (London: Orion, 1998); Jesús Bastante, *Los curas de ETA* (Madrid: Esfera, 2004); Carmen Gurruchaga, *Los "cómplices" de ETA* (Madrid: Esfera, 2004).

[3] See for example the claim by Alvaro Baeza that ETA was 'born in a seminary': *E.T.A. nació en un seminario: El gran secreto – Historia de E.T.A. 1952-1995* (San Sebastián: ABL Press, 1996).

[4] The term 'Northern Ireland' can only be used in reference to the period following the establishment of the state in 1921. However, it will be noted that the official name for the jurisdiction was rejected by many who did not accept its legitimacy and continued to refer to the region as 'the North of Ireland'. Since this was the case for many leading members of the Catholic hierarchy, both terms will be used in this thesis.

Country,[5] from the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936 until the end of the Franco regime in 1975. In both cases the Catholic hierarchy acted as spiritual leaders of a minority community alienated from a State it deemed to be illegitimate and hostile to its national identity. Both the Northern Ireland state and the Franco dictatorship emerged against a backdrop of civil conflict and violence. The triumphant political power consolidated its rule through the imposition of power structures that impeded the political participation of the minority community in the running of the State. The machinery of the State was thus deemed to represent a threat to both the identity and physical security of the minority, whose opposition grew progressively more militant as the twentieth century progressed, spiralling into a devastating cycle of guerrilla warfare and State reprisals during the final years of both regimes.

It must be stated that the intention here is not to compare the conflicts themselves – differentiated by significant political, historical and cultural factors – but rather to examine the often similar challenges facing the Catholic bishops in these two divided communities. It will be argued that ecclesiastical policy in both regions was conditioned to a significant extent by the unique demands such circumstances placed upon episcopal leaders as violence proved to be more than merely a means to bring about change, becoming itself a catalyst for change, polarising communities and producing transformations at all levels of society – including the Church.

It is not only the similarities that make this comparison so instructive, however, but also the significant differences that permit consideration of central issues from contrasting perspectives. Firstly, the initial responses of the Catholic bishops to the establishment of the Unionist government in Northern Ireland and the Franco dictatorship in the Basque Country were entirely different and Church-State relations evolved in both contexts along diametrically opposing lines. The establishment of the Northern Ireland state was opposed by the Catholic hierarchy, who accorded legitimacy to its

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[5] There is a lack of consensus regarding the delineation of the territorial confines of the Basque Country. The broadest understanding considers it to be a region of the Pyrenees made up of seven provinces, three of which are under French rule - Basse-Navarre, Labourd and Soule - while the remaining four - Vizcaya, Guipúzcoa, Álava and Navarre – are under the rule of Spain. This analysis will focus on those provinces within the Spanish territory, with particular emphasis on the most conflictive provinces of Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa.

government only slowly and always with the clear intention of improving conditions for the minority nationalist community. In the Basque Country the support of the Catholic hierarchy was a crucial source of legitimacy for the Franco regime, and the Church openly collaborated with the civil authorities in suppressing the symbols and representations of Basque identity. Of particular importance is the fact that in Northern Ireland the Church's followers belonged almost exclusively to the alienated minority community, in opposition to a predominantly Protestant state, giving rise to the false perception that the conflict was, in fact, a religious one. In the Basque Country however, both sides of the political divide identified with the Catholic Church, with the result that the ecclesiastical authorities had an equal duty of pastoral care to all.

'Political violence' has been defined by Elizabeth Frazer and Kimberly Hutchings as 'the employment of the potentially lethal use of force by actors in the public sphere for publicly acknowledged, collective ends, from national security to national liberation or social revolution.'[6] The pivotal position occupied by the ecclesiastical authorities in the relations between the State and the minority community in both societies ensured that the use of violence, by both State and anti-State forces, would present a series of complex challenges as the bishops were called upon to provide a moral analysis of the means and objectives governing the use of force. The cases of Northern Ireland and the Basque Country will be shown to be clear examples of how the Catholic Church, through its bishops, can confer legitimacy on, or indeed deny legitimacy to, a political regime. The implications of a decision to bestow or withhold legitimacy from political authorities will be explored in relation to the question of 'political' violence – both by the State and in opposition to the State.

The Catholic Church in both societies has shaped the relations of the minority community with the State and been shaped in turn by its interventions in that area. In spite of this, the role of the Catholic hierarchy is often ignored, or treated as peripheral, in historical or political analyses of the

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[6] Elizabeth Frazer and Kimberly Hutchings, 'Argument and Rhetoric in the Justification of Political Violence', *European Journal of Political Theory* 6 (2007), pp. 180-199 (p. 196).

two conflicts. This is an unfortunate oversight since an analysis of these conflicts, viewed through the prism of Church-State relations, provides many revealing insights. Daithí Ó'Corráin makes a similar observation, finding that '[i]n conjunction with State archival material a consideration of the role of Church leaders adds an important new layer of historical interpretation and explanation.'[7] Furthermore, the influence of Catholic religious beliefs and education inevitably tied members of the minority community to a relationship with the hierarchy, which is central to any understanding of both conflicts.

The decision to focus specifically on the Catholic hierarchy reflects the centrality of the role of the bishops within the authority structure of the Church. As José Antonio Pagola has argued, the bishops are not the only voice of the Church, but they are its most authoritative and significant voice, and the one that best represents its position.[8] While it is undeniable that the lower clergy has most contact with society and is therefore most likely to be influenced by it,[9] the bishops represent their followers both with State authorities at a national level and with the Church authorities in Rome. They thus occupy a key position on the axis between national and international spheres of influence. This is clearly of particular significance in the case of minority communities alienated from the State, who will inevitably seek international support as a means of challenging attempts by the State to portray their situation as a domestic problem.

Ó'Corráin's own work also serves to illustrate the value of the examination of the role of ecclesiastical authorities from a comparative perspective, contrasting the responses of the Catholic Church and Church of Ireland to the two states created by the partition of Ireland.[10] In the Basque context, Margaret Woods de Vivero has compared the activities of Basque

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[7] Daithí Ó Corráin, *Rendering to God and Caesar: The Irish Churches and the Two States in Ireland, 1949-1973* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), p. 7.

[8] José Antonio Pagola, *Una ética para la paz: los obispos del País Vasco, 1968-1992* (San Sebastián: Idatz, 1992), p. 11.

[9] Severiano Rojo Hernández, *Église et Société. Le clergé paroissial de Bilbao de la République au franquisme (1931-années 50)* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2000), p. 7.

[10] Daithí O'Corráin, 'Rendering to God and Caesar: The Irish Churches and the Two States in Ireland, 1949-1973' (PhD, Trinity College Dublin, 2004), published in 2006 as *Rendering to God and Caesar: The Irish Churches and the Two States in Ireland, 1949-1973* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006).

priests in opposition to the Franco regime to those of their counterparts in Catalonia.[11] International comparisons of the role of ecclesiastical authorities in different national contexts are lacking, however, despite the significant potential to shed valuable light on the ways in which the universal institution that is the Catholic Church adapts to the demands and conditions of distinct local situations. In the case of the present study the comparison is particularly instructive. While the timeframes covered in both contexts do not perfectly coincide, they do correspond to broadly comparable historical periods: the foundation and consolidation of new political systems, the impact of the Second Vatican Council and the outbreak of the cycles of guerrilla warfare and counter-violence by the State that dominated the latter years of both regimes. This permits the analysis, side by side, of similar challenges faced by the Catholic bishops in different national contexts. It also allows for the inclusion of revealing cross-references that indicate how particular aspects of one conflict were viewed by key participants in the other.

This thesis differs from the existing historiography of the role of the Catholic Church in both societies, not only because of the comparative dimension, but also as a result of the centrality afforded to the response of the ecclesiastical authorities to the question of political violence.[12] Particular attention will be focused on the many ways – both spoken and unspoken – in which the Catholic hierarchy responded to the competing narratives of national security and national liberation, centred on opposing definitions of 'the nation', that lay at the heart of the debate on the legitimacy of the use of force. While operating primarily through a historical framework, this research, of necessity, takes into account the broad range of academic, and indeed non-academic, interest in both conflicts, with reference to the work of

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[11] Margaret Woods de Vivero, 'Clerical Opposition to the Franco Regime in the Dioceses of Barcelona, Vitoria and Bilbao after the Civil War (1939-1975)' (PhD, Trinity College Dublin, 2001).

[12] Gerald McElroy in *The Catholic Church and the Northern Ireland Crisis, 1968-86* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1990) has addressed this issue by means of a different methodological approach, based primarily on the analysis of a questionnaire sent to members of the lower clergy. In the Basque case, specific reference has been made to the theme of political violence by José María Delclaux Echevarría, but from a theological perspective. This work is informative in relation to the internal church debates surrounding responses to violence, while the present study will be focusing instead on the external impact of these interventions. See: José María Delclaux Echevarría, 'Las exigencias de la caridad cristiana y la praxis violenta en las relaciones socio-políticas (La Teología del episcopado vasco sobre la violencia -1969-1990)', (Tesina de licenciatura en Teología Fundamental, Instituto Diocesano de Teología y Pastoral, Bilbao, [No date]).

scholars in other relevant fields, such as the history of ideas, politics, sociology, social anthropology, psychology, theology and also investigations by journalists. It seeks to build on existing studies of key aspects of the Church's role in both contexts, amplifying the analysis with particular reference to the Catholic hierarchy. The approach adopted, however, will not be élite-centred, but rather one that takes into account a broad spectrum of different analyses and interpretations.

It is not intended to replicate the detailed chronological studies of developments in Church-State relations that have already been produced in the individual contexts of Northern Ireland[13] and the Basque Country.[14] Instead, the aim will be to highlight key episodes that will permit an analysis of the impact of the responses offered by the ecclesiastical authorities to political violence and its underlying causes. The key research questions for this study will be: (i) What were the critical factors that determined how the Catholic hierarchy responded to political violence? (ii) How influential were the ecclesiastical authorities in shaping attitudes to the violence within their own communities? (iii) How was that influence perceived by the parties to the conflict and the wider society? The combined responses to these questions will facilitate an assessment of the impact of the hierarchy on the relations

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[13] See for example: Mary Harris, *The Catholic Church and the Foundation of the Northern Ireland State* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1993), for a detailed analysis of the response of the Catholic Church to the Northern Ireland State during the early years of its existence. Oliver P. Rafferty's *Catholicism in Ulster 1603-1983* (London: C. Hurst & Co, 1994) spans a much wider timeframe and successfully illustrates the unique nature of Ulster Catholicism. An even wider chronological period is covered by Marianne Elliott's *The Catholics of Ulster: a History* (London: Allen Lane, 2000), which begins with the arrival of Christianity and ends in the year 2000. Although consideration is given to the role and contribution of the Catholic Church, this is not a church history, focusing instead on the wider Catholic community.

[14] Severiano Rojo Hernández, *op. cit.*, provides a penetrating analysis of the role of the Basque Clergy in one of the Basque regions during the turbulent period of the Second Republic, the Spanish Civil War and the early years of the Franco dictatorship. The later period of the dictatorship is examined by Anabella Barroso in her seminal study *Sacerdotes bajo la atenta mirada del régimen franquista* (Priests under the attentive gaze of the Franco Regime) (Bilbao: Desclée de Brouwer, 1995) in which she examines in detail the various facets of the church-state conflict that marked the final decades of the Franco dictatorship in the Basque Country. In *El clero vasco en la clandestinidad (1940-1968)*, 2 Vols (Bilbao, Donostia, Gasteiz, Iruña, [s.n.], 1994), Frs. Serafín Esnaola and Emilio de Iturrarán have illustrated with extensive documentary evidence their own activities in opposition to the dictatorship. This work is invaluable for the personal depth it adds to the narrative, revealing not only the details of the actions undertaken by these priests, but also their emotional responses to the key events of the period.

between the minority community and the State, in connection with the issue of political violence.

It would be inappropriate and unhelpful to compare individual episcopates. Simon Lee and Peter Stanford in *Believing Bishops*, a study of the Roman Catholic and Anglican hierarchies of the United Kingdom, have concluded that 'it would be wrong to seek one model for all bishops', using the analogy of a football team to illustrate the need for different individuals occupying different positions within the Episcopal Conference:

> Not everybody can play in the same position if the team is to function. Indeed, the geography of the football pitch, or of the country at large, dictates that some will play on the right and some on the left. Depending on the state of the nation and especially on the state of the nation's faith, different kinds of leaders are needed.[15]

An analysis of the responses of individual bishops to the circumstances of their particular dioceses will nonetheless form a core element of this study in recognition of the significant impact individual personalities can have in the area of Church-State relations. While at pains to stress that bishops should be considered as part of a team, Lee and Stanford go on to state that the reason they are so influential is precisely because they are individuals: 'Clearly defined personalities – faces, names – are what the public wants rather than learned reports, findings from anonymous committees, urgings from professional bodies.'[16]

The key primary sources for this analysis will be the statements and publications of the Catholic hierarchy in both Northern Ireland and the Basque Country. Ecclesiastical sources such as the diocesan bulletins of the Basque dioceses and the *Irish Catholic Directory* are of central importance, as they illustrate clearly the message the Catholic bishops wished to transmit to their followers. Newspapers and periodical publications are a further vital point of reference. Here, attention will be paid not only to the content of the messages from the bishops, but also to the manner in which these are presented in newspapers representing different ideological viewpoints. In addition, memoirs written by members of the hierarchy, together with

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[15] Simon Lee and Peter Stanford, *Believing Bishops*, 2nd edn ([s.l.]: Faber Paperbacks, 1991), p. 4.
[16] Ibid. p. 23.

published collections of their statements and writings, provide a valuable insight into the perspective of individual bishops on key issues.

Where possible, these sources have been supplemented with reference to archival material: the correspondence of the bishops, their private writings, and official sources. In the context of Northern Ireland, this analysis has benefited from the inclusion of recently-released and unpublished material from the archive of Cardinal Conway, whose primacy spanned the critical latter years of the Unionist government. It must be stated that access to such material is considerably more difficult in the Basque Country, due to restrictions provided for in Spanish legislation, specifically the *Ley del patrimonio histórico español 16/85*. For instance, access to relevant material contained in the *Archivo Histórico Provincial de Vizcaya* was denied to this researcher, despite the fact that the material in question had been consulted in previously published research. Similar restrictions exist in the ecclesiastical archives, meaning that the archives of the Basque bishops for this period remain closed to researchers. Unsurprisingly, due to the inaccessibility of archives, studies of the role of the Basque Church to date have tended to focus on the lower clergy.[17] The only publications focusing specifically on the Catholic hierarchy are those based on collections of public statements which the hierarchy itself chose to put out into the public domain in response to accusations that the bishops had not done enough to condemn ETA violence.[18]

This deficit can be compensated for in some measure through consultation of the personal archives of members of the lower clergy. Access to such material in the Ecclesiastical Archives of Vizcaya was kindly facilitated by the Director, Dr. Anabella Barroso. This material includes correspondence from the Diocesan Secretary for the Diocese of Bilbao, which provides revealing insights into the views of the diocesan bishop through the instructions given to his clergy. Documents produced clandestinely by priests in opposition to the Franco regime are a further valuable archival resource.

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[17] See footnote 13.

[18] José Antonio Pagola, *op. cit*; *La iglesia frente al terrorismo de ETA*, ed. by José Francisco Serrano Oceja (Madrid: BAC, 2001); *Al servicio de la palabra: cartas pastorales y otros documentos conjuntos de los Obispos de Pamplona y Tudela, Bilbao, San Sebastián y Vitoria (1975-1993)* (Bilbao, Ega, 1993).

These have been preserved in private collections in the Manterola archive of the *Euskal Biblioteca Labayru* and the Aguirre archive of the Monastery of Santa Teresa, Lazkano. This material not only illustrates how the leadership of the hierarchy was viewed by this section of their priests, but also contains memoranda detailing interviews that took place between some of these individuals and their superiors. Further detail, including valuable personal perspective, has been obtained through interviews with individuals who, as members of the lower clergy, were active in their communities in both Northern Ireland and the Basque Country, throughout the period covered in this study.

The thesis has been divided into five sections corresponding to different historical contexts that presented comparable challenges to the ecclesiastical authorities in both regions, stemming from the issue of political violence and its underlying causes. Particular emphasis will be placed on the changing paradigms of ecclesiastical intervention that resulted from the transformations produced by the use of violence by both State and anti-State forces.

The first section will situate the present analysis in its historical context. The response of the ecclesiastical authorities to the development of two nationalist movements – Irish and Basque – that considered Catholicism to be an integral element of their national identity will be elucidated. While associating themselves with the Catholic Church, both movements attempted to draw clearly defined boundaries for the limits of episcopal authority. In addition to assessing the extent to which this endeavour could be regarded as successful, this section will analyse the principal challenges presented to the Catholic hierarchy as a consequence of the centrality of the Catholic religion in nationalist discourse, and the involvement of members of the lower clergy in these movements. National unity will be shown to be the prime consideration for the bishops of both regions, but with contrasting implications in the cases of Irish and Basque nationalism.

Section two will compare the response of the Catholic Church to the emergence of two new political regimes founded in the midst of violent conflict. These were regimes without historical precedent – the Unionist government in Northern Ireland and General Franco's military dictatorship in

Spain, which, unlike the previous dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera, excluded the monarchy. Chapters Three and Four will examine the guidance given by the Catholic bishops to their followers in situations of acute political tension and violence. Both states were founded on a dichotomy that asserted the dominant position of one section of the population over another: unionists and nationalists in Northern Ireland and the victors and the defeated of the Civil War in the Basque Country. In Northern Ireland, the Catholic Church was firmly situated within the minority community, alienated from the State, while in the Basque Country, the Church maintained a presence on both sides of the divide. Both hierarchies would thus begin from very different points of departure in their relations with the State, but ecclesiastical policy would evolve in contrasting directions in response to changing demands and circumstances. Responses to violence, and the aftermath of violence, will form the primary focus of this section and conflicting perspectives of the limits of episcopal authority, brought to the fore by demands for ecclesiastical condemnations of violence, will be examined.

In the third section the evolution of Church-State relations will be analysed from the perspective of the minority community, with particular emphasis on the legitimacy of the State. The Irish and Basque hierarchies provide contrasting examples of the Catholic Church as a source of cultural continuity (in the Irish case) and rupture (in the case of the Basque bishops). Chapters Five and Six will assess the impact of the stance adopted by the ecclesiastical authorities, and how they responded to changing demands emanating from the minority community.

Chapters Seven and Eight will examine the complex intersection between the transformation of the Church on a global level, and the transformation of society at local level that followed the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). The Council represented an attempt by the Church to address the challenges posed by the political, social, cultural and technological changes then taking place throughout the world. The 1965 document *Gaudium et Spes* (Light and Hope – also known as The Pastoral Constitution of the Church) asserted the duty of the Church to work for social justice. This fourth section will argue that this was of crucial significance in the cases of the Basque Country and Northern Ireland where a section of the

bishops' followers considered themselves to be victims of government oppression in the areas of political, social, economic and cultural rights. In particular, it gave legitimacy to clerical protests against the regimes in question, providing priests with a new vocabulary for challenging injustice. In both regions the process of renewal demanded by Vatican II was to be implemented against the backdrop of a climate of increasing political tension and polarisation.

The final years of both the Unionist government in Northern Ireland and the Franco regime in the Basque Country were marked by a bitter cycle of violence and counter-violence as the Basque *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (ETA) and the Provisional IRA engaged in an armed struggle against the State. Section five will analyse the challenges presented to the Catholic hierarchy by the emergence of these guerrilla organisations from within their own communities, supported by a significant level of popular sympathy. As a new dynamic and rhetoric of resistance was introduced into the equation of legitimacy, authority and the nation, the Catholic bishops were faced with a series of competing demands. The Catholic hierarchy was challenged by those who justified their use of violence in terms of national liberation to recognise the causal relationship between injustice and violence. The forces of the State, justifying their use of violence in terms of national defence, called on the Catholic hierarchy to bring the maximum weight of its authority to bear on their opponents in the name of order. In the midst of these competing narratives central importance was accorded to the view of the Catholic hierarchy from various sectors: the parties to the conflict, the media, the affected local communities and international opinion

The conclusion will trace the evolution of ecclesiastical responses to violence in both contexts, examining the key factors that conditioned when, and how, such responses were issued, and how they were received by different sectors of society, including the government and politicians, the media and the bishops' own followers. This final section will also highlight those areas where a unison of thought can be detected and explore points of divergence between the two hierarchies, before outlining key areas beyond the limits of the present study that might be considered for future research.

Chapter One

The Bishops and the Irish Nation

> To Irishmen of every creed and class and party the very thought of our country partitioned and torn as a new Poland must be one of heartrending sorrow.
>
> (Joint manifesto of Roman Catholic and Church of Ireland bishops, 1917)[1]

The commitment and contribution of the Catholic hierarchy to the cause of Irish nationalism has been the subject of considerable debate. The intertwining of religious and political questions produced by the failed attempt to eliminate the Catholic religion in Ireland in the eighteenth century saw the emergence of an acutely politically-conscious Catholic hierarchy, determined to use all the means at its disposal to protect the interests of the Church. The influence of the Catholic clergy in their communities was greatly enhanced as a result of their association with a persecuted Church. This ensured that in the turbulent years of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, marked by violent conflict that culminated in the partition of the country, both State and anti-State forces would be competing for the influential backing of ecclesiastical leaders. The bishops, meanwhile, were determined not to be marginalised by changing political circumstances, such as the rise of democratic politics, and frequently asserted the right to speak on behalf of the nation. This chapter will trace the evolution of ecclesiastical responses to the emergence and development of Irish nationalism throughout the years that preceded Irish War of Independence (1919-1921). The period saw the shaping of questions that were to dominate the debate about the relationship between Church and nation and the limits of episcopal authority throughout the twentieth century.

The British colonial enterprise in Ireland left a devastating legacy of division in its wake. As the native Irish were displaced from their land, predominantly in the North-Eastern province of Ulster, by English and Scottish settlers in the seventeenth century, an alien language, religion and

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[1] *Irish Catholic Directory* (hereafter ICD) (1918), pp. 517-518.

culture were introduced into the country. By the end of what was known as 'the Ulster Plantation', property and government were in the hands of a minority 'differing in national identity and aspirations from the mass of the population'.[2] Attempts to achieve the cultural assimilation of the native Irish followed, with the two key targets being their language and religion. As the Irish language went into decline, however, the Catholic religion 'provided the Irish with a substitute symbolic language and offered them a new cultural heritage with which they could identify and be identified and through which they could identify with one another'.[3] The link between Catholicism and the Irish nation was thus cemented through the attempt to consolidate colonial rule.

Efforts to eliminate Catholicism from the 1690s onwards took the form of the Penal Laws, which banished priests, fined the people for failure to attend the services of the established Church and greatly limited the political and social rights of Catholics. This strategy had both a religious and a political dimension, being aimed at once at the elimination of the Catholic religion and of Catholicism as a political force.[4] On neither count was it to be successful: the Catholic Church did not disappear and continued to conduct its services clandestinely. The linking of political and social rights with religious and national identity, moreover, ensured that organised resistance to colonial rule would assume a politico-religious character. The image thus generated of a persecuted Church, coupled with the personal sacrifices made by members of the clergy in order to continue to minister to the spiritual needs of their people, only served to strengthen the Church's influence. A secondary consequence of this legislation was the conversion or exile of wealthy and influential Catholics, resulting in a leadership vacuum, which in many communities was occupied by the Catholic clergy.[5]

Eamon O'Flaherty has argued that the significant influence retained by ecclesiastical leaders at the end of this period is clearly demonstrated by the

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[2] Maurice Irvine, *Northern Ireland. Faith and Faction* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 9.
[3] Emmet Larkin, *The Historical Dimension of Irish Catholicism* (Dublin: Four Courts, 1997), p. 83.
[4] Oliver P. Rafferty, *Catholicism in Ulster 1603-1983* (London: C. Hurst & Co, 1994), pp. 57-60.
[5] David W. Miller, *Church, State and Nation in Ireland, 1898-1921* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1973), pp. 1-2.

extent of the Catholic Church's involvement in the dismantling of the Penal legislation during the last two decades of the 18th century. As a series of relief acts were introduced between 1774 and 1782, gradually removing restrictions on Catholics, the bishops – albeit to varying degrees – were keen to emphasise the loyalty of the Catholic subjects of the British crown in Ireland.[6] Cooperation between the Catholic hierarchy and the British state during this period was undoubtedly facilitated by shared objectives as the prevailing climate in Europe, sparked by the French Revolution, boded ill for both. The British government was thus in a position to make concessions to the Irish bishops and had strong incentives to do so. The establishment of Maynooth College for the training of priests in 1795 is a case in point. The Church received financial support and a facility for training its priests in Ireland, while the British authorities believed that this would prevent the importation of potentially threatening revolutionary ideologies, acquired by seminarians during their training in other European countries.[7] The adoption of English as the language of the college was a clear indication that, for the hierarchy, the need to secure the position of Catholicism and the Catholic Church in Irish society far outweighed the issue of national identity. From the point of view of the British authorities, the extent to which this measure could be regarded as successful is debatable. It may have ensured that the State had a firm ally in the hierarchy, but this alone was not sufficient to stem the tide of revolution in Ireland.

The relationship between the Catholic Church and the Irish revolutionary tradition is extremely complex and contrasts strongly with that of other European nations such as France or Italy where revolution and anti-clericalism went hand in hand. Failed attempts to suppress the Catholic religion had transformed it into both a badge of identity and a symbol of resistance, leading John Newsinger to conclude that 'the revolutionary movement in Ireland has been infused with Catholic sentiment'.[8] The Catholic

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[6] Eamon O'Flaherty, 'Ecclesiastical politics and the dismantling of the penal laws in Ireland, 1774-82', *Irish Historical Studies* XXVI 101 (May 1988), pp. 33-50.
[7] Patrick J. Corish, *Maynooth College, 1795-1995* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1995).
[8] John Newsinger, 'Revolution and Catholicism in Ireland, 1848-1923', *European Studies Review* 9 (1979), pp. 457-480 (p. 457).

Church as an institution, however, in the eyes of the late 18th century revolutionaries was as significant an obstacle to progress as the State and, accordingly, they sought to challenge the dominance of ecclesiastical leaders. It was not 'catholic sentiment', but the influence of the principles of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution that were prevalent during the failed 1798 rebellion of the United Irishmen. In the words of its most famous leader, Theobald Wolfe Tone, it aimed not only 'to break the connection with England' but also 'to substitute the common name of Irishman, in place of the denominations of Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter'.[9] Although in practice, despite the rhetoric, the movement was 'not ecumenical or secular',[10] and the subsequent rising would expose and greatly exacerbate sectarian divisions, it represents, nonetheless, an attempt to overcome religious differences in the name of national liberation. At the same time, the Catholic hierarchy was seeking to minimise political differences in the interests of carving out spaces where religious interests might be protected in crucial areas such as education.

The Catholic bishops thus occupied an uncomfortable position as leaders of a Church that was appropriated by a revolutionary tradition whose values they did not share. Consequently, as John Whyte has observed: 'The Catholic Church in Ireland has always provided much of the opposition to revolutionary movements.'[11] At the same time, however, the hierarchy was unable to identify completely with the Protestant state, in spite of a shared interest in the preservation of 'order'. As the Protestant government in Dublin clearly had a vested interest in the maintenance of structures that inhibited the political participation of Catholics, thereby facilitating the continuation of its rule over the majority Catholic population, the bishops looked to London for more favourable terms and duly lent their support to the Act of Union which came into force on 1 January 1801. This Act established the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Irish political representatives would now be

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[9] Quoted in *Life of Theobald Wolfe Tone*, ed. by Tom Bartlett, (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1998), p. 46. The term 'Dissenter' was applied to Protestants who did not belong to the established Church.
[10] Richard English, *Irish Freedom: The History of Nationalism in Ireland* (London: Macmillan, 2006), p. 94.
[11] John H. Whyte, '1916 – Revolution and Religion' in *Leaders and Men of the Easter Rising: Dublin 1916*, ed. by F.X. Martin, (London: Methuen, 1967), pp. 215-226 (p. 215).

required to sit in the House of Commons in London. The bishops' support was regarded as critical in the context of nineteenth century Ireland where, as David Miller has pointed out, the 'state' and the 'nation' were two separate entities, the 'state' resting on secular foundations, while the 'nation' held the allegiance of the people: 'In the late nineteenth century, therefore, the Church assumed a crucial role in the Irish political system alongside the State and the Nation, both of which needed the Church to reinforce their claims to legitimacy.'[12]

The Catholic Church was clearly no longer a persecuted Church; for some however, it had now gone to the opposite extreme, betraying the nation in exchange for privilege. According to Miller:

> The most important of the conventions governing relations between Church and State in the mid-nineteenth century ... were that the State would respect the Church's vested interests, especially in the area of publicly financed education, and that the Church would use her very considerable influence to curb direct challenges to the State's monopoly of physical force.[13]

Fr. Joseph McVeigh has gone further, stating that the Catholic Church was, for the British, 'a buffer between their misrule and the organised revolutionary resistance of an oppressed people'.[14]

It would be inaccurate, however, to portray this working relationship as an entirely easy one. While prepared to cooperate with the British government in matters of mutual interest, the Catholic hierarchy resisted attempts to integrate the Irish Catholic Church into the British Church, and opposed State interference in ecclesiastical affairs, including the appointment of bishops. Brian Girvin has argued that it was in fact the controversy surrounding the question of a State veto over episcopal appointments during the years 1808-1810 that helped solidify nationalist opposition to British rule, resulting in the 'fusing of religion and nationalism in Ireland' and providing 'an emotional basis for national identity'.[15] While, during the early years of the Union, Irish Catholics were not 'overly enthusiastic', Girvin stresses that 'they were not,

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[12] Miller, p. 3.
[13] Ibid. p. 6.
[14] Joseph McVeigh, *A Wounded Church: Religion, Politics and Justice in Ireland* (Cork and Dublin, 1989), p. 25.
[15] Brian Girvin, 'Making Nations: O'Connell, Religion and the Creation of Political Identity' in *Daniel O'Connell: Political Pioneer*, ed. by Maurice R. O'Connell (Dublin: DOCAL, 1991), pp. 13-34 (p. 33).

as a unified group, opposed to it'.[16] The campaign over the issue of 'the independence of episcopal appointments', however, soon became 'identified with national consciousness'.[17] A further significant contribution was that the veto controversy served to raise the profile of the charismatic nationalist politician Daniel O'Connell, who would lead the campaigns for Catholic Emancipation and Repeal of the Union during the early part of the 19th century, founding the Catholic Association in 1823.

The influence of the fusion of religion and nationalism identified by Girvin in the veto controversy is clearly discernible during O'Connell's later career. Referring to a draft bill for Catholic Emancipation in 1828, for instance, he informed a meeting of the Catholic Association that 'it contained only one objectionable clause, and that was a species of veto, by which no bishop could be elected without the concurrence of the Crown'. This, he declared, 'could never receive their sanction' and the statement was met with cheers from the crowd. More cheers followed as he proudly stated that: '[a]n act of Parliament had not made their religion, and an act of Parliament should not mar it'.[18] This support for the ecclesiastical authorities was reciprocated and the contribution of the Church proved pivotal in transforming what began as a political campaign with a relatively narrow support base into a genuinely mass movement. In Ulster a majority of the northern bishops and their priests contributed financially to the movement and expressed support for its aims in sermons.[19] Crucially, this enabled O'Connell to benefit from the organisational structures of the Church itself. As Emmet Larkin has rightly observed, by securing the support of the Catholic hierarchy, O'Connell also 'secured the only institutional apparatus that permeated, however imperfectly, to the grass roots'.[20]

O'Connell was not, however, seeking political power for the Catholic Church. On the contrary, he frequently asserted the need for religious liberty and a clear separation between Church and State.[21] His discourse of national

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[16] Ibid. p. 18.
[17] Ibid. p. 27.
[18] *Liverpool Mercury*, 19 December 1828.
[19] Rafferty, p. 129.
[20] Larkin, p. 96.
[21] Later, in 1837 for instance, he publicly expressed his support for the Spanish liberals, fighting the

liberation thus contained a potential underlying threat to the interests of the Church. When the successful campaign for Catholic Emancipation – the Catholic Relief Act became law on 13 April 1829 – evolved into a campaign for the Repeal of the Union during the two decades that followed, the bishops became less comfortable with the political direction of the movement.[22] They did not, however, withdraw their support entirely, despite displaying a reluctance to allow their churches to be used as meeting places for political agitation. By this time clerical support for O'Connell was causing concern in Britain, undermining as it did the legitimacy of British rule in Ireland. Consequently, British representatives began to exert pressure in Rome with the aim of securing a condemnation from the Vatican, and their constant complaints eventually moved the Prefect of Propaganda to write to Dr. Crolly, the Irish Primate, in the spring of 1839, asking him to ensure that the bishops did not become involved in political controversies.[23] Still the response was not deemed sufficient, and the warning was reiterated in a further letter to Archbishop Crolly from the Propaganda Fide on 15 October 1844.[24]

While the Irish hierarchy was mindful of the distinction between 'State' and 'nation' at a national level, and conscious of where the allegiances of the people lay, the Vatican focused instead on the global picture. Its horror of revolution, combined with the insecurity of its own geo-political position, motivated it to preserve, where possible, cordial relations with nation-states. Appeals to the Vatican that by-passed the Irish hierarchy were to be a key feature of the British response to the Irish question over the coming decades. Hopeful of a more favourable response from the Pope, the British authorities would attempt to use diplomatic pressure to achieve what socio-economic privileges had not – the support of the Catholic hierarchy for British rule in Ireland. The strategy contained a fundamental weakness: an under-estimation of the independence of the national hierarchy. While the Papacy had a

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traditionalist forces of Don Carlos for succession to the Spanish throne, calling for an end to 'the unholy union of Church and State' in Spain and all other countries where Catholics were in the majority. Fergus O'Ferrall, *Liberty and Catholic Politics, 1790-1990* (Belfast: The Freehold Press, 1990), p. 8.

[22] Larkin, p. 103.

[23] For details see Matthias Buschkuhl, *Great Britain and the Holy See 1746-1879* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1982), p. 78.

[24] Ibid. p. 79.

controlling influence in deciding which individuals were appointed to the hierarchy (although here too the pragmatic necessity to take the demands of the local context into account was not ignored), there was little the Pope could do to control how a diocese was actually governed. While the Vatican may have proved more open to considering conflicts of national identity in the wider context of global politics, it lacked the capacity to enforce its analysis of the situation at diocesan level. The view of the bishops meanwhile, in political terms, was intently focused on the demands of the immediate local context.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, demands for self-government for Ireland were gathering momentum. The campaign for 'Home Rule' – an Irish parliament that would have control of domestic affairs – began in Ireland in 1870 and came to prominence during the 1880s when Irish politicians won the support of the Liberal Party, under the leadership of William Gladstone. The introduction of the first Home Rule Bill in 1886 provoked riots in Belfast, an early indication of the conflict that was to come. The unique nature of the North-Eastern context, where Catholics were a minority of the population, was becoming more pronounced as the political mobilisation of the Catholic population gathered pace. The early leaders of the Home Rule campaign, such as Isaac Butt and Charles Stewart Parnell, were Protestants, and the bishops had initially maintained a degree of distance from the movement, concerned about its alliance with the Liberal Party and its links with the controversial Irish National Land League.[25] The Home Rulers nonetheless, like Daniel O'Connell before them, recognised the significance of the support of the Catholic Church, both in terms of legitimacy and for organisational purposes. They thus pledged their support for Catholic aims, particularly denominational education, used church property such as parish halls and schools for their meetings, and enlisted the support of the clergy in political platforms.[26]

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[25] The Irish National Land League was founded in 1879 with Charles Stewart Parnell as President. Its aim was to defend the rights and improve the living conditions of Irish tenant farmers. Although the League did not advocate the use of violence, it did call for rent strikes and organised resistance to evictions. The ecclesiastical authorities were concerned about the militancy of the movement and the outbreaks of violence that often followed attempts by tenants to resist eviction.

[26] Marianne Elliott, *The Catholics of Ulster: a History* (London: Allen Lane, 2000), p. 294.

It was Parnell's fall from grace as a result of his being named in the O'Shea divorce case in 1889, however, that moved the bishops to intervene directly in the political organisation of their community. The division of nationalists into Parnellites and Anti-Parnellites alarmed the hierarchy, and the fact that Parnell's disgrace stemmed from the exposure of his affair with a married woman added a significant moral dimension to the controversy. Across the country the bishops took steps to influence public opinion in favour of the Anti-Parnellites, explaining their decision as follows:

> [A]s Irish men devoted to our country, eager for its elevation, and earnestly intent on securing for it the benefits of domestic legislation, we cannot but be influenced by the conviction that the continuance of Mr. Parnell as leader of even a section of the Irish party must have the effect of disorganising our ranks, and ranging as in hostile camps the hitherto united forces of our country.[27]

The crux of the issue from the point of view of the hierarchy was of course that the 'circumstances revealed in the London Divorce Court' showed Parnell to be a man 'wholly unworthy of Christian confidence'.[28] The intervention of the bishops was thus facilitated by the fact that Parnell's leadership was being challenged on moral, rather than political, grounds.

In Belfast Bishop Patrick McAllister helped found a newspaper, the *Irish News*, in 1891, with the slogan '*Pro Fide et Patria*'. In its first edition, which was accompanied by a blessing from the Pope, the bishop outlined the purpose of the *Irish News* as follows:

> To aid in forming a sound public opinion on the great questions of the day, and generally to present correctly and guide in a legitimate way the views of the people of Ulster.[29]

The power of the press was being recognised by the Catholic hierarchy as it sought to ensure that its leadership was not marginalised by modern political developments. In addition to an openness to modern communication techniques, the bishops were also demonstrating a willingness to step outside their traditional sphere of influence, aware that the pulpit alone would not be sufficient to reach their followers.

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[27] Address from the Standing Committee of the Hierarchy in *Freeman's Journal*, 4 December 1890.
[28] Ibid.
[29] *Irish News*, 15 August 1891, quoted in Pat Buckley, *Faith and Fatherland: the Irish News, the Catholic Hierarchy and the Management of Dissidents* (Belfast: Belfast Historical and Educational Society, 1991), p. 78.

Ulster was where support for the Anti-Parnellite faction was strongest. Here, the role of the Catholic clergy was 'highly visible'.[30] Reunited under the leadership of John Redmond in 1900, the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP), as the Home Rulers were now known, came into conflict with the local hierarchy in Belfast. The very politically active Bishop Henry of Down and Connor had founded the Belfast Catholic Association in 1896 to protect the rights of the minority community in the city. It was, in the words of David Miller, 'a political machine' controlled by the bishop.[31] The association, and its episcopal leader, 'a scholar of deep and extensive erudition' and 'an eloquent and persuasive preacher',[32] clashed with Redmond's party, led in the North by Joseph Devlin. Devlin, although himself closely identified with the Catholic Church, vigorously opposed the organisation for its sectarian nature, the high level of clerical influence and the challenge it presented to the leadership of the party. While dismissing Henry as a 'vain, conceited prelate', Miller points out that the IPP 'seemed primarily responsive to agrarian rather than urban Catholic interests at this time'.[33] The bishop's association may thus have served to draw attention to a previously neglected area of nationalist politics.

The causes of the division were, however, more complex than an urban/rural dichotomy. Elliott has argued that the association represented 'an exaggerated version of the Ulster hierarchy's tendency still to view national trends through their localised view of the Protestant peril'.[34] At the same time, however, the prominent role assumed by the hierarchy in matters regarding the Northern Catholic community was a cause of concern for Protestants. In the case of the Catholic Association, its establishment prompted the creation, the following year, of a corresponding Protestant Association. At its inaugural meeting the leader, Mr. Arthur Trew, welcomed the divisions Bishop Henry's Association was producing amongst Northern Catholics:

> Bishop Henry could not control his party, which was now divided. It was a good sign that some of the Roman Catholics refused to be led by the nose, and had the

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[30] Elliott, p. 295.
[31] David Miller, 'The Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, 1898-1918' in *Reactions to Irish Nationalism with an Introduction by Alan O'Day* (London: Hambledon, 1984), pp. 187-203 (p. 190).
[32] *Freeman's Journal*, 19 August 1895.
[33] Miller, *Church, State and Nation in Ireland*, p. 97.
[34] Elliott, p. 296.

> courage to say to him, "You keep to your pulpit and we will keep to the platform."[35]

If Protestants welcomed signs of dissent among the lay Catholic community, Catholics opposed to the Association welcomed signs of dissent amongst the members of the hierarchy. On Sunday 17 January 1904 Archbishop Walsh of Dublin had a letter read in all the churches of his Archdiocese condemning the 'enormous injury' to Catholic interests resulting from 'the proceedings of the Association styling itself "the Catholic Association"'.[36] Although referring to the Catholic Association then active in Dublin, the Archbishop's protest to 'the responsible directors' of the Association, which he hoped would 'have the effect of checking them in their reckless course' was copied and distributed after Sunday Masses in Belfast. Bishop Henry issued a Pastoral condemning this 'unscrupulous and shameful attempt to undermine my authority as a bishop, and to detract from my influence with my good and faithful people'. The *Irish News* printed the full text of the Pastoral, and in its editorial reminded readers: 'Dissension among Catholics is most prejudicial to the national cause'.[37] The incident serves to demonstrate how divisions among bishops can detract from the legitimacy of episcopal statements or initiatives, and how readily such divisions will be exploited by those in opposition to the hierarchy. Mindful of this fact the bishops would strive to minimise all indications of differences of opinion in the public domain. Support for Bishop Henry's organisation soon declined however. The bishop had taken on the politicians and lost.

By 1911 the IPP held the balance of power at Westminster and Herbert Asquith's Liberal government prepared to introduce the third Home Rule Bill. The Bill's two predecessors of 1886 and 1893 had both been approved by the House of Commons, only to be defeated by the Conservative majority in the upper chamber of the parliament, the House of Lords. In 1910 changes to British legislation had removed the power of veto from the House of Lords. The granting of Home Rule now appeared inevitable, since this third Home Rule Bill, once passed by the House of Commons, could not be blocked by the

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[35] *Belfast Newsletter*, 16 November 1897.
[36] *Irish Times*, 18 January 1904.
[37] *Irish News*, 1 February 1904, quoted in Buckley, p. 13.

Lords. Protestant supporters of the Union reacted violently to these developments. Realising that they would now be powerless to prevent the passage of the Home Rule Bill through Parliament, they were determined to at least secure the exclusion of the province of Ulster, where they made up a majority of the population.

With this aim a separate Ulster Unionist Council was established in 1910 under the leadership of Sir Edward Carson, a Dublin lawyer and the Unionist representative of Trinity College Dublin. The fusion of religion and politics in the anti-Home Rule campaign, expressed through slogans such as 'Home Rule is Rome Rule', boded ill for the Catholic community in general, and the Church in particular. The movement also adopted an increasingly militant character: in September 1912, 250,000 Unionists signed the Solemn League and Covenant, a pledge to defeat Home Rule 'using all means which may be found necessary',[38] with some signing in their own blood. The following January the Unionists proved that this was no idle threat with the formation of their own private army, the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF). Rising tensions in Belfast culminated in the expulsion of Catholic workers from the shipyards. Local Catholics, led by Bishop John Tohill of Down and Connor,[39] issued an appeal to 'the Catholics of Ireland to come to the aid of our persecuted brethren in this city'.[40] The scene was set for violent confrontation, with the third Home Rule Bill scheduled to become law in 1914. The impending crisis was averted by a wider, global crisis in the form of the outbreak of World War I, and Home Rule was left on the statute books for the duration of the conflict.

The experience of the First World War, which elsewhere in Europe served to break down divisions within nation-states based on factors such as social class, had an altogether different impact in Ireland, where the British recruitment efforts not only further accentuated cleavages based on religious and national identity, but also gave rise to heightened tensions and further division within the Irish nationalist community as a result of contrasting

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[38] Text of the Covenant in John Darby, *Scorpions in a Bottle. Conflicting Cultures in Northern Ireland* (London: Minority Rights Publications, 1997), p. 189.
[39] Bishop Tohill replaced the deceased Bishop Henry in 1908.
[40] ICD (1923), p. 529 quoted in Canning, p. 119.

responses to the war. Unsurprisingly, Unionists enthusiastically signed up to join the British war effort, believing this display of loyalty would be rewarded at the end of the conflict through the removal of the Home Rule threat. Many nationalists, too, went off to fight for Britain, encouraged by the IPP leader John Redmond who, like the Unionists, expected this display of loyalty to be rewarded, but in the opposing manner.

Participation in the war effort was strongly opposed by the proponents of a more militant Irish nationalism who regarded it as an act of betrayal. This debate firmly implicated the hierarchy as both sides 'defined the relationship between Ireland, Britain and the war effort through the language of morality and spiritual values.'[41] Redmond's war policy did not have the unanimous support of the Catholic hierarchy, but the party endeavoured to obtain maximum gain, in terms of publicity, from any episcopal pronouncements favourable to the allied war effort.[42] Jérôme aan de Weil has estimated that, out of a total of twenty-seven bishops, twenty-one were in favour of the war, three were neutral, one was ambivalent and two 'frankly against'.[43] This lack of unanimity clearly did not favour the British recruitment drive in Ireland. Major Ivor Price, Intelligence Officer for the Irish Command of the British army, considered the 'lukewarm' attitude of the clergy to be a significant factor in the low levels of military recruitment.[44] John Whyte has gone further, arguing that the 'change in the atmosphere' produced by the lack of a unanimous response by the clergy 'was part of the change in the climate of opinion' which made possible the Easter Rising of 1916.[45]

Some of those who rejected Redmond's call were inspired by a belief in the old adage that 'England's difficulty [was] Ireland's opportunity' and prepared to strike in the name of national liberation. On Easter Monday, 24 April 1916, the rebels struck, declaring an independent Irish republic from the steps of the General Post Office in Dublin. Although the rising was clearly a

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[41] John S. Ellis, 'The Degenerate and the Martyr: Nationalist Propaganda and the Contestation of Irishness, 1914-1918' *Éire-Ireland* 35.3-4 (2000-2001), pp. 7-33.
[42] See Ibid. p. 12. for details of the use of episcopal statements in propaganda posters.
[43] Jérôme aan de Weil, *The Catholic Church in Ireland 1913-1918: War and Politics* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2003), p. 12.
[44] Quoted in Charles Townshend, *Easter 1916: The Irish Rebellion* (London: Penguin, 2006), p. 143.
[45] Whyte, pp. 217-220.

failure in military terms, suffering from a series of strategic setbacks at the outset and remaining mostly confined to the Dublin area, arousing little support amongst the population in general, it represents a pivotal moment in Irish history that produced deep and lasting transformations, not least in the relationship between the Church and militant nationalism.

As the rebels proclaimed an independent Irish republic 'in the name of God and the dead generations',[46] the voice of the hierarchy was unusually muted. As has been pointed out by Whyte, however, due to the necessary secrecy surrounding the planning of the Rising, coupled with its short duration, 'there was no opportunity for a formal pronouncement by the hierarchy or by any of the bishops while it was still in progress.'[47] Cardinal Logue's reply to a message from Rome in which the Pontiff had expressed anxiety at events in Ireland was reproduced in the press. It read simply: 'Rebellion is over. The rebels have surrendered unconditionally. We hope peace is now established.'[48]

It was a vain hope. The British authorities, led by Sir John Maxwell, introduced martial law throughout the country. In addition to the detention of the rebels who had surrendered in Dublin, the British military moved to arrest 'dangerous Sinn Feiners' throughout the country, resulting in the imprisonment of 3430 men and 79 women. The fact that 1424 of these prisoners were released within a fortnight severely undermined the credibility of the military authorities and further opposition followed the transfer of the majority of those who remained in custody to England. The crucial factor in the transformation of Irish public opinion, however, was the speedy execution of the rebel leaders in the aftermath of the rising. The initial lack of sympathy for the rebels' aims gave way to indignation and grief at their fate as Maxwell proceeded to try those deemed to be 'ringleaders' by Courts Martial, sentencing them to death by firing squad. The secrecy that surrounded the trials, coupled with the rapidity with which execution followed sentencing, horrified the general population and prompted strongly worded protests from

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[46] Quoted in Townshend, p. 160.
[47] Whyte, p. 220.
[48] *Irish News*, 4 May 1916.

nationalist politicians at Westminster. Between 2nd and 9th May fifteen men were tried by Courts Martial, sentenced to death and executed.[49]

For Whyte, '[t]he most striking thing, however, about the attitude of the Irish bishops after the rising is how few of them said anything.' He further notes that even those episcopal leaders such as Cardinal Michael Logue who had described the rising as a 'lamentable disturbance', 'coupled their condemnations with criticism of the methods used to restore order'.[50] The response of the hierarchy was characterised by a degree of caution and an attempt to strike a delicate balance between condemnation of the use of violence both against, and by, the State, that would be a recurring feature of ecclesiastical responses to political violence throughout the twentieth century.

More important than the 'political' dimension from the point of view of the hierarchy, however, were the implications for the bishops in their spiritual and pastoral role as the executed rebel leaders came to be seen as martyrs for Irish freedom. Reports of the executions were frequently accompanied by accounts of personal displays of religious devotion by the rebel leaders, many of whom had participated in the recitation of the Rosary during the course of the rising, and who were all attended by priests before their executions.[51] In the wake of the executions the Church as a whole softened its attitude towards the rebels and masses were said in honour of the dead. General Maxwell complained to the Prime Minister that the funerals were being used as an opportunity for demonstrations in support of Sinn Féin and Republicanism.[52] In the words of Richard English:

> A cult had come into existence, with a quasi-sacred quality quickly attaching itself to the rebel leaders after the Rising had entered the popular imagination. Catholic Ireland had found new heroes, and their celebration – unsurprisingly – possessed a markedly religious flavour.[53]

The timing of the event was also conducive to the adoption of this 'religious flavour'. Accounts of the executions were appearing in the press at Easter, a time when the sermons of the Catholic clergy were dominated by the theme of redemptive suffering. Accusations from the State that religious ceremonies

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[49] For details of the arrests, trials and executions that followed the rising see Townshend, pp. 274-281.
[50] Whyte, p. 221.
[51] English, p. 274.
[52] Quoted in Townshend, p. 302.

were being exploited for political purposes was to be a recurring theme with significant implications for the bishops as they attempted to respond to the problem of political violence from within their own community.

While Ulster was not directly affected by the events of the rising, the executions had the same impact here as elsewhere in Ireland.[54] Cardinal Logue, in his *Ad Limina* report to the Holy See, dated 20 December 1917, expressed his concerns at the spread of Sinn Féin assemblies throughout the country and was particularly grieved by the presence of members of the clergy, especially younger priests, at these gatherings.[55] The aftermath of the Rising led to the alienation of many from constitutional nationalism. While in its early years Sinn Féin had shared the same aim as the IPP, namely a limited degree of independence for Ireland, it provided a political alternative for nationalists by advocating a policy of abstention from Westminster. An additional factor, leading to the desertion of IPP supporters, was the treatment of Redmond by the British government during the 1916 negotiations for a new settlement for Ulster.

In 1916 the British government was under pressure to resolve the Ulster question, and, represented by David Lloyd George,[56] entered into talks with John Redmond and Sir Edward Carson. Lloyd George attempted to achieve a settlement through what one historian has described as 'the method of running with the hare and hunting with the hounds': he convinced both sides to accept the exclusion of six of the nine counties of Ulster from the Home Rule Parliament, whilst simultaneously convincing Redmond that the exclusion would be temporary and Carson that it would be permanent.[57] At a tense meeting in Belfast on 23 June 1916 Northern nationalists agreed to accept the temporary exclusion of the six counties by 475 votes to 265. Clerical attendance at the meeting from throughout the six Northern counties

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[53] Richard English, *Armed Struggle: The History of the I.R.A.* (London: Macmillan, 2003), p. 5.
[54] Phoenix, p. 20.
[55] Consistorial Congregation, 75 quoted in Bernard J. Canning, *Bishops of Ireland 1870-1987* (n.p.: [The author], 1987), p. 34.
[56] David Lloyd George was a Liberal Member of Parliament who was appointed to the posts of Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1908, Minister of Munitions in 1915, Secretary of State for War in July 1916 and succeeded Herbert. H. Asquith as Prime Minister in December 1916.
[57] Maureen Wall, 'Partition: The Ulster Question (1916-1926)', in *The Irish Struggle, 1916-1926*, ed. by T. Desmond Williams, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), pp. 79-93 (p. 81).

was 'very considerable' and the party leaders, Devlin and Redmond, both arrived in the company of members of the clergy.[58] When subsequent debate in the British parliament revealed that there was to be no fixed deadline for the inclusion of the Ulster counties in the Home Rule parliament, Nationalist supporters felt betrayed.

In Ulster the Parliamentary Party still had a strong leader in Joseph Devlin, and a solid support base in the North-East, but it was losing the battle in those counties located on the border of the proposed exclusion zone. The Catholic bishops, too, were divided on the issue. Bishops MacRory of Down and Connor and Mulhern of Dromore were in contact with the leaders of Sinn Féin, while Cardinal Logue was strongly opposed to their methods and Bishop O'Donnell had acted as treasurer for the IPP and was in close contact with Devlin. The month after the Belfast convention Bishop McHugh launched a loosely coordinated Anti-Partition League at a meeting of politicians and clergy from Tyrone, Fermanagh and Derry.[59] The hierarchy were nonetheless keen to maintain a united front in spite of their contrasting personal political views, conscious of the significance of their influence. Writing to Bishop O'Donnell on 7 June, before the Belfast meeting, Logue had stated: 'I think the bishops should be very cautious, otherwise they may be held up and go down to posterity as the destroyers of the country...'[60]

One issue on which all the bishops were agreed was their opposition to partition. In addition to individual statements by the northern bishops, on 7 May 1917, eighteen Catholic bishops, together with three Protestant bishops from the Church of Ireland, signed a manifesto in which they declared their shared opposition to the partition of Ireland.[61] This rare public display of unity would appear to confirm J.C. Beckett's claim in relation to the Northern Ireland state that '[n]o one in Ireland, of any political persuasion, wanted or welcomed it.'[62] The *Belfast Newsletter*, however, while unsurprised that the

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[58] *Irish News*, 24 June 1916.
[59] Phoenix, p. 36.
[60] Logue to O'Donnell, 7 June 1916, Armagh Archdiocesan Archive (AAA) Logue Papers, quoted in Phoenix, p. 23.
[61] *Irish Catholic Directory* (hereafter ICD) (1918), pp. 517-518.
[62] James C. Beckett, 'Northern Ireland', *Journal of Contemporary History* 6.1 (1971), pp. 121-134 (p. 124).

Catholic bishops would sign such a letter, for '[t]hey are bound to place the interests of the Roman Catholic Church above everything else', regretted

> to see that three Bishops of the Church of Ireland – Tuam, Ossory, and Killaloe – have thought it consistent with their position to join in this anti-Ulster campaign. Their acceptance of the Romanist view on this question will not increase the respect in which they are held by the majority in which they live, and it is certain that it will not alter the attitude of Ulster.[63]

That same year the Catholic bishops again demonstrated what Mary Harris has described as 'the Church's recognition of Irish rights as a nation' when they assumed a prominent role in the protest against the proposed extension of conscription to Ireland.[64] The 1918 anti-conscription campaign united nationalists, with Sinn Féin occupying a key position. The bishops fully endorsed the condemnation of conscription, declaring it to be 'an oppressive and inhuman law which the Irish have the right to resist by every means that are consonant with the law of God'.[65] Despite the militant tone of this statement, the hierarchy remained committed to the use of constitutional means for the redress of Irish grievances. It did, however, appear to be shifting the balance of its influential support in favour of Sinn Féin by distancing itself from the strict identification with the IPP that had characterised its stance on the 'national' question prior to the outbreak of World War I.

That it had not abandoned the party altogether, however, was demonstrated through its support for the Irish Convention of 1917-18, an attempt to promote dialogue between political factions on the Irish question. At the suggestion of Lloyd George, representatives from the political parties of Ireland and the Protestant and Catholic churches came together to draft a settlement for the future of the country. The unrepresentative nature of the Convention was a serious weakness, as Sinn Féin were allocated only five seats and refused to attend. The Catholic bishops were allocated four seats, one of which went to Bishop MacRory who, in a letter to Monsignor O'Riordan, rector of the Irish College in Rome, admitted to having little

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[63] *Belfast Newsletter*, 8 May 1917.
[64] Mary Harris, *The Catholic Church and the Foundation of the Northern Ireland State* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1993), p. 69.
[65] ICD (1918), pp. 534-535.

confidence in its success.[66] The bishop's pessimistic prediction was confirmed when the Convention, described in the *Catholic Bulletin* as 'the new time-killing negotiations',[67] adjourned in April 1918 without having made any progress towards a compromise. After the death of John Redmond in March 1918 Bishop O'Donnell had acted as effective leader of the Parliamentary Party representatives at the Convention. Although some of the party's supporters would apportion to the bishops a share of the blame for its decline as a result of their willingness to collaborate with Sinn Féin, the hierarchy was, in fact, instrumental in enabling it to retain some small measure of representation following the 1918 elections.

For the Northern bishops in particular the stakes were high in the General Election of 1918. In the twenty-six county area Sinn Féin was set to sweep the board, but in Ulster the situation was not so clear-cut. Clearly more was at stake here than in the rest of Ireland: there were real concerns that the Sinn Féin abstention policy would leave the Catholic minority with no representatives at Westminster to oppose the Ulster Unionists. Furthermore, division amongst nationalists in constituencies with marginal nationalist majorities could allow the Unionists to gain control of key electoral wards, thus jeopardising further the position of the nationalist minority. The Ulster bishops were acutely conscious of the minority position of their followers. Cardinal Logue in a letter to Eoin MacNeill, a Northern member of the Sinn Féin executive, warned him of the necessity of avoiding three-cornered contests in Ulster 'which would throw almost all the seats into the hands of the Carsonites. Anyone can see that this would give the Carsonites their strongest argument yet for the partition of Ireland'.[68]

Similar sentiments were aired publicly in a collective statement released by the bishops prior to the election, warning of 'the mischievous effects of division', which would lead to 'the almost certain partition and

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[66] MacRory to O'Riordan, 24 June 1917, Michael O'Riordan Papers, Irish College, quoted in Mary Harris, 'The Catholic church, minority rights and the founding of the Northern Irish State' in *Northern Ireland and the Politics of Reconciliation*, ed. by Dermot Keogh, and Michael H. Haltzel (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Centre Press; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 62-83 (p. 65).
[67] *Catholic Bulletin* 7.7 (July 1917), p. 405.
[68] Logue to MacNeill, 27 November 1918, University College Dublin Archives (UCDA) Mac Neill Papers LA1 K/172.

dismemberment of the country'.[69] At the instigation of Cardinal Logue discussions were held between the IPP and Sinn Féin, resulting in an electoral pact, whereby the eight marginal nationalist seats would be equally divided between the two parties. Michael Farrell has described this arrangement as 'a rather sordid deal',[70] but whilst no one could regard it as entirely satisfactory, the Cardinal was clearly willing to use his position to promote unity amongst nationalist leaders where he deemed the political rights of the Catholic minority, and indeed, of the Irish nation, to be at stake.

The elected Sinn Féin representatives chose not to take their seats in the British Parliament. Instead they set up an Irish Parliament, Dáil Eireann, at the Mansion House in Dublin and issued a declaration of independence. Although invitations were extended to all elected Irish representatives, in practice only Sinn Féin members attended. The inauguration of the Parliament in 1919 coincided with the killing of two members of the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) in an ambush. This killing marked the beginning of what was to be known as the Anglo-Irish war, or the Irish War of Independence.

By the beginning of the twentieth century the Catholic Church had become a dominant social force, with a voice in the political sphere that was far from insignificant. Indeed, the support of the Catholic hierarchy was recognised as crucial by those groups competing for the political allegiance of the Catholic population of Ireland. The close connection between religious persecution and the political, social and economic repression of the Catholic Irish in the historical tradition of nationalist Ireland ensured that resistance to British rule would be of a quasi-religious nature. As a result of the dominant position of the Catholic hierarchy as leaders of the majority faith, the religious element was to be explicitly Catholic.

Challenged to declare where a Catholic's legitimate allegiances lay, faced with the competing claims of 'state' and 'nation', the Catholic hierarchy drew ever closer to the nation. The involvement of the Catholic bishops in the political concerns of their flock caused concern in Britain, and met with a cool response from their superiors in Rome. At the same time, the exponents

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[69] ICD (1919): 623 quoted in Rafferty, p. 201.
[70] Michael Farrell, *Northern Ireland: the Orange State* (London: Pluto Press, 1976), p. 21.

of 'national liberation' were attempting to carve out spaces for action wherein they could retain their Catholicism as a symbol of identity while simultaneously freeing themselves from the controlling influence of the Catholic hierarchy. Divisions between the political representatives of the nationalist community afforded the bishops a valuable opportunity to display leadership, and use their position to promote and maintain unity amongst their followers. This was particularly true in Ulster, where the course of events was soon to catapult the bishops into an even more prominent position of political leadership.

Chapter Two

The Bishops of Vitoria and Basque Nationalism

> '[E]l pueblo vasco se cree desatendido en sus legítimos intereses espirituales, que han sido supeditados a los intereses políticos del Poder central, que procuraba influir en todo sentido en la gobernación eclesiástica, empezando por el nombramiento de obispos.'
>
> (Presentation by Luis de Bereciartúa in an audience with Cardinal Pacelli, Vatican Secretary of State, December 1934) [1]

In a document sent to Pope Pius XI in June 1935, the leaders of the Basque Nationalist Party (Partido Nacionalista Vasco – PNV) claimed that the bishops of Vitoria, together with other representatives of the Church, had been either unable or unwilling to respond as they should – with impartiality and respect – to the 'profound social and patriotic problem' existing in the Basque Country.[2] This chapter will serve as a prelude to the analysis of ecclesiastical responses to the Franco regime in the Basque Country, outlining the unique features of the Diocese of Vitoria that combined to make this at once an attractive and a challenging appointment for bishops during the period that preceded the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. The analysis will centre on episcopal responses to Basque nationalism viewed against a backdrop of changing patterns of central political authority in Spain.[3] The changing political situation will be considered from the perspective of the bishops of Vitoria as they attempted to respond to the challenges posed by the various competing influences from both within and beyond their dioceses.

The historical image of the persecuted Irish Catholic Church sketched in the previous chapter contrasts strongly with that of its Spanish counterpart,

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[1] Translation: 'The Basque people feel they have been neglected in their legitimate spiritual interests, which have been subordinated to the political interests of the central power, which endeavours to influence ecclesiastical governance in every sense, beginning with the naming of bishops.' Idelfonso Moriones, *Euskadi y el Vaticano 1935-1936* (Rome: [s.n.], 1976), p. 13.

[2] A draft copy of this document is reproduced in Moriones, pp. 82-102.

[3] The use of the term 'nationalism' to describe Basque aspirations, although more widely accepted today, was a source of controversy throughout the period under study. It will be noted that opponents of Basque nationalism, a category that included many bishops, referred instead to 'separatism'. Such language asserted the supremacy of the Spanish nation and disputed the legitimacy of Basque claims to belong to a separate nation.

whose association with the infamous Inquisition, created in 1478 and not permanently abolished until 1834, generated an image of a persecuting, rather than a persecuted Church. It was a Church that owed its influence, not to having shared in the suffering of the ordinary people, but rather to its distance from the people and its close links to the traditional structures of political power. By the eighteenth century the Spanish Church was, in the words of William J. Callahan, a 'mirror of the extreme inequalities of a noble-dominated hierarchical society'.[4] The same, however, could not be said of the Basque Church.

The socio-economic status of the Catholic Church in the Basque Country clearly distinguished it from the Spanish Church and would ensure that it retained an influence at all levels of society long after the advent of secularisation had eroded the authority of the Church in Spain in the eyes of the popular classes. The Basque Church was not wealthy, nor did it possess significant land holdings. As a result, the social and economic divide separating the clergy from the working classes, which elsewhere had led to confrontation, and ultimately to a distancing of the lower social classes from the Church, was absent in the region, with the clergy virtually indistinguishable from the people in their appearance and lifestyle.[5]

This situation owed much to the limitations placed on the Church by the regional Basque laws known as *Fueros*, and the institutions that accompanied them. Davydd J. Greenwood has aptly defined the *Fueros* as a fusion of provincial rights and Basque identity.[6] They were based on the traditional values of Basque society, central to which was the concept of 'Collective nobility', identified by Greenwood as the 'moral core of the Basque sense of ethnic uniqueness'.[7] Although not unique to the Basque region, these autonomous political institutions and distinct legal codes had remained in place here long after their disappearance from the rest of the

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[4] William J. Callahan, *The Catholic Church in Spain, 1875-1998* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), p. 2.
[5] Juan José Laborda Martín, 'Catolicismo, industrialización y nacionalismo en la vida política vasca contemporánea' *Cuadernos de Alzate* 2 (1985), pp. 6-16 (pp. 6-7).
[6] Davydd J. Greenwood, 'Continuity in Change: Spanish Basque Ethnicity as a Historical Process' in *Ethnic Conflict in the Western World*, ed. by M. J. Esman, (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 1977), pp. 81-101 (p. 101).
[7] Greenwood, p. 86.

Spanish territory. The Basque Provinces were allowed to maintain their *Fueros* under the Catholic Kings (1469-1516) and the Habsburgs (1569-1700) due to their strategic importance for the defence of Spain.[8] This arrangement contributed to the preservation of traditional, conservative social organisation in this region long after this had begun to disintegrate across Spain. The Basques believed that the egalitarian nature of their society differentiated it from what they perceived to be a corrupt Spanish state.

Consequently, in the Diocese of Vitoria the connection between the clergy and the people was not merely religious, but also socio-cultural.[9] Virtually all members of the clergy were Basques by birth and from rural areas where Basque culture was still dominant.[10] The 'popular classes' depended on the clergy to act as mediators for those who spoke only *Euskera* (the Basque language) and who found themselves alienated in a society increasingly dominated by Castilian culture.[11] A common national identity thus cemented the relationship between the clergy and the people, ensuring that the local clergy would play an active role in political matters and the Church would be acutely affected by political division amongst its followers.

On 29 April 1862, Bishop Diego Maríano Alguacil y Rodríguez took his seat as the first bishop of the Diocese of Vitoria at a time when major political divisions in the Basque region were becoming apparent: in the midst of the Carlist wars of 1833-1876, a series of conflicts originating in a dispute over the right of succession to the Spanish throne. Following the death of King Fernando VII in 1833, the claim of Fernando's three-year-old daughter Isabella to the throne was disputed by the King's younger brother, Carlos María Isidro, who assumed the title Carlos V.[12] The supporters of Carlos, known as Carlists, represented the traditionalist and absolutist opposition to the liberal policies that were gaining prominence during the latter years of

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[8] Marianne Heiberg, *The Making of the Basque Nation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 1.

[9] Severiano Rojo Hernandez, *Église et Société. Le clergé paroissial de Bilbao de la République au franquisme (1931-années 50)* (Paris: L'Armaban, 2000), p. 16.

[10] Ibid. p. 26.

[11] Laborda Martín, pp. 6-7.

[12] The Carlist claim to the Spanish throne would be maintained throughout successive generations of the family of Carlos María Isidro, ending only in 1958 when, during the Franco dictatorship, the Carlists recognised the son of the exiled King Alfonso III, Don Juan de Borbón.

Fernando's reign, summarised by Martin Blinkhorn as: 'urbanism and industrialism in the socio-economic sphere; tolerance, scepticism and atheism in that of religion; centralisation of administration; and in the world of politics, liberalism and socialism'.[13] In Carlism, according to Marianne Heiberg: 'Divine right monarchy and Catholic supremacy were combined with the protection of traditional social order and local autonomies.'[14] The period was thus a time of considerable political upheaval and crisis in Spain as the nature of political leadership and the very definition of the nation were called into question.

The conservative nature of Basque society and the significance attached to the retention of local privilege in the form of the *Fueros*, ensured that the region would be a Carlist stronghold, although the Carlist forces failed to take control of a single city.[15] Catholicism was a core unifying element of the Carlist movement and these wars saw the Basque clergy assume a prominent role in an anti-liberal alliance with local rural nobility and the peasantry, providing 'leadership and inspiration'.[16] The use of slogans such as 'God and *Fueros*' was an early indication of a link between religion and regional autonomy, although the idea of a separate Basque nation had yet to emerge. Nevertheless, the Church's open involvement in this anti-liberal alliance was to have far reaching implications. As Fernando García de Cortázar has argued, '[d]esde entonces el destino de la Iglesia no podría separarse de la suerte de un movimiento – el nacionalismo vasco – que, como ninguna otra institución, había ayudado a nacer y a expandir.'[17]

The defeat of the Carlist forces and the consequent loss of the Basque *Fueros* in 1876 paved the way for the industrial revolution, a defining event that transformed the institutions and values on which Basque society was founded, and brought about what Stanley Payne has described as the 'growing

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[13] Martin Blinkhorn, *Carlism and Crisis in Spain, 1931-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 3.
[14] Heiberg, p. 37.
[15] Juan Pablo Fusi and Jordi Palafox, *España: 1808-1996. El desafío de la modernidad* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1998), p. 45.
[16] Blinkhorn, p. 17.
[17] Translation: 'From that moment on the Church could not separate its destiny from the outcome of a movement – Basque nationalism – which the Church, like no other institution, had helped to emerge and expand.' Fernando García de Cortázar, 'La Iglesia vasca, entre la profecía y la sumisión' *Cuenta y Razón* 33.1 (1988), pp. 31-35 (p. 31).

atomisation of society'.[18] The anxiety produced by this change in conservative Basque circles found its most lucid expression in the writing of Sabino de Arana y Goiri (1865-1903), described by Payne as a product of both traditionalism and industrialisation, since his father was a Bilbao shipbuilder and a Carlist.[19] Arana is regarded as the founding father of Basque nationalism: he was responsible for the design of the *Ikurriña*, the Basque flag, and the introduction of the term '*Euzkadi*' (modern form: *Euskadi*) to designate the land of the Basques.

For Arana, the driving force behind Basque nationalism was the conservation of the moral character of the Basques.[20] He directly attributed the corruption and decay in Basque society to Spanish rule; only separation from Spain and the removal of 'anti-Basque' elements could restore the region to its former glory.[21] In this vision of an idyllic past, central importance was accorded to the position of the Catholic Church. In an article written in 1897, entitled '*Efectos de la invasión*' (Effects of the Invasion), Arana stressed the importance of 'the moral and religious principles of the Roman Church', a fundamental component of Basque tradition.[22] Spain, in Arana's view, although supposedly a Catholic country, had been corrupted by the 'liberal vices'.[23] The faithful Catholic was therefore compelled to support the cause of Basque independence as the only means of ensuring a moral society: '¿Hay otra causa tan noble y santa como la nuestra? ¿Hay otra a cuyo triunfo en Euskeria le sea permitido al católico aspirar?'[24]

The slogan adopted by Arana and his followers, 'Jaungoikua eta Lagi-Zara', meaning 'God and the old Laws', clearly demonstrated the centrality of religion in their ideology. As Daniele Conversi has noted, Basque society was genuinely Christian and deeply conservative in its beliefs, and for this reason it is unlikely that a radical, secular form of nationalism would have taken root

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[18] Stanley Payne, *Basque Nationalism* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1975), p. 64.
[19] Ibid. p. 65.
[20] *El pensamiento de Sabino de Arana y Goiri a través de sus escritos: antología de textos: 1893-1903*, ed. by Luis de Guezala (Bilbao: Partido Nacionalista Vasco, 1995), p. 164.
[21] Heiberg, p. 50.
[22] *El pensamiento de Sabino de Arana*, p. 170.
[23] Ibid. p. 167.
[24] Translation: 'Is there any other cause as noble and sacred as ours? Is there any other whose triumph a Catholic might be permitted to wish for in the Basque Country?' Ibid. p. 170.

there, a fact Arana was aware of when formulating his ideology.[25] Even the date chosen for the foundation of the Basque nationalist party, the *Partido Nacionalista Vasco* (PNV), on 31 July 1895, had a particular religious significance, being the feast day of Saint Ignatius de Loyola, founder of the Jesuit order. Conversi argues that several key aspects of the PNV's doctrine were derived directly from Catholicism, namely a belief in non-violent methods, concern for the poor and a critical attitude towards materialism.[26] The party made no attempt to hide its allegiance to the Church, declaring 'Gu Euzkadirentzat ta Euzkadi Jaungoikoarentzat' ('Ourselves for Euzkadi and Euzkadi for God'). The influence of the Carlist slogan 'God and *Fueros*' is unmistakeable, although Arana's ideology had evolved beyond demands for regional autonomy to the assertion of a separate national identity.

A further contrast with the Carlist model was the assertion by the PNV of the independence of Church and State. Arana did not desire the political involvement of the clergy in the movement, but he nevertheless asked them not to oppose it, calling them to preach 'only the Gospel', and not 'submission to Spain'.[27] Similarly to the case of Ireland, Basque nationalism, from the earliest stages of its development, while maintaining a respectful attitude towards the Church, was attempting to clearly define, or redefine, the limits of ecclesiastical authority. While Arana and his followers undoubtedly preferred to avoid confrontation with the Church, it was clear that they were willing to challenge the legitimacy of episcopal interventions that extended beyond the purely spiritual realm, asserting the supremacy of one national identity over another.

Clerical support was nonetheless to play a fundamental role in the growth of the movement. Anabella Barroso and Fernando García de Cortázar have argued that in Arana's ideology the religion of Christian salvation was combined with a religion of socio-political liberation; this produced new opportunities for apostolic activity which were enthusiastically embraced by a

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[25] Daniele Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain: Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilisation* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 1997), pp. 61-62.
[26] Ibid. p. 62.
[27] *El pensamiento de Sabino de Arana*, p. 171.

section of the lower clergy.[28] From the perspective of the PNV, Catholicism served as a unifying factor, helping to minimise the impact of other differences such as social class. As Stanley Payne has pointed out: 'The political life of the Basque provinces comprised heterogeneous personal and practical interests. Their only common denominator was their Catholicism and greater or lesser conservatism.'[29]

Since the ideology of Arana embraced much more than the purely political aspects of national identity, the PNV was more than just a political party, comprising a variety of associations and organisations, engaged in social, cultural and sporting activities, thus enabling it to achieve a wide support base. Linked to the PNV was the organisation *Solidaridad de Obreros Vascos* (SOV) (Basque Workers' Solidarity), a Catholic trade union founded in 1911 with a clearly nationalist character. The involvement of the Basque clergy in this movement enabled them to retain influence amongst the working classes at a time when this section of society was increasingly turning away from the Church. SOV provided an alternative means of trade union organisation for conservative Basques opposed to the radical nature of socialism. Its success contrasted with the failure of Catholic worker organisations to attract significant support throughout Spain during this period.[30] Membership of SOV, however, was only open to native Basques, thereby excluding the immigrant worker population.[31] In supporting SOV, the clergy were thus also giving their seal of approval to a movement that defined the Basque nation according to ethnic/racial criteria.

In contrast to the lower clergy, the hierarchy was to be unwavering in its loyalty to the Spanish monarchy, which had been granted patronage rights over Episcopal appointments under the terms of the Concordat signed between

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[28] Anabella Barroso and Fernando García de Cortázar, 'La Iglesia vasca y la Diócesis de Bilbao en la edad contemporánea: Religión, política, conflicto y tensión' in *Bilbao, Arte y Historia*, ed. by Juan Manuel González Cembellín et al, (Bilbao: [Diputación Foral de Bizkaia. Departamento de Cultura, 1991), pp. 205-230 (p. 208).

[29] Payne, p. 88.

[30] Juan J. Linz, 'Church and State in Spain from the Civil War to the Return of Democracy' in *Religion and Politics* ed. by John T. S. Madeley, (Aldershot: Dartsmouth Publishing Company, 2003), pp. 353-372 (p. 354).

[31] José Luis de la Granja et al., *La España de los nacionalismos y las autonomías* (Madrid: Editorial Síntesis, [2001]), p. 92.

Spain and the Vatican in 1851.[32] Bishop Alguacil Rodríguez, who had been a Carlist senator for the province of Álava, left the diocese at the end of the conflict in 1876. His successors would prove equally willing to become involved in political matters, but always with the clearly-defined aim of asserting the supremacy of the central Spanish state.

Indeed, the attitude of the hierarchy to Basque nationalism at times amounted to open hostility, as in the case of Bishop Cadena y Eleta, Bishop of Vitoria from 1905-1913. When, on 10 October 1909, the PNV adopted the Archangel Michael as its patron, the name of the priest who officiated at the dedication ceremony was not released to the press for fear that it would lead to his being punished, possibly by exile from the region.[33] In a Pastoral Letter dated February 1910 the bishop made his feelings clear, warning against the perverse and corrupting influence of Basque nationalism, particularly on the young.[34] The Pastoral represents a clear negation from the highest authority in the local Church of Arana's claim that political independence would protect Basque Catholics from the corrupting influences of Spain. That this message was communicated by means of a Pastoral Letter is particularly significant. It was intended to be delivered in churches, with the bishop thus emphatically demonstrating that he was prepared to preach 'submission to Spain'.

Bishop Cadena moved to the Archdiocese of Burgos in 1913 and was replaced by Don Prudencio Melo y Alcalde, for whom Vitoria was his first diocese. Bishop Melo proved less aggressive towards Basque nationalism, but adopted a distant attitude towards priests with nationalist sympathies.[35] The Basque bishops throughout this period, as in the decades that followed the establishment of the Franco regime, could be criticised for their unwillingness to engage in dialogue with those sections of their clergy who did not share their allegiance to the Spanish state. However, the lack of existing frameworks or even precedents for such dialogue between bishops and priests prior to the Second Vatican Council of 1962-5 must be taken into account. It

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[32] For further details see: William J. Callahan, 'Regalism, Liberalism and General Franco', *The Catholic Historical Review* 87.3 (1997), pp. 202-215.
[33] 'Proclamación de San Miguel por el PNV (1909)', *Enciclopedia General Ilustrada del País Vasco* Vol. XXVIII (San Sebastián: Editorial Auñamendi, 1990), p. 314.
[34] Moriones, p. 92.
[35] Barroso and Cortázar, p. 209.

must also be noted that the bishops were not the only Church authorities to be critical of clerical actions regarded as potentially damaging to national unity and Church-State relations. In 1913 the Papal Nuncio Francisco Ragonesi issued this warning to the hierarchy with regard to the religious orders: 'Vigilen el bizkaitarrismo de algunos religiosos vascongados, los cuales con esa actitud separatista no sólo pierden el espíritu de la Orden sino que se hacen odiosos al Gobierno y a la Nación.'[36] This rebuke was deemed by Basque nationalists to be an unjust and humiliating attack on members of the lower clergy by the higher authorities of the Church.[37] The growing tensions were exacerbated during the dictatorship of General Miguel Primo de Rivera (1923-1930) as the Catholic hierarchy appeared as the firm ally of a Spanish State that was deeply hostile to Basque nationalism.

Like General Franco after him, General Primo de Rivera, who established his military dictatorship on 13 September 1923, was to find in the Church one of the primary sources of legitimacy for his regime. One of the dictator's first actions on coming to power was to arrange an official visit by the Spanish King, Alfonso XIII, to the Vatican.[38] The dictatorship was welcomed by the Spanish Church with members of the clergy openly declaring their support. Shlomo Ben-Ami has concluded: 'The Church as a whole viewed the Dictator as *homo missus a Deo* [a man sent by God].'[39] Bishop Zacarías Martínez, who arrived in Vitoria in 1923, responded to the foundation of the new regime by issuing a circular containing obligatory prayers to be said in churches 'for our beloved homeland'.[40] Primo de Rivera was credited with having restored order and stability to the country, and removing the liberal threat, with all the damage to the prestige of the Church that this threat entailed. In addition to Primo de Rivera's willingness to

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[36] Translation: 'Be vigilant of the Vizcayanism of some of the Basque clergy, who, with this separatist attitude not only lose the spirit of the Order, but also make themselves odious to the government and the nation.' *Boletín eclesiástico de Vitoria*, 21 de noviembre de 1913 quoted in Fernando García de Cortázar, 'Mateo Múgica, la Iglesia y la guerra civil en el País Vasco', *Letras de Deusto* 35 (Mayo-Agosto 1986), pp. 5-35 (p. 11).

[37] Moriones, p. 93.

[38] Anthony Rhodes, *The Vatican in the Age of the Dictators 1922-45* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1973), p. 115.

[39] Shlomo Ben-Ami, *Fascism from above: the Dictatorship of Primo de Rivera in Spain, 1923-1930* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983), p. 84.

[40] Ignacio Villota Elejalde, *La Iglesia en la sociedad española y vasca contemporánea* (Bilbao: Desclée de Brouwer, 1985), pp. 169-170.

defend the position of the Church, he himself was, in the words of *The Times*' Spanish correspondent, 'a man with a clean record and a high standard of morality'.[41]

In the Basque Country the dictatorship was greeted with less enthusiasm. The Decree against Separatism of 18 September 1923 augured badly for Basque nationalists; it stated that crimes against the security and unity of Spain would be tried by military tribunals. Political manifestations of Basque nationalism were strictly prohibited. The Basques however were not the main target of what *The Times* described as the dictator's 'excess of centralising zeal', that position being reserved for the language and customs of his own native Catalonia. According to *The Times*, the Catalans

> are the more disturbed by the unexpected attitude of the Directory, because the Basques, whose language is, of course, utterly different from Spanish and from every other language in Europe, are allowed to keep those institutions in which they can preserve their national identity.[42]

It must be acknowledged, nonetheless, that the tolerant attitude of the dictatorship towards Basque cultural activities did not extend to the Basque language itself and restrictions were placed on the public use of *Euskera*. This caused serious difficulties for the Church in its evangelising activities in rural areas where a majority of the population did not speak Spanish, and yet there were no protests to the regime from the hierarchy. The failure by the ecclesiastical authorities to defend Basque language rights against 'central Government persecution' during the Primo de Rivera dictatorship featured prominently among a list of complaints submitted by Basque nationalists to the Vatican in 1934. This failure, it was argued, endangered the faith of the Basques.[43]

Bishop Martínez made no mention of the language problem in his *Ad Limina* Report to the Holy See of 1927.[44] This is somewhat surprising since he had in the past displayed an awareness of the linguistic diversity of his diocese, publishing his first pastoral letter in both Spanish and Euzkera.[45] He

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[41] *The Times*, 18 September 1923.
[42] *The Times*, 25 March 1924.
[43] Moriones, p. 14.
[44] Joaquín Perea, *El modelo de Iglesia subyacente en la pastoral del clero vasco 1918-1936* (Bilbao: Desclée De Brouwer, 1991), p. 666.
[45] Ibid p. 703.

had, in addition, participated in *Congresos de Estudios Vascos*, gatherings aimed at the preservation and promotion of Basque history and culture. The tone and content of his interventions however, left no doubt that this support was conditional on the absence of manifestations of 'separatism'. Opening the Congress of August 1926, Martínez expressed the wish that its work would unite the Basque Provinces 'en un mismo amor, bajo los rayos de un mismo sol y entre los pliegues de una misma bandera, bajo el sol de España y la bandera de España'.[46] The bishop had also approved the introduction of new subjects in the Diocesan seminary of Vitoria, such as ethnology and Basque language and literature.[47] While these changes could hardly be described as revolutionary, they did expose seminarians to outside influences, from which they had hitherto been carefully shielded, while allowing for the promotion of an awareness of a unique Basque identity and the assertion of the importance of its manifestations, particularly in the form of the Basque language.

Frances Lannon attributes the willingness of the new bishop to support these innovations to his own unusual background – Bishop Martínez held a doctorate in biology and his previous experience had been as head of natural sciences in the Escorial, Madrid.[48] Under his leadership some change was facilitated, though not enough to satisfy those priests sympathetic to the cause of Basque nationalism. The bishop's loyalty to Spain was not in doubt and was openly revealed in public declarations such as the following, made at the inauguration of a new railway line in 1926: 'La Iglesia pide también por mediación mía que por esta vía férrea cruce la riqueza de la provincia, con sus frutos, con sus industrias, pero que no cruce nunca la mercancía de la corrupción, del vicio, de la rebeldía, del desorden, de las ideas separatistas.'[49] For Bishop Martínez's successors however, the seminary was to prove a focal

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[46] Translation: 'in the one love, under the rays of the same sun and between the folds of the same flag, under the sun of Spain and the flag of Spain'. *Boletín Oficial del Obispado de Vitoria* (BOOV) 15 August 1926 quoted in Villota Elejalde, p. 178.

[47] For details see Frances Lannon, 'A Basque Challenge to the Pre-Civil War Spanish Church' *European Studies Review* 9 (1979), pp. 29-48.

[48] Lannon, p. 37.

[49] Translation: 'The Church too asks, through my mediation, that the riches of the province, its fruits and industries may pass through this railway, but that the merchandise of corruption, vice, rebellion, disorder and separatist ideas may never pass.' *El Pueblo Vasco*, 23 February 1926, quoted Villota, p. 178.

point for confrontation between the Spanish authorities and the Basque clergy.

Ironically, in spite of the regime's open hostility to 'separatism', the Primo de Rivera era was a period of expansion for Basque nationalism, and at its conclusion the PNV spread rapidly through Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa.[50] While the dictatorship had prohibited all political manifestations of nationalism, cultural activities were allowed to continue unhindered and Basque nationalists were able to use this period to broaden their support bases by intensifying regional cultural awareness.[51] Crucially, SOV was also tolerated during the dictatorship and even allowed to continue publication of its newspaper *El Obrero Vasco*. The advantage of cultural nationalism, according to Raymond Carr and Juan Pablo Fusi, was that it appealed to mass involvement much more than the narrower intellectual nationalism and could become a surrogate for political action when this had to be a clandestine affair.[52] It had the further advantage of appealing to the Catholic clergy, described by Carr and Fusi as the 'intelligentsia' of Basque nationalism.[53]

The significance of this clerical involvement did not escape the civil authorities. In 1926 Primo de Rivera sent the Marqués de Magaz as ambassador to the Vatican with the task of enlisting the help of the Papacy in the repression of both Basque and Catalan nationalism, since he believed that the support of the clergy was the sustaining force behind the two movements.[54] As the Vatican could not be expected to act directly in matters concerning the lower clergy of a particular diocese, it must be concluded that the regime, in spite of the professed loyalty of the ecclesiastical authorities, did not consider its influence alone sufficient to achieve the necessary ecclesiastical intervention. The support of the Vatican was thus sought as a means of exerting further pressure on the national hierarchy.

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[50] García de Cortázar, 'Mateo Múgica...', p. 11.
[51] Payne, p. 104.
[52] Raymond Carr and Juan Pablo Fusi, *Spain: Dictatorship to Democracy* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1981), p. 157.
[53] Carr and Fusi, p. 158.
[54] Hilari Raguer, 'El Vaticano y los católicos vascos durante el primer año de la Guerra Civil' in *Gernika: 50 años después (1937-1987): Nacionalismo, República, Guerra Civil* ed. by Manuel Tuñon de Lara, (San Sebastián: Universidad del País Vasco, 1987), pp. 157-160 (p. 159).

The mission assigned to the Marqués de Magaz was an early manifestation of the somewhat paradoxical situation that would emerge in a more accentuated fashion under General Franco, where the Catholic Church in the Basque Country was seen as being at once the principal guarantor of legitimacy for the regime, but also a key force in sustaining the biggest threat to that legitimacy. The simultaneous co-existence of the Church of pacification and the Church of resistance within the Basque Country was a source of constant tension and would become increasingly apparent during the episcopate of Bishop Mateo Múgica (1928-1937). Upon his arrival in Vitoria in March 1928, Bishop Múgica found himself confronted by a situation where, in the words of García de Cortázar, many of his clergy confused the service of the people of God with the defence of the Basque homeland.[55] A fluent Basque speaker, but strict, conservative figure, Múgica was to lead the diocese through years of turbulent political change.

On 14 April 1931 Spain became a Republic for the second time in its history. Its leaders were determined to break the hold of the *ancién regime*, introducing sweeping reforms of Spanish society. Foremost amongst these was a determination to remove the Catholic Church from the public sphere. By October, the Republic's Minister for War had famously declared: 'España ha dejado de ser católica.'[56] This hostile attitude, however, must be regarded as a crucial missed opportunity. It is undoubtedly true that the Spanish Church was closely associated with the power structures Republican leaders sought to eliminate and that its opposition to the Republican form of government was well known. This was particularly obvious in the case of Bishop Múgica who made the fateful decision to intervene prior to the elections of April 1931. The bishop issued a series of instructions entitled *Normas del obispo de Vitoria, que deben seguir en conciencia los católicos, en toda lucha electoral* (Norms of the Bishop of Vitoria which Catholics are obliged in conscience to follow in any electoral contest). The document warned that it was wrong for any member of the electorate to give his vote to

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[55] Fernando García de Cortázar, 'Mateo Múgica...', p. 11.
[56] Translation: 'Spain is no longer Catholic'. *Diario de Sesiones de las Cortes Constituyentes de la República española* (D.S.C.C.) 55, 26 quoted in Nicolás González Ruiz, *Azaña: sus ideas religiosas, sus ideas políticas, el hombre* (Madrid: Gráfica Universal, 1932), p. 61.

left-wing candidates with an anti-clerical agenda.[57] The emphasis on 'conscience' in the title effectively indicates that for the bishop the exercise of political choice had, in this case, clear moral implications.

Redefinition of the relationship between Church and nation was thus unavoidable in the context of the programme of reform envisaged by the Republican government. A more conciliatory approach could have proved beneficial to both the civil and ecclesiastical authorities. According to Gerald Brenan, not only could the Church have provided the government with a valuable source of support, but the government in turn could have assisted the Church 'to raise itself to the intellectual and moral level of Catholicism in other countries'. Instead, '[t]hey preferred, in the moment of their triumph, to throw down the gauntlet'.[58] The Decree separating Church and State was promulgated on 23 May 1931, just nine days after the proclamation of the Republic, a clear indication of the direction Republican legislation would take. Under the Constitution of October 1931, Catholicism was no longer the official religion of Spain and Article 26 introduced a series of provisions limiting the role of the religious orders. This was reinforced by additional items of legislation: the decree dissolving the Jesuit Order in January 1933 and the Law of Religious Confession and Congregations of May of the same year.[59]

The Catholic hierarchy was nonetheless prepared to adopt a pragmatic approach towards the new regime. Collective pastorals of the Spanish bishops of 1931 and 1933 encouraged respect and obedience for the legally constituted government, and stated that while the Church was obliged to voice its protest against secular legislation, it had at all times shown moderation and a desire to avoid a rupture between Church and State.[60] The provisions of these pastorals were summarised by members of the Basque clergy as follows:

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[57] *Boletín eclesiástico de Vitoria*, 15-IV-1931 quoted in García de Cortázar, "'Mateo Múgica...', p. 12.
[58] Gerald Brenan, *The Spanish Labyrinth: An Account of the Social and Political Background of the Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004 [1943]), p. 237.
[59] Copies of the relevant pieces of legislation are reproduced in Antonio Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa en España 1936-1939* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1999), pp. 748-756.
[60] Text of the Pastorals in Jesús de Iribarren, *Documentos colectivos del Episcopado Español 1870-1974* (Madrid: BAC, 1974), pp. 189-219.

1. Ejercicio pleno de los derechos comunes del ciudadano para la mejora de las leyes y de las instituciones dentro del régimen establecido.
2. No cooperar a nada encaminado a destruir por la violencia el régimen político existente.
3. Reparar los males que afligen con el ejemplo de las virtudes cristianas.[61]

Nor did the Vatican condemn the Republican government, despite its rejection of the Concordat. Anthony Rhodes has described the Vatican's reaction to the anti-clerical legislation of the Republic and the violence that accompanied it as 'curiously mild', pointing out that while Pius XI did condemn Spanish anticlericalism in his 1933 encyclical *Dilectissima Nobis*, he did not condemn the Republican form of government.[62]

The attack on the Church by the Republican government was both strategic and symbolic. Having come to power with a wide-ranging programme for reform, promising to transform the lives of the working classes, the government soon found that it could not deliver on promises such as agrarian reform. Its programme was unavoidably inimical to the most powerful sectors of society and it lacked the capacity for effective enforcement since the support of the army was heavily weighted in favour of the property-owning classes. The Church was the most vulnerable section of the opposition, and consequently, '[t]he religious issue was finally chosen by the left to cement its alliance'.[63] The power of religion as a unifying force was thus not limited to its positive application – uniting individuals as a result of shared values – but it also had a powerful negative application, bringing together individuals who shared a common rejection of those values.

This symbolically significant attack on the Church – associated throughout Spain, as noted at the beginning of this chapter, with wealth and privilege – did not have the same impact in the Basque Country, where socio-economic and cultural divisions between the clergy and the working classes were not so pronounced. Basque nationalists had been reluctant allies of the

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[61] Translation: '1. Full exercise of the common rights of the citizen for the improvement of the laws and institutions within the established regime. 2. Not to cooperate with anything aimed at destroying by violence the existing political regime. 3. Repair the harm inflicted with the example of Christian virtue.' *El Clero Vasco frente a la cruzada franquista. Documentos*, (Toulouse: Egi-Indarra, 1966), p. 25.

[62] Rhodes, p. 117.

[63] Shlomo Ben-Ami, *The Origins of the Second Republic in Spain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 306.

pro-republican forces, initially declaring them to be 'enemies' of the Church.[64] With the Republic now a reality that could not be avoided, however, they opted to cooperate with the Republican government in pursuit of regional autonomy. The particular nature of Basque nationalist politics did not permit the Basques to situate themselves comfortably on the left-right axis of the Spanish political system. An effective illustration of their dilemma can be found in the address given by the PNV leader José Antonio de Aguirre to the Spanish Cortes in 1931 in which he situated his party outside the traditional discourse of left and right-wing politics and stressed its confessional nature:

> Al colocar el nombre de Dios en la primera palabra de nuestro lema, nosotros queremos decir que nuestro partido es confesional y en esta fraseología de "derechas" y de "izquierdas", fraseología ridícula, nosotros tenemos tomada una posición bien definida. Nosotros somos católicos viriles e integrales, de un catolicismo viril, no de una sensiblería enfermiza.[65]

Aguirre then went on to outline those aspects of the PNV doctrine that aligned the party with the left-wing of traditional Spanish politics. This raises a key issue that was to be a constant feature of the relations between Basque nationalists and the ecclesiastical authorities – cooperation with left-wing, Marxist factions in pursuit of common aims. Despite being at pains to stress the confessional nature of his party, the PNV leader wished also to emphasise the need for the separation of civil and ecclesiastical spheres of influence:

> Para nosotros en esta fraseología, a que he hecho alusión, si por "derecha" se entiende la oposición a los progresos legítimos de la democracia contra los poderes absolutos, si eso es ser "derecha", nosotros somos de "izquierda". Si ser "derecha" consiste en la identificación de la religión con un régimen cualquiera y no en la independencia de los dos poderes – eclesiástico y civil – en sus dominios respectivos, nosotros somos de izquierda. Si por ser "derecha" se entiende la oposición a los progresos legítimos del proletariado, llegando incluso a la transformación completa del régimen actual, hasta a lo que ni vosotros mismos llegáis sobre el terreno económico [...] si a eso se llama ser derecha, nosotros somos de izquierda.[66]

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[64] *Euzkadi,* 19 March 1931, quoted in Rojo Hernández, p. 49.

[65] Translation: 'By placing the name of God in the first part of our slogan, we wish to say that our party is confessional, and in this phraseology of "right" and "left", a ridiculous phraseology, we have adopted a well-defined position. We are virile and total Catholics, of a virile Catholicism, not a sickly sentimentality.' J. de Hiriartia, *'El caso de los católicos vascos'* (Paris, no date) ANSGC: F-1346

[66] Translation: 'For us, in this phraseology I have referred to, if by "right" one understands opposition to the legitimate progress of democracy against absolute power, if this is to be on the "right", we are on the "left". If to be "right-wing" consists in the identification of religion with any regime, as opposed to the independence of the two powers – ecclesiastical and civil – in their respective dominions, we are on the left. If by "right-wing" one understands opposition to the legitimate progress of the proletariat, arriving as far as the complete transformation of the present regime, reaching further even than you in the economic plain, if this is called being right-wing, we are on the left.'

The PNV could not, however, ally itself blindly with left-wing forces. The party remained essentially conservative and traditionalist in its values and committed to the defence of the Catholic Church:

> Pero si por el contrario ser de "izquierda" consiste en luchar contra la familia, contra los principios sagrados de la Iglesia Católica, cuyas doctrinas nosotros profesamos, en ese caso, según esa fraseología que yo juzgo ridícula, en ese caso, nosotros de derecha. Yo os hablo con toda sinceridad.[67]

This double-affinity with elements of the political programmes of both right and left was to present the PNV with difficult decisions as it attempted to negotiate its regional autonomy in a political climate openly hostile to the Church. Despite the emphasis Aguirre placed on the attachment of his followers to the Catholic Church, the Republican authorities lost no time in repaying Bishop Múgica for his anti-Republican campaigning. In May 1931, less than a month after the proclamation of the Republic, he was expelled from its borders. According to Miguel Maura, the Minister responsible, however, the expulsion was not a reprisal for the bishop's anti-Republican campaigning but rather the government's response to a refusal from the bishop to refrain from making a pastoral visit to Bilbao, despite protestations from the civil governor in the region that the reception planned by Basque nationalists and Carlists was likely to provoke a hostile response from the Left.[68]

The secularising programme of the Republican government led to constant clashes with its PNV allies, culminating in their refusal to vote on the Constitution. Aguirre claimed however, in a letter to Fr. Miguel de Altzo, dated January 1933, that he and his associates had been advised by the 'ecclesiastical authorities' to frame their opposition to Republican legislation in secular terms 'invoking the arguments of democracy, international law and violated liberty'. They were to avoid framing the problem 'in its religious and dogmatic aspects'.[69]

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[67] Translation: 'But if on the other hand to be "left-wing" consists of fighting against the family, against the sacred principles of the Catholic Church, whose doctrine we profess, in that case, according to this phraseology which I judge ridiculous, in that case we are on the right. I say this with complete sincerity.'

[68] Francisco Rodríguez de Coro, *Catolicismo vasco entre la furor y la furia (1931-1936)* (Donostia-San Sebastián: Eusko Ikaskuntza, 1988), pp. 64-66.

[69] Aguirre to Fr. Miguel de Altzo, 12 January 1933 (Copy), ANSGC: PS Bilbao Caja 10 Exp. 1.

The Republican period was one of significant growth for the PNV as the party doubled its share from six seats to twelve between 1931 and 1933.[70] In addition, there was an increase in support for SOV, which in 1933 changed its name to *Solidaridad de Trabajadores Vascos* (STV), and was led by nationalist priests such as Policarpo Larrañaga, Alberto de Onaindía and José Ariztimuño.[71] From this position of strength Basque nationalists began to demand autonomy for Euskadi. The issue of autonomy was inextricably linked to the religious question; regional autonomy for the Basques would enable them to avoid many of the implications of the anti-clerical legislation emanating from the Republic.[72] The threat to the Catholic religion also motivated the traditionalist Carlist forces to join with the PNV in their demand for regional autonomy. The two sides came together in support of the Statute of Estella on 14 July 1931, a project for Basque autonomy which demanded that the autonomous Basque region have competence in matters of Church-State relations and the right to maintain independent relations with the Vatican. Once again Catholicism emerged as the common denominator uniting the various factions in the Basque region, proving crucial for gaining support in the staunchly Carlist region of Navarre. José Luis de la Granja has drawn parallels between the alliance of Catholic interests in defence of the *Fueros* during the Carlist Wars as a means of combating the liberal threat, and the use of political autonomy in the Statute of Estella to defend religious interests against Republicanism.[73]

The strong emphasis placed on Catholicism in the Statute was to be its downfall. The Republican government viewed with suspicion what the Basque socialist Indalecio Prieto famously described as an attempt to establish a

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[70] De la Granja et al, p. 141.
[71] Ibid. p. 142.
[72] This message was clearly expressed in the letter from Aguirre to Fr. Miguel de Altzo: 'Si las beatíficas derechas no se hubieran opuesto al Estatuto, hoy nos reiríamos de las leyes sectarias de Madrid, porque todas ellas entrañan un interesantísimo problema de ejecución.' [Translation: 'If the blessed right-wing had not opposed the Statute, today we would laugh at the sectarian laws of Madrid, because they all entail a most interesting difficulty in their execution.'] Aguirre to Fr. Miguel de Altzo, 12 January 1933 (Copy), ANSGC: PS Bilbao Caja 10 Exp. 1.
[73] José Luis de la Granja, 'El País Vasco y la II República española: unas relaciones conflictivas. (Del "Gibraltar vaticanista" de 1931 al "oasis vasco" de 1936-1937)' *Gernika: 50 años después*, pp. 115-126 (p. 120).

'Vaticanist Gibraltar.'[74] Republicans in general disapproved of the PNV's religiosity and stress on ethnic distinctiveness,[75] and for this reason were more reluctant to grant autonomy to the Basques than to the Catalans.[76] The Constituent Cortes rejected the Statute of Estella in its session of 25-26 September 1931 and the alliance of Basque forces fell apart when it became clear that under no circumstances would the Republic be persuaded to give the Basques control in the area of Church-State relations. In 1932 a more republican, secular autonomy statute was rejected by Navarre and by Álava the following year.

Despite the fact that Basque nationalists saw autonomy as a means of protecting the region from anti-clericalism, they incurred the censure of both the national hierarchy and the Vatican for their refusal to enter into the right-wing coalition, the *Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas* (CEDA), formed in 1933. Although the PNV shared many of the coalition's core conservative values – foremost amongst them respect for the Church – the leaders of the CEDA were declared opponents of regional autonomy. The PNV did not perceive itself to be faced with a choice between autonomy *or* the defence of the Church, since, as noted above, they believed that securing regional autonomy would enable them to achieve both aims simultaneously. Interestingly, Bishop Múgica, who had been permitted by the Republic to return to his diocese in 1933, defended the party, stating that a Catholic was legitimately entitled to choose either the PNV or the CEDA.[77] The bishop's declaration was published in the Basque press.[78]

The participation of the CEDA in the 1933 elections had, however, been encouraged by the Vatican.[79] Notwithstanding Múgica's pronouncement, a Basque deputation to the Vatican prior to the 1936

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[74] D.S.C.C. 25, 7 August 1931 quoted in Martin Blinkhorn, '"The Basque Ulster": Navarre and the Basque Autonomy Question under the Spanish Second Republic' *Historical Journal*, 18.3 (September 1974), pp. 595-613 (p. 603).

[75] Heiberg, p. 82.

[76] Blinkhorn, p. 602.

[77] A copy of the account given by Bishop Múgica in his first report to the Vatican, dated 21 October 1936, was published in *El Clero Vasco frente a la cruzada franquista*, p. 367.

[78] See Joseba M. Goñi Galarraga, *La Guerra Civil en el País Vasco. Una guerra entre católicos* (Vitoria: Editorial Eset, 1989), p. 100.

[79] Peter C. Kent, 'The Vatican and the Spanish Civil War', *European History Quarterly* 16 (1986), pp. 441-463 (p. 442).

elections was refused an audience with either the Pope or the Secretary of State. An internal PNV memorandum reveals the stated reason for this refusal: Vatican officials were expressing their disappointment at the party's refusal to contest the forthcoming elections as part of the CEDA.[80] The version of events disseminated in the public domain, however, – in the form of an interview with the returning delegation members in *El Día* on 28 January 1936 – claimed that the visit was an unmitigated success which went entirely according to plan. In the interview it was claimed that Basque nationalists had not expected to meet the Pope, who was not holding any audiences at the time they arrived.[81] A letter from party member Pío de Montoya to a Fr. Hipólito de Larracoechea, dated 8 February, suggests that Basque nationalists were concerned at the potential impact knowledge of the true nature of events might have on their supporters.[82]

The election of the Popular Front government in 1936 caused relations between Church and State to deteriorate still further. Street violence and the confiscation of Church property led the papal nuncio to fear for his safety.[83] Nonetheless, Basque nationalists remained firm in their support for the Republic, to the great disappointment of Bishop Múgica.[84] While the bishop was prepared to defend what he regarded as the legitimate right to work for political autonomy, an alliance with the openly left-wing and anti-clerical Popular Front could not, in his view, be justified. The widening gulf between Basque nationalists and their spiritual leader would become increasingly apparent when the Bishop of Vitoria joined his Episcopal colleagues in their support for the military uprising against the Republican government on 18 July 1936.

The tensions and conflict identified during this early period are indicative of the difficulties that would characterise Church-State relations, and indeed internal Church relations within dioceses, during the Franco dictatorship. The 1935 Memorandum from Basque nationalists to Pope Pius

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[80] *Informe sobre las relaciones entre Iglesia y la República Española y sobre la situación de la Iglesia en Euzkadi durante la guerra.* ANSGC: Caja 259, Exp. 3.
[81] A copy of the article in question has been reproduced in Moriones, pp. 156-159.
[82] Letter reproduced in Moriones, pp. 160-162.
[83] Kent, p. 443.
[84] García de Cortázar, 'Mateo Múgica...', pp. 15-16.

XI, alluded to at the beginning of this chapter, cites Bishop Múgica as the only incumbent of the See of Vitoria not to adopt an unjust attitude towards Basque nationalism. His predecessors, it was claimed, conducted themselves at all times as employees of the Spanish government, rather than bishops of the Catholic Church.[85] While his loyalty to Spain was no less than that of his predecessors, Múgica had shown greater understanding in his approach to Basque nationalism and local culture. The experience of the Second Republic demonstrated that the bishop was not opposed to the demand for autonomy in principle; his support for the PNV was rather conditional on the nature of the alliances it formed. This was to prove the critical stumbling block in the breakdown in relations that followed the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War.

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[85] Quoted in Moriones p. 91.

Chapter Three

The Catholic Bishops and the Northern Ireland State (1920-1927)

> 'S'il est une Eglise dans la catholicité où l'Episcopat réalise dans sa plénitude la devise, proclamée par le Pasteur suprême du ministère des âmes ... "Je suis le Bon Pasteur ... je connais mes brebis et mes brebis me connaissent," c'est l'Eglise d'Irlande; il n'y en pas une seconde qui, à ce point de vue, soit son égale.'
>
> (Letter to Cardinal Logue from Belgian Bishops in response to statement by the Irish Bishops of 19 October 1920)[1]

The emergence of the Northern Ireland state against a backdrop of violence, division and uncertainty ensured that the Catholic hierarchy would assume a dominant position within the minority Catholic community during the period 1921-1972. It will be argued that while the task of political leadership was eagerly embraced by the Catholic bishops, it was nonetheless one they could not easily have avoided. The partition of Ireland had left political leaders divided and lacking a coherent strategy at a time of crisis for the Catholic community in the North, and ecclesiastical leaders frequently stepped into this void, using their influence to seek redress for Catholic grievances.

This chapter will examine the response of the Northern bishops to the formation of the Northern Ireland state, with particular reference to the issue of political violence. The early 1920s was a turbulent time for the bishops as they sought to maintain the balance between support for the assertion of national rights and condemnation of violent actions. Finally, the chapter will begin to analyse the question of Catholic alienation from the Northern Ireland state, which would cause the minority to seek solutions to their grievances within their own community. The impact of the practical initiatives engaged in by the bishops on behalf of the Catholic minority will be examined. It will be argued that the prominent role of the Catholic hierarchy proved to be a source of cohesion and continuity within the Catholic community at a time of rupture and insecurity.

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[1] Translation: 'If there is a church in the Catholic world where the Episcopate in its entirety lives out the formula proclaimed by the supreme Pastor of the ministry of souls ... 'I am the good shepherd, ... I know my flock and my flock know me', it is the Irish Church; no other is its equal in this respect.' Letter to Cardinal Logue from Belgian Bishops in response to a statement from 19 October 1920, ICD (1921), p. 562.

Having publicly voiced their support for the cause of Irish unity and independence, the Catholic bishops found themselves at the centre of the controversy when the Irish Republican Army (IRA) initiated a campaign of guerrilla warfare against the British forces in Ireland. Opponents of Irish nationalism would attribute to the Catholic hierarchy a measure of responsibility for the Irish War of Independence or Anglo-Irish War, of 1919-1921. The bishops, however, while they continued to be both critical of the record of British rule in Ireland and supportive of Ireland's right to independence, were appalled by the deeds and tactics of the IRA and greatly frustrated by what they regarded as a misrepresentation of their position. This view was clearly expressed by Cardinal Logue in a letter to the Bishop of Nottingham, dated 20 December 1919: 'Another favourite theory in England, ... is that if an Archbishop or Bishop points out the causes of all this disorder and tries to have those causes removed, the conclusion is at once drawn that he sympathises with murder.'[2]

While the Catholic hierarchy, and the Cardinal in particular, were strongly opposed to any kind of 'disorder', in the changed climate of post-1916 Ireland the bishops were not prepared to ally themselves with the British state against Irish nationalists. Instead, the analysis they offered of the violence presented Britain's role in Ireland as the root cause. In addition to their speeches and declarations, the Catholic bishops enlisted the help of the press in asserting their right to speak out against British 'misgovernment', while repeating their condemnation of violence and disorder. In January 1920 the text of the Cardinal's letter, quoted above, appeared in the *Irish News* under the headline, 'Cardinal Logue's strong reply to British Attack'. In the letter the Cardinal explained the position of the bishops as follows:

> The wish to have an end put to misgovernment, which lies at the bottom of all the evil, gives no ground to infer that there is any sympathy with or want of reprobation of the unfortunate crimes to which misgovernment leads.[3]

On 27 January the Irish Bishops made a collective statement 'on the State of the Country' in which this analysis of the causes of the 'dreadful confusion and disorder' was made explicitly clear. The violence, it was argued, was a

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[2] ICD (1921), p. 500.
[3] *Irish News*, 5 January 1920, p. 5.

direct consequence of 'the principle of disregarding national feelings and national rights, and of carrying everything with the high hand, above the head of the people'.[4] Asserting a claim to act as interpreters of national feeling, the bishops were using the powerful influence of their collective voice to ensure that the demands of the nation were heard.

In July 1920 the issue of Catholic insecurity in the North gained renewed prominence. The killing of an Ulster-born member of the Royal Irish Constabulary caused outrage in Belfast and Protestant workers in the shipyards forcibly expelled their Catholic colleagues from their jobs. Although ostensibly aimed at Sinn Féin supporters, in reality all Catholic workers and even some Protestant trade unionists were affected by the expulsions. With employers refusing to take preventative action the expulsions soon spread to other industries, including engineering and building works, and extended beyond Belfast to other towns such as Banbridge and Dromore.[5] Violence was also raging in Derry where nationalists had succeeded in gaining control of the Derry Corporation and electing a nationalist mayor in January for the first time in 230 years. Loyalists expressed their frustration through an outburst of sectarian violence which resulted in 18 deaths. Six civilians had been killed in a gun-battle between the IRA and British troops in the grounds of St. Columb's College, a Catholic school.[6] Angry mobs also attacked Catholic-owned premises and the property of the Catholic Church across the North and there were large-scale evictions of Catholics from Protestant areas.

Not only did the British government appear to be unwilling to take measures to protect the Catholic population, but in some areas British troops actually went on joint patrols with members of the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF).[7] The situation deteriorated further with the creation of a Special Constabulary in September 1920, which many UVF members joined.[8] In the same month the Dáil, in an effort to support fellow nationalists in the North,

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[4] ICD (1921), p. 548.
[5] Michael Farrell, *Northern Ireland: The Orange State* (London: Pluto Press, 1976), p. 29.
[6] Ibid. p. 26.
[7] Ibid. p. 30.
[8] Michael Farrell, *Arming the Protestants: The Formation of the Ulster Special Constabulary, 1920-7* (London: Pluto Press, 1983).

introduced a boycott of Belfast-produced goods, which was to remain in effect until attacks on the Catholic population ceased.[9] In October the bishops issued a statement condemning the conditions experienced by Catholics in the North, declaring that 'only one persecuting section can be found among the Irish people'.[10] Extracts from the statement were reproduced in the Protestant *Belfast Newsletter* under the headline 'The Rebel Hierarchy'.[11]

Statements from the bishops in support of the rights of the Irish nation were frequently interpreted in the *Newsletter* as an endorsement of Republican violence. The paper also echoed condemnations of the bishops that had appeared in the British press, such as the following warning issued to the hierarchy by the London *Morning Post*:

> The principle of authority on which all States – and all churches, let Rome note – rest is being vigorously and treacherously challenged, and until it is completely and securely vindicated there can be no peace in the world. The Roman Catholic Church is proud of its discipline and the imposing structure of its world-wide dominion. Let it, then, remember that condoning rebellion and quibbling with moral law may in time wreck the organisation on which it has lavished such jealous care... [12]

Apparent, in this extract, is a belief that the Church had a moral obligation to side with the State in the interests of preserving order. If the Church nurtures rebels, it argues, those rebels will then turn on the Church when the destruction of the State is complete. While the Irish bishops may have shared this analysis prior to 1916, however, it was now evident that popular support for British rule in Ireland was an unattainable goal and that the Church would have little to gain from an alliance with the State.

Secondly, the statement is indicative of Protestant perceptions of the Catholic Church and 'the imposing structure of its world-wide dominion'. The accusation that the bishops had not done enough to prevent violence frequently stemmed from an over-estimation of the extent of ecclesiastical authority, amounting to a belief that the Catholic hierarchy could command

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[9] Bishop MacRory would later say of the boycott that 'he regretted that it should be necessary to resort to such a weapon', but that the boycott had its origins in the denial to Catholics of 'the right to work and live'. In the bishop's view, '[t]hat was the most extreme form of boycott.' *Irish News*, 20 June 1921.
[10] ICD (1921), p. 558.
[11] *Belfast Newsletter*, 20 October 1920.
[12] *Belfast Newsletter*, 22 November 1920.

total obedience, and that if the bishops wished to stop the violence they need only say the word:

> The Catholic bishops as a body ... have thrown their whole influence on the side of the rebels, and they have made no effort to restrain them from murder. They could control them if they wished, and as they decline to do so, they cannot free themselves from blame for the campaign of assassination.[13]

The British authorities, in an effort to negate the unsatisfactory response of the Irish bishops to the conflict, turned their attention to Rome. It had long been felt in Ireland that the stance adopted by the Vatican to events in that country was too favourable to the British point of view. It was argued that the Pope, the Secretary of State and other influential figures took all their information on Irish affairs from British sources.[14] Since Ireland at this time had no official representative at the Vatican, both political and ecclesiastical leaders depended on the same source of information, the rector of the Irish College, Monsignor John Hagan, an astute character with an in-depth understanding of the highly complicated workings of Vatican politics. In a letter to Bishop O'Donnell, Hagan described how the particular nature of Vatican politics makes informal channels of communication very important, with the result that certain offices carry more significance than may immediately be apparent because of the level of contact with high-ranking officials that they entail.[15] His own position clearly exemplified this point. Hagan was in regular contact with both leading political and ecclesiastical figures, informing them about happenings in Rome, warning them about potential crises and advising them on the best course of action.

Unsurprisingly, the British strategy in Rome was centred on achieving a Papal condemnation of Sinn Féin. The correspondence of both political and ecclesiastical figures in Ireland conveyed concern that pressure was being

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[13] *Belfast Newsletter*, 23 November 1920.

[14] See for example the view of Monsignor Hagan, Rector of the Irish College: 'My great difficulty lies in the fact that the Cardinal Secretary is altogether in the hands of the British...'. Hagan to O'Donnell, 13 August 1923, Armagh Archdiocesan Archive (AAA) O'Donnell Papers. A particular source of bitterness was the coverage of events in Ireland by the Italian press. This was especially offensive in the case of the *Osservatore Romano*, the semi-official organ of the Vatican, as expressed in a letter from Hagan to Cardinal Logue in February 1921: 'We also pointed out to him that our country was the only one with regard to which the 'Osservatore' depended altogether on Masonic-Freemason sources for its news....'. Hagan to Logue, 9 February 1921, AAA Logue Papers.

[15] Hagan to O'Donnell, 10 January 1924, AAA O'Donnell Papers.

exerted on the Pope by the British to this end.[16] Clearly a condemnation of Sinn Féin would have serious implications not only for Irish nationalists but also for the hierarchy, many of whom openly supported the party, whilst others, despite their reservations, had collaborated with them on issues such as the anti-conscription campaign of 1917. When, in May 1920, Hagan received word of the preparation of a condemnation of Sinn Féin, he urged Séan T. O'Kelly, former diplomatic representative of the Republic in Paris, to request an audience with the Pope and present him with a Memorandum outlining the position of Irish nationalists.[17]

The Memorandum complained of the treatment of Ireland in the Italian press, reminded the Pope of his declarations on the rights of Poland and the obvious parallels with the Irish situation, stressed the strong position of Irish Catholics in the United States, Canada and Australia, and warned of the possible repercussions in these regions of any actions on the part of the Vatican seen to be unfriendly to Ireland.[18] O'Kelly in his audience with the Pope found him to be sympathetic to the cause of Irish nationalists and supportive of their right to independence, but he advised them to be careful of their weapons and methods.[19] All seventeen Irish bishops present in Rome at the time for the beatification of the Irish martyr Oliver Plunkett reported the same satisfaction[20] and no condemnation was issued by the Vatican. Indeed the Pope's public statement during the ceremony approximated very closely to the views expressed in the conversation reported by O'Kelly:

> The present hour is, indeed, one in which Ireland needs altogether peculiar help from on high that she may be enabled to attain the goal of her just aspirations without the violation of a single duty.[21]

This statement is clearly intended as a caution against the use of violence, and yet the Pope refrained from elaborating on exactly what Ireland's 'duties'

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[16] See for example letter from Bishop Fogarty of Killaloe to De Valera warning that vigilance was necessary. Fogarty to De Valera, 25 May 1920, University College Dublin Archives Department (UCDA) De Valera Papers, P150/1331.

[17] It is interesting to note that a draft Memorandum drawn up by Hagan was rejected by O'Kelly who was appalled by the 'directness of the language and sentiments expressed'. Dermot Keogh, *The Vatican, The Bishops and Irish Politics, 1919-39* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 40.

[18] Memorandum par Séan T. O'Kelly, 18 May 1920. UCDA De Valera Papers, P150/731.

[19] O'Kelly to Frank Walsh, 12 July 1920. UCDA De Valera Papers, P150/731.

[20] O'Kelly to De Valera, 29 July 1920. UCDA De Valera Papers, P150/731.

[21] ICD (1921), p. 519.

were in this regard, preferring perhaps to leave the question of more concrete condemnations to the national hierarchy.

The Irish bishops meanwhile, including Cardinal Logue and Bishop O'Donnell, demonstrated their support for Irish independence by their attendance at a reception hosted by O'Kelly with the Irish flag on display and the singing of nationalist songs such as the 'Soldier's song' anthem. O'Kelly later reported: 'There was a great row raised in the English "House" over this and even the Pope had a good deal to say about it when I last saw him.'[22] The open support of the Irish bishops contrasted strongly with the ambiguous attitude of the Vatican. When De Valera suggested that O'Kelly return to Rome as diplomatic agent to the Vatican he refused, stating that he believed the Vatican would refuse official recognition to Ireland which 'would only play into the hands of our enemies unnecessarily'.[23] Revealing of the complicated nature of Vatican politics is the advice offered to O'Kelly by Monsignor Hagan, who suggested that the Irish should avoid sending a representative while Vatican policy remained favourable. If the attitude of the Vatican became hostile, Hagan argued, Ireland should then send a representative and demand recognition. This recognition would almost certainly be refused for fear of giving offence to England, but the demand would place the Vatican in the difficult situation of having to publicly declare itself unwilling to recognise the Irish representative.[24]

On 27 January 1920 the Irish hierarchy had reiterated its opposition to partition, declaring that the only way to ensure peace was to allow 'an undivided Ireland to choose her own form of government'.[25] The call was not heeded by the British authorities however, who introduced their own proposal for a resolution in the form of the Government of Ireland Bill in February 1920. The Bill provided for the establishment of a separate parliament in Belfast, a measure that had long been opposed and feared by nationalists, particularly in the North, and by the Northern bishops. Two separate parliaments would thus be created, with a 'Council of Ireland' coordinating

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[22] O'Kelly to De Valera, 29 July 1920. UCDA De Valera Papers, P150/731.
[23] O'Kelly to De Valera, 10 October 1920. UCDA De Valera Papers, P150/731.
[24] Ibid.
[25] ICD (1921), p. 549.

matters of common interest. When the Bill was passed by the British parliament on 23 December 1920, it was clear to the nationalist community of the North and their ecclesiastical leaders that a Unionist Parliament in Belfast was a reality they would have to face.[26] On 15 December, in a letter to *The Times*, Cardinal Logue had expressed the view that the Bill promised 'very little, if any, healing effect' and criticised the lack of protection for the Catholic minority:

> Judging from past experience, this Catholic minority has much greater need of protection than Protestants, not only in north-eastern Ulster, but in any part of Ireland. This is not even-handed justice, and is likely to sow the seeds of much future trouble.[27]

The Cardinal's letter effectively encapsulates the response of the Catholic hierarchy to the creation of the Northern Ireland state – the very act of its foundation was an injustice against the Catholic minority. This would have far-reaching repercussions in terms of perceptions of its legitimacy. Before the new government had even become operational the Catholic bishops were expressing fears for the safety of their people. Relations between Church and State thus began in mistrust and suspicion.

Following a further British attempt to secure a Papal condemnation of Sinn Féin in February 1921, De Valera appealed to Archbishop Hayes of New York for support, stating that such condemnation would be 'for Britain a victory such as she has not achieved even by the victory of the great war. It will be a blow to Ireland that will rend her asunder, and then the enemy can do with her what she wills'.[28] In the same month Monsignor Hagan wrote to Bishop O'Donnell that the Vatican atmosphere was becoming 'charged with anti-Irish electricity'.[29] The following April however, the Pope wrote to Cardinal Logue and sent a contribution to the Irish White Cross Association, set up to provide relief to those affected by the violence.[30] This letter was regarded as a major diplomatic achievement for Dáil Eireann and its content

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[26] *The Constitution of Northern Ireland being the GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND ACT, 1920* (Belfast: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1956).
[27] *The Times*, 15 December 1920.
[28] De Valera to Hayes, 2 February 1921, UCDA De Valera Papers, P150/1095.
[29] Hagan to O'Donnell, 12 February 1921, AAA O'Donnell Papers.
[30] Benedict XV to Logue, 27 April 1921, AAA Logue Papers.

caused some displeasure amongst English diplomats.[31] In the letter, read at masses on 22 May, the Pope declared the neutrality of the Holy See and called on 'English as well as Irish to calmly consider whether the time has not arrived to abandon violence and treat of some means of mutual agreement'.[32]

The Anglo-Irish war ended in October 1921 and negotiations began between Dublin and London. This was welcomed by the Catholic hierarchy who had long been calling for a truce.[33] Indeed, Bishop Mulhern of Dromore had been instrumental in setting up these negotiations, passing on to De Valera a letter of invitation from the British Prime Minister David Lloyd George on 25 June 1921.[34] The opening of the negotiations prompted the Pope to send a telegram to King George expressing his happiness and his hopes for an end to the 'age-long dissension'. This telegram was released to the press by the British Foreign Office on Wednesday 19th October, together with the King's reply:

> I have received the message of your Holiness with much pleasure, and with all my heart I join in your prayer that the Conference now sitting in London may achieve a permanent settlement of the troubles in Ireland, and may initiate a new era of peace and happiness for my people.[35]

The publication of this correspondence prompted De Valera to send a telegram to the Pope challenging King George's assertion that the troubles were 'in Ireland' and that the people of Ireland were 'his' people. The concluding paragraph read:

> We long to be at peace and in friendship with the people of Britain as with other peoples, but the same constancy through persecution and martyrdom that has proved the reality of our people's attachment to the faith of their fathers proves the reality of their attachment to the national freedom, and no consideration will ever induce them to abandon it.[36]

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[31] Keogh, pp. 70-71.
[32] ICD (1922), p. 592.
[33] See for example Bishop McHugh of Derry's Lenten Pastoral of February 1921: 'Why a truce should not be proclaimed, and an effort made to have peace established on the broad principles of the Gospel, if Justice is to govern the relations between England and Ireland, is a thing I cannot well understand.' *Irish News*, 7 February 1921.
[34] Oliver P. Rafferty, *Catholicism in Ulster 1603-1983* (London: C. Hurst & Co, 1994), p. 206.
[35] Text of both telegrams in Supplement to *Irish Bulletin* Vol. 6 No. 6 Thursday 17th October 1921. Weekly review of events in Ireland No. 30 (October 16th to October 22nd, 1921) UCDA De Valera Papers, P150/1364.
[36] Telegram from De Valera to His Holiness Benedict XV, 20 October 1921. UCDA De Valera Papers, P150/1364.

De Valera's message to the Pope was clear: the unwavering loyalty of the Irish to their Catholic faith, in spite of persecution, was equated with their attachment to their national identity; as they had not abandoned one, so they could not be forced to abandon the other. A section of the island's Catholic population, together with their bishops, would nonetheless feel that they had been abandoned.

The Catholic bishops did not attend the official opening of the Northern Ireland Parliament on 22 June 1921 by King George V, despite an invitation to Cardinal Logue. The Catholic nationalist population of Ireland did not accept the new state as legitimate, and this attitude was reflected in the stance adopted by their ecclesiastical leaders. On the day of the King's visit the Irish bishops issued a statement from their June meeting that condemned 'the sham settlement devised by the British government' that was 'rightly' spurned by their people.[37] Nor was the new state regarded as permanent, but rather as a transitory reality that would ultimately be replaced by a more satisfactory long-term solution. This view gave rise to the adoption of a non-recognition policy whereby Catholics would withhold their cooperation from the State in its initial stages, a stance that was supported by the Catholic hierarchy.

While the national question was evidently of considerable importance to the Catholic hierarchy, the primary concern of the bishops during the period analysed in this chapter was, unquestionably, the immediate welfare of the Catholic minority.[38] In the words of F.S.L. Lyons, the reaction of northern Catholics to the creation of the new regime was one of 'stunned disbelief, mingled with acute fear for their own safety'.[39] This insecurity was not of course confined to the Catholic community. The leaders of the new state were acutely aware of the overwhelming opposition of the majority of the Irish people to partition and the fact that the confines of the state had been

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[37] *Irish News*, 22 June 1921.

[38] 'In defiance of Ireland, a special Government has been given to one section of her people remarkable at all times for intolerance, without the slightest provision to safeguard the victims of ever-recurring cruelty; and a Parliament of their own is set up in their midst after a year of continuous and intolerable persecution directed against the Catholics of Belfast and the surrounding area at a time when the campaign of extermination is in full blast and a public threat is uttered to leave the Catholic minority at the mercy of the Ulster "special constables".' Statement of the Irish Bishops, 22 June 1921. Ibid.

[39] Francis S. L. Lyons, *Ireland since the Famine* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), p. 711.

carefully constructed so as to guarantee them a majority. The Catholic minority in Northern Ireland was thus viewed as a threat, and this attitude permeated all aspects of official policy. The position of Catholics as unwilling citizens of a State to which they were openly hostile made protection for their rights difficult to secure. The situation was exacerbated by the fragmented nature of the political leadership of the nationalist community in the North and the outbreak of civil war in the South.

On 6 December 1921 the Anglo-Irish Treaty was signed, granting Ireland Dominion status in place of the desired Republic.[40] Political representatives were to be obliged to swear an oath of allegiance to the British crown. Partition was effectively confirmed when the unionists of the North were permitted to opt out of what was to be known as the Irish Free State, and retain the parliament in Belfast provided for by the 1920 Government of Ireland Act. Any hopes that this Treaty represented the beginning of a new peaceful era in Irish history were short-lived. The Treaty was rejected by De Valera, who issued a statement six days later saying that Ireland was not bound to accept it.[41] Meeting the following day to consider the terms of the Treaty, the Irish Bishops declared that the responsibility for deciding the destiny of Ireland lay with Dáil Eireann and expressed the certainty that its members would 'have before their minds the best interests of the country and the wishes of the people to whom they and we happily belong'.[42]

Northern nationalists felt particularly betrayed as none of the negotiating delegates were deemed to be sufficiently aware of their situation and there had been no attempt to consult with them throughout the course of the negotiations. The Catholic bishops emerged as the most influential and prominent defenders of Northern nationalists, sending a delegation to meet with Arthur Griffith, a member of the Sinn Féin negotiating team, in December 1921. Assurances were given that adequate safeguards for the northern Catholic minority would be inserted into the Treaty.[43] Nationalist hopes rested on the provision in the Treaty for a Boundary Commission to

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[40] A summary of the terms of the agreement was published in ICD (1923), p. 536.
[41] ICD (1923), pp. 537-538.
[42] ICD (1923), p. 538.
[43] McHugh to Byrne 18 December 1921. Dublin Archdiocesan Archives (DAA) Edward Byrne Papers.

agree the location of the North-South border. It was believed that, following consultation with the local population in border areas, this would reduce the area of Northern Ireland so as to make it unviable, thereby forcing the unionists to accept inclusion in the Free State.

On 7 January 1922 the Treaty was ratified in the Dáil by just 64 votes to 57, revealing the depth of division surrounding the issue. The Catholic bishops, while far from satisfied with its terms, had urged acceptance of the Treaty in their Christmas addresses. The only alternative, they argued, was chaos. Bishop MacRory, who had openly and publicly attributed Ireland's troubles to the denial of her national rights,[44] declared, 'I see no hope but in working on the lines of the Treaty'.[45] On 1 January 1922 Cardinal Logue stated that the Treaty 'seemed to give everything substantial which was necessary for the welfare and progress of the country', describing it as 'the only hope for the peace, tranquillity, and welfare of Ireland'.[46] The influence of the Catholic hierarchy proved to be vital for securing acceptance of the Treaty in the Northern counties. Eamon Phoenix has argued that MacRory's pronouncement in favour of the Treaty was influential in Antrim and Down, and the efforts of Bishop McHugh in Derry were instrumental in preventing the Sinn Féin dominated Corporation from declaring its allegiance to the Dáil, thereby jeopardising the position of the city.[47] The bishops were, however, unable to prevent the outbreak of a year-long civil war between supporters and opponents of the Treaty in the South in the months that followed.

While the Irish Civil War had considerably less impact in the North-East than other parts of the country, since it was fought mainly over the issue of the political status of the twenty-six county state, it did divert the attention of Southern political leaders away from the question of partition and the concerns of the Catholic minority in the North. The Catholic bishops quickly emerged as the main spokesmen for their communities, bringing their

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[44] See for example the sermon given by Bishop MacRory in St. Patrick's Church, Belfast, 27 March 1922: 'If they were to find the cause of the present deplorable condition of their country they must, Dr. MacRory said, go further back than the last year or two, and find it in the age-long denial of their unquestionable rights.' ICD (1923), p. 531.

[45] ICD (1923), p. 540.

[46] ICD (1923), pp. 541-542.

[47] Eamon Phoenix, *Northern Nationalism: Nationalist Politics, Partition and the Catholic Minority in Northern Ireland, 1890-1940* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 1994), pp. 161-168.

concerns to the attention of political leaders. The acceptance of the hierarchy's leadership in the North contrasted with the situation in the South, where the condemnation by the Catholic bishops, first of the anti-Treaty forces, then of the government policy of executions, caused political leaders to question the right of the hierarchy to interfere in political matters.

A joint Pastoral Letter of the Catholic hierarchy of 22 October 1922 condemned the campaign of the anti-Treaty forces as murder, since it was not supported by any legitimate authority. Those who participated in it could not be absolved in Confession or admitted to Holy Communion. Furthermore, it condemned attempts to silence the pastoral office of the bishops through 'calumny and intimidation' and accused Republicans of slandering the priesthood of Ireland by 'suggesting a cabal amongst them to browbeat their Bishops and revolt against their authority'. In addition, the bishops drew attention to the position of the Catholics of the North, stating that they were particularly vulnerable to violent reprisals for Republican actions.[48] Republicans however remained defiant, responding to the Pastoral in a communication of 31 October in which they stated that it had been resolved that De Valera would make representations to the Vatican protesting against 'the unwarrantable action of the Irish hierarchy'. The bishops, it was claimed, were 'using the sanction of religion to enforce their own political views and compel acquiescence by Irish Republicans'.[49] The attempt to end the conflict by invoking the authority of episcopal office had ended in failure.[50] It was a failure the bishops would bear in mind in future dealings with Republicanism.

The anti-Treaty forces in their opposition to the hierarchy accused the bishops, somewhat unfairly, of accepting the partition of Ireland.[51] While it is undoubtedly true that the Irish Bishops had encouraged acceptance of the Treaty as the best means of securing a lasting peace, they were far from

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[48] ICD (1923), pp. 608-613.

[49] ICD (1923), p. 593. Information regarding the organisation and text of the appeal is located in UCDA De Valera Papers, P150/1654 and P150/1655.

[50] John Newsinger for instance has argued: 'This condemnation in no way weakened the faith of devout Catholics like de Valera or undermined their political resolve. Hundreds of republicans remained in arms until the cease-fire order of 24 May 1923, and in the general election in August Republican candidates polled nearly 300,000 first-preference votes or 27 per cent of the total poll.' John Newsinger, 'Revolution and Catholicism in Ireland, 1848-1923', *European Studies Review* 9 (1979), pp. 457-480 (p. 457).

[51] Memorandum entitled 'Quotations from Irish Bishops', UCDA De Valera Papers, P150/1653.

satisfied with its terms. As previously noted, the bishops in general, and those in the North in particular, had frequently expressed their opposition to the partition of the country and their concerns for the welfare of the Catholic minority in the North. With their political leaders divided and lacking in direction, it was the Catholic hierarchy who would step forward to act as spokesmen for the grievances of that community.

Insecurity, in various forms, was prevalent amongst the Catholic community of the North in the years that followed the establishment of the Northern Ireland state. In the case of the border counties, for instance, economic uncertainty was a major concern, with trading districts cut off from customers and suppliers.[52] Belfast Catholics were undoubtedly in the most vulnerable position of all. The hardship resulting from the shipyard expulsions was intensified by sectarian violence, which saw many driven from their homes and countless others murdered.[53] The violence that accompanied the birth of the new state appeared to justify the fears expressed by the Catholic bishops in their opposition to partition. Catholic enclaves in Belfast were attacked, homes were burned and the occupants driven out, and with the machinery of law and order entirely in the hands of their political opponents it appeared Catholics had nowhere to turn for protection.

Bishop MacRory had helped set up the Catholic Protection Committee to assist the expelled Catholic workers, estimated in 1920 at a total of 10,000 men and 1,000 women of whom 9,000 would remain unemployed for the next few years.[54] On 22 April 1922 the committee's chairman, Father Bernard Laverty, sent a strongly worded telegram to Winston Churchill (then Colonial Secretary) claiming that Belfast Catholics were 'being gradually but certainly exterminated' and that the Northern Government was either 'culpable or

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[52] See for example Mulhern to Dunne, 1 December 1925, DAA Edward Byrne Papers: 'The alleged boundary in this neighbourhood cuts off from Newry Market district some of her best customers...'

[53] The total of those killed in Belfast between July 1920 and June 1922 has been recorded as 455 (of which 267 were Catholics, 185 Protestants and three unascertained), with over 2,000 people wounded. G.B. Kenna, *Facts and Figures of the Belfast Pogrom 1920-1922, New edn ed. by Thomas Donaldson* (Dublin: O'Connell Publishing Company, 1997), p. 101. Writing in the Preface to the new edition of this work Andrew Boyd has noted that G. B. Kenna was a pseudonym for Fr. John Hassan, curate of St. Mary's, Belfast, during the period and that, '[i]t is believed that the book was withdrawn on the day of publication in 1922 or soon afterwards. The Catholic Church authorities in the North of Ireland and the Government of the Irish Free State feared it would cause an upsurge of the sectarian violence that had begun in 1920 but which had shown signs of subsiding in the late summer of 1922' (p. 3).

[54] Farrell, *Northern Ireland: The Orange State*, p. 29.

inefficient'.[55] The following month the committee sent a further telegram giving details of the number of dead and injured, which concluded simply: 'Position of the Catholics desperate'.[56] A key aspect of the hierarchy's strategy in attempting to address Catholic grievances was to appeal to the British government to take responsibility for the actions of the Belfast authorities.

The work carried out by the committee, under the auspices of the Catholic hierarchy, did not meet with unanimous approval. For some, such initiatives unduly extended the influence of the hierarchy in the community. According to Michael Farrell, the Catholic Protection Committee was 'the mouthpiece of the Bishop'.[57] In April 1922, a Belfast Sinn Féin representative, Dr. McNabb, accused Fr. Laverty of going behind the back of the Free State Government in setting up the Catholic Protection Committee, at a time when that government was engaged in negotiations with the Unionist authorities. Questioned about the view of the bishop, McNabb replied: 'He is one of the biggest sinners of the lot.'[58]

The lack of effective Sinn Fein organisation in Ulster, however, meant that the most important link between the Dublin government and the Catholic minority in the North was the Catholic hierarchy. As Mary Harris has observed: 'This consultation indicates a recognition of the bishops' long-standing links with politicians and the Church's experience in dealing with Catholic grievances.'[59] Throughout this period the Catholic minority in the North had been gradually losing faith in the Free State government. This was largely due to the fact that Collins had entered into a series of pacts with Craig without prior consultation with the Northern nationalists. The outcome of these pacts had been disappointing and Joseph Devlin and his supporters resented the fact that Collins was regarded by both London and Belfast as

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[55] Text of the telegram reproduced in ICD (1923), p. 563.
[56] 'Belfast Pogrom' National Archives, Dublin S 1451.
[57] Farrell, *Northern Ireland: The Orange State*, p. 62.
[58] Minutes of meeting of Northern Advisory Committee, 11 April 1922, National Archives, Dublin S1011.
[59] Mary Harris, 'The Catholic Church, Minority Rights and the Founding of the Northern Irish State' in *Northern Ireland and the Politics of Reconciliation*, ed. by Dermot Keogh, and Michael H. Haltzel (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Centre Press; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 62-83 (p. 68).

spokesman for northern nationalists.[60] The Catholic bishops sought to overcome this divide by using every opportunity at their disposal to ensure that the particular situation of Northern nationalists was taken into account by Free State leaders.

Furthermore, it is undeniable that interventions from the bishops could often have greater efficacy than those of political leaders. This was frequently demonstrated by Bishop MacRory. Since the conditions experienced by Catholics in Belfast represented much more than a purely social problem, being rather a multi-faceted issue linked to questions of security, identity and political rights, MacRory's efforts on behalf of those affected took many forms. He used his influence to appeal for financial aid, both in Ireland and abroad, and these appeals served as damning propaganda against the Unionist government. Such interventions represent an early attempt to raise the issue of the plight of Belfast Catholics in an international context, embarrassing the Belfast and London governments. In his statements Bishop MacRory was unequivocal in his criticisms of the Unionist regime and its treatment of the Catholic minority:

> Almost ten thousand Belfast workers have been for months deprived of their employment simply because they are Catholics. Thousands of others, being Catholics, were the first to be dismissed owing to the prevailing slackness of work. The Government out-of-work allowance has for some reason so worked up to the present that these Catholic victimised workers are excluded from benefit.[61]

The bishop's analysis of the problem as religious persecution is clear: Catholic workers have been 'victimised' because of their religion. This victimisation was compounded by the violation of their national rights as Irishmen. The bishop added that his diocese was 'no longer in Ireland; not even in Ulster, for that historic province has been mutilated, but in the nameless Satrapate made up of the six amputated counties'.[62]

A similar sense of religious persecution, combined with the violation of national rights, was present in the hierarchy's response to the issue of policing. The 'Specials' in particular were regarded as a hostile force, accused of actively participating in acts of violence and intimidation against

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[60] Phoenix, p. 200.
[61] ICD (1922), p. 508.
[62] Ibid.

Catholics. Once again Bishop MacRory was at the forefront of the campaign for justice for the minority in the area of law and order. MacRory's diocese of Down and Connor suffered a disproportionate amount of sectarian violence, often culminating in brutal murders. In many cases members of the Specials were connected to the attacks, but all demands for official enquiries were blocked.[63] MacRory attempted to highlight the plight of his flock by every means at his disposal, condemning the attacks from the pulpit, through the press, and by direct contact with political leaders. In an interview with the *Irish News* in June 1921, the bishop was damning in his criticism of the role of the British government:

> Considering the acute religious and political difference for which Belfast is notorious, his Lordship said he regarded this arming of one section of the people against another as one of the most iniquitous and indefensible things of which any Government could be guilty.[64]

The Belfast government's response to the problem of violence in the region came in the form of the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act (Northern Ireland), 1922: 'An Act to empower certain authorities of the Government of Northern Ireland to take steps for preserving the peace and maintaining order in Northern Ireland, and for purposes connected therewith.'[65] This Act provided the police and Special Constabulary with wide powers of search, arrest and detention. Since the security forces were drawn almost exclusively from one side of the community the Act only served to increase Catholic fears. It further provided for the suspension of civil liberties and measures such as curfew and internment, which, in the view of the hierarchy, were applied disproportionately to the Catholic minority.

At their April 1922 meeting in Maynooth the Irish Bishops issued a 'Pronouncement on the Position of the Catholics in Belfast and Adjoining Areas'. Cataloguing the sufferings of Catholics in the North-East, which 'must shock any man of Christian feelings or even the common instincts of humanity', the bishops declared:

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[63] For details of the controversy surrounding the activities of the 'Specials' during this period see Farrell, *Arming the Protestants*, pp. 158-160.
[64] *Irish News*, 20 June 1921.
[65] A copy of the Act is available from the CAIN database of the University of Ulster: http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/hmso/spa1922.htm

> The authorities can hardly plead helplessness. They have at their disposal tens of thousands of armed men paid for by the British Government, and still, while Catholics in the Six Counties cannot have even a shot-gun to protect their crops from the crows without prosecution, and even the threat of the lash, scarcely a single weapon of destruction, firearm or bomb, has been seized from the emissaries of murder.[66]

Even the bishops themselves were not immune to the consequences of the legislation.[67] At their next meeting the following June the hierarchy issued a 'Statement of the Archbishops and Bishops of Ireland in reference to recent insults to Cardinal Logue'. The statement detailed how the ageing Cardinal had been searched several times, once at gunpoint, and rudely treated by the Ulster Special Constabulary:

> For such maltreatment of an old man in such exalted station there is scarcely a parallel in the annals of the most savage tribe, and as, despite the presence of numerous British troops in the Northern area, there is no Government to give protection or redress to Catholics, we deem it a solemn duty to lay before the Holy Father and the whole civilised world a faint outline of the barbarities heaped upon him who is the beloved head of the Irish Church.[68]

The symbolically significant position of the Cardinal was thus used by the hierarchy as a means of drawing attention to the treatment of the Catholic community as a whole.

The attention given to the searching of the Cardinal in the international press led to an expression of regret from Craig on behalf of the government.[69] Pressure from London resulted in an investigation by the Northern Ireland Home Affairs Office. The Lord Lieutenant General and Governor General of Ireland forwarded to Craig an article from the *Catholic Herald* of 29 July 1922, which carried the headline 'Cardinal Logue Again Insulted', suggesting that 'if the facts are as stated' he should 'endeavour to guard against such action'.[70] Privately, however, Craig attributed the incidents in question to the

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[66] ICD (1923), pp. 603-604.

[67] For examples of alleged mistreatment of bishops and abuse of church property see Rafferty, pp. 216-218.

[68] ICD (1923), pp. 604-605.

[69] The *Irish Independent* on 26 June 1922 reported that Craig had been interviewed by the Belfast Correspondent of the *Chicago Tribune* (Paris Edition) about the searching of Cardinal Logue. In his response Craig allegedly stated: 'If he [the Cardinal] had been anxious for peace in the North he would have been pleased to find the net so fine.' Copy of press cutting in Public Records Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) CAB 6/48. The *Belfast Newsletter*, however, reported on 29 June that the Prime Minister had 'expressed his regret, in which the government concurred, that anything in the nature of inconvenience or discourtesy should have been experienced by the Cardinal.' Copy of press cutting in PRONI HA 5/982.

[70] Lord Lieutenant General to Craig, 10 August 1922. PRONI CAB 6/48.

uncooperative attitude of the Cardinal, writing to the Secretary of the Irish Office:

> I may mention, for your private information, that the Cardinal is very difficult to deal with. When his car is stopped in the ordinary way he does not reveal his identity, and he has refused the accommodation we have offered in the form of a regular member of the Royal Ulster Constabulary to accompany him on his motor journeys.[71]

Reports from police and army officials made similar claims, bordering on accusing the Cardinal of deliberately seeking to embarrass the state security forces.[72] Personally, Cardinal Logue sought to minimise the significance of the searches. In a letter sent to Winston Churchill it was claimed that 'the old man's chief complaint was that these incidents had involved him in replying to letters of sympathy addressed to him from countries in Europe and abroad.'[73] Whether the Cardinal intentionally created the circumstances for a confrontation with security forces or not, it is clear that the 'accommodation' offered him, in the form of a police escort, would have been unacceptable, given the stance of the hierarchy in relation to the issue of policing and the minority community. The incident served to demonstrate the power of the hierarchy to exert pressure on the Unionist government via London by means of attracting the attention of the international media. The significance of this potential was not lost on the Belfast authorities and 'B' Specials in the Armagh area were instructed 'to cease searching any cars conveying high Church dignitaries of all denominations'.[74]

In their defence of the physical security of the minority community the bishops considered themselves obliged to respond to threats from a number of different sources. Bishop MacRory, in addition to condemning atrocities by the forces of the Northern Ireland state also urged restraint from

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[71] Craig to Mark Sturgis, 12 August 1922. PRONI CAB 6/48.

[72] In relation to the June 1922 incident Colonel W.B. Spender wrote to Lionel Curtis of the Colonial Office: 'It is only right that you should be told that the Cardinal apparently deliberately did not use the road which had been agreed upon and on which the Special Constabulary had been warned, but went another way apparently with the purpose of meeting other Constabulary who had not been so warned.' Spender to Curtis, 24 June 1922. PRONI CAB 6/48. A police report on the searching of Cardinal Logue and Bishop O'Donnell claims that the prelates did not make their identity known until after the search had been completed. *Report from County Commandant's Office, Armagh 18.6.22*. PRONI CAB 6/48.

[73] An extract from this letter, from an unnamed source, was forwarded to Craig by the Secretary to the Irish Office. Sturgis to Craig, 10 August 1922. PRONI CAB 6/48.

[74] *Report from County Commandant's Office, Armagh 18.6.22*. PRONI CAB 6/48.

nationalists, particularly the members of the IRA. Despite the fact that the Free State leader Michael Collins had entered into talks with the Northern Prime Minister James Craig in 1922, with the aim of reaching an agreement that would maintain peace between the two states, the IRA were carrying out attacks in border areas, raiding police barracks and ambushing patrols. Reprisals for such attacks were swift and brutal and were generally carried out in MacRory's diocese, which, although not the scene of the original attack, was where Catholics were most vulnerable, as a result of their location in a few enclaves inside the city.

This view was clearly expressed at a meeting of the Northern Advisory Committee, established by Michael Collins, on 11 April 1922, where MacRory opposed the suggestion by Dr. McNabb that republicans should burn unionist property as a means of coercion, on the grounds that they would respond by taking the lives of innocent people.[75] In February 1922 the bishop condemned 'the doctrine of vicarious punishment, according to which the Catholics of Belfast are made to suffer for the sins of their brethren elsewhere'.[76] MacRory attempted to impress on the Dublin government the hopelessness of the situation of the Belfast Catholics, unable to turn to the State and its security forces for protection from violence. Lacking confidence in the ability of the Free State government to protect his people, he eventually came to the conclusion that the best Northern Catholics could do under the circumstances was join the 'Specials'. He stated:

> I am convinced in my own heart that by putting our people into the Specials, we shall be doing the thing that will displease the Orangemen more than anything we could do, and that we would be doing a thing that will protect our people in Belfast...that recognition would only be the recognition that you are going to give them in other matters too.[77]

MacRory was Collins' nominee to the Catholic Police Advisory Committee, provided for in an agreement between Collins and Craig. Its aim was to be the organisation and encouragement of Catholic participation in the police

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[75] Minutes of meeting of Northern Advisory Committee, 11 April 1922, National Archives SPO S1011 quoted in Phoenix, p. 205.
[76] *Irish Independent*, 27 February 1922, quoted in Eamon Phoenix, 'Michael Collins – The Northern Question – 1916-22' in *Michael Collins and the Making of the Irish State*, ed. by Gabriel Doherty and Dermot Keogh, (Dublin: Mercier Press, 1998), pp. 92-116 (p. 103).
[77] Minutes of meeting of Northern Advisory Committee, 11 April 1922, National Archives SPO S1011 quoted in Phoenix, p. 208.

force. Although the bishop did not take part in its proceedings, two priests, Frs. Bernard Lavery and H. J. Murray, did participate. It was hoped that the committee would be able to encourage Catholics to join the Specials. The initiative was, however, a total failure. Unionist distrust of republicans led to the arrest of two of the Catholic members of the committee, accused of using it as a front for obtaining confidential information on the police force.[78]

The bishop's support for Catholic participation in the policing of the Northern Ireland state, including the Special Constabulary, represents a departure from his stated position the previous year when, in response to a question about the invitation to Catholics to join the 'Specials', he had acknowledged: 'Yes, it was true they had been invited; but it was well-known to the authorities in Belfast that for political reasons they would not and could not accept the invitation.'[79] Bishop MacRory's modified stance on policing is indicative of a wider acknowledgement by the hierarchy that the existence of the Northern Ireland State would now have to be accepted in the interests of Catholic safety and welfare.

The policy of non-recognition of the Northern Ireland state was now proving to be untenable and had produced a complex situation that served only to further inhibit redress of Catholic grievances. This was particularly true in the area of education, a matter of supreme importance for the Catholic bishops. Michael Farrell has commented: 'If the bishops had to choose between accepting the Northern state and losing their schools then they were going to keep their schools.'[80] However, as Bishop MacRory's participation in the Police Advisory Committee demonstrated, the hierarchy was prepared to cooperate with the Northern government where issues of Catholic welfare were at stake. Catholic education was, for the hierarchy, the guarantor of the faith, and therefore first and foremost in all aspects of Catholic welfare.

Catholic schools, prior to partition, had received almost total funding from the government, while the management was left entirely to the clergy.

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[78] Fr. McLaverty gave an account of his experience in the Tallents Report of July 1922, complaining of a series of obstacles to the work of the Committee, originating in the Northern Ireland Ministry of Home Affairs, including a reluctance to clarify its precise status and agree a location for the meetings. National Archives (UK) Tallents Papers, CO 906/30.

[79] *Irish News*, 20 June 1921.

[80] Farrell, *Northern Ireland: The Orange State*, p. 101.

When in 1921 the Lynn Committee was set up by the Unionist education minister, Lord Londonderry, to decide the future of education in the new state, Cardinal Logue refused to nominate a representative. In his reply the Cardinal made clear his lack of faith in the Northern regime: 'Judging from the public utterances of some of the members of the Belfast Parliament and their sympathisers, I have little doubt that an attack is being organised against our schools.'[81] The gulf between the Catholic Church and the Northern education authorities widened when the Local Government Act of 1922 made it obligatory for all those in receipt of payment from local government authorities to take an oath of allegiance to the State. This act not only applied to the chaplains of public institutions, but also to teachers. Many preferred to work without pay rather than take the oath. The hierarchy negotiated with Collins the payment of Catholic teachers' salaries from the Free State, and around a third of Catholic teachers accepted this option. A resolution passed by the Catholic teachers of Derry, Fermanagh and Tyrone on 25 February 1922 protested 'against either Catholic education or Catholic teachers being placed under the Government of "Northern" Ireland' and called on the Provisional Government of the Irish Free State to take Catholic education in the North under its control: 'They regard the "Northern Minister of Education" as well as other members of the "Northern" Cabinet, in their recent utterances regarding the Irish language and schools as enemies of truly [sic] Irish national system of education.'[82]

The situation was further exacerbated by Lord Londonderry's Education Act of 1923, which was regarded as decidedly unfavourable to Catholics, since it aimed to bring schools under the control of the State education authorities. The Act established Education committees to take over the management of schools, which would be divided into three classes. Class I schools would be entirely under the management of the committees and would receive full government funding. Class II schools would be managed by two committee representatives and four members of the school patrons and would receive partial funding. The managers of Class III schools would remain

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[81] Logue to Londonderry, 2 September 192, CAB 6/9 PRONI quoted in Harris, 'The Catholic Church, Minority Rights....', p. 67.
[82] ICD (1923), p. 550.

independent of the authorities but would receive no funding other than grants towards heating and cleaning.

Initial opposition to the Education Act, however, came from the Protestant churches, outraged at the elimination of religious education. In response, provisions were eventually made for the teaching of Scripture in State schools, meaning that these effectively became Protestant Schools. The hierarchy saw the 1923 Act as blatant discrimination against Catholic interests. Although the original aim of the act was to provide non-denominational education, the subsequent concessions to the Protestant churches placed Catholics at a clear disadvantage. Religious instruction alone was considered insufficient by the hierarchy, who stressed the need for a 'Catholic ethos' in their schools, including the right of the clergy to appoint teaching staff. Following the death of Collins in the Civil War, William T. Cosgrave became leader of the Free State government and was no longer willing to pay the salaries of northern teachers. The hierarchy, seeing no other option, began to put pressure on nationalists to enter Parliament in order to protect Catholic interests in the area of education.

Despite their reservations about the Dublin government, border nationalists continued to place their faith in the power of the Boundary Commission to transfer their area to the Free State. This created further divisions as nationalists in the North-East with no hope of transfer sought the abandonment of the Commission in favour of a joint agreement between North and South that would lead to increased cooperation between the two governments. Before the Boundary Commission had even met however, its proceedings were marred by allegations that it was never intended to produce any large-scale transfers of territory.[83] The ambiguity surrounding its mandate further increased the concerns of border nationalists. While Craig insisted that no territory would be conceded to the South, the Free State government had maintained that it would not accept anything less than the transfer of those border areas with a Catholic majority.

In a letter to Bishop Mulhern of Dromore, responding to the latter's concern that the predominantly nationalist town of Newry would remain under

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[83] Harris, *The Catholic Church and the Foundation of the Northern Ireland State*, p. 170.

the Northern parliament, Collins had assured him that 'no action and no desire of the Northern parliament could take this territory away from the Irish government.'[84] Another bishop whose diocese would be affected by the Commission, McKenna of Clogher, in his Lenten Pastoral of 27 February 1922, responded to Winston Churchill's objection to a literal interpretation of the boundary clause on the grounds that it would reduce Northern Ireland to unviable proportions:

> The result only proves how preposterous was, and is, the claim of a small handful of Unionists in the north-east corner of Ireland to get a parliament of their own, and what a travesty of Justice and fair play was the Partition Act which now, it is pretended, has the sanctity of a Treaty.[85]

Similarly, Bishop MacRory stated in his Lenten Pastoral his regret that he saw 'no hope of peace, if that North-East corner persists in cutting itself off politically from the rest of Ireland'.[86]

Despite Craig's assurances, unionists continued to be troubled by the Catholic majority in the border counties, particularly Fermanagh and Tyrone. In an effort to limit the strength of their representation the Unionist government now set about a 're-organisation' of the electoral wards for local government, which amounted to the gerrymandering of constituencies to create a large surplus in Catholic areas, while other wards were organised in such a way that a very small Unionist minority was sufficient to take control. This measure, coupled with the abolition of Proportional Representation in the Local Government Act of 1922, greatly alarmed nationalists, concerned at losing their majority before the conclusion of the Boundary Commission. It was the clergy of Derry who led the Catholic protest in October 1923, declaring the re-division of Tyrone's rural electoral districts to be aimed at 'depriving Catholics ... of fair and adequate representation on the public boards of the country.'[87]

The death of Collins resulted in a more hesitant attitude to the Boundary Commission by the Free State government. Cosgrave finally

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[84] Collins to Mulhern, 26 January 1922, National Archives SPO S180/a quoted in Phoenix, p. 175.
[85] *Irish Independent*, 27 February 1922, quoted in Ibid, p. 187.
[86] ICD (1923), pp. 554-555.
[87] ICD (1924), p. 593, quoted in Finbar J. Madden & Thomas Bradley: 'The Diocese of Derry in the twentieth century, c.1900-1974' in *A History of the Diocese of Derry from earliest times* ed. by Henry A. Jeffries & Ciarán Devlin (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), pp. 240-258 (p. 248).

nominated as his representative Professor Eoin MacNeill, a native of County Antrim, and the appointment met with general approval amongst Northern nationalists. The British government appointed J.R. Fisher to represent the Unionist government (since Craig refused to nominate a representative), while Richard Feetham, a South African judge, was appointed chairman.

On 12 October 1923 Cardinal Logue and the northern bishops issued a statement on the Northern Ireland situation enumerating the various grievances of the Catholic community.[88] The bishops were unequivocal in their condemnation of the Unionist government:

> It is doubtful whether in modern times any parallel can be found for the way in which the Catholic minority in the north of Ireland is being systematically wronged under the laws of the northern parliament.

The statement highlighted specific wrongs committed against Catholics, such as the abolition of P.R., the gerrymandering of constituencies, the Education Act and the imposition of an oath of allegiance on Catholic teachers. The bishops concluded by encouraging Catholics to 'organise openly on constitutional lines', a clear call for political action. The statement prompted a bitter response from Nationalist politicians, who accused the hierarchy of having denied the constitutional leaders its support in 1918, thereby limiting the possibilities for the type of organisation it now advocated.[89]

In spite of the condemnation of the Unionist regime expressed in the statement, from 1923 onwards the hierarchy began to encourage nationalists to enter the Belfast Parliament. Initially it was agreed that only those MPs from counties not affected by the Boundary Commission would take their seats, and Joseph Devlin and Thomas McAllister duly entered the Parliament in 1925. Indicative of the contradictory attitude of the hierarchy on the subject of recognition was the fact that, despite a request from Hugh O'Neill, Speaker of the House of Commons, to O'Donnell (now Cardinal following the death of Logue in 1923) no Catholic chaplain was appointed to the Parliament.[90]

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[88] ICD (1924), pp. 605-608.
[89] See: Phoenix, p. 293.
[90] O'Neill to O'Donnell, 29 April 1925, AAA O'Donnell Papers.

The Commission worked throughout most of 1925, touring the border areas and meeting with the inhabitants. Members of the clergy played a prominent role in the proceedings, including Bishop McHugh of Derry, Bishop McKenna of Clogher and Bishop Mulhern of Dromore. MacNeill significantly failed to insist on the holding of a plebiscite in border areas and resigned from the Commission in November before its findings were made public. A leak to the press suggesting that the Commission's findings would in fact result in the transfer of insignificant amounts of territory to the Free State, while Free State territory would be transferred to the North, frightened Cosgrave's government, who agreed to the replacing of the Commission with a tripartite agreement between London, Belfast and Dublin confirming the 1921 border. Bishop Mulhern, writing in December 1925, remarked: 'The sky becomes darker for the Catholics of the N.E. [North East].'[91] Following the collapse of the Boundary Commission and the signing of the tripartite agreement, nationalists in the border counties felt betrayed by the Dublin leadership. The bishops too were frustrated at the lack of interest in the Northern situation shown by political leaders in the South.[92]

While this bitterness caused a minority of Northern nationalists to join the ranks of the Anti-Treaty IRA, the majority opted for the entry of nationalists as a united body into the Northern Ireland Parliament. This decision received the blessing of the Catholic hierarchy, who, in spite of serious reservations, saw recognition of the Northern Ireland Government as the only way forward for nationalists in the six counties. By 1927 ten of the twelve nationalist representatives had taken their seats in the Belfast Parliament, with only the two Republicans, Eamon Donnelly and De Valera, remaining outside.[93]

The violent conflict that preceded the foundation of the Northern Ireland state accentuated the significance of the moral authority of the Catholic hierarchy. As Bishop (later Cardinal) MacRory stated in 1922:

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[91] Mulhern to Dunne, 1 December 1925, DAA Edward Byrne Papers.
[92] Bishop McHugh of Derry for instance was 'shocked and concerned at what he termed the lack of concern of Dublin politicians for northern nationalists'. Philip Donnelly, 'Bishop Charles McHugh of Derry Diocese (1856-1926), *Seanchas Ard Mhacha* 20.2 (2005), pp. 212-244 (p. 226).
[93] Phoenix, p. 351.

'Since I came to Belfast as Bishop I have taken a hand in nearly every sort of work that falls to the lot of a Bishop, and in some work that fortunately does not often fall to a Bishop's lot.'[94] The bishops attempted to adopt a delicate balance between the need to condemn both the denial of what they regarded as Ireland's national right to choose her own form of government, and acts of violence carried out in the name of the nation. The warnings from the Northern bishops that the partition of Ireland could not produce a lasting peace were ignored by the British government and the creation of the new state was perceived as a grave injustice against the Catholic minority.

As the uncertainty surrounding the future of the Northern Ireland state impeded effective organisation by political leaders, a leadership vacuum opened up within the Catholic community. The authority attached to episcopal office and the power of Catholicism as a unifying force, overcoming the divisions between the various nationalist factions, made the bishops a natural choice to fill the void. No strangers to political involvement, the bishops readily accepted the position of spokesmen and attempted, through a variety of different methods, to use their influence to the benefit of the minority community.

Oliver Rafferty has aptly stated that 'the Northern Ireland government and perhaps the protestant population as a whole saw its relationship with northern Catholicism as one of containment'.[95] It was clear that in this atmosphere concessions to the Catholic minority would not be forthcoming. The bishops provided cohesion and leadership in the Catholic community at a time when these elements were lacking in political circles. They acted as spokesmen, voicing the grievances of the minority, but in so doing reinforced the sense of religious persecution. The voice of the bishops was a formidable one, given the prestige attached to their office both within and outside Ireland. This ensured that the hierarchy would be a key reference point for the Northern Ireland government in its relations with the minority community in the years to come.

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[94] *The Irish News*, 27 January 1922.
[95] Rafferty, p. 215.

Chapter Four

The Basque Church in the Spanish Civil War (1936-39)

> '¡Qué espectáculo tan triste ofrecen esos católicos separatistas, doblemente separatistas, por renegar de la Jerarquía eclesiástica y de la Patria española!'
>
> (Rafael García de Castro, *La tragedia espiritual de Vizcaya*, 1938)[1]

Throughout the course of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) the eyes of the world were on Spain. The leaders of the military rebellion against the government of the Second Republic quickly identified themselves with the Catholic Church, conscious of the need for positive propaganda at both a national and international level. The acceptance of this alliance by the Catholic hierarchy gave rise to the myth of the civil war as a religious crusade in defence of Catholicism. This chapter will examine the significant contribution made by ecclesiastical leaders to the cause of the military rebels in the Basque Country, a key locus of resistance to the military uprising. Joseba Goñi Galarraga has described the war in the Basque Country as 'a war between Catholics'.[2] Here, old divisions dating back to the period of the Carlist wars in the nineteenth century resurfaced against a backdrop of widespread bloodshed and destruction. Repeated attempts were made to use the moral pressure of episcopal authority to compel the Basques to abandon their resistance and the resulting legacy of disappointment and division would have significant consequences for the future bishops of the Basque Country.

When the military rebels took up arms against the Republic on 18 July 1936, the government responded by arming members of left-wing political organisations and trade unions. In so doing, the Republican leaders unleashed a force they were unable to control and the left-wing militia found a suitable scapegoat and outlet for their frustration in their old enemy, the Catholic Church, accusing Church leaders of involvement in the conspiracy. As

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[1] Translation: 'What a sorry sight these separatist Catholics appear, doubly separatist, having renounced both the ecclesiastical hierarchy and their Spanish homeland'. Rafael García de Castro, *La tragedia espiritual de Vizcaya* (Granada : Edit. y Librería Prieto, 1938), p. 157.

[2] Joseba M. Goñi Galarraga, *La Guerra Civil en el País Vasco. Una guerra entre católicos* (Vitoria: Editorial Eset, 1989).

discussed in Chapter Two, however, the Collective Pastorals of the Spanish hierarchy of 1931 and 1933, while making no attempt to disguise the bishops' disapproval of the Republican form of government, had urged respect for the legitimately constituted authority. Although ecclesiastical leaders clearly identified with the counter-revolutionary goals of the rebels, it is unlikely they would have given their support to armed rebellion had they not been subjected to the anti-clerical violence of the Republic's supporters.

The 'Anti-clerical Fury' as it came to be known, dominated the first six months of the conflict, and was characterised by the systematic burning of church buildings, and the imprisonment and assassination of the clergy. This was, in the words of José M. Sánchez, 'the greatest clerical bloodletting in the entire history of the Christian Church'.[3] Antonio Montero, in his meticulous study of the violence, has concluded that 6832 members of the Catholic clergy were killed throughout the period of the Civil War, including 13 Bishops.[4] It was not only the vast scale of the killing that was shocking, but also the grotesque manner in which it was carried out. Political and socio-economic opposition to the clergy as enemies of the revolution combined with a uniquely Spanish tradition of superstitious anticlericalism, adding a ritualistic element to the violence: the clergy were hunted down and killed, either individually or in groups, frequently after torture and mutilation, and their bodies were then paraded through the streets or exposed in public places.[5]

Ninety-five percent of the killings took place during the first six months of the war,[6] yet in spite of the intensity of the violence, the Republican government appeared either unwilling or unable to take the necessary measures to prevent these atrocities by its extremist supporters. This failure was to have far-reaching political implications in terms of

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[3] José M. Sánchez, *The Spanish Civil War as a Religious Tragedy* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987), p. 8.

[4] Antonio Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa en España 1936-1939.* (Madrid, Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1999), pp. 761-764.

[5] For an analysis of the anticlerical violence see Julio de la Cueva, 'Religious Persecution, Anticlerical Tradition and Revolution: On Atrocities against the Clergy during the Spanish Civil War', *Journal of Contemporary History* 33.3 (1998), pp. 355-369.

[6] Sánchez, p. 11.

Catholic support for the Nationalist rebels and later Franco regime.[7] Rather than 'being deeply convinced from the first of the genuinely Catholic nature of [the] national rising',[8] as Franco would later claim, the Catholic clergy found themselves with no other alternative than to seek the protection of the rebels, or Nationalists, as they came to be known.

Furthermore, contrary to Franco's assertion that 'persecution of our conscience in religious matters was what caused our Crusade to be impregnated with spirituality and set the seal of a religious restoration on the national rising from the very start of our Movement',[9] the interests of religion had played no part in the motivation of the rebel leaders. None of the Nationalist leaders, not even Franco himself, who had been brought up a devout Catholic,[10] had joined the rising for the defence of Catholicism. They were primarily concerned with questions of public order and the unity of Spain. It was generally understood, however, that they would respect the Church, its clergy and institutions.

For their part, the rebels were quick to grasp the value of Catholic support. Having expected a swift victory, they found themselves in need of a coherent ideology when the rising evolved into a war. The proclamation that had announced the military rebellion had only established what the rebels were fighting against, and so attracted the allegiance of a variety of factions with seemingly incompatible political agendas: in addition to right-wing Republicans, there were Monarchists, Carlists and the Fascists of the Falange. Catholicism proved invaluable as a unifying factor, helping to overcome both political differences and regional ties, and was soon presented as an intrinsic

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[7] The consequences of this failure have been further analysed in Nicola Rooney, 'The Role of the Catholic Hierarchy in the Rise to Power of General Franco' *Quest* 4 (Conference Special Edition 2007) [e-journal] [n.p.n.]

[8] "Message of H.E. the Head of State to the Spanish Cortes on Sending Them the Text of the Concordat between Spain and the Holy See for Ratification, 26 October 1953", in *The Concordat Between Spain and the Holy See (27 August 1953)* (Madrid: Diplomatic Information Office, 1953), p. 66. Copy in National Archives, Dublin. Department of Foreign Affairs P122: 'Vatican Attitude Towards General Franco'.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Stanley Payne, *The Franco Regime 1939-1975* (Madison; London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), p. 199.

element of Spanish nationalism. It was, in the words of José M. Sánchez, 'ideological cement'.[11]

The powerful propaganda of the religious crusade was, however, in its origins, a creation of the hierarchy. The term 'crusade' had appeared in Franco's early declarations, but in a patriotic sense without religious connotations. The war was first declared a religious crusade by the Bishop of Pamplona, in a sermon on 15 August 1936, in which he argued that by siding with the Crusaders the Church could help avoid further bloodshed.[12] A symbolic link between the rebels and the hierarchy was established early in the conflict when Franco was given the Archbishop's residence in Salamanca to use as his headquarters, making the Episcopal Palace the centre of control for the Nationalist zone. In September the Archbishop, Enrique Pla y Deniel, published a Pastoral entitled 'The Two Cities,' in which he contrasted Republican Spain with Nationalist Spain and declared that the Church could not be criticised for siding with order over anarchy, hierarchical government over disintegrating communism and the defence of Christian civilisation against those who were '*sin Dios y contra Dios*'.[13]

This was the first printed reference to the Crusade, and was followed two months later by a pastoral from the Spanish Primate, Cardinal Isidro Gomá, which echoed the interpretation of the war as a religious crusade in defence of Catholicism. The Cardinal denied that the conflict was a class war, declaring it to be a war of principles, of doctrines, of one civilisation against another. He also offered a retrospective justification of the military insurrection, stating that whatever its origins, the course of events that followed demonstrated that it had been motivated by profound feelings of love for the Spanish homeland.[14] Similar declarations from other bishops followed, all asserting the legitimacy of the struggle waged by the Nationalists.

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[11] Sánchez, p. 116.

[12] Boletín Oficial Eclesiástico de Pamplona, 15 de septiembre de 1936, pp. 352-353 quoted in Hilari Raguer, *La pólvora y el incienso: la Iglesia y la guerra civil española (1936-1939)* (Barcelona: Ediciones Península, [2001]), p. 206.

[13] Translation: 'without God and against God'. Quoted in Stanley Payne, *El catolicismo español* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1984), p. 219.

[14] For an analysis of the main arguments of the Pastoral, challenged by a Basque priest, see: Angel de Zumeta, *Un Cardenal español y los católicos vascos.* (Bilbao: Publicaciones Minerva, 1937).

This ideological support was arguably of greater value to the rebels than the more practical forms of aid provided by the hierarchy, such as the use of church buildings and donations of money and supplies.[15] The Nationalist leaders had taken up arms against a democratically elected government, but the theological justifications offered by the hierarchy enabled them to present their struggle as a 'just war.' Franco had taken control of the Military Junta on 1 October 1936, simultaneously declaring himself Head of State, and his leadership was at once accepted by the hierarchy.

That same day the Basque statute of autonomy came into effect, the Republican government having overcome its reluctance to grant autonomy to the Basques in recognition of the strategic significance of their position. The conservative, Catholic PNV clearly had greater ideological affinity for the rebels, but the experience of the political right in matters of autonomy led to the belief that their cause would be best served through support for the Republic. It was to be an uneasy alliance. In the view of one member of the anarchist Trade Union CNT, 'the Basque nationalists were much more concerned with protecting right-wingers and churches and fighting us than they were in defending the interests of the republic.'[16] José Antonio Aguirre took his oath of office as Lehendakari, or leader, of the Basque autonomous government on 7 October after attending a public mass in the Basilica de Begoña, Bilbao. During the service Aguirre swore fidelity to both the Catholic faith and the Basque Country:

> Ante Dios humillado,
> En pie sobre la tierra vasca,
> Con el recuerdo de los antepasados
> Bajo el Arbol de Guernica
> Juro
> Cumplir fielmente mi mandato.[17]

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[15] See, for instance, Documento 1-32. Carta de D. Mateo Múgica al Cardenal Gomá, in *Archivo Gomá. Documentos de la Guerra Civil* ed. by José Andrés-Gallego and Antón M. Pazos, 8 vols. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2001) VI, p. 97.

[16] Ronald Fraser, *Blood of Spain. The Experience of Civil War, 1936-1939* (London: Penguin Books, 1979), p. 190.

[17] Translation: 'Humbled before God / Standing on Basque soil / With the memory of our ancestors / Under the Tree of Guernika / I Swear / To faithfully fulfil my mandate.' José Antonio de Aguirre y Lecube, *De Guernica a Nueva York pasando por Berlin* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Vasca Ekin, 1945), p. 19.

This act of public worship took on particular significance at a time when the slaughter of thousands of clergy in the Republican zone was having a detrimental impact on the government's image, inhibiting its attempts to secure international support.

The Basque Country had remained virtually, although not entirely, unscathed by the anti-clerical violence that was sweeping the rest of the Republican zone. Where such acts of violence did occur they were largely confined to the mining region of Vizcaya,[18] an industrialised area with a significant population of migrant workers. The animosity towards the Church that elsewhere motivated these attacks by left-wing elements appears to have been absent amongst the Basque working class. Spanish anti-clericalism was motivated by a combination of political, cultural and socio-economic factors which resulted in a desire to break the strict identification between community and religion.[19] Basque workers sought no such rupture. In fact, in their 1934 report to the Vatican, the PNV claimed that membership of the Catholic STV union, where members of the clergy assumed a prominent role, exceeded that of the Marxist unions, a situation that did not exist anywhere else in Spain.[20]

The significance of the Basque situation is demonstrated by the fact that the first public reaction from the Catholic hierarchy, less than a month after the outbreak of the war, came from the Basque bishops. On 6 August 1936 the bishops of Vitoria and Pamplona issued, via radio, a joint pastoral condemning the collaboration of the Basque nationalists with the left-wing republican forces.[21] The central message of the Pastoral was that it was not licit for Basques to divide the Catholic forces in the face of a common enemy, nor was it licit for them to join forces with left-wing, anti-clerical elements in spite of shared political aims. The content caused confusion and concern

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[18] Manuel Delgado Ruiz, 'Anticlericalismo, espacio y poder. La destrucción de los rituales católicos, 1931-1939' *Ayer* 27 (1997), pp. 149-180 (p. 173).
[19] Ibid. p. 157.
[20] Idelfonso Moriones, *Euskadi y el Vaticano 1935-1936* (Rome: [s.n.], 1976), p. 14. This claim is substantiated by Manuel Ramírez Jiménez, *Los grupos de Presión en la Segunda República Española* (Madrid: Tecnos, 1969) pp. 308-309.
[21] Copy of the Text in Anastasio Granados, *El Cardenal Gomá Primado de España* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1969), pp. 127-131. The text was later published in the *Boletín Eclesiástico de Vitoria*, 1-IX-1936.

amongst Basque nationalists, many of whom turned to their local clergy for guidance, but found them equally confused. The Pastoral clearly had significant implications for priests with Nationalist sympathies, but the unusual manner of diffusion – via radio rather than being issued to the clergy to be read in churches – raised doubts in relation to its authenticity.

Although both signatories later declared that they had signed the letter willingly and in agreement with the sentiments expressed, the Pastoral had, in fact, been drawn up by Cardinal Gomá.[22] The question of authorship was to be a source of ongoing speculation and controversy.[23] José M. Sánchez, in considering the position of Bishops Múgica and Olaechea, has concluded it is unlikely that they, as native Basques, would have written such a letter of their own accord. Bishop Olaechea, from a working-class background, had expressed reservations about the tactics employed by the Nationalists and had refused to preside at a public mass for them on 25 July, or bless their troops. Sánchez has further claimed that Bishop Múgica, in spite of his support for the Nationalists, would have preferred to consult the PNV leaders prior to publication of the Pastoral.[24] Gomá later stated in a report to the Holy See that he had been approached by the two bishops and asked to write the Pastoral on their behalf.[25] This suggests that the Basque bishops did not themselves feel qualified to write a response to the situation. In choosing the wording of the Pastoral, the Cardinal began by stating, on behalf of the Basque bishops, that the motivation for this joint response was the fact that this 'politico-religious' problem – of collaboration between Catholics and Communists – had arisen within, and was limited to, their dioceses. The claim to obedience was based not only on the authority of the Episcopal Office, but also on the fact that the bishops themselves were Basques in 'race and blood', sharing the same traditions and history as Basque nationalists.[26]

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[22] A 'clarification' was later issued by Bishops Múgica and Olaechea, confirming that they had not been coerced into signing the document. Text in Montero, pp. 686-687.

[23] For instance, Fr. Ramón Laborda, a Basque priest who made a tour of Ireland in January 1937, claimed that Bishop Múgica had signed the letter 'at gunpoint', a claim that was reproduced in the Irish press. See Granados, p. 126.

[24] For a summary of the position of both bishops see Sánchez, pp. 77-78.

[25] Copy of report in Granados, pp. 125-126.

[26] Ibid. p. 127.

This attempt to promote political unity through the authority of the episcopal office ended in failure. Juan de Iturralde has argued that it could be said that the bishops were 'obeyed' if the word 'obey' is understood in its classical sense, meaning 'to listen with respect'.[27] Complying with their wishes was another matter. Firstly, as has already been explained, the decision to communicate the content of the Pastoral via radio was unusual and aroused suspicion. Secondly, the bishops were deemed to be insufficiently aware of the situation in the region to be in a position to direct the actions of their followers.[28] Thirdly, the argument used to defend the refusal to join the right-wing CEDA coalition in 1936 remained valid: the Basques did not consider themselves to be faced with a choice between loyalty to the Church and loyalty to their nation. They had defended the rights of the Church during the Republican period, and in an autonomous Basque state those rights would be safeguarded. They thus respectfully concluded that their ecclesiastical leaders were mistaken in calling on them to join the rebels and continued in their previous course of action. Iturralde has pointed out that Catholic theology does not teach that bishops are infallible, and further argues that this is particularly relevant in 'abnormal circumstances' such as those created by the civil war.[29]

Despite his declarations of support for the rising, Bishop Múgica was to become the first casualty of the rebels' plans for the Basque Church. In a meeting with Cardinal Gomá in September 1936 the rebels made clear their view that Múgica was excessively tolerant towards the 'separatist' elements of his clergy and was therefore unsuitable to remain at the head of the diocese.[30] Although Gomá disagreed with the accusations, he advised the Vatican to arrange for Múgica's removal from Vitoria. In a report to the Holy See he stated that the bishop was unwilling to make any move that could be interpreted as a victory for the rebels, thereby further upsetting the delicate situation in his diocese. The Cardinal insisted that Bishop Múgica would only

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[27] Juan de Iturralde, *El catolicismo y la cruzada de Franco* (Bayonne: Egi-Indarra, 1955), p. 358.
[28] Sánchez, p. 78.
[29] Iturralde, p. 363.
[30] Antonio Marquina Barrio, *La diplomacia Vaticana y la España de Franco (1936-1945)* (Madrid: Instituto Enrique Flórez, 1982), p. 48.

leave if asked to do so by officials in Rome.[31] On 25 September 1936 the Vatican Secretary of State authorised Gomá to make arrangements for the removal of the bishop and this was done on the pretext of his presence being required in Rome for a Congress on the Missions.[32]

Cardinal Gomá was regarded as a wholly unsympathetic figure by Basque nationalists, who accused him, rightly, of a one-sided interpretation of the war.[33] Nonetheless, the claim by his biographer that his intervention in the Basque situation was motivated by 'charity' is not without foundation.[34] The primate's response to the Spanish Civil War serves as an illustration of the significance of the personal experiences of bishops as individuals in shaping the direction of episcopal leadership. When the military uprising occurred the Cardinal was away from his Episcopal See of Toledo, having gone to seek treatment for a kidney ailment in baths located in the Basque region of Navarre. This detail is significant for a number of reasons. Firstly, had the Cardinal been in Toledo at the time of the rising, he might well have been assassinated, for such was the fate of 48% of his clergy.[35] Secondly, in Navarre the rising had immediate success and so there was no anti-clerical violence. This immediately gave Gomá a favourable impression of the rebels and their ability to protect the Church. Unable to comprehend the Basque desire for political autonomy, the Cardinal saw unity among Catholics as the best means of bringing the war to a rapid end.

This interpretation obviously favoured the aims of the military rebels, who regarded Basque nationalists as a thorn in their side, contradicting the all-important myth of the Crusade. The example of the Basque Country was exploited in the propaganda of the Republican government to disprove allegations of intolerance and anti-clericalism. A clear illustration of this can be found in a 1937 pamphlet produced by the *Servicio Español de Información* (Spanish Information Service) entitled *El Catolicismo en la*

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[31] Copy of *Informe* in Granados, p. 140.
[32] Ibid. p. 141.
[33] The August 1936 Joint Pastoral of the Basque bishops drafted by the Cardinal made no mention of the Ecclesiastical declarations of 1931 and 1933 advocating respect for the legally constituted authority, nor the nature of the military uprising. Juan María Laboa, "La Iglesia Vasca", *Historia 16* 13, pp. 94-107, (p. 96).
[34] Granados, p. 125.
[35] Sánchez, p. 76.

España leal y en la zona facciosa ('Catholicism in loyal Spain and the rebel zone'). The pamphlet carried excerpts from speeches in defence of the Catholic religion by prominent Basques such as Aguirre and Manuel de Irujo,[36] together with testimonies from foreign journalists and observers such as the Dean of Canterbury describing the level of religious practice in the territory under the control of Aguirre's government.

The booklet further asserted that there were over 70 priests politically active in the Basque front in addition to those who were there to perform their normal religious duties.[37] While this number may have been exaggerated, it is certainly true that the Basque autonomous government enjoyed a high level of clerical support. One of the most famous of the Basque priests active at the time, Alberto de Onaindía, has described his multi-faceted role in the war as follows:

> Salvé gente de las cárceles, gestioné el traslado al extranjero de numerosas personas pertenecientes ideológicamente al bando enemigo, intervine en propuestas de paz, participé en negociaciones de canje, puse en comunicación a encarcelados con sus familiares residentes en la zona adversa, informé a múltiples círculos de opinión pública, a embajadas y a la Santa Sede.[38]

As can be inferred from the above testimony, the Basque government enjoyed a strong working relationship with the local Catholic clergy throughout the course of the war. Under its direction the region also became an important transit destination for members of the Catholic clergy fleeing persecution in other parts of the Spanish territory and the autonomous government was instrumental in arranging safe passage to other countries for members of the clergy and religious orders.[39]

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[36] When on 4 September 1936, the Socialist, Largo Caballero, who had just become Prime Minister of the Republic at war, requested a Basque representative for his new cabinet, the PNV accepted on two conditions: firstly that Euskadi would receive its Statute of Autonomy, and secondly that religious liberty would be restored. Manuel de Irujo entered the Republican government, first as Minister without Porfolio and then, from May 1937, as Minister for Justice. For further information see: Raguer, *La pólvora y el incienso*, p. 321.

[37] Servicio Español de Información: *El Catolicismo en la España leal y en la zona facciosa* (Madrid-Valencia: Editorial Ramón Sopena, 1937) Archivo Nacional: Sección Guerra Civil (ANSGC) F-507.

[38] Translation: 'I saved people from the prisons; I arranged the removal to foreign countries of people belonging, ideologically speaking, to the other side; I intervened in peace proposals; I participated in negotiations for exchanges; I put prisoners in contact with their families in the other zone; I provided information for multiple circles of public opinion, for embassies and for the Vatican.' Alberto de Onaindía, *Obras Completas*. Volumen V. *Hombre de paz en la guerra*. (Bilbao: Gran Enciclopedia Vasca, 1980), p. 10.

[39] Records preserved in ANSGC, PS Bilbao Caja 21 Exp. 11.

Franco and his followers could not therefore justify their attacks on the Basque Country in terms of the defence of Catholicism. Nevertheless, the rebels attacked the Basques with a ferocity that bewildered French military observers. In a report dated 29 May 1937, Lieutenant Colonel Morel described how the rebels had abandoned all other enterprises to focus their energies on the Basque region, and claimed that they had never fought the 'Reds' with the same fierceness as they had the Catholic, and deeply conservative people of the Basque Country.[40] One report from the French authorities concluded that the taking of Bilbao could have a symbolic value, linked to a tradition of past civil wars where the definitive battle had always been fought in the city. This had resulted in an almost superstitious conviction that gaining control of Bilbao would ensure victory. While the observers doubted that there was any basis for this conviction, they felt that its psychological value could not be ignored.[41]

A more likely explanation than superstition was the threat the Basques represented to the supreme aim of the military rebels: national unity. While Franco could not accuse Basque nationalists of crimes against the Church, he could accuse them of attacking something which to him was equally, if not more sacred: the unity of Spain. This attack was made all the more significant because it challenged the rebels' primary source of legitimacy: the alliance with the Catholic Church. Franco's attitude to the Basques was aptly summed up by the famous French Catholic writer Jacques Maritain, who observed: 'La guerra santa odia más ardientemente que al infiel a los creyentes que no la sirven.'[42]

The conquest of Guipúzcoa resulted in a brutal repression of the Catholic clergy, seen as powerful allies of the Basque 'separatists'. In

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[40] *Informe del Agregado Militar de la Embajada francesa en España, Teniente Coronel Morel sobre la situación militar a finales de mayo (15 de mayo – 1 de junio) en el frente de Bilbao.* 29 de mayo de 1937. Etat Major de l'Armée (EMA) 7N 2755 in *Colección documental para el estudio de la Guerra Civil en Euskadi procedente de los Archivos Militares Franceses (1936-1937). [Archives de l'Armée de Terre, Château de Vincennes, Paris]*, ed. by Juan Carlos Jiménez de Aberasturi, (San Sebastián: Sociedad de Estudios Vascos, [1987]), p. 196.

[41] *Boletín Informativo: 'La prise de Bilbao'.* 21 de junio de 1937. (EMA) 7N 2759 in Ibid. p. 261.

[42] Translation: 'The holy war reserves its most ardent hatred, not for the infidel, but for those believers who do not serve it.' Prologue to the book by Alfred Menizábal, *Aux origines de la tragédie. La politique espagnole de 1923 á 1936.* (Paris: [1937]) p. 43, quoted in Herbert R. Southworth, *El mito de la cruzada de Franco* (Barcelona: Plaza y Janés, 1986), p. 160.

addition to those imprisoned, 13 priests were shot between October and November 1936. The Bishop of Pamplona, who had signed the joint Pastoral with Bishop Múgica the previous August, issued an appeal in November for 'no more bloodshed'; although in reality this appeal called only for an end to irregular or unofficial executions and made no mention of the countless other executions carried out under the guise of authority.[43] The killings outraged Bishop Múgica who sent a letter in defence of the executed priests to the Vatican stating that Franco's troops, rather than killing them, should have been kissing their feet.[44] Even Cardinal Gomá, that staunch supporter of Franco's crusade, was moved to protest against the execution of the Basque priests. In his reply, Franco claimed to be in ignorance of the killings, and attributed them to 'un abuso de autoridad por parte de un subalterno'.[45] He assured the Cardinal that there would be no further executions of priests that did not follow the proper judicial procedures.[46]

José Antonio de Aguirre publicly challenged Cardinal Gomá's interpretation of the conflict in a radio broadcast on 22 December 1936, declaring that the war in Spain was not a war of religion, but one motivated by economic interests.[47] The Cardinal also made public his reply in a '*Carta abierta*' (open letter), published on 10 January 1937.[48] In the letter Gomá declared that he was speaking on behalf of all the hierarchy, including the absent Bishop Múgica, and once more repeated the appeal for the Basques to abandon their collaboration with the communists:

> Pero se ha tomado mal camino, señor Aguirre; para la defensa de la tradición y de la patria se ha pactado una alianza con gente sin tradición y sin patria, o que laboran contra ambas por un postulado de su doctrina política.[49]

The Cardinal further argued that the Basques were misguided in believing that 'un enjambre de pequeñas repúbicas pudiese labrar para todos los españoles un bien mayor que el que podría venirnos de un gran Estado bien regido, en

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[43] Copy of this sermon in Raguer, *La pólvora y el incienso*, pp. 416-417.
[44] Onaindía, p.111.
[45] Translation: 'An abuse of authority by a subordinate.'
[46] Quoted in Marquina Barrio, p. 49.
[47] *Euzkadi*, 23 December 1936, quoted in Granados, p. 331.
[48] Text in Ibid. pp. 333-341.
[49] Translation: 'But you have taken a bad road, señor Aguirre; in defence of tradition and your homeland you have entered into an alliance with people without tradition and without homeland, or who work against both to advance their political doctrine.' Ibid. p. 339.

que se tuviera cuenta de los relieves espirituales e históricos de cada región.'[50] For Izaskun Sáez de la Fuente, this confrontation symbolised a clash between 'two symbolic universes: Basque and Spanish identity', the key to both of which was the Catholic faith.[51] Gomá's letter was used as propaganda by Franco who had it reproduced and distributed through Vizcaya by the air force.[52] It was also printed in the *Boletín Eclesiástico de Vitoria* without the consent of Bishop Múgica, and despite his public opposition to the accusations made against his clergy.[53]

Despite this lack of sympathy for their political aims, the Cardinal's attitude to the Basques was judged too lenient by Franco's supporters. The Marqués de Magaz, informing Franco's Secretary for Foreign Affairs on the Cardinal's visit to Rome of December 1936, accused him of 'una condescendencia difícilmente explicable en quien como él, aun siendo catalán, condena el catalanismo en todas sus formas...'[54] Interestingly, the Marquis made a further complaint, namely that the Cardinal's visit had hindered his campaign against Bishop Múgica and the Basque Bishop Antonio Pildain, Bishop-elect of the Canary Islands, since these were his constant companions, to whom he directed only words of 'benevolence'.[55]

The propaganda war between the rebels and the Basque clergy became increasingly significant as attacks on the region continued and gained in intensity. One of the most famous and enduring symbols of the Spanish Civil War, Picasso's *Guernica*, was inspired by events in the Basque Country. The destruction by aerial bombardment of the market town of Guernika on 26 April 1937 by the German Condor Legion, less than a month after a similar

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[50] Translation: 'a swarm of little republics could provide for all Spaniards greater benefit than could come from a great state, well ruled, in which the spiritual and historical features of each region were taken into account.' Ibid p. 334.

[51] Izaskun Sáez de la Fuente Aldama, *El Movimiento de Liberación Nacional Vasco. Una religión de sustitución* (Bilbao: Instituto Diocesano de Teología y Pastoral: Editorial Desclée de Brouwer, 2002), p. 109.

[52] Fernando García de Cortázar, 'Mateo Múgica, la Iglesia y la guerra civil en el país vasco', *Letras de Deusto* 35 (Mayo-Agosto, 1986), pp. 5-35 (p. 27).

[53] Ibid. p. 28.

[54] Translation: 'condescension difficult to explain in one like him, who, although a Catalan, condemns Catalan nationalism in all its forms'.

[55] Marqués de Magáz al Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores de Salamanca. Roma 21 de diciembre de 1936, in Marquina Barrio, p. 334. Bishop Pildain had been a Deputy to the Spanish Cortes during the Second Republic, where he had defended the Basque right to autonomy. Manuel Ramírez Jiménez, *Los grupos de presión en la Segunda República española* (Madrid: Tecnos, 1969), p. 308.

attack on the town of Durango, shocked the international community. The swift arrival of international journalists on the scene ensured that the Nationalists were unable to suppress details of the incident, but Franco's propaganda machine set to work denying that any bombing had taken place, and claiming that the town had been destroyed by the rebels in their retreat.[56] It has been claimed by historians that the attack was not ordered by Franco at all, but was carried out as an experiment by the Germans acting without his consent.[57] Basque nationalists believed, however, that the choice of Guernika was no accident, since this was the location of the hall used by representatives of the Viscayan government to carry out Foral administration and the oak tree where Spanish Kings would come and swear to uphold the *Fueros* of the province. For this reason Davydd J. Greenwood has described the bombing as a 'symbolic attack on one of the most venerated symbols of Basque rights and ethnic identity'.[58]

The Basque clergy were quick to come to the defence of the autonomous government and wrote a collective letter to the Holy See confirming that the bombings had taken place and describing in detail the destruction caused. The letter was then reproduced in pamphlet form and distributed with translations in English, French and Italian.[59] Photographs showing pictures of dead members of the clergy amongst the rubble of demolished churches were circulated as counter-propaganda.[60] Fr. Onaindía travelled to Paris to address French Catholics on behalf of the autonomous government. An eyewitness to the bombing of Guernika, Onaindía was able to provide a detailed account of events and took advantage of the occasion to draw attention to the hypocrisy of Nationalist claims that they were acting in

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[56] For an analysis of the version of events put forward by Franco and his allies see: Alberto Reig Tapia, 'Guernica como símbolo', in *La guerra civil en el País Vasco: 50 años después* ed. by Manuel Tuñon de Lara, (Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco, 1987), pp. 123-154.

[57] Stanley Payne, *Basque Nationalism* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1975), p. 194.

[58] Davydd J. Greenwood, 'Continuity in Change: Spanish Basque Ethnicity as a Historical Process', in *Ethnic Conflict in the Western World*, ed. by M. J. Esman, (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 1977), pp. 81-101 (p.100).

[59] *El clero vasco, fiel al Gobierno de la República, se dirige al Sumo Pontífice, para hacer constar que la vandálica destrucción de Durango y Guernica se debió exclusivamente a la acción de los aviones alemanes* (Madrid-Valencia: Ediciones Españoles, 1937) ANSGC F-3824.

[60] See pamphlet: Alberto Onaindía, '"Guernica". Fotografías y datos sobre su bombardeo.' (1937) ANSCG F-3468.

defence of Catholicism while murdering defenceless Catholics.[61] It was hoped that news of this atrocity would impel the French authorities to abandon their policy of non-intervention, but in this respect Onaindía was unsuccessful.[62] While the lower clergy were mobilising in support of the autonomous Basque government Franco was seeking to enlist the more influential support of the Catholic hierarchy in addressing an international audience.

Franco proposed to Cardinal Gomá the drafting of an ecclesiastical document, destined for an international audience, which would correct the 'false' interpretations of the Spanish conflict. This suggestion met with a favourable response from the Cardinal and resulted in the famous Collective Letter of the Spanish bishops of July 1937. Addressed to bishops from all over the world, the letter described the war as an 'armed plebiscite', driven by patriotic and religious motives. Franco's *Movimiento Nacional* (National Movement) was presented as representing the true values of Spain, with blatant disregard for the diversity of political views and national identities existing within the Spanish territory. Significantly, the letter denied that the goal of the Nationalists was to impose a dictatorship on a defeated nation.[63]

The Spanish conflict, it was claimed, was not a civil war, but rather a war of self-defence against the forces of international communism.[64] Of course, this theory of foreign conspiracy was not without benefits from the hierarchy's point of view. As Sánchez has pointed out, if the Spanish people during the 'Anti-clerical Fury' had turned on the Church of their own accord, it would suggest that after centuries of Christianisation, the church had failed in its mission. It was therefore much more convenient for the bishops to blame foreign influences or 'diabolical international forces.'[65] While, from the church's perspective this document undeniably caused alienation on a national level, internationally it must be regarded as a great success. Bishops from other nations made declarations in support of the Spanish hierarchy and

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[61] For a detailed analysis of Onaindía's declarations in France see: Severiano Rojo Hernández, 'Guernica: les presses basque et française face au bombardement,' *El Argonauta Español* 1 (2004) (http://argonauta.imageson.org - accessed August 2007).
[62] Ibid.
[63] Text in Jesús Iribarren (ed.), *Documentos colectivos del episcopado español 1870-1974* (Madrid: BAC, 1974), pp. 219-242.
[64] Ibid. p. 228.
[65] Sánchez, p. 21.

asked their followers to support Franco's cause with donations and prayers, while urging their governments to support him politically.[66]

The case of Ireland effectively illustrates the significance, for the rebels, of the identification with the Catholic Church. Events in Spain sparked considerable public debate in Ireland, which was reflected in the press and in a particular way in the declarations of the hierarchy.[67] Fearghal McGarry has pointed to the prominence of Spain and the interrelated themes of communism and anti-clericalism in the Lenten Pastorals of the years 1937-1939 as an indication of the significance of this conflict for the Irish hierarchy.[68] The Irish Cardinal, Joseph MacRory, was an outspoken defender of Franco, declaring in 1938, 'If there was a war for God and Christian civilisation it is the war waged by General Franco and the youth of Spain'.[69] In 1936 the Cardinal had organised the collection of £44,000 in Ireland - money destined for the rebuilding of church property destroyed in the fury, but which eventually went to support Franco's military effort.[70] General Eoin O'Duffy's Irish Brigade, with 1000 volunteers, was the only significant group of foreigners from a non-Fascist Western Country to fight for the Nationalists.[71] O'Duffy believed that General Franco was 'holding the trenches not only for Spain, but for Christianity'.[72] His volunteers carried papal flags and wore Sacred Heart badges on their uniforms and O'Duffy held a meeting with Cardinal Gomá upon his arrival in Spain.

Significantly, after hearing Cardinal Gomá's explanation of the Basque situation, General O'Duffy came to believe that his troops could not fight the Basques, recognising the significant Catholic interest on their side. Accordingly, he had the following clause inserted into the 'Conditions of Service' of the Irish Brigade:

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[66] The extent of the diffusion of the document and the virtually unaminous positive response from Ecclesiastical leaders around the world (with the notable exception of France, where the response was decidedly cooler) can be gauged from the volume of letters received by Cardinal Gomá in the wake of its publication. These have been published in *Archivo Gomá* VII and VIII.

[67] Robert A. Stradling, *The Irish and the Spanish Civil War 1936-1939* (Manchester: Mandolin (MUP), 1999).

[68] Fearghal McGarry, *Irish Politics and the Spanish Civil War* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1999), p. 149.

[69] *Irish News*, 2 January 1938.

[70] Gomá to Cardinal MacRory, 24 November 1936, Documento 1-211 *Archivo Gomá*, VI p. 357.

[71] Sánchez, p. 178

[72] Eoin O'Duffy, *Crusade in Spain* (Clonskeagh: Browne and Nolan Limited, 1938), p. 13.

> The Irish Brigade may be employed on any front with the sole exception of the Basque Front. General O'Duffy objects to the Irish troops being engaged against the Basque Nationalists for reasons of religion and traditional ties between the Basques and the Irish.[73]

The outcome of this exchange lends further credence to the assertion of Cardinal Gomá's biographer that while the Primate may have disagreed with the political aims of the Basques, he was not devoid of sympathy for their situation.

On 19 June 1937 Franco's troops had taken Bilbao and the Basque nationalists appeared to have been defeated. Nevertheless, the international interest in their situation dictated that it had to be addressed in the Collective Letter, and so the bishops, while they praised the 'civil and religious virtues' of the Basques, lamented the disregard they had shown for the teachings of the church, as expressed by the Pope in his encyclical on Communism.[74] Although the document was signed by several Basque bishops resident in other dioceses, Basque nationalists may have taken some comfort from the fact that Bishop Múgica refused to sign the letter, stating as his reason that he was not resident in his diocese when the document was drafted.[75] A further source of comfort may have been the ambiguous reaction of the Vatican, slow as it was to endorse the stance of the Spanish hierarchy. The bishops' Collective Letter was not published, nor even mentioned in the *Osservatore Romano*, leading to speculation that the Pope disapproved of the content.[76]

With the outbreak of the war, perceived as the beginning of the inevitable clash between left and right, the battle for dominance between communism and fascism, the reaction from Rome was eagerly awaited by the international community. The Vatican however, wished to distance itself from the Spanish conflict as far as possible, as is demonstrated by this excerpt from

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[73] O'Duffy, p. 195. General O'Duffy was later to change his mind, moved by news of the slaughter of 202 prisoners, some of them members of the clergy, in Bilbao on 4 January 1937. As a result he asked that Clause Six be removed (Ibid. p. 199), but the Irish Brigade was never called to fight the Basques. O'Duffy would later conclude: 'If there is one thing which perhaps more than any other will endure to General Franco's credit for all time, it is his humane treatment of Basques, who deserved very little consideration from him.' Ibid. p. 198.

[74] Iribarren, pp. 239-240.

[75] For details see Javier Sánchez Erauskin, *Por Dios hacia el imperio. Nacionalcatolicismo en las vascongadas del primer franquismo 1936-1945* (Donostia: Graficas Indauchu, 1994), p. 190.

[76] Sánchez, p. 100.

the *Osservatore Romano*, written three months after the declaration by the Spanish bishops:

> It is quite erroneous to suppose [...] that there are simply two camps in the Spanish civil war – the one the Reds, the other the Nationalists who are supported by the Vatican. The Church does not belong to any political or social camp.[77]

The Basque situation was undoubtedly a key motivating factor in the reluctance of the Vatican to give its wholehearted support to General Franco. While the Basque Country maintained its independence, the Vatican, recognising the definite Catholic interest on the Republican side, viewed its role as a possible mediator in the conflict rather than a participant.[78] Repeated calls for a peaceful resolution, involving concessions to the Basques in the matter of political autonomy, aroused resentment among the Crusaders who felt that the Vatican was attempting to deprive them of total victory.[79] Even Mussolini, in a telegram to Franco, advised him to grant some form of regional autonomy to the Basques as the best means of gaining the support of the Pope.[80]

Franco, however, was not prepared to make any concessions and instead sent the Marqués de Magáz to the Vatican in an effort to convince the Pope to condemn the actions of Basque nationalists; so began what Hilari Raguer has described as the 'diplomatic battle' in Rome.[81] As Franco confided to an Italian diplomat, it was hoped that a Papal condemnation would result in the surrender of the Basques, allowing Franco's troops to take the whole north of Spain with ease.[82] The Archbishop of Burgos in his Lenten Pastoral of 1937 declared the Basques to be excommunicated because of their collaboration with the Communists, but the document had little impact.[83] The Vatican was not prepared to get involved in the matter, with the Secretary of State

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[77] *Osservatore Romano*, 21 October 1937, quoted in Rhodes, p. 124.
[78] Peter C. Kent, 'The Vatican and the Spanish Civil War', *European History Quarterly* 16 (1986), pp. 441-463 (p. 456).
[79] Marquina Barrio, p. 102.
[80] Archivio Storico, Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Rome (ASMAE), Telegram from Mussolini, 26 December 1936, Spagna: fondo di guerra, busta 302, quoted in Kent, p. 449.
[81] Hilari Raguer, 'El Vaticano y los católicos vascos durante el primer año de la Guerra Civil' in *Gernika: 50 años después (1937-1987): Nacionalismo, república, guerra civil* ed. by Manuel Tuñon de Lara, (San Sebastián: Universidad del País Vasco, 1987), pp. 157-160 (p. 157).
[82] De Ciutiis to Ciano, Salamanca 26 December 1936. Minister degli affari Esteri, Archivo Storico Diplomatico, fondo "Ufficio Spagna" quoted in Ibid. p. 164.
[83] Laboa, p. 94.

informing the Italian ambassador to the Holy See that there would be no condemnation since the intransigence of Franco's attitude to the Basques, while it did not excuse their conduct, at least made it comprehensible.[84] In spite of this refusal, Basque nationalists felt that their situation was misunderstood and that their cause had been tainted by misinformation passed to the Vatican.[85]

In mid-July 1937, with the Basques defeated and Franco's victory appearing increasingly inevitable, Cardinal Pacelli, the Vatican Secretary of State, arranged for Monsignor Antoniutti to go the Basque Country as Apostolic Delegate on a two-fold mission: firstly to organise the return of Basque children evacuated during the war, and secondly to deal with the problem of the Basque clergy - to encourage them to accept Franco's regime and to ensure that in return he would treat them leniently.[86] A secondary objective of Pacelli's in sending the Monsignor to Spain was to have him act as a confidential observer for the Vatican, informing the Secretary of State on the situation in the country.[87]

Since the Monsignor's mission carried no official diplomatic recognition, the regime initially displayed a very reserved attitude towards him and placed numerous obstacles in his path.[88] However, Franco was in favour of the repatriation of Basque children, which served as positive propaganda for his regime, and was willing to allow the participation of the Monsignor in this task. He was less willing to accept Vatican intervention with regard to the Basque clergy, although here too the actions of the Apostolic Delegate could be viewed as a service to the Burgos government.[89] On his arrival in Bilbao Antoniutti found approximately 60 members of the clergy and religious orders in prison for acts of "separatism". He arranged for their removal to the Carmelite Convent of Begoña, had particularly harsh sentences reduced, and also arranged for the transfer to the south of Spain of

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[84] Pignatti a Ciano, Rome 29 December 1936, Ufficio Spagna b243 quoted in Raguer, p. 166.
[85] Onaindía, pp. 64-65.
[86] ASMAE, Ciano to Holy See, 18 August 1997, busta 35, Santa Sede 12 – Spagna quoted in Kent, p. 455.
[87] Marquina Barrio, p. 64.
[88] Ibid.
[89] M.A.E.I., B. 14 (Spagna) telespresso 229677, Roma, 26 de agosto de 1937 quoted in Ibid. p. 65.

priests that were not permitted by the government to remain in their dioceses.[90] Basque nationalist leaders, who had hoped that Antoniutti had been sent by the Vatican 'to help the oppressed Basque Catholics',[91] were sorely disappointed at the outcome of his mission.

That the commitment of Basque nationalists to the Catholic religion was genuine and not merely utilitarian was demonstrated by the fact that Basques who went into exile first in Valencia and later in Barcelona established in both cities a Basque chapel in which to continue their observance of religious services. In Barcelona the *Capilla Vasca*, which began as a private chapel, became a semi-public church with services in *Euskera*, Catalan and Spanish. Among those who attended the services were representatives of the Basque government, foreign consuls and Catalan leaders. Basque nationalists, in particular Manuel de Irujo, now Republican Minister for Justice, hoped to build on the success of this venture by extending religious practice in the Republican zone. Their efforts were frustrated, however, by the Vicar General of Barcelona, who placed constant obstacles in their path.[92] Here too they were disappointed by the lack of support from the Vatican. Irujo remarked bitterly in a letter to Fr. Alberto de Onaindía that 'el Vaticano es una potencia enemiga de Euzkadi y de la República'.[93] This view is understandable given the complicity of the ecclesiastical authorities in the 'purging' of the Basque Church by the Franco regime.

In September 1937 Bishop Múgica, without prior consultation, was replaced by an Apostolic Administrator. The bishop learned of the appointment through a notice in the *Osservatore Romano* and resigned his position shortly after. Although considered innocent of any wrong-doing,

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[90] Hilari Raguer, 'El Vaticano y la guerra civil española (1936-1939)' *Cristianesimo Nella Storia* 3, (April 1982), pp. 137-209 (p. 177).

[91] *La misión de Monseñor Antonitti* (sic) *en la zona rebelde y el problema de las relaciones entre el Gobierno de la República y la Santa Sede.* ANSGC Caja 259 Exp.5.

[92] For a detailed analysis of Irujo's attempts see: Hilari Raguer, "El Vaticano y la guerra civil española", pp. 191-200.

[93] Translation: 'The Vatican is an enemy power to both Euskadi and the Republic.' Archivo Manuel de Irujo. Eusko Ikaskuntza. Donostia. 'Culto y Clero', 1937-1938, caja 20 quoted in Gregorio Arrien and Iñaki Goiogana, *El primer exilio de los vascos: Cataluña 1936-1939* (Barcelona: Fundació Ramón Trías Fargas, Bilbao: Fundación Sabino Arana, 2002), p. 195. For information on the '*Capilla Vasca*' see Ibid. pp. 191-195.

Múgica had been sacrificed by both the Spanish Primate and the Vatican to the demands of the rebel leaders. This sacrifice was to be the first of many. His replacement, Monsignor Lauzurica, was described by Franco as 'a man who will speak of God when speaking of Spain'.[94] Franco's judgement was confirmed when, in his first address to the people of the diocese, Monsignor Lauzurica called for 'total incorporación al movimiento nacional por ser defensor de los derechos de Dios, de la Iglesia Católica y de la Patria que no es otra que nuestra Madre España.'[95] This statement had profound implications in a region where a significant percentage of the population did not consider Spain to be their homeland. Basque Nationalists saw Monsignor Lauzurica's support of Franco as a particularly bitter betrayal since the Basque Government had organised safe passage for him across the French border during the war.[96] Lauzurica later wrote a prologue for Pedro Altabella García's work *El Catolicismo de los Nacionalistas Vascos* (The Catholicism of the Basque Nationalists), in which he accused the PNV of valuing politics over religion and claimed that 'el alzamiento fué la única tabla de salvación que flotaba sobre el borrascoso mar de nuestra Patria' when Spain was on the point of being converted into 'a canton of Russia'.[97]

With Múgica gone and a sympathetic figure at the head of the Basque Church the regime attempted to 'purify' it of 'separatist' elements through the imprisonment and exile of members of the clergy deemed to have Basque nationalist sympathies, and the closing of the seminary of Vitoria, seen by the authorities as a '*batzoki diocesano*'.[98] Restrictions were placed on the public use of the Basque language, including in preaching.[99] Interestingly, this

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[94] Pedro Altabella García, *El catolicismo de los nacionalistas vascos* (Madrid: Editora Nacional, 1939), p. 8.

[95] Translation: 'total incorporation into the national movement, because it is the defender of the rights of God, of the Catholic Church and of our homeland, which is none other than our Mother Spain.' *Boletín Oficial de la Diócesis de Vitoria* 1-X-1937 quoted in García de Cortázar, 'Mateo Múgica...' p. 32.

[96] For details see: Onaindía, pp. 44-54

[97] Translation: 'the rising was the only lifeline available in the midst of the stormy sea that was our homeland'. Prologue to Altabella García, op. cit. See p. 10 for reference to PNV and p. 8 for praise for military uprising.

[98] Fernando García de Cortázar, 'La Iglesia que Franco no quiso: religión y política en el País Vasco (1936-1975)', *Saioak* 5, (1983), pp. 49-76, (p. 52). A 'Batzoki' is a political centre of the PNV.

[99] For instance, on 4 August 1937 the local Mayor wrote to the parish priest of Elduain informing him that the military commander of Tolosa had prohibited preaching in Euskera in all but the first Mass of each day. Archivo Diocesano de San Sebastián. Signatura 2096/027-00.

practice was opposed by Cardinal Gomá on the basis of his experience as a Catalan. Although he claimed to know little about the situation in the Basque region, the Cardinal advocated consultation with the local clergy on the possible consequences of such measures.[100] Under Lauzurica's direction religious ceremonies in the Basque Country would take on a markedly political character and become the principal means of diffusion for the regime's ideology. The war was portrayed as a divine punishment visited upon the people for their betrayal of Spain and their religion and the Basques were called upon to repent for their actions. Lauzurica was supported by Monsignor Antoniutti, in his new capacity as *chargé d'affaires* with the Franco government.[101]

Franco presented his sword to Cardinal Gomá in a ceremony held in the church of Santa Bárbara, Madrid, on 29 May 1939, symbolising that through his victory the Church was also victorious. For the Church, however, the victory was to be a hollow one. In allying itself with the Franco regime the Catholic hierarchy had given the episcopal seal of approval to the division of the Spanish people into victors and vanquished. Nowhere was this more noticeable than in the Basque Country where the fratricidal divisions caused by the civil war were reflected not only in the lower clergy, but also in the hierarchy when Bishop Múgica refused to join his brother bishops in signing the 1937 *Carta Colectiva*. Justifying their participation in such an unprecedented intervention the Spanish bishops had stated in the letter: 'El obispo es el primer obligado a defender el buen nombre de su patria'.[102] This statement could equally have been uttered by Bishop Múgica in defence of his decision to distance himself from the Franco regime.

In 1945 Múgica wrote *Imperativos de mi conciencia* (*Imperatives of my Conscience*), a document in which he repented of the support given to General Franco and his followers in the early stages of the war, and defended the

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[100] See letter to Serrano Suñer, Governance Minister, in Granados, pp. 230-231.

[101] The Apostolic Delegate was pictured in Begoña, Bilbao, accompanied by the ambassadors of Germany, Italy and Portugal, giving the Fascist salute at a ceremony to dedicate one of the avenues of Bilbao to the 'Three Nations'. See photo in Pedro de Basaldua, *En España sale el sol* (Buenos Aires: Orden Cristiano, 1946), p. 78.

[102] Translation: 'The bishop must be the first to defend the good name of his homeland.' Text of the letter in Jesús Iribarren (ed.), *Documentos colectivos del episcopado español 1870-1974* (Madrid: BAC, 1974), p. 222.

attitude adopted by his clergy to the rebellion.[103] Initially in favour of Franco's uprising against the godless republic, the Bishop of Vitoria had been appalled by the treatment of his people and his clergy by the rebel forces. Although the accusations of sympathy towards separatists brought against him by the Franco regime were unjustified, Múgica, more than any of his predecessors in the diocese, understood the attachment of the people to their local culture. José M. Sánchez has argued that *Imperativos de mi conciencia*, 'reveals an intensely political bishop who was so devoted to his faith that all matters – even clearly political ones – became matters of religion'.[104] It must be remembered, however, that even under what one might regard as 'normal' circumstances – political stability, stable Church-State relations and an absence of violence – virtually any political decision can have moral implications. The moral significance is heightened in the context of political violence and insecurity, particularly when dealing with competing political actors with contrasting views on the role of the Church.

It is thus unsurprising that Bishop Múgica, given the political conflict taking place during his episcopate, would seek to give guidance to his followers on political matters. Indeed, it is perhaps a tragic irony that the man most capable of bridging the gap between the different political factions, being at once loyal to Spain yet sympathetic to the cause of Basque nationalism, was twice forced to leave his diocese – by the Second Republic in 1931 and by the military rebels in 1936 – when his followers were most in need of his leadership. The acquiescence of the Vatican in the removal of the popular prelate was a devastating blow to Basque nationalists, who would find themselves alienated from the Church of National Catholicism established after the war. While the Catholic Church in the rest of Spain breathed a sigh of relief, believing that the days of persecution were over, for a section of the Basque Church it appeared that the persecution had only begun.

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[103] Copy in Alberto de Onaindía, *Ayer como hoy. Documentos del clero vasco* (Saint-Jean-de-Luz: Axular, 1975), pp. 76-117.
[104] Sánchez, p. 83.

Chapter Five

The Irish Hierarchy and the 'Protestant Parliament' (1928-1962)

> 'Even were its regime one of justice and equality, of liberty and fair play – and it is not – we should still oppose the dismemberment of our fatherland. For we are Irish and until we are united with our brethren of the rest of Ireland, not only are we deprived of our rights as Irishmen but the historic Irish nation, unnaturally divisioned, is robbed of its glory and greatness.'
>
> (Bishop Daniel Mageean, writing in *Orange Terror. The Partition of Ireland*, 1943)[1]

This chapter will analyse developments in Church-State relations during the period leading up to the Civil Rights movement of the late 1960's. It will explore the overtly antagonistic relationship that existed between the Catholic hierarchy and the political authorities, arguing that it was, paradoxically, in many ways mutually reinforcing. As the Stormont government continued to thwart Catholic efforts to form an effective political opposition, the Catholic minority sought to address its problems within its own community, effectively creating a state within a state. At the heart of these internal solutions were the Catholic bishops, thus lending credence to the image propagated by the regime of a Catholic community dominated by the influence of the hierarchy. Consequently, Unionist leaders were able to present themselves as defenders of the Protestant people against the domineering influence of the Catholic Church. This was particularly significant at a time of economic depression, when growing social tensions within the Protestant community threatened to shatter the cross-class foundations of Unionism.

By the end of the 1920s the Catholic bishops had accorded tactical recognition to the Unionist government and begun to encourage the participation of Catholics in the Northern Parliament with the aim of safeguarding Catholic interests. At a conference held in Belfast on 28 May 1928, Nationalist representatives came together to form the National League: 'an Organisation to protect and defend the interests of our people'. Although no members of the hierarchy were present, the Catholic clergy assumed a

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[1] *Orange Terror. The Partition of Ireland.* (A reprint from the Capuchin Annual 1943), p. 32, University College Dublin Archives Department (UCDA) Aiken Papers P104/4606.

prominent role, with Archdeacon Tierney of Enniskillen acting as Chairman for the conference and Fr. Eugene Coyle P.P. of Belleek proposing the motion to establish the League.[2] In his address to the conference, Joseph Devlin, in spite of his well-known aversion to clerical interference in political matters, stressed that the decision to re-enter Parliament had been taken with the support of the bishops – an announcement that was greeted with cheers from the crowd.[3]

Despite this apparent enthusiasm for the support of the hierarchy the close association between the Catholic bishops and the Nationalist party would prove problematic for both. While the central leadership position occupied by the bishops within the Catholic community up to this point rendered collaboration with political leaders inevitable, actively joining forces with a political party was another matter. With the weight of episcopal authority firmly behind the Nationalist party, the dividing line between political and moral issues became blurred, leading Eamonn McCann to conclude that 'Nationalist candidates were not selected; they were anointed'. This, in his view, created a very real perception that it was sinful not to vote for them.[4] Yet it was not only critics of the Catholic hierarchy who opposed this political alliance. In the view of Dr. Edward Daly, Bishop of Derry (1974-1994), this close association worked against the best interests of both the party and the Church. In addition to causing divisions within the nationalist community, [i]t played into the hands of Unionists who had a paranoia about the Catholic Church.'[5]

This last point is of crucial significance. While the bishops were undoubtedly able to bolster support for the Nationalist party within their own communities, they were powerless to influence the Protestant government. On the contrary, their open support for the party, given their previous reluctance to recognise the legitimacy of the State, was unlikely to motivate the Belfast government to facilitate Nationalist participation in decision-making

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[2] *Irish News*, 29 May 1928.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Eamonn McCann, *War and An Irish Town*, 3rd edn (London: Pluto, 1993), p. 69.
[5] Bishop Edward Daly, 'The "Troubles"' in *History of the Diocese of Derry from Earliest Times*, ed. by Henry A. Jeffries and Ciarán Devlin, (Dublin: Four Courts, 2000), pp. 259-296 (p. 262).

processes. In effect, the optimism generated by the conference and the foundation of the League was short-lived, as it soon became apparent that Catholic representatives would not be permitted to form an effective opposition. The only piece of legislation they succeeded in having passed through Parliament was the Wild Birds Act (1931). Laudable an achievement though this might have been, it did nothing to improve the conditions of the Catholic minority. Led by Devlin, the Nationalist politicians walked out of Parliament in 1932.[6] Devlin's last major speech to the Parliament was a glaring indictment of the deliberate policy of exclusion to which he and his colleagues had been subjected:

> You had opponents willing to co-operate. We did not seek office. We sought service. We were willing to help. But you rejected all friendly offers. You refused to accept co-operation ... You went on on the old political lines, fostering hatreds, keeping one third of the population as if they were pariahs in the community, refusing to accept support from any class but your own and relying on those religious differences and difficulties so that you could remain in office for ever.[7]

The Belfast government, housed from 1932 onwards in the new Parliament buildings at Stormont, had no interest in encouraging or facilitating the participation of Catholics in the political life of the State. This was clearly demonstrated by the Prime Minister, James Craig, in his infamous 1934 declaration: 'All I boast is that we have a Protestant parliament and a Protestant state.'[8] Catholic efforts at cooperation and political participation did little to change the authorities' perception that they were fundamentally disloyal. Leading Unionist politicians feared the influence of the Catholic religion which, in the words of Sir Basil Brooke, Minister for Agriculture, was 'so politically minded' and 'out to destroy us as a body'.[9] These declarations were particularly significant in the context of the economic depression of the 1930s. By 1932 the unemployment rate was in excess of 76,000 (or 28%), concentrated primarily among urban industrial workers, particularly in Belfast. This meant that Protestant skilled workers, 'the

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[6] For details of Nationalist participation in the Northern Parliament see Farrell, pp. 98-120.
[7] Parliament of Northern Ireland, *Parliamentary Debates: Official Report* (Hansard) *House of Commons*, Vol.14 Col. 103, quoted in Farrell, p. 118.
[8] Parliament of Northern Ireland, *Parliamentary Debates: Official Report* (Hansard) *House of Commons*, Vol.16 Cols. 1091, 1095, quoted in Ibid. p. 92.
[9] Speech at Derry, 19 March 1934 quoted in *Orange Terror,* p. 24.

backbone of Unionist support in Belfast', were badly affected.[10] The best interests of the government were thus served by emphasising the threat posed by the Catholics to the security of the State as a means of ensuring the continued loyalty of its working class supporters.

Statements from the Northern bishops frequently served to reinforce the image projected by Unionist leaders of the 'disloyal' Catholics. Episcopal declarations in support of Catholic social and economic rights frequently included references to the political situation that did little to dispel the notion that the ultimate goal underlying all Catholic demands was the destruction of the state. During the 1930s these declarations continued in much the same vein as in the previous decade, condemning the partition of Ireland as unnatural and immoral and censuring the Unionist regime for its discrimination against the Catholic minority. This discrimination was most keenly felt in Belfast, where continued violence and unemployment ensured that Catholics remained in a very vulnerable position, and in Derry, where Catholics, although in the majority, were unable to gain control of the City Council. The grievances and frustrations of the local community were reflected in the speeches, sermons and Pastoral Letters of the bishops, which continued to project an image of religious persecution. Bishop Mageean of Down and Connor, for instance, in his Lenten Pastoral of 1935, condemning the 'boycott of Catholics', which had been 'openly advocated by men in authority', bitterly remarked that, 'Catholics in this part of Ireland have grown accustomed to being persecuted on account of their religion'.[11]

The bishops too at times had personal grievances of their own. In 1936 the Derry Unionist Registration Association attempted to deprive Bishop O'Kane of his vote, forcing him to appear in person at Derry Registration Court, together with the priests of St. Eugene's Cathedral.[12] In 1941 copies of Cardinal MacRory's Lenten Pastoral,[13] destined for parishes south of the border, were withheld by the Northern censor from 19 February until 3 March

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[10] Farrell, p. 124.
[11] *Irish News*, 4 March 1935.
[12] Bernard J. Canning, *Bishops of Ireland 1870-1987* ([S.L.]: [The author], 1987), p. 89.
[13] Bishop MacRory of Down and Connor became Archbishop of Armagh in 1928 following the death of Cardinal O'Donnell and was named Cardinal in 1929.

without explanation. On 8 April Nationalist members of the Northern Senate demanded an apology for the holding of the parcel.[14] The actions of the censorship officer were endorsed by the Minister of Information in the British House of Commons, but he would not specify the statements to which exception had been taken and no apology was issued.[15]

It was believed that objections to the Cardinal's Pastoral stemmed from his condemnation of the sending of men and boys, mostly Catholics, to work in England, for which he held the government responsible. The letter had stated: 'I doubt whether the banishment of a man from his own country in such cruel circumstances is law, it certainly seems not to be justice.'[16] MacRory gave his reaction to the events on 19 May, stating:

> A Bishop's Pastoral Letter is written with scrupulous regard for truth, justice and freedom. It is an intimate, important and exclusive document which a civil Government has no right to withhold from the people to whom it is addressed.[17]

The message to the government was clear: State interference in communications between a bishop and his people was unacceptable. Although intended primarily as a communication between the bishop and his followers, ecclesiastical leaders were also aware that the content of their Pastoral Letters would be reported in the media and would not escape the notice of the civil authorities. They thus provided a useful mechanism for communicating messages to the government without direct contact.

Cardinal MacRory's was not the only Pastoral Letter of 1941 to address the issues of discrimination and injustice. The Bishop of Down and Connor condemned the violation of Catholic homes by the police and the arrest without charge of Catholic men and boys.[18] Dr. Mageean's Pastoral echoed the speech he had given to the Belfast St. Vincent de Paul Society the previous December when he had condemned the 'tyranny' and 'injustice' that led to the violation of Catholic homes, and the hardship faced by the families of those imprisoned.[19] Dr. Farren, Bishop of Derry,[20] in a strongly worded

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[14] ICD (1942), p. 650.
[15] Ibid. p. 657.
[16] Armagh Archdiocesan Archives (AAA) MacRory Papers, Lenten Pastoral 1941.
[17] ICD (1942), p. 656.
[18] Ibid. pp. 644-645.
[19] Ibid. p. 627.
[20] Dr. Neil Farren replaced the deceased Bishop O'Kane in October 1939.

Pastoral, painted a bleak picture of the conditions experienced by Catholics living in the city. The bishop condemned 'the subtle form of persecution' where 'the machinery for social service is cunningly perverted for the bigot's ends' and the implications of this for family life, one of the key values of the Catholic Church. In this pastoral the bishop appeared to despair of Catholics having any hope of justice under the Unionist government:

> ... If my voice could penetrate the barrage of bigotry with which, under the guise of loyalty, these people have surrounded themselves, I would tell those responsible for administration in these parts that the observance of justice, and particularly of distributive justice, is at least as important in the eyes of God as the puritanical observance of the Sabbath.
> ... I am afraid my voice would fall on deaf ears. The mentality which can give such a strange connotation of loyalty finds it difficult to understand that the Commandment of God, 'Thou shalt not steal', binds the highly-placed official in his administration just as it does the street urchin.[21]

The frustration of the bishops is clearly evident in the language of their Pastoral Letters. The open expression of anti-Catholic sentiments by leading government figures, combined with the lack of any incentive or encouragement for Catholics to identify with the State or participate in its political, social or cultural life, meant that the bishops had no alternative solution to offer their followers other than opposition to the State. The absence of feasible political alternatives was compounded by the lack of interest shown by the London and Dublin governments in the situation of Northern Catholics. Appeals in both these directions were similarly doomed to fall on 'deaf ears'.

Unable to obtain any leverage over the Unionist government, the Northern bishops attempted to use the prestige of their office to gain access to the governments of London and Dublin as an alternative means of exerting pressure. Their approach to both governments comprised several strands: (i) raising awareness of the situation of the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland; (ii) calling for assistance in specific areas, such as financial support; (iii) calling for action against the Belfast government and an end to partition. Once again, the bishops were assuming an overtly political role that went far beyond attending to the spiritual needs of the Catholic community.

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[21] ICD (1942), p. 645.

In their appeals to London the bishops' primary aim was to oblige the British authorities to accept responsibility for the actions of the Belfast government acting under their auspices. These appeals were either ignored or rejected. Such was the experience of Bishop Mageean during the summer of 1935 in Belfast, when serious rioting, sparked by clashes between Catholics and Loyalists at the Orange Order's annual 12 July parade, led to 514 Catholic families being driven from their homes and hundreds of Catholics losing their jobs.[22] The bishop's acute fear for the safety of his people was expressed in a letter to the Archbishop of Dublin: '[I]t would seem that their aim is to exterminate the Catholics.'[23] When a telegram to Prime Minister Craig received only an acknowledgement from his secretary by way of reply, the Bishop then wrote to the British Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin. In response, Sir John Simon, Minister for Home Affairs, informed him that the British government was not prepared to intervene since the maintenance of law and order was the responsibility of the Northern Ireland authorities.[24] The Catholic hierarchy continued to draw attention to Britain's responsibilities to the Catholic community, even using the pulpit to do so, as in the case of Cardinal MacRory's New Year Sermon in Armagh Cathedral in 1938:

> There is not even a pretence to distribute justice. For this we have to blame not only the Northern Government but also, and still more, the Power that set it up and now, apparently, takes not the slightest trouble to see that it deals justly by all its subjects.[25]

Attempts to exert pressure through the English press proved equally disappointing for the bishops. Bishop Mageean claimed to have encountered, in his efforts to get 'some of the facts about the North' published in the English press, 'a veiled, courteous censorship which is as impenetrable as a good stone wall.'[26] One means that does, however, appear to have been available to the bishops for transmission of messages to the British public via its press was the coverage of the content of their Pastoral Letters, these 'intimate, important and exclusive' documents, to quote Cardinal MacRory.[27]

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[22] Farrell, p. 140.
[23] Mageean to Byrne, 5 August 1935, DAA Byrne Papers.
[24] For an account by Bishop Mageean of his efforts see: *Orange Terror*, p. 31.
[25] *Irish News*, 3 January 1938.
[26] *Orange Terror*, p. 31.
[27] ICD (1942), p. 656.

The Times, for instance, published a summary of Bishop Mageean's 1938 Lenten Pastoral, which challenged the British government to take responsibility for the actions of the Northern Parliament, whose history 'was one long record of partisan and bigoted discrimination in matters of representation, legislation and administration'. In the eyes of the bishop: 'The British government imposed that Parliament upon them, and were ultimately responsible for its acts. The Government that imposed it were the Government to abolish it.'[28] Unsupported by the factual information referred to by Bishop Mageean, however, the impact of messages such as the above on the British public was severely limited.

Writing in the 1940s, in response to a suggestion by one commentator that Catholics should concentrate on improving their condition within the context of Northern Ireland, while making their grievances known in England, the bishop wrote:

> I don't disagree with [the] proposal. I have no alternative to offer in its place: for I abhor violence. But when he talks of getting the idea "sold" to the public in England, let there be no doubt about the magnitude of the task involved.[29]

It is unsurprising that Bishop Mageean would be disillusioned with the British government and regard efforts aimed in that direction as futile following his experience during the 1935 riots. What is particularly revealing in this statement however is the open acknowledgement by the bishop that he has no alternative to offer, 'for I abhor violence'. The implication here is that the only alternative would be to use force – something the hierarchy could not approve of. With the Belfast government blocking all political alternatives for dealing with nationalist grievances, and the British government refusing to accept its responsibilities, the options for the hierarchy were extremely limited. Equally disappointing was the attitude of the Dublin government.

The lack of interest from the Free State government was a source of considerable disappointment for the bishops. The situation did not improve even after the newly created Fianna Fáil party, led by De Valera, came to power with grandiose displays of devotion to the Catholic Church, such as the

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[28] *The Times*, 28 February 1938.
[29] *Orange Terror*, p. 31.

1932 Eucharistic Congress in Dublin,[30] and the recognition of the 'special position' of the Catholic Church in Ireland, enshrined in the 1937 Constitution.[31] The feelings of betrayal and abandonment experienced by Northern Catholics during the 1920s increased during the next decade as their fellow nationalists in the South appeared to turn a blind eye to their situation. In the words of Dr. Mageean: 'One may as well be blunt about it: our Catholic people in the North have sometimes been painfully disappointed at the apparent apathy of the rest of Ireland to their sufferings and persecutions.'[32] He did acknowledge, in a private letter to De Valera dated 1 September 1935, 'the difficulties against any line of action you might think of taking'.[33]

When it became known in 1938 that De Valera was to enter into talks with the British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, Northern nationalists, with Bishop Mageean at the forefront, were quick to remind the Fianna Fáil leader of his responsibilities to the Catholic minority of Ulster. In a letter to De Valera the bishop made plain that the grievances of Northern Catholics could be reduced to one simple demand: 'Partition is an evil which only its removal can remedy.' He also warned the Irish leader that he could feel no sense of gratification from any agreements that left this issue untouched, and urged him not to accept any settlement that 'would leave unchanged the intolerable position of almost half a million of your people in the North-East who are deprived of their national rights as Irishmen.'[34] The hopes of the Northern minority were once again dashed. Although it was reported that De Valera had made his opposition to partition plain,[35] no proposals for modification ensued from the encounter. Since external political support

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[30] During the Eucharistic Congress, De Valera's 'ceremonial appearances in the company of Irish bishops and senior churchmen from all over the world in the presence of hundreds of thousands of people marked the symbolic end to the loss of official Church approval from which he and his associates had suffered so badly since 1922, both politically and personally, and his emergence as a Catholic statesman of unexampled orthdoxy'. Patrick Murray, *Oracles of God: the Roman Catholic Church and Irish politics, 1922-37* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2000), p. 262.

[31] The 1937 Constitution was described by Cardinal MacRory as 'a great Christian document full of faith in God as the Creator, Supreme Lawgiver and Ruler, and full also of wise and carefully thought out provisions for the upholding and guidance of a Christian state'. *Irish News*, 3 January 1938. For a discussion of the reflection of Catholic teaching in the articles of the Constitution see Murray, pp. 291-292.

[32] *Orange Terror*, p. 29.

[33] Mageean to De Valera, 1 September 1935. UCDA De Valera Papers P150/2871.

[34] *Diary of London Conference*, UCDA Aiken Papers P104/2902.

[35] *Irish News*, 18 January 1938.

would clearly not be forthcoming, the bishops were left with no alternative but to continue with their efforts to address Catholic grievances within the community itself, a response that could provide no long-term solutions.

Ironically, the Unionist regime played a significant role in promoting the growth of the Catholic Church in the North throughout the 1930s: the discrimination practised against Catholics at all levels of public life forced them to concentrate their efforts within their own religious community. Since the government refused to take measures to alleviate the suffering of unemployed Catholics and their families, this role was taken on by the Church independently of the civil authorities. What this effectively meant, as noted by Mary Harris, was that 'social problems were addressed within the framework of the Church rather than the State'.[36] While this response was unquestionably the most effective way to deal with urgent cases of economic hardship, it could be argued that, as a long-term policy, it was detrimental to the position of the Catholic working classes. On the one hand, the active role assumed by the Church allowed the State to ignore its responsibility to a section of its citizens, while on the other, any approach which reinforced the cohesion of the Catholic community also cemented the divisions that separated Catholics from their Protestant neighbours. David Kennedy has claimed that, whilst these Catholic organisations brought numerous benefits to the community,

> the service they gave was a restricted one. It tended to ignore the wider implication of the answer to the question 'And who is my neighbour?' It tended to develop a spirit of mutual admiration and complacency. And it emphasised the apartheid mentality which is the curse of Northern Ireland.[37]

This 'apartheid mentality' was reinforced by the fact that there were no equivalent organisations in the Protestant community, leading to the perception that the Catholic Church was creating a state within a state.[38]

While recognising the difficulties created by episcopal interventions in social and economic matters it must also be acknowledged that the bishops

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[36] Mary Harris, *The Catholic Church and the Foundation of the Northern Ireland state* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1993), p. 264.
[37] David Kennedy, 'Catholics in Northern Ireland, 1926-1939' in *The Years of the Great Test 1926-39* ed. by Francis MacManus, (Cork: Mercier Press, 1967), pp. 138-149 (pp. 148-149).
[38] Liam O'Dowd, Bill Rolston and Mike Tomlinson, *Northern Ireland: between Civil Rights and Civil War* (London: CSE Books, 1980), pp. 15-16.

had attempted to seek political solutions that addressed the root causes of the social and economic problems affecting their community. In addition to condemning official discrimination against Catholics, they had attempted to enlist the support of the Irish and British governments. The Catholic hierarchy, although openly opposed to the partition of the country, was not opposed to the redress of Catholic grievances within the framework of the state. The reality, however, was that this appeared an impossible aspiration given the implacable opposition of the Unionist government and the inaction of London and Dublin. The bishops were left with no alternative but to provide assistance using the means at their disposal within their own communities. In response to the 1935 riots for instance, the Housing and Employment Committee, under the direction of Bishop Mageean, purchased forty-eight houses to provide accommodation for families that had been forced to flee their homes.[39]

The Catholic hierarchy was thus actively involved in devising practical solutions to the problems facing the Catholic community, and was prepared to commit resources to this end. The arrangement did entail significant benefits for the bishops in enabling them to maintain their influence over the Catholic working classes at a time when their counterparts in other European countries were losing the battle with Socialism. An interesting illustration of how the Catholic working classes in Northern Ireland placed religious interests above class interest can be found in the response to the election campaign of Harry Midgely in 1938. Midgely, the Labour candidate for the Dock district in Belfast, a seat he had won in the previous election of 1933, was fiercely heckled by Catholic workers over his support for the Republican government in the Spanish Civil War. His meetings were broken up with shouts of 'Up Franco' and 'Remember Spain', while '[f]ists and umbrellas were waved threateningly'.[40] Midgely attempted to argue his case, asking the crowd: 'Do you want civil and religious liberty?', but the response came back: 'No, not from you'.[41] Midgely lost his seat and, perhaps unsurprisingly, was to be bitterly anti-Catholic in his subsequent political career, although it has been

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[39] Mageean to De Valera, 1 September 1935. UCDA De Valera Papers P150/2871.
[40] *Irish News*, 2 February 1938.
[41] *Irish News*, 4 February 1938.

argued that he had already taken the first steps in this direction prior to 1938.[42]

The support of the Church was sought by the nationalist community, not only in political, social and economic matters, but also in the cultural sphere, with high levels of clerical involvement in a variety of cultural and sporting organisations and activities. According to Aodán MacPóilin, the exaggerated social cohesion in the minority community produced by government discrimination, or 'Catholic communalism', was 'an extremely effective form of passive resistance'.[43] MacPóilin has aptly described the Catholic Church as 'both an indispensable and an erratic ally' in the efforts to preserve the Irish language in the North.[44] While individual members of the hierarchy had been personally committed to the preservation of the language, the Church as a whole did not have a clearly defined policy in this area. The Catholic clergy nonetheless played a prominent role in the efforts to maintain the teaching of Irish in schools, with Catholic priests forming the majority of a delegation that met the Minister for Education to discuss the issue in 1927.[45]

Attempts to promote interest in Irish language and traditions in the form of *Feisanna* – regional competitions and displays of Gaelic culture including dancing, music and verse – were enthusiastically supported by the clergy, who were often invited to give the address at the opening ceremonies. The political overtones accompanying these addresses firmly associated the preservation of Irish culture with the political reunification of the country. The address given by Monsignor Tierney at the opening of Enniskillen *Feis* in 1935 conveys the significance of local culture to nationalists:

> Since our last meeting here our country has been divided geographically. Ephemeral politicians have drawn a line across the map of Ireland, but the spirit that is shown in this assembly and in the number of competitors enables us to laugh at this man-made line. Lines do not make up the enlivening and vivifying spirit of a nation. The nation lives in its language, culture, games and music.[46]

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[42] Midgley, during the 1938 campaign vehemently refuted allegations of 'snubbing and insulting the Roman Catholics and their Church', asserting that '[h]e was a Christian and not merely a narrow sectarianist'. *Irish News*, 3 February 1938. Michael Farrell, on the other hand, has claimed that Midgely made no effort to assist Catholics intimidated from their work in his consistuency, and at the height of the 1935 riots 'he conveniently went away on holiday'. Farrell, p. 376, Note 54.

[43] Aodán MacPóilin, 'Irish in Belfast, 1892-1960: from the Gaelic League to Cumann Chluain Ard', in *Belfast and the Irish Language*, ed. by Fionntán de Brún, (Dublin: Four Courts, 2006), p. 126.

[44] MacPóilin, p. 114.

[45] Ibid. p. 125.

[46] *Irish News*, 1 July 1935.

Earlier that same year, Bishop Mageean, presiding over the final competitions of the Belfast *Feis*, had declared that the Irish language was, for the people, 'a bulwark against the paganism that surrounded them on all sides and threatened to submerge them'. According to Bishop Mageean the language helped preserve the 'national spiritual outlook' of the Irish people.[47]

Nation and religion thus remained intimately connected and this link was reinforced through continued interventions of the hierarchy in matters of 'national' concern. An effective illustration is the statement by the Northern bishops of 30 April 1939 in response to the threat of conscription being imposed in Northern Ireland. With clear echoes of their 1917 intervention, the bishops condemned conscription as an attack on the rights of the Irish nation:

> We are convinced that any attempt to impose conscription here would be disastrous. Our people have been already subjected to the grievous injustice of being cut off from one of the oldest nations in Europe, and in being deprived of their fundamental rights as citizens of their own land. In such circumstances to compel them to fight for their oppressor would likely arouse them to indignation and resistance. It would be regarded by Irishmen, not only in the Six Counties, in Eire, and throughout the world wherever they are found, as an outrage on the national feeling and an aggression upon the national rights.[48]

As in 1917 there is a clear designation of England as the 'oppressor' and an implied recognition of the right to resistance without any specification of what this might mean in practical terms, or, more importantly, where the limits of justifiable resistance lay. When, in 1945, the British Representative to the Dublin government attempted to impress upon Cardinal MacRory the strategic importance of the Northern coast to England, stating that without its facilities 'England might have been brought to her knees', he found the Cardinal's response 'unpractical' and 'a very harsh doctrine'. Cardinal MacRory replied 'that he supposed that was so' but added, '*Fiat Justitia rua Coelum*' ('Let Justice be done though the Heavens may fall').[49]

The decision of the Dublin government to remain neutral during the conflict had once again brought the issue of partition to the fore. When the war ended, an Anti-Partition League was established, in an attempt to give some form of coherent political leadership to the nationalist community in the

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[47] *Irish News*, 27 May 1935.
[48] ICD (1940), p. 642. The statement was published in the *Irish News* on 2 May 1939.
[49] Maffey to Machtig, 30 June 1945, Public Records Office of the United Kingdom, DO 35 1228.

North. Michael Farrell has written: 'The Catholic emphasis was underlined, not only by the absence of the Ulster Union Club and the Socialist Republicans, but by the presence of a large number of priests and by messages of support from the bishops of Derry and Dromore.'[50] Protestant sympathisers of the League, however, were concerned by the attitude of the Catholic bishops. In 1951 a Church of Ireland Minister wrote to Frank Aiken, Secretary for the League, asking: 'What I want to know is this – has your Society, which I supported, told the Roman Catholic Bishops the harm they are doing to our cause?' The Minister claimed that many of the Pastoral Letters of the Catholic bishops were 'abusive to Protestants', stating: 'I know quite a number of Church of Ireland people in Northern Ireland who think as myself as regards Partition – and their one great dread is this domineering spirit of the Pastorals.'[51]

While the entitlement of the bishops to act as interpreters of 'national feeling' was widely accepted, it is nonetheless true that not all those who opposed the division of the Irish nation identified with the leadership of the Catholic hierarchy. The omnipresence of the Catholic bishops in initiatives aimed at addressing the question of partition impregnated the movements in question with a decidedly Catholic character. For those who accepted the authority of the Catholic bishops, their involvement in political initiatives was interpreted as a show of support, an attempt to confer legitimacy and raise the profile of the endeavours in question. According to this analysis, episcopal support was both desirable and useful, explaining why Devlin's 1928 announcement that the Nationalist return to Parliament had been supported by the hierarchy was greeted with cheers by the crowd. For others – either outside the Catholic faith or Catholics who wished to see the role of the bishops confined to matters of spiritual and pastoral care – the involvement of the hierarchy was 'domineering', motivated by a desire to control, and served to alienate potential supporters, thus ultimately proving to be a restrictive influence.

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[50] Farrell, p. 179.
[51] Maurice Talbot to Secretary Anti-Partition League, 14 February 1951. UCDA Aiken Papers P104/4663.

The Pastorals of the Northern Bishops throughout the pre-war years had expressed implacable opposition to the Northern Ireland state and were characterised by a refusal to recognise the legitimacy of the State itself and by repeated condemnations of the actions of the civil authorities. This was particularly true of Lenten Pastorals. Here, the dominant theme of the suffering of Christ provided a useful narrative with which to link the sufferings of the Catholic minority under the 'Protestant Parliament' of Belfast. In his Lenten Pastoral of 1939 for instance, Bishop Mageean said of his flock: 'suffering and atonement they know well are inculcated by the faith to which they have always shown such loyalty'. The Pastoral outlined a catalogue of grievances, all stemming from the same source: 'we, the Catholics of this part of Ireland, have no status in our native land'.[52] Such declarations frequently aroused resentment amongst Protestants. Mageean's claim was later publicly refuted by a Unionist representative, Rev. Dr. Little, who argued that 'the Catholics had all the rights of citizenship – and no propaganda could alter the facts'.[53] Condemnation of partition would become less pronounced, however, during the post-war years as the Catholic hierarchy began to re-assess its relationship with the Belfast government. Indeed, the Pastoral letters of the Northern bishops for 1951, the year in which the letter to Frank Aiken, quoted above, was written, were notable for the absence of references to partition, with the bishops focusing instead on the Communist threat to the Church in other parts of the world.[54]

The Irish Catholic Church in the post-war period was under the leadership of John D'Alton, named Archbishop of Armagh in 1946, following the death of Cardinal MacRory. Daithí Ó Corráin notes that, as a native of the Southern county of Mayo, D'Alton's appointment as Primate in 1946 was 'a departure from modern tradition'.[55] His primacy too would mark a departure from tradition in the area of Church-State relations. Under his leadership a new phase would begin, characterised by a growing *rapprochement* between

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[52] *Irish News*, 20 February 1939.
[53] *Irish News*, 3 March 1939.
[54] *Irish News*, 5 February 1951.
[55] Daithí Ó Corráin, *Rendering to God and Caesar: The Irish Churches and the Two States in Ireland, 1949-1973* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), p. 44.

the leaders of the Catholic Church and the Unionist authorities. D'Alton shared his predecessors' rejection of the border as unjust,[56] but proved more open to the prospect of a political solution that fell short of the united, independent Ireland demanded by the Cardinals that had gone before him. Evident tensions remained nonetheless in his relationships with the civil authorities at all levels. No official message of congratulations was sent by the Northern government when he was made Cardinal in 1953.[57] Two years later, the Unionist-controlled local government in Derry, the Derry Corporation, refused to acknowledge his presence in the city for the Catholic Truth Congress.[58]

The changing nature of Church-State relations found an echo within the Catholic minority itself in the form of an increasing awareness that political action would have to be based on a pragmatic acceptance of the reality of the Northern Ireland state. The post-war period brought economic benefits to Northern Ireland that resulted in improvements in the condition of the Catholic minority. Although implemented through the Belfast parliament, these improvements were a direct consequence of changes in British legislation, and did not represent a change in policy by the Unionist government. Further confrontations with the State in relation to the grievances of the minority community would be inevitable.

Education, predictably, remained a source of tension. Throughout the years that followed the 1923 Education Act, which had established that only those schools under the control of local government would receive full funding, provision for Catholic education featured prominently amongst the grievances of the hierarchy. In January 1930 Cardinal MacRory made the following plea:

> Cannot the Belfast Government allow us to have our fair share of money for building and enlarging schools on terms that were allowed by the British Government? One thing is certain, we cannot go on as at present. Public money is

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[56] Bernard J. Canning has observed that among D'Alton's first words on assuming charge of the See of Armagh was a condemnation of Partition: 'As a lover of my country I naturally deplore the political partition of this island of ours which God intended to be one and undivided.' Canning, pp. 48-49.

[57] Ó Corráin, p. 116.

[58] Finbar J. Madden & Thomas Bradley: 'The Diocese of Derry in the twentieth century, c.1900-1974' in *A History of the Diocese of Derry from earliest times* ed. by Henry A. Jeffries & Ciarán Devlin (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), pp. 240-258 (p. 257).

being poured out on the buildings of schools, and Catholics are getting practically none of it.[59]

By April Cardinal MacRory was more optimistic, writing to Archbishop Byrne: 'I have hope that we shall extract fairly good terms from Craigavon and Co. on the Education Question.'[60] The Catholic hierarchy actively lobbied the Unionist government for improved funding under the terms of the 1930 Education Act.[61] Michael McGrath has argued that this was 'the Catholic authorities' most successful campaign during the fifty years of devolved government'.[62] The bishops exploited every available opportunity, 'employing every asset in the Northern Ireland Parliament, the *Irish News* and public meetings to present their case'.[63] The outcome was two thirds of the level of funding allocated to Catholic schools under the British authorities, a significant concession from the Unionist regime.

Grievances remained, however, as provision for religious education in State-run schools meant that these effectively became Protestant schools, while still in receipt of full government funding. Catholics, in the view of the bishops, were thus unfairly penalised because of their religion. Bishop Mageean called it 'the penalty of our faith'. Stressing the importance of Catholic education, the bishop continued: 'We can quite easily go and receive the free education our non-Catholic neighbours do, but the price is too high. We are not prepared to endanger the faith of our children, even for thousands of pounds.'[64] It was a theme the bishop would return to often, declaring in 1939: 'Catholic parents are no more able to send their children to these provided and transferred schools than they are to send them to a Protestant place of worship or to an Orange hall.'[65] Later the same year the bishop claimed that government education policy represented blatant discrimination: 'The Ministry of Education formulated their laws in such a way that they

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[59] ICD (1931), pp. 575-576, quoted in Michael McGrath, *The Catholic Church and Catholic Schools in Northern Ireland. The Price of Faith* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2000), p. 73.
[60] MacRory to Byrne, 10 April 1930, DAA Byrne Papers.
[61] For a full account of the various methods employed see: McGrath, pp. 72-81.
[62] Ibid. p. 107.
[63] Ibid.
[64] *Irish News*, 12 March 1938.
[65] *Irish News*, 27 February 1939.

knew the Catholic people would be penalised. I have asserted this before and no-one has ever contradicted me.'[66]

The 1947 Education Act introduced mass secondary education and provided scholarships to enable children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds to attend grammar schools. Young people from the Catholic community were thus able to gain access to a university education that would previously have been denied to them. The Catholic bishops were once again successful in obtaining an increased level of government funding without surrendering control of their schools to publicly appointed bodies. The 'Catholic ethos' of their schools had been successfully preserved, but at what cost to the Catholic community? The hierarchy has been criticised for its 'medieval determination' to retain total control of the management of schools, which, it has been claimed, deprived Catholic children of much-needed funds.[67] The increased government contributions still left a considerable deficit that had to be met through fund-raising activities in the local community. If the hierarchy had been prepared to accept something less than total control their followers would have been spared that financial burden. For the bishops, however, education was a crucial issue from the perspective of the transmission of the faith and could not be left in the hands of the local authorities. Financial considerations were thus deemed to be outweighed by the moral significance of the issue, and this reasoning was to be applied in other aspects of government policy that affected the minority.

In 1947 attempts to bring all voluntary hospitals, including the Catholic Mater Hospital in Belfast, under State control, sparked protests from Archbishop D'Alton and the Bishop of Down and Connor, who denounced the measure as a confiscation of church property.[68] Similar opposition was voiced to the extension of the British Welfare State, a model of social policy in which the State assumes primary responsibility for the welfare of its citizens, to Northern Ireland. It should be noted however, that this opposition did not

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[66] *Irish News*, 22 May 1939.
[67] Donald Akenson, *Education and Enmity: the Control of Schooling in Northern Ireland 1920-50* (London: David and Charles, 1973), p. 115.
[68] John H. Whyte, *The Catholic Church in Modern Ireland 1923-1979*, 2nd edn, (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1980), p. 150.

stem from the fact that the State authorities in Northern Ireland were Protestant, nor from objections to the legitimacy of the State. During the same period, the hierarchy was actively engaged in a controversial campaign to limit the interference of the avowedly Catholic Irish government in the area of Health and Social Services. The reasoning behind this opposition was explained by Archbishop D'Alton in an address to the Catholic Truth Society of Ireland on 10 October 1950 as follows:

> We have a right to expect that our social legislation will not be in conflict with Catholic principles. It should not be a mere copy of legislation evolved in the materialist atmosphere of Great Britain, where State paternalism is gradually destroying personal independence and initiative.[69]

Notwithstanding the obvious benefits for those Catholics from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, the Catholic bishops deemed State control of social services to be in conflict with the Social Teaching of the Catholic Church, notably the principle of Subsidiarity, which advocated limiting the role of the State in the interests of promoting personal freedom.[70] Of particular concern was the potential encroachment on the rights of the parents and the sanctity of family life. Despite these objections, however, Church leaders were actively involved in assisting the members of their community to claim all of the benefits to which they were entitled. Such was the intention behind the establishment of the Catholic Social Service Centre in Derry in 1947.[71]

In addition, during this period, as calls for the removal of partition became less pronounced, Church leaders began to advocate increased cooperation at State level as the best means of addressing Catholic grievances. In 1957 Cardinal D'Alton put forward his own proposal for a political solution to the Northern Ireland situation: North and South should be reunited within a federal structure; the reunited Ireland should then join the Commonwealth on the same basis as India and apply for entry into NATO.[72]

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[69] ICD (1951): 709

[70] The significance of this principle in shaping the response of the Catholic hierarchy to changes in social legislation has rightly been recognised by Ó Corráin. Commenting on the antagonistic relations between the Catholic hierarchy and the Stormont government during the post-war period, he argues that: 'Contesting social policy paradigms, an aspect rarely afforded the significance it merits, was at the heart of this antagonism.' Ó Corráin, p. 117.

[71] Daly, p. 261.

[72] Canning, p. 49.

Ó Corráin has summarised government response to the proposal as 'cool in the North, sceptical in London and cautious in the South'.[73] Although it did not result in any concrete political developments, the proposal is significant as an attempt to present a compromise solution, entailing concessions on both sides, and one that addressed British concerns in the area of security, as had been outlined to D'Alton's predecessor, Cardinal MacRory. In contrast with MacRory's 'harsh' response however, D'Alton was prepared to be more accommodating towards contrasting political aspirations.

Conversely, D'Alton would adopt a much stronger line than his predecessor in his response to the IRA and attempts to end partition by force. Ó Corráin has contrasted D'Alton's determined stance with that of Cardinal MacRory, citing as an illustration a letter from MacRory to Bishop Mageean dated Christmas 1942 in which he stated: 'I think it would do more harm than not to attempt to pull them up. We are unable to pull up their aggressors, against whose injustice they act.'[74] Although conscious of a causal link between injustice and violence, it would be inaccurate to portray the Catholic hierarchy during MacRory's primacy as sympathetic to the IRA. Indeed, in 1931 MacRory, together with the other members of the hierarchy, had been sent a statement from the IRA Army Council condemning the 'extremely uncharitable' pronouncements made by bishops, in many cases from the altar, attributing to the IRA 'false motives' and wrongly portraying the organisation as 'Anti-Religious'. The statement concluded:

> We trust that the Hierarchy and Clergy will not lend their aid to the enemies of the Nation's freedom, nor frustrate the people in their efforts to assert their inalienable rights and liberties. The Army Council begs that, if they are not ready to assist, at least they will not hinder.[75]

While IRA actions during MacRory's primacy were more sporadic, Cardinal D'Alton was forced to respond to a concerted campaign of attacks in border areas known as 'Operation Harvest', which lasted from 1956 to 1962. It was a guerrilla-style campaign in which 'flying columns' from the South attacked police stations and other targets in border areas. In all, the campaign involved

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[73] Ó Corráin, p. 51.
[74] Ibid. p. 46.
[75] AAA MacRory Papers, Sec. Army Council to MacRory, 10 October 1931.

over 500 incidents and several fatalities.[76] The Catholic bishops, led by Cardinal D'Alton, were unequivocal in their condemnation, releasing a statement following the meeting of the hierarchy's Standing Committee in January 1957, which stressed that 'no matter how good and desirable the ending of partition may be, the use of unlawful means to bring it about would not be justified'.[77] Unlike the cases of previous IRA campaigns, the Catholic hierarchy were not to be held responsible, with even Lord Brookeborough, despite his well-known public aversion to Catholicism, acknowledging in a speech at Stormont that '[a]cts of violence have been condemned by leaders of Church and State, North and South.'[78]

The hierarchy's strong stance against the IRA border campaign cannot, however, be attributed solely to the changing nature of its relations with the State, but was also reflective of the mood in the Catholic community at the time. It is widely acknowledged that 'Operation Harvest' was condemned from the outset by the lack of support amongst the local population. This was recognised even by the IRA itself in its 1962 statement announcing the end of the campaign, which referred to 'the attitude of the general public whose minds have been deliberately distracted from the supreme issue facing the Irish people – the unity and freedom of Ireland'.[79] Indicative of the contradictory nature of the response of the Irish public to manifestations of the physical force tradition of nationalism – hostile to the campaigns themselves, yet sympathetic to the individuals involved and the ideals they espoused – was the large turn-out for the funerals of two IRA members killed during a raid on 5 January 1957. The funeral of Fergal O'Hanlon took place north of the border in the Diocese of Clogher, while a funeral procession for Sean South travelled through Dublin en route to his native Limerick. Both attracted large crowds, demonstrating that the Catholic community, North and South, was not afraid to display sympathy for IRA members, despite the pronouncements of their bishops.[80]

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[76] Richard English, *Irish Freedom: The History of Nationalism in Ireland* (London: Macmillan, 2006), p. 361.
[77] AAA D'Alton Papers, quoted in Ó Corráin, p. 49.
[78] *Irish News*, 6 February 1957.
[79] *Irish News*, 27 February 1962, quoted in English, p. 361.
[80] For details of both funerals see: *Irish News*, 5 January 1957.

By 1962 the attitude of the Catholic hierarchy to the Northern Ireland State had undergone a clearly perceptible shift. That year saw the arrival in the Diocese of Down and Connor of Bishop William Philbin, who replaced the deceased Bishop Mageean on 30 August. Like Cardinal D'Alton, Bishop Philbin was a native of County Mayo. A cosmopolitan figure and prominent theologian, with an impressive range of publications that included essays on *Patriotism* (1958) and *The Irish and the New Europe* (1962), Bishop Philbin was regarded as a progressive thinker who advocated 'an openness to the world outside'.[81] From the beginning of his episcopacy the bishop displayed an interest in developing a good working relationship with the civil authorities. On 2 October, shortly after his arrival in Belfast, he was pictured in the *Belfast Newsletter* in the company of the Lord Mayor, Alderman Martin Wallace, during a visit to City Hall.[82] Appearances, however, belied the continued underlying tensions, as significant grievances of the Catholic community remained unaddressed.

Paradoxically, the overt antagonism between the Catholic hierarchy and the Belfast government during the first four decades of the state's existence, so frequently conveyed in the public statements of both political and ecclesiastical leaders, was, in many ways, mutually reinforcing. The exclusion of Catholics from meaningful participation in the State forced them to look to their Church for solutions to their grievances, thereby strengthening the cohesion of the Catholic community, and placing the Church firmly at the centre of all aspects of the life of the minority. Conversely, the role assumed by the hierarchy in addressing Catholic needs enabled the State to abdicate its responsibilities to its Catholic citizens. Meanwhile, the appearance of the bishops as spokesmen for the community enabled the regime to present Catholics as entirely dominated by their Church, a perception that helped maintain the sectarian divisions between the Catholic and Protestant working classes. These divisions were further reinforced by declarations from the Catholic hierarchy calling for an end to partition and the dismantling of the Northern Ireland state. The altered tone of ecclesiastical declarations during

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[81] Canning, p. 124.
[82] *Belfast Newsletter*, 2 October 1962.

the post-war period was indicative of a growing *rapprochement* with the civil authorities and reflected the hope that Catholic grievances could be addressed within the framework of the Northern Ireland state. These more cordial relations, however, failed to achieve the removal of outstanding Catholic grievances. By the late 1960s the Catholic community had begun to mobilise in support of more active forms of resistance to the State, beyond the control of the Catholic hierarchy.

Chapter Six

The Basque Bishops and 'National' Catholicism (1939-1962)

> Ante Dios y los santos Evangelios juro y prometo, como corresponde a un obispo, fidelidad al Estado español. Juro y prometo respetar y hacer que mi clero respete al Jefe del Estado español y al Gobierno establecido según las leyes españolas. Juro y prometo, además no tomar parte en ningún acuerdo, ni asistir a ninguna reunión que pueda perjudicar al Estado español y al orden público, y haré observar a mi clero igual conducta. Preocupándome del bien e interés del Estado español, procuraré evitar todo mal que pueda amenazarlo.
>
> (Oath of allegiance sworn by Spanish bishops during the Franco dictatorship)[1]

The ideology of the Franco dictatorship was built on an all-encompassing dialectic of Spain and Anti-Spain that perpetuated the divisions of the Civil War and permeated all aspects of official policy. For Basque nationalists, firmly located on the side of the defeated and regarded as traitors to the national cause, there would be no space for their political and national aspirations in the new Spain. The Basque bishops thus occupied a unique position on the axis between victors and vanquished, being at once representatives of an alienated minority whose culture and identity had been forcibly marginalised, and simultaneously representing the Church triumphant that was to share in the victory of the regime.

If the Catholic Church for Irish nationalists in Northern Ireland represented continuity, for Basque nationalists under the Franco regime it would represent a point of rupture through the promotion of what was regarded as an alien culture and a hostile ideology in churches and religious ceremonies. While this did not signify a change in ecclesiastical policy, for, as noted in Chapter Two, the Basque bishops had long been criticised for their failure to defend Basque culture and were openly hostile to political nationalism, it nevertheless represented a political choice by the Church. This

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[1] Translation: 'Before God and the Sacred Gospels I swear and promise, as befits a bishop, fidelity to the Spanish state. I swear and promise to respect, and make my clergy respect, the Head of the Spanish State and the government established according to Spanish law. I further swear and promise not to take part in any agreement, or attend any meeting that could be harmful either to the Spanish state or public order, and I will ensure similar conduct from my clergy. Concerned for the well-being and interest of the Spanish state, I will endeavour to avoid any ill that may threaten it.' Text of the oath in Feliciano Blázquez, *La traición de los clérigos en la España de Franco: Crónica de una intolerancia (1936-1975)*, (Madrid: Editorial Trotta, 1991), p. 48.

chapter will analyse the considerable challenges to the Catholic hierarchy resulting from this decision, not least of which was the need to deal with the competing loyalties of the clergy under their authority.

The Catholic hierarchy emerged from the Spanish Civil War closely allied with the Franco regime in a unique, symbiotic model of Church-State relations known as National Catholicism. The privileged position of the Church in Spanish society was restored, including control of education, financial support, and the adaptation of State legislation to Catholic teaching. Catholicism was declared to be an integral part of Spanish national identity, and the Catholic Church became the primary instrument for the dissemination of the regime's ideology. This alliance however was not to be an easy one. Paradoxically, in this most Catholic of countries, the radio message from the Pope congratulating Franco on his victory was censored in the Spanish media to exclude the final paragraph in which he urged compassion towards the defeated.[2] A Pastoral on a similar theme from the Cardinal Primate himself, that erstwhile champion of Franco's 'Crusade', suffered the same fate.[3]

The new 'Caudillo',[4] eager though he was to secure the support of the Catholic Church, had little use for the Christian values of forgiveness and reconciliation. On the contrary, the uneasy alliance of the various factions that made up his 'Movimiento Nacional' made the preservation of the Civil War divisions a necessity;[5] accordingly, under the dictatorship, Spain was firmly divided into two camps: the victors and the defeated. The Church of National Catholicism helped preserve this division of the Spanish people: those killed fighting for Franco became martyrs for Spain; monuments were dedicated to them in religious ceremonies and commemorative plaques were

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[2] Stanley Payne, *El catolicismo español* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1984), p. 228.

[3] The circulation of Cardinal Gomá's Pastoral, *Lessons of War and the Duties of Peace*, was banned by the government, concerned by its references to the rights of the individual, the need for political participation and monitoring of government. Frances Lannon, *Privilege, Persecution and Prophecy: The Catholic Church in Spain 1875-1975* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. 215-216. The Cardinal did not live long enough to experience the reality of the regime he had worked so hard to legitimise as he died on 22 August 1940.

[4] 'Caudillo' was one of the titles adopted by Franco, equivalent to Hitler's 'Führer', or Mussolini's 'Duce'.

[5] Paul Preston, *The Politics of Revenge: Fascism and the Military in Twentieth-Century Spain* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 37-38.

erected in churches. Supporters of the Republic were called upon to repent for their sins and accept their guilt for the suffering caused by the war.

Nowhere was this division more strongly felt than in the Basque Country. As explained in Chapter Four, the region had been divided by the war, with the Carlist majority of Navarre and Álava lending their support to the military uprising and the Basque nationalists of Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa remaining loyal to the Republic. After the war these two 'traitor provinces' were stripped of their political and economic privileges and subjected to a severe cultural repression aimed at eliminating all vestiges of Basque culture and symbols of Basque uniqueness, which extended even to the prohibition of Euskera.

The Catholic Church was to become the principle instrument through which the regime would enforce the dominance of Spanish culture, as the weakness of Franco's supporters in the Basque region meant that this task was beyond them.[6] The Falange could achieve no significant penetration in this traditional conservative society and the influence of the Carlists was generally limited to Navarre and Álava. A key aspect of government strategy in the region was to emphasise the fundamental Christian principles of the new Spain, in particular the identification of the State with the Church, its institutions and its representatives.[7] The emergence of National Catholicism in the Basque Provinces contrasted with the experience of other regions since it did not involve the re-establishment of the Church's authority (which had not been undermined by the secularism experienced elsewhere), but rather the establishment of a new Church, which was to be Spanish rather than Basque in identity.[8] This process had begun even before the war ended, with imprisonment and exile of members of the clergy, the closure of the seminary of Vitoria and the replacement of Bishop Múgica with Monsignor Lauzurica.

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[6] Javier Sánchez Erauskin, *Por Dios hacia el imperio. Nacionalcatolicismo en las vascongadas del primer franquismo 1936-1945* (Donostia: R&B, 1994), p. 15.

[7] Memoria sobre el estado político social y administrativo de Vizcaya in Archivo General de la Administración Sec. Gobernación, I.D.D. 1.03, Caja 3175, quoted in Severiano Rojo Hernández, *Église et Société. Le clergé paroissial de Bilbao de la République au franquisme (1931-années 50)* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2000), p. 174.

[8] Sánchez Erauskin, p. 17.

Nowhere else in Spain was the Church purged in this way.[9] It has been estimated that this repression affected more than 800 members of the Catholic clergy in the region.[10] The Vatican thus effectively permitted the re-shaping of the Basque Church in accordance with the political aims of the Franco regime.

Monsignor Lauzurica proved to be the ideal choice for Franco's purposes. He was, from the beginning, outspoken in his support for the regime and under his direction the message of National Catholicism was aggressively promoted on the streets of Basque towns and cities. The war was interpreted as a divine punishment and the Church proclaimed the need for repentance and recognition of collective guilt. Acts of devotion, such as the Stations of the Cross, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and the saying of the Rosary, were transformed into public acts of repentance. The season of Lent, already one of the most important events in the Church's calendar, now took on a deeper significance.

Large sums of money were donated by the authorities for the rebuilding of Church property destroyed during the war, and the re-inauguration ceremonies for these buildings became further occasions for public repentance.[11] Although the Basque Church had suffered little persecution during the period of the Second Republic and the Civil War, the regime still found pretexts for contrasting its attitude with that of the Republican forces, such as the claim that there had been an attempt during the war to steal the jewels of the Virgin of Begoña, even though this was known to be false.[12] Furthermore, in what has been described as 'a methodical exercise in confusion', the churches destroyed in the Nationalist bombing of Durango and Guernika were treated in the same manner as those destroyed by left-wing forces.[13]

Monsignor Lauzurica showed himself to be very aware of the power of religious ceremonies when he declared in 1939:

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[9] Ibid. p. 16.
[10] Serafín Esnaola & Emiliano de Iturrarán, *El clero vasco en la clandestinidad (1940-1968)* 2 vols. (Bilbao, Donostia, Gasteiz, Iruña, [s.n.], 1994), VI p. 15.
[11] Sánchez Erauskin, p. 43.
[12] Rojo Hernández, p. 181.
[13] Sánchez Erauskin, p. 43.

> Las festividades anuales de los sagrados ministerios son más eficaces que los solemnes documentos del magisterio eclesiástico para formar al pueblo en las cosas de la fe, por acomodarse mejor al común de los fieles, dirigiéndose no sólo a la inteligencia sino también al corazón y a los sentidos mediante la fuerza sugestiva de los sagrados ritos y ceremonias.[14]

The authorities, too, were conscious of the persuasive power of these ceremonies and grasped every available opportunity to turn them to their advantage, enlisting the power of the press to explain their significance and the norms to be observed during their celebration.[15] The presence of political, and even military, leaders at religious ceremonies conveyed an image of harmony and unity in Church-State relations. This was reinforced through the use of language: prayers were said for General Franco and sermons declared the love of God to be inseparable from the love of Spain. The unity of Spain was sacred. Separatism was heresy. Lauzurica expressed this idea as early as 1937, stating:

> En la Iglesia española y en la Patria deben estar concentrados todos los amores. Al decir España, digo Iglesia. En el amor a nuestra Patria residen los grandes amores a la Iglesia. Amar a España es amar lo más grande, lo más sublime. Despreciarla, es despreciar lo más sagrado. El que ame de verdad a España y a su Iglesia es el que obtendrá el galardón en esta tierra y en el Cielo.[16]

After the war, the Basques were continually reminded from the pulpit of their duty to Spain, but Church support for the dictatorship and its ideology also took more subtle forms. The prohibition of *Euskera* applied to religious sermons and Church compliance in this matter, despite the pastoral difficulties it created in rural areas where *Euskera* was still widely spoken, helped confirm the dominance of Spanish culture. Indeed, in the ceremonies of National Catholicism all symbols of Basque uniqueness were removed, and

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[14] Translation: 'The annual festivities of the sacred ministries are more effective than the solemn documents of the Church's teaching for educating the people in matters of faith, since they are easier to adapt for the average believer, directed as they are, not merely at the intelligence, but also at the heart and the emotions through the suggestive force of the sacred rites and ceremonies.' *Boletín Oficial del Obispado de Vitoria* 1-X-1939, quoted in Ibid. p. 27.

[15] Severiano Rojo Hernández has surveyed the content of *La Gaceta del Norte* during the principle religious festivals – Easter, the Feast of the Assumption and Christmas - for the period 1938-1950. He notes a conscious effort at religious re-education promoted through the newspaper in the form of articles explaining the religious significance of the date in question. He finds that this practice begins to decline from 1945 onwards, and by 1950 has practically disappeared. Rojo Hernández, pp. 176-178.

[16] Translation: 'All our devotion should be concentrated in the Spanish Church and Homeland. In saying Spain, I say Church. In our love for our Homeland resides our great devotion for the Church. To love Spain is to love what is greatest, what is most sublime. To scorn her, is to scorn what is most sacred. He who truly loves Spain and her Church will obtain his reward on this earth and in Heaven.' *Boletín Oficial del Obispado de Vitoria* 1-XII-1937 quoted in García de Cortázar, 'La Iglesia que Franco no quiso: Religión y política en el País Vasco (1936-1975)', *Saioak* 5 (1983), pp. 49-76 (p. 53).

replaced with symbols of the Spanish nation. The flying of the *Ikurriña*, the Basque flag, was prohibited, while the Spanish flag was proudly displayed at all public gatherings. Symbolic reminders of Franco's victory were incorporated into religious services: huge triumphal field masses were celebrated, accompanied by Spanish military music and the playing of the Spanish national anthem.

While political symbols were invading the religious sphere, the reverse was also happening: symbols of the Catholic faith, such as statues of the Sacred Heart and other religious monuments, were erected by the authorities in public places.[17] Town squares, streets, bridges and parks were re-baptised in politico-religious ceremonies, and given names that reflected the values of the regime. Provinces and towns were dedicated to the saints and to the Sacred Heart, always with clear reference to the fact that these were patrons of Spain.[18] Symbols familiar to the Basque people as objects of devotion were instrumentalised in the promotion of Spanish nationalism. In addition, the authorities also carried out what one historian has described as 'cosmetic surgery' on those figures of devotion that were essentially Basque in their origins.[19] Rather than attempt to eliminate them, the regime incorporated Basque saints and places of worship into the machinery of National Catholicism, with pilgrimages and processions rededicating them to Spain.

Javier Sánchez Erauskin has pointed out that the impact of the politico-religious messages of National Catholicism was magnified in a society where private space was continually invaded by an institutionalised public sphere and people had few possibilities of escape through holidays and other diversions.[20] Local dances, festivals and carnivals had all been prohibited, and replaced with a prolific number of religious ceremonies and festivals. When a decree of 9 March 1940 established Spain's national holidays, thirteen, out of

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[17] Rojo Hernández, p. 182.
[18] A perfect illustration is the dedication of Guipúzcoa to the Virgen del Pilar in 1940, the year of her centenary, when the President of the Provincial Council declared: 'Guipúzcoa te ama porque eres madre de Dios y porque eres Virgen de España'. (Translation: Guipúzcoa loves you because you are the mother of God and because you are Virgin of Spain.) *BOOV*, 16-I-40 p. 66, quoted in Sánchez Erauskin, p. 51.
[19] Ibid. p. 62.
[20] Ibid. p. 25.

a total of seventeen, were religious festivals.[21] However, non-religious motives for attending these ceremonies were prevalent: the nature of society under the Franco dictatorship meant that it was important to be seen at these events, not least of all because a certificate of good conduct from the local priest was necessary in order to guarantee many basic necessities.

The Catholic hierarchy thus gave its support to a system based on an illusory appearance of universal devotion to both Church and State. The close collaboration of the Spanish hierarchy with the Franco regime facilitated social control through penetration of communities at parish level and contributed to the creation of a situation where 'collective protest was almost impossible to mount'.[22] Such achievements, however, were purely superficial; the absence of protests in the streets belied the intense opposition to the regime simmering below the surface. Despite the strength of Basque devotion to the Catholic Church, the weight of ecclesiastical authority was insufficient to compel Basque nationalists to give loyalty to the Spanish state. This is hardly surprising given the decision by the State to exile leading members of the clergy, including Bishop Múgica. The policy of exile had the additional undesirable consequence of placing some of the regime's most determined opponents beyond its reach, enabling them to challenge its authority at an international level. Beyond the Spanish borders political and cultural opposition to the dictatorship was being organised, often with the support of members of the Catholic clergy, now outside the control of both civil and ecclesiastical authorities.

Exiled Basque priests in France in particular were actively engaged in undermining the image of National Catholicism. Reports from the Spanish Ambassador in Paris frequently complained of anti-Spanish propaganda, such as the circulation of a photograph issued to the press in 1940 showing a large group of Basque priests in a Spanish prison.[23] Religious festivals, such as the feast day of St. Ignatius, were occasions for displays of Basque culture, with

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[21] Rojo Hernández, p. 175.
[22] Michael Richards, *A Time of Silence. Civil War and the Culture of Repression in Franco's Spain, 1936-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 156.
[23] *Memorandum No.283 Política-Europea,* París 20 de febrero de 1940, Archivo General de la Administración (AGA) Sec. Exteriores, I.D.D. 97, Caja 11383 Rojos Vascos Separatistas.

the flying of the Ikurriña and the singing of songs in Euskera at religious services.[24] These ceremonies were reported in the press and some were attended by members of the exiled Basque government.[25]

In addition to these activities, Basque priests also engaged in more overt propaganda activities. Fr. Alberto de Onaindía frequently broadcast information on the Basque situation on Radio Paris during the post-World War II period under the pseudonym 'Padre Olaso', with a view to reaching an international audience.[26] A bi-monthly publication entitled *Anayak* (Brothers) was initiated in 1937.[27] Written in French, this was described as the '*Bulletin des prêtres basques en exil*' (Bulletin of exiled Basque priests), and contained contributions from well-known figures, including Onaindía. *Anayak* explained the attitude adopted by the exiled priests during the civil war, and the reasons for their opposition to the emerging Franco regime. Following the death of Pope Pius XI, *Anayak* published a copy of a letter from Monsignor Mathieu, Bishop of Dax, describing an interview with the Pope in which the Holy Father had assured him that he was aware of the 'Christian vitality' of the Basques.[28]

Not content with asserting control over its own national hierarchy, the Franco dictatorship began to turn its attention to the French bishops. There was growing concern in Spain that the attitude of the French ecclesiastical authorities to Basque exiles was excessively tolerant; Basque priests were permitted to continue their ministry in exile, with some even assigned parishes.[29] Monsignor Mathieu frequently incurred the rancour of the Spanish authorities with his activities in support of the Basque community.

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[24] *Memorandum No. 166 Informe sobre manifestaciones vasco-separatistas el día de San Ignacio*, Bayona 4 de Agosto de 1939, AGA Rojos Vascos Separatistas.

[25] Oficina de Información Diplomática: *Nota Informativa de Radio*. Madrid, 16 de Junio de 1953. AGA Rojos Vascos Separatistas.

[26] A broadcast by Padre Olaso which stated, with reference to the Spanish situation, that 'the Church should avoid linking itself with a regime tainted by totalitarianism and its attendant evils' was noted in a *BBC Monitoring Report* No. 2750 2/7 April 1947. Copy in National Archives Dublin, Department of Foreign Affairs, P122.

[27] Complete collection in Aguirre Archive, Monasterio de Santa Teresa, Lazkano. Seven editions were produced in total.

[28] 'Monsignor Mathieu nous parle de Pie XI', *Anayak* 4 (1 Mars 1939), p. 2.

[29] *Consulado de España, Bayona: Despacho Num. 148. Asunto: Da cuenta del fallecimiento de Monseñor Houbaut, Obispo de Bayona.* Bayona, 20 de Julio de 1939, AGA Rojos Vascos Separatistas.

Commenting on the aforementioned celebrations for St. Ignatius' Day the Spanish consul remarked:

> Nada de esto tendría gran importancia si no hubiese dicho la misa y dado la comunión Monseñor Mathieu Obispo de Dax, si a la misma no hubiese asistido igualmente otro Obispo (Monseñor St. Pierre, de Argel según me dicen) y si no hubieran estado presentes en el banquete las Autoridades francesas entre ellas el Alcalde.[30]

In July 1939 the Spanish ambassador made a series of complaints to Cardinal Verdier of Paris regarding the situation of Basque exiles. Spanish authorities were troubled by the continued publication of *Anayak* (in spite of the censure of the Archbishop of Paris), the attitude of the Bishop of Dax, and the Cardinal's own involvement with the '*Ligue des Amis des Basques*' (League of the Friends of the Basques), regarded by the Spanish authorities as an essentially political and separatist organisation.[31] A letter from the Spanish Consul to the Minister for Foreign Affairs in Burgos later that same month reveals a keen interest in ecclesiastical affairs north of the Spanish border and an awareness that developments here could have an impact on Spain's image abroad. The Consul warned the Minister that the Episcopal See of Bayonne had become vacant following the death of Monsignor Houbaut and that the government should do everything in its power to avoid the appointment of a bishop whose views on the Basque question would create difficulties.[32]

On 25 November 1944 a group of exiled Basque priests decided to bring their protest directly to the Vatican and wrote a collective letter denouncing the collaboration of the Catholic Church with the Franco regime, focusing in particular on its role in the Basque Country.[33] The letter condemned in the strongest possible terms the support given to Franco by the

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[30] Translation: 'None of this would be of any great importance if it had not been Monsignor Mathieu, Bishop of Dax, who said the Mass and distributed Communion, if another bishop had not attended as well (Monsignor St. Pierre, from Argel I am told), and if the French authorities, including the Mayor, had not been present at the banquet.' *Memorandum No. 166 Informe sobre manifestaciones vasco-separatistas el día de San Ignacio*, Bayona 4 de Agosto de 1939, AGA Rojos Vascos Separatistas.

[31] *Memorandum No. 812 Política-Europa. Asunto: Conversación con el Cardenal Verdier.* Paris, 4 de Julio de 1939, AGA Rojos Vascos Separatistas.

[32] *Consulado de España, Bayona: Despacho Núm. 148. Asunto: Da cuenta del fallecimiento de Monseñor Houbaut, Obispo de Bayona.* Bayona, 20 de Julio de 1939, AGA Rojos Vascos Separatistas.

[33] Xavier d'Iramuno [Pseudonym of José Miguel de Barandiaran]: *Persecuted, Defamed, Abandoned. The Basque Clergy: Defending Justice and Brotherhood it serves the Church of Christ* (Bayonne: Société d'Editions et d'Imprimerie du Sud-Ouest. 1946).

Spanish hierarchy while the clergy of Vitoria were suffering persecution at the hands of his troops. The priests made a series of demands aimed at restoring the independence of the Basque Church and obtaining justice for those members of the clergy persecuted by the Franco regime. This letter was significant for two reasons: firstly, it belied the image of unity and harmony between Church and State portrayed by the proponents of National Catholicism. Furthermore, while the priests were at pains to stress that they did not withhold obedience from their hierarchical superiors,[34] this direct appeal to the Vatican suggested a lack of faith in the national hierarchy. The timing of the letter was also significant. In 1944, in the context of World War II, Franco was at pains to demonstrate his loyalty to the Catholic Church in a bid to convince the Papacy and other foreign powers that his was not a Fascist regime.

The letter condemned attempts by the Franco regime to eliminate the Basque culture, and stressed the importance to the Basque people of the preservation of their cultural identity, and, in particular, their language. The defence of the Basque language was expressed with reference to Christian values and contained clear echoes of the ideology of Sabino de Arana:

> It is one of the original elements of the Basque people, a powerful vehicle of their traditional customs and, above all, of their purified Christian spirit. Moreover, in conjunction with the other elements of traditional Basque culture, it is the wall which protects our people against the avalanche of irreligion and immorality of the surrounding populations.[35]

For Basque nationalists, the lack of recognition for their culture, language and ethnic uniqueness from both the Catholic hierarchy and the Vatican was to be a source of major disappointment, and would be reflected in the rejection of the ecclesiastical authorities appointed to the region.

The letter to the Vatican received no response. Instead, in 1949, Franco's Catholic opponents in the Basque region were dealt a devastating blow when the Vatican agreed to the division of the Diocese of Vitoria and the creation of two new dioceses: Bilbao and San Sebastián. Although this measure could be justified for pastoral reasons – namely the size of the diocese of Vitoria and the wider plan to make diocesan and administrative

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[34] Ibid. p. 25.
[35] Ibid. p. 13.

divisions coincide across Spain – dismemberment of the diocese was not the only option available to the Vatican, which could have chosen instead to create a Basque ecclesiastical province. Such a move would clearly not have found favour with the Franco regime, however, whereas the creation of new dioceses was undoubtedly advantageous from the point of view of the Spanish state. Each diocese would now have its own seminary and the clergy would no longer be trained all together in the seminary of Vitoria to which the regime so strongly objected. Finally, in what was regarded as a further concession to the Franco regime, three non-Basque bishops were chosen to head the new dioceses. In 1956 the See of Pamplona was raised to the category of Archdiocese and the Diocese of San Sebastián was included in its territory, while Bilbao and Vitoria continued to depend on the Archdiocese of Burgos. Such decisions implied a negation by the Vatican of the existence of a separate Basque identity.

One of the first tests for the new bishop of Bilbao, Monsignor Morcillo, was the question of the local Capuchin monastery in Bilbao. The monastery belonged to the Province of Castile, but the Capuchins of Navarre had demanded its inclusion within their province for political and ethnic reasons. Incorporation had been granted in 1916, but was delayed due to objections from both the Spanish government and the Capuchins of Castile, who wished to maintain the status quo. In 1950 the issue was re-examined and the change was due to take place on 31 December. The government, fearful of provoking a rupture with Rome while both parties were engaged in difficult negotiations for a new Concordat, sought instead the opinion of the Bishops of Bilbao and Pamplona. Monsignor Morcillo declared himself to be in total agreement with the government, fearing that the joining of the monastery of Bilbao to the province of Navarre could lead to an influx of separatist clergy, thereby aggravating the politico-religious situation in the province of Vizcaya. On 13 December the bishop declared his unconditional support for the Capuchins of Castile and on 10 December 1951 the Papal Nuncio, Monsignor Cicognani, informed the government that there would be no

change.[36] Once again, recognition of the existence of a unique Basque identity had been denied by the ecclesiastical authorities, and decisions relating to the organisation of the Catholic Church in the region had been taken in deference to the regime.

While the new bishops may have found favour with the regime, many of their clergy were far from satisfied. The appointment of non-Basque bishops, who did not speak Euskera, was held to be a contradiction of the Church's teaching on the use of indigenous languages in missionary work, and the new bishops were deemed insufficiently aware of the situation in the Basque region to be able to provide effective leadership. This view is succinctly expressed in a letter from a group of priests of the Diocese of San Sebastián to their new bishop, Monsignor Font Andreu, prior to his arrival in 1950.[37] The priests described their parishioners as being in a state of 'incertitude and anxiety',[38] and put to the bishop a series of questions, which, it was claimed, were frequently asked by the lay community. The letter asked why the Church's teaching on the use of indigenous languages in preaching was not respected in the region and why excessive manifestations of Spanish nationalism were permitted in churches, when even the mildest expression of Basque nationalism was prohibited. With clear echoes of the collective letter of 1944, the accommodating attitude of the ecclesiastical authorities towards the State was denounced, together with the failure of the Catholic hierarchy to support the persecuted Basque clergy.

In presenting this letter to the bishop, the priests saw themselves as merely acting as 'postmen', passing on the views of the people.[39] One of the priests involved, Fr. Serafin Esnaola, has explained that the letter represented an attempt by those priests who desired a hierarchy faithful to the people, to provoke some reflection on the part of the ecclesiastical authorities, even though they had little hope of success.[40] This letter did not of course represent the views of the whole population, and other groups were attempting to win

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[36] Severiano Rojo Hernández, 'El caso del convento de los capuchinos de Bilbao: geografía eclesiástica y franquismo en 1950.' *Hispania Nova* 1 (1998-2000) [Online journal accessed 5 October 2005].
[37] Text of the letter in Esnaola and Iturrarán, VI pp. 53-59.
[38] Ibid. p. 54.
[39] *Egiz* 11 (Enero 1951).
[40] Esnaola and Iturrarán, p. 69.

the support of the new bishop. On 24 September 1950 the *Comunión Tradicionalista de Guipúzcoa* (Traditionalist Communion of Guipúzcoa) sent a letter to the bishop expressing the views of those loyal to the regime and warning him of the danger presented by the 'political' activities of some members of the lower clergy.[41] This competition between the various factions to win the support of the bishops would be a feature of the Basque dioceses throughout the dictatorship.

National Catholicism once again widened the gap between the hierarchy and those members of the lower clergy with Basque nationalist sympathies, which under Bishop Múgica had appeared to be narrowing. This distance became more apparent during the 1950s with the appearance of clandestine publications expressing the viewpoint of that section of the Basque clergy opposed to National Catholicism, and often directly criticising the hierarchy. The first of these publications, entitled *Egiz* (with the truth), appeared in March 1950, describing itself as a publication of Basque priests. The aim of *Egiz*, as outlined in its first issue, was to echo the 'sentiments and aspirations that cannot be freely expressed under the regime of General Franco'.[42] *Egiz* called on the Church, and the hierarchy in particular, to work for reconciliation in Basque society and to end the Church's involvement in commemorations and celebrations that only served to reinforce the division of the Basque people.[43]

While the authors of *Egiz* echoed the disappointment of the Basque people at the naming of non-Basque bishops for the region, they nonetheless declared their loyalty to their new superiors and were at pains to point out that their opposition was not directed at the bishops as individuals, but rather at the manner of their appointment.[44] For the duration of the Franco regime, new bishops appointed to the Basque dioceses would find their authority subject to question before they had been able to demonstrate the shape their leadership would take. Some seven months later, however, the priests of *Egiz*

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[41] Anabella Barroso Arahuetes, *Sacerdotes bajo la atenta mirada del régimen franquista* (Bilbao: Desclée de Brouwer, 1995), p. 49.
[42] *Egiz* 1 (Marzo 1950).
[43] *Egiz* 5 (Julio 1950).
[44] *Egiz* 4 (Junio 1950).

made a more specific complaint referring to the lack of assistance and comprehension from the ecclesiastical authorities.[45]

In September 1951 the bishops of the three Basque dioceses issued a decree forbidding priests to collaborate in any way in the reproduction and distribution of *Egiz*. At the same time however, in a seeming contradiction, they maintained that *Egiz* could not really be a 'Publication by Basque Priests', since the authors had failed to request from their superiors the licence required by Canon Law:

> Por otra parte, la clara y manifiesta orientación política y partidista de la citada publicación, por no citar sus nada infrecuentes insidias contra la Jerarquía Eclesiástica, nos llevan a la persuasión de que "Egiz" no es publicación de sacerdotes de nuestra Diócesis de San Sebastián, pues, si lo fuera, no habrían dejado de cumplir lo mandado por el canon 1386.[46]

The authors of *Egiz* reproduced the episcopal decree in the subsequent number of the publication, which appeared in the month of October, followed by a series of articles explaining and defending their actions.[47] In a particularly revealing article, entitled 'La autoridad eclesiástica y la opinión pública en el seno de la Iglesia' (The ecclesiastical authority and public opinion in the heart of the Church), the priests declared their willingness to rectify any error proved against them, particularly in reference to the ecclesiastical hierarchy, for whom they maintained the highest respect. They wished to make clear, however, that the ecclesiastical authorities were not above criticism in matters that fell outside the realm of Papal infallibility, and that the clergy were within their rights to respectfully point out any deficiencies in the decisions taken by their superiors. Finally they categorically stated that *Egiz* did not represent an act of rebellion or disobedience, but merely the desire to speak the truth.[48]

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[45] *Egiz* 11 (Enero 1951).

[46] Translation: 'Furthermore, the clear and manifest political and partisan orientation of the aforementioned publication, not to mention its not infrequent malicious attacks on the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, leads us to believe that 'Egiz' is not a publication by our priests of San Sebastián, because, if it were, they would not have failed to comply with the requirements of Canon 1386.' A copy of the Decree was reproduced in *Egiz* 16 (Agosto-Septiembre-Octubre 1951) and also published in the Diocesan Bulletins of Vitoria, Bilbao and San Sebastián for the month of September.

[47] See for example: 'La clandestinidad no es delito' (clandestinity is not a crime), 'Política y moral' (Politics and morality) *Egiz* 16 (Agosto-Septiembre-Octubre 1951).

[48] *Egiz* 16 (Agosto-Septiembre-Octubre 1951).

A further issue of *Egiz* was produced in November/December of 1951, but a repetition of the Episcopal prohibition, with the threat of tougher sanctions, led to its disappearance. In the final issue of August 1952 the priests once again reproduced the Episcopal decree and declared that they were abandoning the publication in order to avoid causing a scandal amongst the faithful with their seeming disobedience. They lamented, however, the failure of the bishops to properly address the issues raised by *Egiz* and to state their objections to the content of the publication.[49]

The priests of *Egiz* had highlighted the widening gap between the Basque people and the ecclesiastical authorities, but the bishops appeared unwilling to address the issue through dialogue, preferring instead to fall back on the principle of obedience and the threat of canonical sanctions. This was to be a recurring pattern in the Basque dioceses throughout the Franco dictatorship. Not only were valuable opportunities for conciliatory gestures by the hierarchy lost, but the tough line adopted by the bishops could often be counterproductive, as in the case of *Egiz*. Fr. Serafin Esnaola, one of the collaborators, has explained how the Episcopal decrees condemning *Egiz*, appearing as they did in the diocesan bulletins, served as publicity, making members of the lay community aware of the publication and anxious to know its content. The condemnations were even reported in the international press.[50]

A second clandestine publication appeared in 1954 entitled *Egi Billa* (in search of the truth). Although this was described as a 'Publication by Basque Catholics' rather than priests, in reality many of the same individuals were involved. Since it did not claim the same direct association with the Basque clergy as *Egiz*, however, *Egi Billa* did not provoke the same forceful reaction from the hierarchy and continued until 1961 when it was replaced by another clandestine publication, this time without name or author, known simply as *Sine Nomine*. The decision to become involved in these publications was not one that was taken lightly by the priests involved as it exposed them to considerable risks, including exile, loss of livelihood and imprisonment.

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[49] *Egiz* 18 (Agosto 1952).
[50] Esnaola and Iturrarán, pp. 40-41.

The process of producing the publications themselves was extremely difficult and involved the smuggling of typewriters and paper from across the border in France. Priests would not refer to the publication by telephone for fear that their conversations would be intercepted by the authorities and instead used the codename 'Félix', enquiring for example for Félix's health if they wished to check whether or not the publication was ready.[51] The motivation of these priests is clear from the titles chosen for their publications. With all public sources of information controlled by the regime, the priests sought another means of publicising the 'truth' to counteract the dominant narrative of the Franco regime. The Basque bishops were not prepared to allow such spaces to be created under their auspices, but would soon find that changes in the relations between the Church and the regime at an international level had placed the Basque Church at the centre of the opposition to the dictatorship.

On 27 August 1953 the Vatican signed a new Concordat with the Spanish state. Described by *Le Monde* as 'the greatest victory for General Franco's regime since the end of the Civil War',[52] the Concordat was hailed as a sign of the Vatican's approval of the Spanish political system. The *Osservatore Romano* pointed out that what made the Spanish Concordat unique was that it was signed, not to put an end to a state of conflict, but to stabilise and improve an existing situation.[53] This statement, however, is far from an accurate depiction of the situation. In spite of the prolific displays of loyalty to the Catholic Church that followed Franco's victory, the Vatican remained wary of the new regime, its attitude contrasting strongly with the enthusiasm of the national hierarchy.[54] This was particularly evident in the negotiations for the new Concordat.

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[51] Author interview with Fr. Juan José Aguirre, 8 June 2006.

[52] 'Caution morale?' *Le Monde* 29 August 1953 [n.p.n.] quoted in *La Documentation Catholique* CCL (1953), p. 1169.

[53] *Osservatore Romano*, 28 August 1953.

[54] Reporting on a conversation with Monsignor Domenico Tardini, then Secretary of the Roman Curia and later to be appointed Vatican Secretary of State in 1958, the Irish Ambassador to the Holy See summarised the Vatican attitude to the Franco regime in 1947 as follows: 'The H.S. [Holy See] does not like dictators because their regimes are abnormal, liable to violent change, and if stable for the time being, are in themselves sources of future instability. All that is bad for the Church...' *Copy of Report from Ambassador to Holy See*, 20 May 1947. National Archives, Dublin. Department of Foreign Affairs P122.

The status of the Concordat between Spain and the Vatican had been the subject of much controversy from the moment the Franco regime came to power. Franco argued that the Concordat signed between the Vatican and the Spanish monarchy in 1851 remained in force, because although rejected by the government of the Second Republic, it had never been revoked by the Vatican. Crucially, this Concordat had conferred upon the Spanish Monarchs patronage rights over Episcopal appointments. The Vatican preferred to accept the unilateral rejection of the Concordat rather than grant similar rights to the Franco regime. Franco, however, was determined to have a say in the naming of bishops and this issue became the crux of the negotiations for a new Concordat.[55]

In 1941 a limited diplomatic agreement, called the '*Convenio*,' re-established a measure of ecclesiastical patronage but included an agreement by the Franco regime not to act unilaterally on matters of mutual interest to both Church and State.[56] Although hailed as a success by official propaganda, the Convenio did not provide the regime with the total endorsement Franco was seeking. Tensions remained and no bishops were appointed to fill vacancies until 1942 since the Vatican objected to bishops swearing an oath of allegiance to the State and the regime was attempting to find candidates sympathetic to the Falange.[57] The Concordat was not signed for another twelve years, and external factors were to play a crucial role in motivating both parties to come to an agreement. The successful conclusion of a Concordat with the Vatican became a top priority for the regime after Spain's support for the axis powers during World War II condemned it to a situation of international isolation. The threat to international stability posed by the Cold War also made the Vatican keen to bring Spain firmly within its sphere of influence.

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[55] See: William J. Callahan, 'Regalism, Liberalism and General Franco' *The Catholic Historical Review* 87.3 (1997), pp. 202-215.

[56] See Antonio Marquina Barrio, *La Diplomacia Vaticana y la España de Franco (1936-1945)* (Madrid: Instituto Enrique Flórez, 1982), for a detailed analysis of the negotiations leading up to the signing of the Convenio.

[57] William J. Callahan, *The Catholic Church in Spain* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2000), p. 388.

The final Concordat provided no significant changes to the provisions of the Convenio. It made Spain a confessional state (Art. I) and confirmed the privileged position granted to the Catholic Church by the Franco regime, including Church control of education (Arts. XXVI, XXVII), the promotion of religious messages through the mass-media (Art. XXIX), and financial support (Art. XIX).[58] While the signing of the Concordat may have represented a veritable triumph for the Franco regime, the Catholic Church, by allying itself with a totalitarian state, had seriously compromised its position. In defence of the Vatican, Michael O'Carroll has claimed that 'Pius XII did not impose the confessional state on Spain. The Spaniards chose it, though consulting Rome on how the statement of it should be worded.'[59] While it is true that National Catholicism was not a Vatican invention, it would be equally unjust to portray it as a reflection of the sentiments of the Spanish population. As José María Setién (Bishop of San Sebastián from 1979 to 2000) has pointed out, National Catholicism was not an expression of an existing reality, but rather a political objective[60] – in this case the ideals of the Franco regime.

The signing of the Concordat was a further blow to Basque nationalists, who had hoped that the isolation of the Franco regime might enable them to obtain international support for their cause. The Concordat also had significant implications for the independence of the Church, confirming Franco's patronage rights over the naming of bishops under the tercio system established by the Convenio.[61] Commenting on this situation in 1948, the Irish Ambassador to the Holy See had observed:

> From the point of view of the Holy See the real difficulty about Spain is the [continuation] of the pernicious privilege of the direct appointment of Bishops claimed by all Governments whatever their colour. This is the fundamental cause of the large number of ambitious, proud, wealthy and time serving prelates in Spain who, notwithstanding the civil war, have learned very few lessons. We should be

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[58] Text of the Concordat in Fernando Díaz-Plaza, *La posguerra española en sus documentos* (Barcelona: Plaza y Janés, 1970), pp. 305-325.

[59] Michael O'Carroll, *Pius XII: Greatness Dishonoured* (Dublin: Laetare Press, 1980), p. 211.

[60] José María Setién, 'Repurcusiones del nacional-catolicismo en la vida de nuestra Iglesia' *Iglesia Viva* (1970), pp. 485-496 (p. 485).

[61] Under this system the Spanish government, in consultation with the papal nuncio, selected six potential candidates to fill a vacant See. This list was sent to the Pope, who returned a list of three to the Head of State, who would then select the final candidate from this list.

> grateful for the relative humility of our Bishops and for the fact that we first hear of their appointment through the morning papers.[62]

In addition, the bishops were obliged to swear an oath of allegiance to the regime (quoted at the beginning of this chapter) which made them responsible for the actions of their clergy, preventing any ill that might threaten the Spanish nation. For the opponents of the regime the Concordat thus converted the bishops into badly paid civil servants,[63] while in the Basque Country its most salient result was a loss of faith in the ecclesiastical authorities.[64]

According to William J. Callahan, 'the Concordat applied a final coat of veneer to National Catholicism, but failed to strengthen it from within'.[65] The appearance of unity and harmony conveyed through the ostentatious politico-religious ceremonies masked deep divisions. A clear illustration of this can be found in the relations between the Church and the working classes. 1953 was the year of the *Misión del Nervión* in Bilbao, which aimed to reach 400,000 people. The Mission was held in a variety of locations; besides churches, meetings were held in schools, cinemas and other public buildings and loudspeakers carried the message onto the streets.[66] During the early years of the Franco regime, it was clear that both Church and State had lost their grip on the working classes: not only were levels of religious practice among the workers low, but they also represented the greatest threat to the stability of the regime. The working classes bore a disproportionate amount of the burden resulting from the regime's autarkic economic policy, with many living in conditions of acute poverty. Convinced that Catholicism would act as an antidote to Marxism amongst the workers, the regime facilitated, in every way possible, Church penetration of working-class districts, making it virtually impossible for workers to escape its influence.

During the 1940s the collaboration of civil and Church authorities in Bilbao had led to the creation of eleven new parishes, all located in industrial areas and built on land donated or subsidised by the State. Significantly,

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[62] J. P. Walsh to F. H. Boland, 22 March 1948. National Archives, Dublin. Department of Foreign Affairs P122
[63] Blázquez, p. 49.
[64] Esnaola, VI p. 140.
[65] Callahan, *The Catholic Church in Spain*, p. 388.
[66] Rojo Hernández, p. 187.

leading industrialists also contributed financially to the construction of these new churches. In order to avoid the impression that the new parishes were being imposed on the people, the Church organised fund-raising activities with the participation of the local community.[67] In this collaborative effort, the dividing lines between religious and political spheres of influence once again became blurred. The Christian principle of sacrifice as a form of redemption was manipulated by the dictatorship, which claimed that true Spaniards were called upon to make sacrifices in the name of national regeneration.[68]

One of the key redeeming features of the 1953 Concordat, from the point of view of the Church, had been the freedom it gave to Catholic worker organisations – the only such organisations permitted outside State control. In the Basque Country, where the vertical unions of the Falange had failed to attract significant support, the Church was to play an important role through *Acción Católica* (Catholic Action) and its specialist organisations such as the *Hermandad Obrera de Acción Católica* (The Brotherhood of Workers of Catholic Action), founded in 1946. The hierarchy took a much more active interest in *Acción Católica* than it had in the pre-war STV, led by members of the Basque clergy. Nonetheless, the bishops were unable to prevent these organisations becoming key sources of opposition to the regime.

The period of the late 1940s and early 1950s saw the beginning of strike action by Basque workers, which was to become a feature of Basque political life until the end of the dictatorship. The strike action was part of a wider phenomenon occurring in other parts of the Spanish territory, but in the Basque Country the support of the Basque government in exile ensured that the challenge to the Franco regime was of a more political nature. As soon as the first strikes began, it became clear that the policy of promoting close contact between the clergy and the workers, supported by both the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, had backfired. Many of these priests came to identify with the demands of the working classes, and openly supported their right to strike. The response of the hierarchy was to tighten its control on

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[67] Ibid. pp. 165-167.
[68] Richards, pp. 23-24.

organisations such as *Acción Católica*, as is illustrated by a letter from Bishop Gúrpide to the Diocesan Committee in 1968 in which he reminded them that what distinguished Acción Católica from other apostolic organisations was the central position occupied by the hierarchy.[69] The identification of members of the clergy with these protests was particularly disturbing to both civil and ecclesiastical authorities when they began to voice this support publicly from the pulpit. The bishops attempted to remedy this situation by forbidding their priests to preach a sermon during periods of political tension and to tighten their control over the apostolic workers' associations – a blatantly inadequate response, which sought to suppress manifestations of dissent, rather than tackle its underlying causes. By the 1950's, however, the political and social climate was undergoing irrevocable changes.

As Carrie Hamilton has observed: 'The grassroots Christian movement in the Basque country (sic) paralleled that in the rest of Spain, with the important added factors of cultural/linguistic difference, nationalism, and a particularly intense history of devotion.'[70] The Basque bishops were thus faced with a two-pronged challenge: opposition to the Franco regime, combined with opposition to Spanish identity. This opposition took on a new dynamic with the creation, in 1959, of *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (ETA – meaning Basque Country and Freedom). ETA was formed when the group known as *Ekin* (meaning 'to do' in Euskera), founded seven years earlier by a group of university students in Bilbao, broke its links with the PNV. The aim behind *Ekin* had been to organise actions aimed at preventing the extermination of native Basque culture. This group then merged with the youth wing of the PNV (*Eusko Gaztedi del Interior*) in 1956, but the more militant attitude of these new recruits soon led to clashes with the PNV leadership, and three years later the *Ekin* members left to found their own organisation, taking a number of the *Eusko Gaztedi* members with them. During the early years of its existence the organisation limited itself to largely

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[69] *Boletín Oficial del Obispado de Bilbao* (BOOB) (1968), p. 153.
[70] Carrie Hamilton, 'The Gender Politics of ETA and Radical Basque Nationalism 1959-1982' (PhD, Royal Holloway University of London, 1999), p. 106.

symbolic actions, but from 1961 onwards it became progressively more militant, opening a new chapter in the history of radical Basque nationalism.[71]

The opening up of the Spanish economy had brought with it an influx of foreign ideas into Spain which were also reflected in the composition of the lower clergy. A new generation of priests had emerged who had not participated in the civil war and were influenced by ideas from countries such as France and Germany, where many of them had studied. Acutely aware of the tensions created by the Church's support for National Catholicism, these priests were prepared to openly challenge the authority of their superiors. The first major public challenge to the Basque Ecclesiastical authorities came in May 1960 in the form of the famous 'Document of the 339 Priests'. This was a collective letter, addressed to the bishops of the Basque dioceses and signed by 339 Basque priests, in which they denounced the human rights abuses committed by the Franco regime in Spain in general, and more specifically the persecution of the ethnic, linguistic and social characteristics of the Basque people.[72]

In language that anticipated the Second Vatican Council, set to commence two years later, the signatories declared that their analysis of the situation in Franco's Spain, and the Basque Country in particular, was founded on the teaching of the Catholic Church on the natural rights of individuals and communities. The letter advocated freedom of conscience and the right to truth. It condemned 'super-propaganda' and other methods of coercion employed by the State to subvert the freedom of the individual. Finally, it denounced the policy adopted by the Franco dictatorship towards Basque culture, and *Euskera* in particular, as 'reactionary, inhuman and bordering on genocide'.

While no Spanish newspaper would print the document, copies were obtained by international press, including *France-Press*.[73] With the attention of the world's media focused on Spain, the civil authorities, although incensed by the contents of the document, were anxious to avoid the further negative publicity that would be generated by harsh reprisals against the

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[71] Ecclesiastical responses to ETA will be examined in detail in Chapter Ten.
[72] Copy of the letter complete with signatures in Esnaola and Iturrarán, VI pp. 243-251.
[73] Ibid, p. 273.

signatories, and instead left the matter in the hands of the Church authorities. The reaction of the bishops did not disappoint. In a joint statement of 1 July 1960 the bishops rejected the document on the grounds of its political nature and the 'evident falsehoods' it contained. They also criticised the manner in which it was presented and questioned its authenticity.[74] Once again, however, the bishops refused to address specific issues or to indicate which statements they regarded as false. Unlike the original document, the response of the bishops received wide diffusion in the Spanish press.[75]

Declarations from the Vatican and the Papal Nuncio in support of the Basque bishops were similarly guaranteed maximum publicity.[76] Inaugurating the Seminary of Bilbao on 30 October 1960, the Nuncio reminded his listeners that: 'The army of Christ the King is a hierarchical army, led by the Bishops together with the Supreme Pontiff.'[77] In the context of Franco's Spain this militaristic metaphor may have appeared singularly appropriate to many of his listeners. Similar sentiments had been expressed by a member of the Basque clergy in an article that appeared on 24 July in *La Voz de España* entitled, '*Total adhesión al Obispo*' (Total Adhesion to the Bishop):

> '[E]n la Iglesia al pueblo no corresponde poder alguno de mando, ni siquiera a los sacerdotes, de suerte que de ese poder, llamado en terminología técnica JURISDICCIÓN, reside privativa y exclusivamente en unas determinadas personas, que son con toda propiedad los Pastores de rebaño de Cristo.'[78]

The same day a delegation of priests visited Bishop Font Andreu in a public display of loyalty.[79] In October Bishop Gúrpide, in a Pastoral Exhortation, denounced the 'absurd' trend that sought to reach Christ 'without going through the Church'. The attitude of a 'genuine Catholic' to the Church, the bishop declared, could only be characterised by 'love, reverence, obedience and deference'.[80] As in the case of *Egiz*, however, the reaction of the

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[74] Ibid, p. 281.
[75] See for example: *Diario Vasco*, 7 July 1960; *Ya*, 7 July 1960.
[76] See for example: *Diario Vasco*, 9 July 1960; *La Voz de España*, 2 August 1960.
[77] Esnaola and Iturrarán, VI p. 283.
[78] Translation: '[I]n the Church the people have no power of command whatsoever, not even the priests, since this power, referred to in technical terms as JURISDICTION, resides exclusively with certain persons, who are the rightful Pastors of Christ's flock.' *La Voz de España*, 24 July 1960. [Emphasis as in the original].
[79] See: *Diario Vasco*, 24 July 1960; *La Voz de España*, 24 July 1960.
[80] *La Gaceta del Norte*, 2 October 1960.

hierarchy proved counter-productive, increasing popular awareness of the document and making lay people anxious to know its contents.[81]

For the priests involved, the portrayal of their initiative as an act of rebellion against the ecclesiastical authorities was a source of bitter disappointment, not least of all because it obscured the true nature of their message.[82] This view was reinforced by the fact that it was the ecclesiastical authorities themselves who took responsibility for punishment of the signatories. As a preliminary measure the bishops interrogated all the priests involved, in an attempt to persuade them to retract their signature. When this proved fruitless the bishops employed a variety of sanctions: priests were removed from positions such as teaching posts, denied permission to travel, even within Spain, and many were removed from their parishes. This last punishment was considered by many priests to be particularly cruel and was to be the bishops' weapon of choice in dealing with dissidents throughout the 1960's. The transfer of priests out of their parish invariably led to loss of influence and in many cases the transfer involved taking a lower position than that occupied in the previous parish. Collective action by the priests consequently became more difficult to organise.[83]

The reaction of the Basque bishops to the discontent in their dioceses throughout this period can broadly be described as negative: condemnation of actions, rejection of documents, employment of sanctions against priests. The bishops, given the relative weakness of the regime in the region noted above, were uniquely placed to be able to promote dialogue and reconciliation, but chose not to do so. The magnitude of the task of promoting dialogue between competing national interests in the context of the unashamedly totalitarian nature of the Franco regime should not of course be underestimated. In reality, many of the bishops appointed after Franco's rise to power, particularly the non-Basques, failed to comprehend the significance of Basque

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[81] In October 1960 members of the PNV organised a petition in Vizcaya and later in Guipúzcoa demanding that the Basque Bishops make public the content of the Document of the 339 and explain their specific objections. Predictably, the response of the bishops was to declare that true Catholics should accept the decisions of the hierarchy with humility and without question. Esnaola and Iturrarán, VI pp. 317-319.

[82] Ibid. p. 284.

[83] For a detailed analysis of the various sanctions imposed by the civil and ecclesiastical authorities see Barroso, pp. 72-80.

culture and traditions, and the deep attachment of the people to their national identity.

The significance of the role of the Catholic hierarchy in Franco's rise to power has been analysed in Chapter Four. It is, however, in the consolidation of his power and the establishment of the dictatorship that the role of the bishops takes on a greater significance. Catholicism is commonly referred to as one of the 'pillars' of the Franco regime, but in the aftermath of the civil war it could perhaps more accurately be described as the framework that held together all the disparate elements of Franco's '*Movimiento Nacional*'. Catholicism could not have been used in this way without the assent of the hierarchy, but the role of the Spanish bishops went far beyond mere compliance as they became enthusiastic champions and ideologues of the Franco regime. As a result, their position was to be severely weakened in the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council of 1962-65, which undermined the foundations of National Catholicism and appeared to justify the position of those members of the clergy in opposition to the Franco regime.

Chapter Seven

The Challenge of Vatican II in Northern Ireland (1962-1968)

> 'Why should you of all people stand powerless in the struggle for power, when you have been given the greatest power of all?'
>
> (Fr. Des Wilson, Open letter to the leaders of the Churches in the North of Ireland, September 1971)[1]

Opening the Second Vatican Council on 11 October 1962, Pope John XXIII expressed the wish that the work of the Council, on which 'the eyes of the peoples' and 'the hopes of the entire world' were fixed, would meet expectations.[2] Vatican II undoubtedly raised expectations of the responsibilities of the Catholic Church and its leaders in the defence of human rights and social justice. Whether those expectations were to be met would depend greatly on the leadership shown by the Catholic bishops on a national level in implementing its decrees. This chapter will examine the response of the Catholic bishops of Northern Ireland to the teaching of Vatican II during a critical period in the history of both Church and State, when old leaderships, social structures and the dominant paradigms for social action were challenged.

The Second Vatican Council was a meeting of the Catholic bishops from all over the world, and, accordingly, throughout its deliberations considerable emphasis was placed on collegiality and the authority of the Catholic hierarchy within the Church. The Council document *Lumen Gentium* [Light of the World], also known as the *Dogmatic Constitution of the Church*, contains a chapter entitled 'The Church is Hierarchical' which outlines the essential role of the bishops.[3] The same document, however, also affirms the central importance of the lay community in the life of the Church and the right of individual lay people 'to manifest their opinion on those things which

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[1] Quoted in Monica Patterson, *The Hungry Sheep of Ulster* (Belfast: The Platform Group, 1974), p. 73.
[2] 'Discorso del Sommo Pontefice Giovanni XXIII per la Solenne Apertura del SS. Concilio' par. 9.4, Papal Archive, www.vaticano.va [Accessed 27 September 2007].
[3] Text of the document in *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* ed. by Austin Flannery, New Rev. Ed. (Dublin: Domincan Publications, 1992), pp. 369-387.

pertain to the good of the Church'.[4] A key challenge then for the bishops would consist in reconciling the need to assert their leadership with the need for greater involvement of the lay community and lower clergy.

The Irish contribution to the Council was led by William Conway, who began the period as Auxiliary to Cardinal D'Alton, succeeding him upon his death as Archbishop of Armagh in 1963 and becoming Cardinal in 1965.[5] Those bishops in attendance were acutely aware of the significance of the task they were undertaking. Council proceedings were conducted in conditions of the utmost secrecy, with even the *periti*, or theological advisors of the bishops denied admission to the business sessions of the Council, particularly during the early phases. Billy Fitzgerald recounts how a certain Fr. Cahal Daly, *peritus* to Bishop William Philbin of Down and Connor and one day to be Primate of All Ireland, was found in possession of a forged official identity pass and 'hustled from the basilica in a manner more congruent with a James Cagney movie than with the august surroundings of the Vatican'.[6]

The contribution of the Irish hierarchy to the Council was regarded as positive, in stark contrast to the more difficult experience of the Spanish hierarchy, to be examined in Chapter Eight. The *Declaration on Religious Liberty*, which proved to be a major hurdle for the bishops of Spain, was warmly welcomed by their Irish counterparts. Cardinal Conway made what Louis McRedmond described as an 'important intervention' on this issue, stressing Ireland's commitment to religious liberty and praising the fact that the basis for the declaration was the concept of the dignity of the human person. Ever conscious of the situation in Northern Ireland, however, the Cardinal was critical of the 'vague' reference to the right of parents not to be 'made to bear unjust burdens' as a result of choosing denominational education for their children. Specifically, and unsurprisingly, the Cardinal wished to see a reference to the fact that some governments were denying State assistance to Catholic schools.[7]

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[4] *Lumen Gentium*, par. 37, in Ibid. p. 394.
[5] Cardinal Conway's archive contains no specific collection on the Council.
[6] Billy Fitzgerald, *Primate: A Portrait of Cardinal Cahal B. Daly* (London: Fount, 1992), p. 70.
[7] Louis McRedmond, *The Council Reconsidered* (Dublin: Gill & Son, 1966), pp. 85-86.

The bishops were to face many new challenges following the Council's conclusion, as the Church strove to narrow the gap between clergy and laity, integrating the lay community more fully into the life of the Church. Not least amongst these challenges was the task of dealing with the modern mass media. As previous chapters have shown, the Northern bishops already had considerable experience in dealing with the media, actively engaging with journalists for a variety of purposes that included: (i) increasing the dissemination of their messages to reach as wide an audience as possible; (ii) attempting to influence public opinion; (iii) publicising their responses to actions and attitudes of State and non-State actors; and (iv) raising awareness – on both a national and international level – of key issues affecting the minority community. The importance of the media for the Northern bishops was to increase still further with the outbreak of violence that closely followed the Council's conclusion. Chapter Nine will illustrate how journalists not only disseminated, but also, to a degree, shaped the responses of the Catholic hierarchy to political violence.

One of the defining characteristics of the modern world, the mass media was a force to be reckoned with as the Catholic Church set about launching its *aggiornamento*. At the Council the significance of the media was recognised and bishops were encouraged to engage with it.[8] McRedmond, covering the fourth session of the Council for the *Irish Independent*, outlined the challenge presented by Vatican II in relation to the media as follows:

> The Council itself urges the Church to make full use of the mass media. One does not use a thing by perverting or limiting its purpose. A surgical knife is not made to cut bread ... Similarly, the mass media must not be treated as mere substitutes for the pulpit, as mere receptacles for hand-outs. The mass media are *sui generis*, intended to do what, in particular, the pulpit (or the party platform or the Chairman's address) cannot do: stimulate the debate in which the value of an idea is tempered and tested under the questioning of those who could not see its point when it was first presented.[9]

Significantly, Redmond remarked positively on the availability of Cardinal Conway and his secretary, Fr. Lenny, to journalists, in contrast to other Irish bishops. He also contrasts the Cardinal's approach with that of episcopal leaders of other nationalities, recounting how Conway would distribute copies

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[8] For the 'Decree on the Means of Social Communication' see Flannery, pp. 283-292.
[9] McRedmond, p. 191.

of his speeches to journalists, together with an invitation to call on him at the Irish College with any questions.[10] Dealing with the media was to be one of the key challenges of Conway's primacy, spanning, as it did, some of the most violent years of the Northern Ireland conflict.

In social and political matters, too, the pre-conciliar stance adopted by the Irish hierarchy could be regarded as more in line with the spirit of Vatican II than many of their counterparts in other nations. The Northern bishops had been actively engaging in social justice issues on behalf of their community from the moment of the foundation of the State. They had been unequivocal in their condemnation of the political authorities when they deemed their actions to be illegitimate. Relations between the hierarchy and the lower clergy were good, and there were strong bonds between the lay community and the bishops as a result of the response of the hierarchy to Catholic grievances. It could be surmised, then, that the process of renewal inspired by Vatican II would be much smoother for the Northern bishops than for some of their episcopal colleagues.

Be that as it may, the process of implementing Vatican II in Northern Ireland would entail dissent and disappointment, protests and alienation. The hierarchy, and Cardinal Conway in particular, would be faced with many difficult decisions as they attempted to guide their followers through this process of renewal and change against the backdrop of the increasing polarisation of society. As the Second Vatican Council ended, the impact of a changing global climate – social, cultural, political and economic – was becoming patent in Northern Ireland on both sides of the political divide. Unionist leaders were coming under pressure from Britain to introduce changes that would pave the way for the modernisation of the economy. Meanwhile, a new generation of Catholics was emerging, prepared to engage in acts of non-violent protest to make their grievances heard by the civil authorities. These Catholics began to distance themselves from the leadership of the Catholic bishops, while at the same time seeking to avoid a rupture with the Catholic hierarchy. This transition was facilitated by the involvement of members of the lower clergy in the protest movements.

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[10] Ibid. pp. 185-187.

While the importance of priests was emphasised during the Second Vatican Council,[11] they were, as noted above, excluded from its deliberations. The Council did nonetheless make a significant impact on the lower clergy of the North of Ireland. While some felt that Vatican II was not progressive enough, and merely involved the replacement of one set of norms with other, albeit more liberal ones,[12] for others it fundamentally changed how they perceived their sacerdotal mission. Particularly influential was *Gaudium et Spes*. Bishop Edward Daly of Derry has recalled in his memoirs how

> It had a profound impact on all of us who ministered among people who had been deprived of their dignity and their rights and it fuelled our desire to do something to improve the living conditions of the people. Up until then, most priests were reluctant to rock the political boat. But this document called on all members of the Church to challenge injustice, especially when people were denied their rights and dignity. We were challenged to do this in a non-violent manner. Few of us, however, were very sure about how we could go about it. Everyone was a little fearful about stepping out of line.[13]

This statement contains an implicit suggestion that, for the lower clergy working in Northern Ireland, the interventions of the hierarchy on behalf of the Catholic minority were not in themselves sufficient to live up to the challenge presented by Vatican II. This did not mean that the efforts of the bishops were being rejected, but rather that the priests felt the need to do something themselves in their own capacity.

As stated in the introduction, the priests are much closer to the people than their superiors, living amongst them and sharing their conditions. Although the hierarchy in its declarations had been supportive of the grievances of the Catholic community, many of the priests, like their parishioners, felt that more action was needed. The main contribution of Vatican II from the perspective of the lower clergy, as will be seen both in this chapter and in the analysis of the Basque case in Chapter Eight, was legitimacy. This was significant since the priests who became involved in activities such as marches and sit-down protests were acutely conscious of the

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[11] 'Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests' in Flannery, pp. 863-902
[12] Des Wilson, *An End to Silence* (Cork: Mercier Press, 1985), p. 86.
[13] Edward Daly, *Mister, are you a Priest?: Jottings by Bishop Edward Daly* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2000), p. 124.

fact that priests had not done this kind of thing before.[14] There was thus a potential for conflict with the ecclesiastical as well as the civil authorities.

Gaudium et Spes did not provide a specific programme for the form that involvement by the Catholic clergy in the struggle for human rights and social justice was to take, providing instead a series of guiding principles. This of course is entirely understandable, given that *Gaudium et Spes*, like all other Council documents, was conceived in a global framework, making it impossible to take into account the specific circumstances of the various national contexts. Nonetheless, for many Irish priests the document spoke to them in their particular situation, confirming their view that the struggle to defend human rights and dignity must necessarily form part of the work of the Church.

It was, inevitably, a challenging document. As Louis McRedmond has rightly observed: 'The lines had to be drawn, for there were no precedents. The modern world was unique in its structure, its hopes, its fears, its standards and symbols.'[15] In a section entitled, 'The Essential Equality of all Men: Social Justice', the document declared that 'forms of social or cultural discrimination in basic personal rights on the grounds of sex, race, colour, social conditions, language or religion, must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God's design'.[16] Such statements resonated clearly with members of the Catholic minority of Northern Ireland who had long regarded themselves as victims of discrimination and were becoming increasingly mobilised in efforts to challenge their situation.

The 1947 Education Act has been described by Bishop Edward Daly as a 'Trojan Horse'.[17] As a result of its provisions many Catholics were now able to complete their education and attend university. This university education produced a generation who, in the words of Michael Farrell, 'had no experience of the previous defeats and were not demoralised. They chafed at their own second-class status and began to articulate the grievances of their

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[14] Author interview with Bishop Edward Daly, 29 February 2008.
[15] McRedmond, p. 101.
[16] *Gaudium et Spes*, par. 29 in Flannery, p. 929.
[17] Bishop Edward Daly, 'The "Troubles"' in *History of the Diocese of Derry from Earliest Times*, ed. by Henry A. Jeffries and Ciarán Devlin, (Dublin: Four Courts, 2000), pp. 259-296 (p. 262).

community'.[18] During the late 1960s the Catholic community began to look for support for its rights outside the framework of the Church. Wishing to set aside the 'apartheid mentality' that had dominated the first four decades of the Northern Ireland State, the emerging Catholic leaders sought to address the grievances of their community within the framework of the State, and challenge the regime to fulfil its responsibilities to its citizens. Furthermore, they sought to promote the cooperation of working-class Protestants and Catholics in a number of key areas where they had common interests, such as voting rights where restrictions based on property ownership excluded Protestants from low-income backgrounds as well as Catholics.

With this aim the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association was formed, officially coming into existence on 9th April 1967.[19] Inspired by the Civil Rights movement led by Martin Luther King and his supporters in the United States, the association members sought to draw attention to the grievances of the working-classes, both Catholic and Protestant, through peaceful protest. According to the association's authorised history,

> NICRA evolved from a diverse set of political aims and ideals which slowly came together to forge a unity based on a common frustration with Unionism, a broad rejection of crude Nationalism and a growing awareness of the need for an effective vehicle for political and legislative reform.[20]

These 'aims and ideals' were sufficiently broad to attract a wide range of individuals, including members of the Communist and Labour parties, Republicans, Trade Union representatives and other independent representatives. Although members of the lower clergy were involved at local level, in a break with past nationalist tradition, the support of the Catholic Church, or indeed any of the churches, was not actively sought.[21] This

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[18] Michael Farrell, *Northern Ireland: The Orange State* (London: Pluto Press, 1976), p. 329.

[19] The origins and evolution of the Civil Rights movement remains a highly contested area of history. The organisation itself, in commissioning a short history to mark its tenth anniversary in 1978 observed: 'It is impossible to give an "official" NICRA view on our history, because no one person knows all the events as yet and no two people agree exactly on how these events should be interpreted.' *"We Shall Overcome"... The History of the Struggle for Civil Rights in Northern Ireland 1968-1978* (Belfast: NICRA, [1978]), p. 1. A similar lack of consensus persists today. The analysis that follows seeks to add the perspective of the Catholic Church to this debate.

[20] *"We Shall Overcome"*, p. 5.

[21] The Cameron Enquiry, established by the British government to investigate the violence that followed the early Civil Rights demonstrations, noted that when NICRA representatives met with members of Derry Housing Action Committee in 1968 to discuss plans for a march in the city, invitations were sent to a large number of political organisations, trade unions and cultural bodies but

represents a fundamental shift away from the tradition paradigm of church-led action from the Catholic community, and from the 'Catholic communalism' discussed in Chapter Five.

It was a situation that presented new challenges to the bishops. On the one hand, the grievances articulated by the movement had been fully endorsed by the Catholic hierarchy through their own interventions during the periods analysed in Chapters Three and Five. The demands of the movement included a reform of voting procedures in local government elections, an end to discrimination in employment and in the allocation of public housing and the disbanding of the B Specials. The failure of the hierarchy to achieve any tangible successes in the above areas can be attributed to their inability to exert significant pressure on the Northern Ireland Government and the refusal of the governments of both London and Dublin to take responsibility for the situation of the Catholic minority in the North. The strategy employed by the bishops had failed to produce the desired results and now, the global climate of the 1960's provided the impetus for a change of tactics.

In addition, it has been argued that 'political' leadership was largely thrust on the bishops as a result of the regime's refusal to allow Nationalist political leaders to form an effective political opposition. The emergence of new political leaders capable of articulating the grievances of their community was thus to be welcomed. There were nonetheless significant concerns about the nature and composition of this new movement. The Irish bishops were now presented with a problem that had long preoccupied the Basque hierarchy: the cooperation between Catholics and the political left.

Rather than attempt to assert their moral authority and bring their followers firmly back within their sphere of influence, or, it might be argued, under their control, the bishops chose instead to maintain their distance from the movement. Paradoxically, this decision may have allowed for greater Church influence to penetrate the movement than would have been possible if a direct challenge had been issued. For instance, Gerald McElroy, in analysing the Church's response to the emergence of the NICRA has argued

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none to the churches. *Disturbances in Northern Ireland. Report of the Commission appointed by the Governor of Northern Ireland* (Belfast: HMSO, 1969), par. 38.

that the lack of centralised leadership in the Civil Rights movement itself meant that there was 'considerable' outside influence 'and since grass-roots support for the civil rights campaign was overwhelmingly Catholic, the amorphous nature of the civil rights movement allowed the Catholic Church to use its influence during this period'.[22] While the hierarchy avoided direct involvement, this was not the case of the lower clergy, and many priests, inspired by the teaching of Vatican II and *Gaudium et Spes* were keen to avail of the opportunity presented to address injustices through non-violent protest. The primary tactic employed by the movement, emulating the Black Liberation movement of the United States, was the protest march. While the bishops had preferred to address their protests privately to political leaders in correspondence, or publicly through the media, the people were now taking the protests to the streets. Approximately 2,000 people took part in the first NICRA march between the towns of Coalisland and Dungannon, in the border county of Tyrone, on Saturday 24 August 1968, as a protest against housing allocation in the area. In an early indication of what was to come, the march was confronted with a counter-demonstration of approximately 1,000 people led by Ian Paisley and Major Ronald Bunting. The police responded by preventing the marchers from entering Dungannon town square and several marchers were injured.[23] Cardinal Conway was travelling in Latin America when this first march took place, but was present for the next march, held on 5 October, and the violent backlash that followed.

The choice of Derry as the location for this march was unsurprising since here the effects of gerrymandering and discrimination were particularly apparent: local government in the form of the Derry Corporation was controlled by Unionists, despite a Catholic majority in the city, and this exclusion of Catholics led to problems in other areas such as housing allocation. The creation of the Derry Citizens' Action Committee in 1968 was indicative of the shift towards direct action then taking place within the local community. When a ban from the Unionist Minister for Home Affairs, William Craig, was defied by 2,000 people, the march was forcibly broken up

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[22] Gerald McElroy, *The Catholic Church and the Northern Ireland Crisis, 1968-86* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1990), p. 9.
[23] *"We Shall Overcome"*, p. 12.

by police who used batons on the unarmed protestors. The actions of the police were captured on film by a cameraman from the Dublin-based broadcaster RTÉ, and the subsequent publicity transformed the campaign from a movement of the 'politically conscious' into what could accurately be described as a mass movement.[24]

An analysis of the declarations of the bishops during the period reveals that the reaction of the hierarchy to the Civil Rights movement was twofold. Firstly, the bishops addressed the protestors, sympathising with their grievances and encouraging them to show restraint, ever concerned by the potential of mass protests to escalate into violence. Secondly, the bishops appealed to the governments of both Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom, urging them to take action to address the legitimate grievances of the protestors. Cardinal Conway firmly believed that political progress was the key to ending the growing social unrest, as this statement, published on 14th October 1968, indicates:

> I know the people who are suffering from these injustices well enough to realise that they will respond to any credible sign that their position is going to be remedied soon.
> To put off tackling these injustices realistically until the extremists who support them fade away is, I believe, misguided and dangerous, and I believe that the broad spectrum of public opinion throughout the community would welcome concrete action now and that such concrete action would itself influence attitudes for good.[25]

Once again the Cardinal was assuming the role of spokesman for the community. Although their leadership had been somewhat marginalised, the bishops came to the defence of the protestors, contradicting false claims that the campaign was, in fact, a front for the IRA.[26] The efforts of the hierarchy on behalf of the movement were, however, deemed insufficient by a section of the Catholic community, including some members of the lower clergy. Fr. Joseph McVeigh has written that, during the campaign, the hierarchy were 'conspicuous by their absence and by their silence'.[27] In his view the Church

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[24] Ibid. p.13.
[25] *Irish News*, 14 October 1968 quoted in McElroy, p. 17. The Cardinal's statement was also reported in *The Times*, 14 October 1968.
[26] Although, as noted above, members of the Republican movement were involved in the civil rights campaign, they did not have a controlling influence and the bishops were, in fact, more concerned about the threat posed by the more militant, Marxist element of the movement.
[27] Joseph McVeigh, *A Wounded Church: Religion, Politics and Justice in Ireland* (Cork: Mercier Press, 1989), p. 78.

authorities demonstrated that their primary concern was to stifle resistance rather than to confront injustice.[28]

A critical aspect of the contribution made by the Second Vatican Council, in the view of Bishop Edward Daly, was that it made people 'more conscious of their ecumenical responsibilities'.[29] The choice of the term 'responsibility' is entirely appropriate since this was precisely the manner in which Ecumenism was presented at the Council. The conciliar document *Unitatis Redintegratio* or the *Decree on Ecumenism* (1964) challenged the Catholic clergy to embrace a new spirit of cooperation with those of other faiths, particularly their fellow Christians:

> Since co-operation in social matters is so widespread today, all men without exception are called to work together; with much greater reason is this true of all Christians, since they bear the seal of Christ's name.[30]

It was hoped that the outcome of the Council would lead to a re-evaluation of the relations between the Catholic community and its Protestant neighbours in Northern Ireland.[31] Protestant representatives were amongst those from other religious denominations invited to observe during Council sessions. Maurice Irvine has claimed, however, that many Northern Protestants were sceptical, regarding the Council as a tactical manoeuvre whereby the Catholic Church abdicated aspirations it no longer had the power to enforce.[32]

Nonetheless, increased cooperation between religious leaders of the different faiths in Northern Ireland would certainly become a feature of the decades that followed the Council's conclusion. That the Council was, from its early stages, having an impact on relations between the two communities was demonstrated by the response in Northern Ireland to the death of Pope John XXIII on 3 June 1963. In addition to statements from the leaders of the three main Protestant churches, the Lord Mayor of Belfast sent the following message to Bishop Philbin:

> The passing of His Holiness the Pope will be greatly regretted throughout the world. Please convey to the Roman Catholic Community my deepest sympathy on

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[28] Ibid. p. 79.
[29] Daly, 'The "Troubles"', p. 291.
[30] 'Decree on Ecumenism', par. 12, in Flannery, p. 81.
[31] Oliver P. Rafferty, *Catholicism in Ulster 1603-1983* (London: C. Hurst & Co, 1994), p. 252.
[32] Maurice Irvine, *Northern Ireland. Faith and Faction* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 177.

> the grievous loss of a good and saintly man who worked unceasingly for world peace.[33]

This was a clear indication of the growing *rapprochement* between Church and State that characterised the period, initiated under the leadership of Cardinal D'Alton.

Ecumenism did, however, present significant challenges in the context of the political divisions separating the two religious communities in Northern Ireland. This became particularly apparent as the situation descended into violent conflict. The need to cooperate with other churches, in the spirit of Vatican II, was often overshadowed by the need to identify with the alienation of the Catholic minority, and to use the prestige of the episcopal office to draw attention to the systematic discrimination that lay at the heart of that alienation. Consequently, invitations for ecumenical cooperation on political issues often aroused suspicions of political manipulation.

Cardinal Conway's 1968 statement on the Civil Rights protests, quoted above, followed the release of a statement by the Protestant Church leaders on 12 October in which they advocated 'a period of civic calm'.[34] In his journal entries from 11-12 October the Cardinal recounted how, after much consideration and consultation with the Bishop of Down and Connor, he had refused to sign that statement on the grounds that he needed 'to spell out the grievances on our side much more fully'.[35] In his response to the Protestant leaders Cardinal Conway stated that to sign such a statement would weaken his influence for peace.[36] While the Catholic community was not alone in suffering the effects of discrimination and violence, there was clearly a sense amongst the hierarchy that attention must be drawn to the disproportionate suffering experienced by the minority.

The ecumenical cooperation advocated by Vatican II, in the context of Northern Ireland during the late 1960s, was thus to be treated with extreme caution. The Cardinal had also been requested to join the 'Heads of Churches' in a meeting with the Prime Minister on 11 October. When Cardinal Conway

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[33] This statement, together with the statements of the Protestant church leaders, was published in the *Belfast Newsletter*, 4 June 1963.
[34] *Belfast Newsletter*, 14 October 1968.
[35] AAA Conway Papers, Journal Entry, 12 October 1968.
[36] Ibid.

was unable to attend, Bishop Philbin was invited in his place. On further consultation, the two prelates decided that this, too, would be unwise, 'feeling it was politically motivated'.[37] In the years that followed, as international media interest in the conflict increased, Cardinal Conway would be at pains to stress that this was not a religious conflict.[38] The political differences separating the two religious communities could not, however, be entirely ignored in the name of ecumenical rapprochement.

Derry experienced what Bishop Daly has described as 'the first tangible evidence of ecumenism'[39] on the 15 of November, the eve of the next Civil Rights march in Derry. The television images generated by the previous march on 5 October had greatly increased tensions in the city. Again the government responded by banning the march, and the protesters prepared to defy the ban. With far greater numbers expected than at the previous two marches, Church authorities were naturally apprehensive. In Derry the two cathedrals, Catholic and Protestant, were left open on the eve of the march for an all night vigil. The event was well attended and represented, in the view of Bishop Edward Daly, a show of support from Bishop Farren, while the bishop himself 'stayed in the background'.[40]

A key question in any assessment of the effectiveness of episcopal interventions at the beginning of the 'Troubles' is whether or not the bishops could have done more to publicly support the right to peaceful protest. Arguably, the type of 'background' support offered by Bishop Farren on this occasion was much more in keeping with the normal limits of episcopal office and the ecclesiastical sphere of influence than direct intervention. Leaving the cathedral open was an attempt to respond to the spiritual needs of those involved, providing space for prayer and reflection in a time of fear and tension. The bringing together of the two religious communities at such a time

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[37] Ibid.
[38] See for example *Irish Times*, 22 March 1972 for an assertion by Cardinal Conway that the conflict was not religious: 'After all, they're not fighting about theology. They're not waving Bibles and Rosaries at one another ... It is a conflict of social and political dimensions. The religion part is merely because of an accident of history.'
[39] Daly, 'The "Troubles"', p. 291.
[40] Author interview with Bishop Edward Daly, 29 February 2008.

made it an initiative of considerable merit, all the more so for its unprecedented nature.

Newly released information from Cardinal Conway's archive reveals that the Primate himself was considering a decidedly more pro-active response to the situation. In a journal entry from 15 November the Cardinal records: 'Then in the evg. (sic) the Derry situation began to look very ugly. I got the idea of marching myself if they took the alternative route.'[41] It can be extrapolated that the Cardinal's intention was to prevent violence by leading the marchers away from the disputed areas, while at the same time compensating for this concession with the additional legitimacy his presence would bestow. He may also have believed that his presence would help to guarantee the safety of protestors since both the government and the State security forces would no doubt be anxious to avoid the negative publicity that would result from attacks on a crowd of unarmed protestors led by the Catholic primate.

In the end the Cardinal did not put his offer to the organisers of the march, despite its being approved by some of his advisors as 'a bold and imaginative stroke'. On further consultation with one of the priests of the Derry Diocese the Cardinal found that the organisers 'were set on the original route and that there was some hope of no violence if they sat down'. He concluded that his offer 'would embarrass them and confuse them at the last minute'.[42] The Cardinal's dilemma on this occasion indicates a willingness to become involved that was tempered by a reluctance to impose himself on the movement. That the Cardinal did not seek a controlling influence may be deduced from a journal entry of 16 November, in which he expressed approval at the outcome of the protest, carried out without his involvement: 'The thing in Derry went off fairly well – particularly in view of the fact that they got in to the Diamond. The singing of "we shall overcome" was quite good.'[43]

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[41] AAA Cardinal Papers, Journal Entry 15 November 1968.
[42] Ibid.
[43] AAA Conway Papers, Journal Entry 16 November 1968. The 'Diamond' is the name given to the central part of Derry city.

According to Bishop Edward Daly, Cardinal Conway, a relatively young member of the hierarchy – 55 years old in 1968 – had a much better understanding of the situation than the older Bishops Farren and O'Doherty (Bishop of Dromore), or Bishop Philbin who was not a native of the North.[44] One can only imagine the impact that the Cardinal's participation in a march would have had at this early stage of the Civil Rights movement. The image of his tall, imposing figure amongst the marchers (at 6ft 2in the Cardinal's height was frequently remarked upon) would certainly have drawn the attention of the media. It is likely that it would have fundamentally altered the nature, and indeed composition of the movement had it been allowed to go ahead. This was an authentically mass movement, the culmination of numerous *ad hoc* initiatives at grass roots level – not the kind of activism generally engaged in by the Catholic hierarchy. The authority attached to the Cardinal's office coupled with his public profile make it unlikely that it would have been possible for the Cardinal to participate as one of the crowd, rather than chief protagonist. It is probable, too, that such an offer of support would have provoked divisions within the movement itself, arousing the opposition of those who wished to maintain a wide, cross-community support base. In any event, divisions were soon to occur without the Cardinal's intervention.

As media images projected events from the streets of Northern Ireland around the globe the British government began to grow concerned and call for reform. The Northern Ireland Prime Minister, Terence O'Neill, who had taken over from Lord Brookeborough in 1963, appeared willing to lead his party through the necessary period of change. O'Neill has been described as having 'the inestimable advantage which so many Ulster politicians lack of having experience of the world outside Ireland'.[45] As a result of having lived abroad for many years before taking political office, it has been argued that O'Neill had the ability 'to see Northern Ireland's problems in a wider context, and to escape from its stifling parochialism'.[46] It is certainly undeniable that his

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[44] Author Interview with Bishop Edward Daly, 29 February 2008.
[45] John Cole, Introduction to Terence O'Neill, *Ulster at the Crossroads* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), p. 22.
[46] Ibid.

premiership marks the first attempt by a Unionist government to win the support of the Catholic community, with visits to Catholic schools and meetings with the Irish *Taoiseach* (Prime Minister).

O'Neill responded to the pressure for reform in his now famous 'Ulster at the Crossroads' speech on 9 December 1968, stating that he saw his duty as twofold:

> First, to be firm in the maintenance of law and order, and in resisting those elements which seek to profit from any disturbances. Secondly, to ally firmness with fairness, and to look at any underlying causes of dissension which were troubling decent and moderate people.[47]

O'Neill announced a series of reforms, and called on the Civil Rights movement to end street demonstrations. Cardinal Conway regarded the speech as 'a magnificent effort' and issued a comment of praise.[48] In response, NICRA declared its intention to support the reform process by refraining from further protests for a month. By this time, however, the Civil Rights movement had begun to splinter and for some the reforms represented too little, too late. An organisation, known as the People's Democracy, had been formed by students in Queen's University in the aftermath of the violence in Derry in October. This organisation, more socialist and militant in nature than NICRA (and consequently a cause of concern to the Catholic hierarchy), did not accept the truce and instead announced a march from Belfast to Derry, beginning on 1 January 1969. The march was attacked at several points along the route, with the most serious attack occurring at Burntollet Bridge, outside Derry. Again the police failed to protect the marchers. According to Cardinal Conway's analysis the incident threw into relief the basic problem: 'the loyalists are not prepared to allow the right of peaceful demonstration and the police are not prepared to enforce it'.[49]

On 6 January 1969 Bishop Farren issued a statement to be read at all masses in Derry asking the people in making their 'legitimate protests' to show the same dignity and restraint as they had over previous months. The bishop declared his intention to ask the civil authorities 'to consider the validity of the protests that have been offered, whether about civil rights in

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[47] Ibid. p. 141.
[48] AAA Conway Papers, Journal Entry 9 December 1968.
[49] AAA Conway Papers, Journal Entry 1 January 1969.

general or the abuse of authority in particular'.[50] While conferring legitimacy on the protests, the bishop was simultaneously once again assuming the role of spokesman for the Catholic community before the civil authorities. It would appear that the hierarchy was attempting to balance calls for moderation with declarations of support, particularly as the violence exposed the vulnerability of the Catholic community.

The violence also had the effect of attracting the attention of the world's media, forcing the British government to hold an enquiry. On 19 January the Northern bishops issued a collective statement welcoming this development and indicating firmly what they believed to be the root cause of the disorder:

> We believe that the most serious threat to public order in recent months has come from the activities of people who, despite their almost cynical disregard for community peace, were allowed to impede lawful and peaceful demonstrations with the threat or use of force.[51]

Although supportive of the aims of the movement, and willing to speak out in its defence, the bishops remained concerned about the threat presented by left-wing influences and cautioned their followers about 'small groups of subversive militants who have associated themselves with the Civil Rights movement for their own ends.' This was a danger, the bishops argued, 'which should not be underestimated'.[52] The statement concluded with an ominous warning: 'It would be tragic if this opportunity to go to the root of the matter, and so lay the foundations of lasting peace, were to be lost.'[53]

The root of the matter, in the view of the Catholic hierarchy, was clearly the alienation of their community from a State in which they were discriminated against on the grounds of their religious and national identity. While remaining firm in their conviction that the foundation of the Northern Ireland state was, in itself, an act of injustice against the minority, Catholics were now displaying a willingness to participate in the political life of that state, yet were being denied the opportunity to do so. Acts of peaceful protest, intended to draw attention to key social justice issues where the State had

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[50] Quoted in Daly, *Mister are you a Priest?*, p. 140.
[51] ICD (1970), p. 737.
[52] Ibid. p. 744.
[53] Ibid. p. 739.

failed in its duty to some of its citizens, had been met with violence, and portrayed as acts of subversion. This view was supported by the findings of the Cameron report on the disturbances in Northern Ireland (October 1968-March 1969), which concluded that social and economic grievances 'had substantial foundation in fact and were in a very real sense an immediate and operative cause of the demonstrations and consequent disorders after 5th October 1968'.[54] The report also confirmed allegations of police brutality.[55]

At the end of April 1969 Bishop Farren, together with the local leaders of the Church of Ireland and Presbyterian and Methodist Churches, went on a walking tour of the Bogside (Catholic) and Fountain (Protestant) areas of Derry to see for themselves the extent of the housing problem, which continued to represent a significant grievance.[56] O'Neill's attempts to push through the necessary reforms met with stiff opposition, both from the supporters of Ian Paisley and from within his own party. Following the resignation of two members of his cabinet, he himself resigned as Prime Minister on 28 April 1969 and was replaced on 1st May by his cousin, James Chichester-Clark. Under Chichester-Clark's leadership a series of reforms were to be implemented, but by this time the tensions had escalated exponentially. The situation exploded on 12 August 1969 following a march by the Apprentice Boys in Derry.[57] During the subsequent rioting, barricades were erected in Derry's Catholic Bogside area, creating a no-go zone for the State security forces that became known as 'Free Derry'. As the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) fought to gain entry to the Bogside, rioting spread throughout other towns and cities in the North, leading to the formation of other no-go areas. Three days later the British army was deployed on the streets of Belfast.

The following week the British Home Secretary, James Callaghan, came to Northern Ireland to assess the situation for himself, and met with

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[54] *Disturbances in Northern Ireland, Report of the Commission appointed by the Governor of Northern Ireland*, Cmd 532 (Belfast: HMSO, 1969), par. 127.
[55] *Disturbances in Northern Ireland*, par. 177.
[56] Daly, *Mister are you a priest?* p. 145.
[57] The Apprentice Boys of Derry is a Protestant organisation formed to commemorate two dates in the city's history that are regarded as significant by the Protestant population: 18 December (the closing of the city gates that began the siege of Derry in 1698) and 12 August (the relief of Derry after the siege).

Cardinal Conway. The Cardinal reassured Callaghan that the Catholic population did 'acquiesce in the constitution'. He warned him, however, that the 'reforms that were in hand had not come through quickly enough and did not go to the root of the problem.'[58] Callaghan's visit culminated in the formulation of a programme of reform in which the British government pledged to implement changes in a number of key areas including employment, housing, means for the investigation of grievances against public bodies, and proper electoral representation of minorities.[59] Before releasing details of the proposed reform package to the press Callaghan telephoned Cardinal Conway and asked for his support, receiving a positive response.[60]

Despite the marginalisation of the leadership of the Catholic hierarchy during the Civil Rights movement, the bishops continued to be regarded as authoritative representatives of their community at government level. This form of intervention was, in addition, much more desirable from the perspective of the Catholic hierarchy than the Civil Rights agitation. By 1969 the efficacy of the Civil Rights movement had been demonstrated through the achievement of many of its key objectives; by this time however the ensuing violence had resulted in further hardship, which was again to impact disproportionately on the Catholic community.

The central questions in relation to the role of the hierarchy at this critical moment are whether the bishops could have assumed a more active role at the beginning of the civil rights campaign, and whether this could have prevented the outbreak of violence. Bishop Edward Daly, who participated in the campaign as a priest, disagrees: 'It was a time when all the old leaderships were cast out ... It was a movement of the roots of the people – it came from the bottom up. It wasn't inspired by either political or Church leadership.' He stresses however that, while not actively involved themselves, the bishops made no attempt to prevent the participation of their clergy.[61]

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[58] James Callaghan, *A House Divided: The Dilemma of Northern Ireland* (London: Collins, 1973), p. 79.
[59] Text of the Communiqué outlining the reforms in Ibid. pp. 199-202.
[60] Ibid. p. 97.
[61] Author Interview with Bishop Edward Daly, 29 February 2008.

For the Northern bishops the challenge of Vatican II was not to speak out against perceived injustice, for this they clearly already regarded as central to their role, but rather to respond to the new methods of challenging injustice utilised by their followers that no longer placed them at the centre. According to Bishop Daly, while *Gaudium et Spes* was an influential document, it would be wrong to over-estimate its impact. It was one of a number of factors that combined to produce a particular atmosphere in 1968. These included the events then taking place in other parts of the world (such as the civil rights campaign in the United States and the student revolt in Paris), developments in education, the emergence of the modern mass media and the culture of the time expressed through popular music.[62] The outbreak of violence and the subsequent polarisation of society, however, would see the Catholic hierarchy move centre-stage once again, where the leadership of the bishops would be subject to increasing challenges from a more assertive lay community.

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[62] Ibid.

Chapter Eight

The Response of the Basque Hierarchy to Vatican II (1962-1968)

> '¡Extraordinaria oportunidad, para que los Obispos hayan podido asomarse al balcón de sus respectivas jurisdiciones locales y contemplar la Iglesia en toda la amplitud de sus problemas y sus soluciones!'[1]
>
> (Clandestine publication by Basque Priests, 1962)

While the bishops and cardinals invariably represented the more conservative elements of the various national churches, in the case of the Basque Country the choice of the bishops as Basque representatives to the Second Vatican Council was particularly significant. By 1962 both the lay community and the lower clergy were becoming increasingly vocal in their rejection of a hierarchy appointed, as they perceived it, by Franco himself, in direct contradiction of the Church's teaching with regard to indigenous communities. It was clear from the outset that Vatican II would present the Basque bishops with considerable challenges. Not only were they going into the Council at the head of a divided Church, but they were also closely allied with a totalitarian regime, and that alliance was enshrined in a Concordat that was deemed to be '*desfasado*' (out-dated).[2]

This chapter will analyse the response of the Basque hierarchy to Vatican II, considering the implications of Council teachings for the situation of the Basque nationalist community in their dioceses and, in particular, the expectations of the lower clergy. Vatican II fundamentally undermined the power structures that shaped the Basque Church. Of particular significance was the emphasis placed on the independence of Church and State in their respective spheres. The hierarchy would have to redefine its relations with the Franco regime, transforming a system of Church-State relations that had been in place for almost three decades. At the same time, the hierarchy was challenged to democratise the structures of the Church itself, facilitating

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[1]Translation: 'An extraordinary opportunity, allowing the bishops to step out onto the balcony of their respective local jurisdictions and contemplate the Church in the fullness of its problems and solutions.' *Sine Nomine* (1 G 7 y 8), p. 3.

[2] Enrique Miret Magdalena, 'Catolicismo y franquismo', *Historia 16 Especial*, 115 (1985), pp. 67-75 (p. 70).

greater participation by the lower clergy. A daunting task in itself, the difficulties this entailed were magnified in a society divided by conflicting national identities. As in the case of Ireland the changes of Vatican II were to be implemented against a backdrop of rising tensions and violence resulting from the escalation of ETA's campaign against the Spanish state and the violent response of the Franco regime.

Although Basque nationalists may have had little faith in the bishops as their representatives at the Council, they nevertheless hoped to receive support for their cause through the reaffirmation of certain norms and principles of the Church, which in their view were not being applied in the Basque region. This idea was clearly expressed in an article which appeared in *Sine Nomine*, entitled '*Nosotros ante el Concilio*' (Our position vis-à-vis the Council). The author stated that while the Basques did not expect the Council to provide a judgement on their particular situation, they hoped that their cause would be supported indirectly through the condemnation of actions which subordinated religious interests to the interests of the State, together with the liberation of ecclesiastical jurisdiction from the civil authorities and the confirmation of the right of the clergy to preach faithfully the message of truth and justice contained in the Gospel.[3] In sum, it was hoped that the calls for change from below, whose influence on the direction of episcopal leadership had so far proved negligible, would be mirrored by similar calls from above, which carried considerably more weight.

As was to be expected, the contribution of the Spanish hierarchy to the Council was generally viewed as reactionary. The new direction adopted by the Church, particularly with regard to religious liberty and the separation of Church and State, challenged the beliefs which had formed the basis of the ministry of these, mostly elderly, bishops, described as 'más papistas que el Papa' (more Papist than the Pope).[4] It must be remembered, however, that Council decrees also contradicted the stance adopted by the Vatican itself towards the Franco regime. *Christus Dominus*: *The Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops* (1965) asserted: 'In the exercise of their apostolic function

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[3] *Sine Nomine* (1 G 5 y 6), p. 3.

[4] For an overview of the contribution of the Spanish bishops to Vatican II see Hilari Raguer, 'El Concilio Vaticano II y la España de Franco' *Historia y Vida* 362.5 (1998), pp. 34-49.

... bishops enjoy as of right full and perfect freedom and independence from all civil authority.'[5]

Papal policy towards the regime was clearly changing, but the Vatican, unlike the local hierarchy, had the luxury of distance to facilitate this evolution. The Basque bishops, on the other hand, would be faced with the challenge of attempting to distance themselves from the regime, while continuing to carry out their pastoral duties in an environment dominated by the out-dated Concordat. Signs of unease were already apparent during the Council deliberations. Monsignor Font y Andreu of San Sebastián opposed the use of the vernacular during the Mass, arguing that, 'en los lugares donde hay duplicidad de lenguas vernáculas daría lugar a confusión, controversias y divisiones. Puedo asegurarlo por propia experiencia'.[6] Monsignor Font y Andreu, as noted in Chapter Six, had received a collective letter from his clergy on arrival in the diocese, in which the policy of the Church towards Euskera had been identified as a key grievance. Monsignor Peralta of Vitoria, however, spoke in favour of the use of the vernacular,[7] a clear reflection that cultural issues were not as controversial in Vitoria, where Basque nationalism was not deemed to pose the same degree of threat.

Further pressure was brought to bear on the hierarchy at the Council through the activities of Basque and Catalan nationalists. A group of Catalan Catholics distributed among those in attendance a clandestine document denouncing the repressive measures employed by the Franco regime. The Basques were even bolder in their attempt to raise awareness of their situation. A document, addressed to the Secretary General of the Council and signed by over 300 members of the Basque clergy, was presented by a Basque missionary bishop, Ignacio Larrañaga.[8] The intervention served to highlight once again the gulf that separated the bishops of the Basque dioceses from a

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[5] '*Christus Dominus*: The Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops', par. 19, in *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* ed. by Austin Flannery, New Rev. Ed. (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1992), p. 575.

[6] Translation: 'in those places where there is more than one vernacular language it would give way to confusion, controversy and division. I can confirm this from my own experience'. Quoted in Hilari Raguer, *Réquiem por la cristianidad: El Concilio Vaticano II y su impacto en España* (Barcelona: Ediciones Península, 2006), p. 66.

[7] Ibid. p. 68.

[8] Text of the document in Alberto de Onaindía, *Ayer como hoy. Documentos del clero vasco* (Saint-Jean-de-Luz: Axular, 1975), pp. 249-270.

section of their clergy as a native Basque bishop was seen to be taking a stand alongside the native clergy in opposition to bishops that were deemed to be outsiders and insufficiently aware of the circumstances in their own dioceses.

The document described the suffering of the Basque clergy, claiming that priests had been persecuted by the regime and abandoned by the hierarchy. Key arguments were supported through the inclusion of statements from Bishop Múgica, who, as the last bishop appointed to the region before Franco's victory, was presented as the authentic voice of the Basque hierarchy. The document referred to the difficulties the close alliance of Church and State created for priests attempting to fulfil their pastoral mission in 'a climate of fear of the civil authorities and mistrust of the ecclesiastical authorities'.[9] In concluding, the priests made two requests. Firstly, they called on the Council to dictate principles that would facilitate the compliance of the hierarchy in its duty to protect the rights of its clergy, particularly in states which claimed to be Catholic in origin. Secondly, they requested that some reparation be made by the Church for the suffering of Bishop Múgica and the priests executed by Franco's troops.[10] Implicit within this remark was a rebuke to the Vatican for its stance on the Spanish Civil War and its treatment of the Bishop of Vitoria.

While there was no direct response to their appeal, Basque nationalists could find much that was satisfactory in the outcome of the Council, described by Enrique Miret Magdalena as 'el gran aldabonazo que hizo despertar de su sueño tranquilo a muchos católicos, clérigos o seglares'.[11] *Christus Dominus* did appear to provide a response to many of their concerns about the hierarchy. In addition to the assertion of the independence of the ecclesiastical authorities, noted above, the document decreed: 'A bishop should be solicitous for the welfare – spiritual, intellectual, and material – of his priests.' The bishops were also called to 'be compassionate and helpful to

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[9] Ibid. p. 268.
[10] Ibid. p. 270.
[11] Translation: 'the loud knock at the door that woke many Catholics, clerical and lay, from their tranquil slumber'. Miret Magdalena, p. 74.

those priests who were in any kind of danger'.[12] In relation to the needs of the lay community it was stated:

> In order to be able to provide for the welfare of the faithful as their individual circumstances demand, he [the bishop] should try to keep himself informed of their needs in the social circumstances in which they live. To this end he should employ suitable methods, especially social research.[13]

Papal policy had clearly changed, becoming less concerned by Communism and more concerned with human rights. This was particularly significant in the context of the Franco dictatorship, a regime which traced its origins to an alliance with the Church against the perceived Communist threat. Indeed, the regime continued to label all its opponents 'reds' regardless of their background, ideology or motivations. As the tensions within National Catholicism began to surface in the aftermath of the Council the 'red' label would even be applied to members of the hierarchy. Pope Paul himself was already known in Spain as a '*papa comunista*' (Communist Pope) for his intervention, while Archbishop of Milan, on behalf of a communist sentenced to death by the regime.[14]

If the Council represented a 'great knock at the door' for Spanish Catholics, for the Franco dictatorship it was 'a stab in the back'.[15] The new direction of the Church fundamentally undermined and challenged the regime's legitimacy. Franco's response to the new Vatican policy of Popes John XXIII and Paul VI had been, predictably, to censor papal encyclicals.[16] Following the Council's conclusion, however, some effort was made to bring the Spanish situation in line with its teachings, albeit on a purely superficial level. This is demonstrated by the 1967 Law on Religious Liberty, which stated:

> El Estado español reconoce el derecho a la libertad religiosa fundado en la dignidad de la persona humana y asegura a ésta, con la protección necesaria, la inmunidad de toda coacción en el ejercicio legítimo de tal derecho.[17]

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[12] *Christus Dominus*, par. 16 in Flannery, p. 573.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Stanley Payne, *El Catolicismo español* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1984), p. 245.
[15] Javier Tusell, *Historia de España Vol. III La época de Franco* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1997), p. 7.
[16] Raymond Carr and Juan Pablo Fusi, *Spain: Dictatorship to Democracy* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1981), p. 152.
[17] Translation: 'The Spanish state recognises the right to religious liberty, founded on the dignity of the human person, and ensures, with the necessary protection, immunity from all coercion in the exercise of that right.' Text of the Law in Fernando Díaz-Plaza, *La posguerra española en sus documentos* (Barcelona: Plaza y Janés, 1970), p. 398.

The influence of the Council is unmistakeable in the wording of this legislation with its emphasis on the 'dignity of the human person' and the legitimate exercise of rights. In reality, however, the enactment of the law did not affect the confessionality of the Spanish state, which remained intact, demonstrating that the outcome of the Council had little meaningful impact on the policy of this avowedly Catholic regime.

Understandably, the initial satisfaction experienced by the more progressive elements amongst the lower clergy soon gave way to disappointment when the Council declarations failed to produce any substantial changes in Franco's Spain. Although the government was prepared to pay lip service to the principles emerging from Vatican II, the totalitarian nature of the regime made it fundamentally incompatible with the new direction adopted by the universal Church. Since the Spanish hierarchy was unwilling to risk an open rupture with the State, Council teachings were implemented at a very slow pace. The frustration of Basque priests at this delay is aptly summed up in an article from *Sine Nomine*, entitled simply, 'Hágase en nuestro pueblo lo que se dice en Roma.'[18]

Impatient with the reluctance of the hierarchy to assert the independence of the Church from the State, as explicitly called for in conciliar decrees, members of the clergy began to act independently. In the Basque Country priests were openly and publicly attempting to dismantle the apparatus of National Catholicism. They refused to allow symbols of the regime, such as the Spanish flag, into their churches, removed civil war plaques commemorating only those who died fighting for Franco, and omitted the prayers for the Caudillo from religious services. The implications for both the ecclesiastical and civil authorities were considerable. As Stanley Payne has observed: 'Hundreds of clergy were involved in political activities that a quarter-century earlier would have brought immediate imprisonment, beatings, and long prison terms to laymen.'[19]

An emblematic case was the Lazkano incident of January 1965 and an analysis of its main features is revealing of the wider tensions that

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[18] Translation: 'Practise in our land what is preached in Rome.' *Sine Nomine* (I G 7 y 8), pp. 3-10.
[19] Stanley Payne, *The Franco Regime 1936-1975* (Madison; London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), p. 560.

characterised the post-Vatican II period. The church organist, who was also the mayor of the town, repeatedly disobeyed the order for silence during the Consecration of the Mass, claiming to have received verbal permission from the bishop, Monsignor Font y Andreu, for the playing of the National Anthem. A written request for confirmation from the priest to his superior received no reply. On 6 January, when the organist once again disobeyed the prohibition, the celebrant interrupted the mass, and his coadjutor gave an explanation from the pulpit stating, 'en la Iglesia no podemos admitir nada que sea distintivo de unos y sirva para herir a otros y alejarlos de la Iglesia'.[20]

The following day the priest was reported to both the civil governor and the bishop, but on 13 January the bishop was presented with a petition in support of the priest from a group of parishioners. The bishop's response was to inform the priest concerned, in a letter of 18 January, that he had authorized the organist to play the national anthem on five feast days throughout the year. The civil governor of the region found the priest guilty of disrespect towards the national anthem, an attack upon national unity and social peace, classified as an offence by the 1959 Public Order Law. The priest refused to pay the fine imposed, declaring the civil authorities incompetent to judge the actions of a priest in his sacred ministry:

> Una Autoridad, que dice ser católica, debe reconocer a la Iglesia, como una Institución divina, la cual, por su misma constitución, es libre para su acción ministerial, no pudiendo jamás intervenir la Autoridad Civil en lo estrictamente espiritual.[21]

The priest was reprimanded by the bishop for the scandal he had caused,[22] but appealed this reprimand to the Vatican Secretary of State and the Sacred Congregation of the Council, (now known as the Congregation for the Clergy). In his appeal, the priest denied that his intention had been to cause a scandal and indicated the discrepancy that existed between the permission for the playing of the Spanish national anthem, and the prohibition of Basque

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[20] Translation: 'In the church we cannot permit anything that, being particular to one sector, serves to injure others and distance them from the church.' Quoted in Anabella Barroso Arahuetes, *Sacerdotes bajo la atenta mirada del régimen franquista* (Bilbao: Desclée de Brouwer, 1995), p. 203.

[21] Translation: 'An authority that claims to be Catholic must recognise the church as a divine institution, which, by right of its very constitution, is to be free in its ministerial action, since the civil authority is never entitled to interfere in strictly spiritual matters.' Copy of the letter in Aguirre Archive, Monasterio de Santa Teresa, Lazcano.

[22] '*Copia de la amonestación del Obispo*', 18 June 1965, in Aguirre Archive.

traditional music, in spite of the wishes of the majority of the parishioners.[23] Protest letters from both members of the clergy and the lay community, in solidarity with the parish priest of Lazcano, demonstrated the depth of feeling on this issue and the consequent willingness to challenge episcopal authority.[24] In March a note appeared in the Diocesan Bulletin prohibiting music of any kind during the Consecration.[25]

This incident, which preceded the Council's conclusion, serves to highlight some of the key difficulties faced by the Basque bishops during the late 1960s and the nature of their response. The situation they had inherited was one in which the Church was complicit in the suppression of local culture, while the 'official' culture of the regime was being promoted through its structures and ceremonies, against the wishes of a significant section of both the lay community and the clergy. That Monsignor Font y Andreu was not entirely comfortable with the existing arrangement may be deduced from the preference for 'verbal' permission and the reluctance to confirm policy in writing until faced with a potential crisis. As in the various disputes between members of the lower clergy and the hierarchy analysed in Chapter Six, the reluctance to engage in any form of dialogue on these issues is manifest. In this instance some concession was made to the wishes of the nationalist population in the form of a blanket ban on music of any kind. As such clashes between priests and civil authorities became more frequent, however, sitting on the fence would not be an option for the ecclesiastical authorities, who were expected to keep their clergy in line with official policy.

The civil authorities preferred to let the Catholic bishops deal with their dissident subordinates in order to avoid the scandal that would result from the punishment of members of the clergy, but the problem rapidly became overwhelming. Of all the Basque bishops, it was Monsignor Gúrpide, who had taken charge of the Diocese of Bilbao in 1955, who was faced with the most difficult task: between 1965 and 1968 the civil authorities for the region had received 367 police reports regarding members of the clergy.

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[23] 'Letter to Cardenal Pietro Ciriacci, Prefecto de la Sda. Congregación del Concilio', 26 February 1966. Aguirre Archive.
[24] Copy of both documents in Aguirre Archive.
[25] Barroso, p. 207.

These reports implicated 196 priests, 24.5% of the total number of diocesan clergy.[26] Bishop Gúrpide's difficulties predated the conclusion of Vatican II, and he had proved unable to facilitate dialogue and engage with the issues raised by his priests, preferring instead to rely on the now-familiar message of obedience and respect for authority, while effectively alienating a significant section of the population of his diocese. A brief examination of the principal statements published by the bishop in the diocesan bulletin serves to illustrate the point.

In October 1963 the bishop instructed priests that all commands of the civil authorities, provided they did not give offence to God, should be complied with and obeyed.[27] In 1965 he addressed the problem of the participation of civil authorities in religious services, and the presence of symbols of the regime in places of worship.[28] Using language that to many of his followers would appear ironic, Gúrpide wrote: 'Ha sido siempre, y es, una especial solicitud pastoral de la Iglesia el aprecio, encomio y respeto de las tradiciones de los pueblos, y de sus costumbres religiosas.'[29] This statement demonstrates a blatant insensitivity to the situation of the Diocese of Bilbao, divided as it was into two separate cultures: that of the victorious regime and the defeated Basque nationalist culture.

The 'tradition' that Gúrpide was referring to, however, was the attendance of civil authorities at religious services. While it is certainly true that this had been a feature of life in the region under both the Spanish monarchy and the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, the bishop could not have failed to be aware that in the context of the civil war and the Franco regime this practice had taken on a new significance. Nor was he unaware, when he ordered his priests not to interfere with local religious customs, that all local customs which gave expression to aspects of Basque culture had been suppressed by the regime, with the cooperation of the Catholic Church. This was the same Bishop Gúrpide who stated in 1965, responding to the demand

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[26] Ibid. p. 217.
[27] 'El Sacerdote ante lo temporal', *Boletín Oficial del Obispado de Bilbao (BOOB)* 159 (Noviembre 1963), p. 920.
[28] 'Tradiciones y costumbres Religiosas', *BOOB* 182 (Octubre 1965), pp. 543-545.
[29] Translation: 'Appreciation, praise and respect for the local traditions and religious customs of the people is, and has always been, a special pastoral concern of the Church.'

for religious services in Euskera: 'Es la lengua para la liturgia y no la liturgia para la lengua.'[30]

In a 1968 Pastoral Note the bishop returned to the issue and made his point even more forcefully.[31] 'La enseña nacional no es bandera o emblema de partido alguno, sino de la sociedad en que vivimos...'[32] wrote Monsignor Gúrpide, in words reminiscent of the addresses of Monsignor Lauzurica during the early days of National Catholicism. The Bilbao of the post-conciliar period, however, was vastly different from the Bilbao of the post-civil war, and the days of National Catholicism were now clearly numbered. Frustrated by Gúrpide's consistent refusal to even discuss the concerns of his clergy, some of the more militant amongst his priests had begun to openly protest against his leadership and call for a more democratic style of government by the Church authorities. In August 1968 some thirty to forty priests held a sit-in protest in the Episcopal Offices in Bilbao. The group identified itself by the name *Gogor*, meaning energetic, taken from the slogan *Gogorkeriaren aurka, gogortasuna* (against the force of oppression, the force of unity). The name is indicative of the new, more militant direction clerical protests were taking. While 1968 may have been a year of protest across the globe, the grip of the Franco dictatorship on civil society was still sufficiently tight to make mass protest extremely difficult to organise. Clerical protests, however, were facilitated by the protection accorded to ecclesiastical property under the terms of the Vatican Concordat. What had been the regime's great triumph during the early period of Franco's rule was to prove its greatest source of woes during the final decades of the dictatorship.

The protesting priests were calling for a more democratic style of leadership in the diocese, in line with the principles of Vatican II. The response of the bishop was unequivocal: 'Nadie olvide que es en la Diócesis el Obispo el único Pastor que gobierna.'[33] Nevertheless, he did agree to appoint a *Comisión asesora* (Consultative Commission), composed of twelve

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[30] Translation: 'The language is for the liturgy, not the liturgy for the language.' *BOOB* (1965), p. 147.
[31] 'Sobre la asistencia de la Autoridades Civiles al templo', *BOOB* (Octubre 1968), pp. 726-728 .
[32] Translation: 'The national flag is not the standard or emblem of any party, but of the society in which we live.'
[33] Translation: 'Let no one forget that in the Diocese the Bishop is the only pastor who governs.' *La Gaceta del Norte*, 3 September 1968.

priests, and led by Fr. Angel Ubieta López. This move gave rise to the hope that the bishop was moving towards the more democratic form of leadership demanded by the priests. These hopes were to be dashed a few days later when, in a public statement, the bishop denied that the Commission had any real authority. He then issued another Pastoral Note, confirming and reinforcing all his previous statements and condemning the protest with the usual references to respect for the legitimately constituted authorities.[34]

Gúrpide's actions sparked a further, more dramatic protest, which caught the attention of the world's media and gave rise to serious concerns for both the Franco regime and the Vatican. This time a group of priests occupied the diocesan seminary in Derio and demanded the resignation of the bishop. Monsignor Gúrpide, by now critically ill with cancer, responded by imposing the sanction of suspension *a divinis* on the protesting priests. This, however, did not stop the protest, nor did the news that Gúrpide had died on 18 November 1968, offering his life for the unity of his diocese.[35] The priests wished to make clear that their actions were not motivated by personal animosity towards the bishop, but rather at the way in which the Diocese of Bilbao was governed. Gúrpide was replaced by an Apostolic Administrator, Monsignor Cirarda, who immediately negotiated an end to the protest, lifting the sanctions against the priests and naming Fr. Ubieta as his Vicar General.

While the appointment of an Apostolic Administrator to a diocese upon the death of the previous encumbent may have been normal practice, it is significant in this case because such appointments bypassed the potential veto exercised by the regime. In the years that followed the Council's conclusion Apostolic Administrators would be appointed as a tactical measure by the Vatican as it sought to include more progressive figures in the Spanish hierarchy. In the words of Frances Lannon: 'In these critical years when the teaching of the Second Vatican Council had to be promulgated in Spain, the

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[34] 'La Iglesia y los principios morales de lo temporal' *BOOB* 219 (Noviembre 1968), pp. 808-810.
[35] 'Testamento Espiritual' *BOOB* Número Extraordinario (1968), p. 6.

Vatican had found a way of rapidly making the episcopacy younger and more sympathetic to its orientation.'[36]

Beyond the press coverage generated by clerical protests, the tensions between the ecclesiastical authorities and their subordinates were also manifest in a more immediate and personal way at local level through the content of the sermons preached in Basque churches. The messages being conveyed from the pulpit had been a source of increasing concern for leaders of both Church and State with the beginning of working-class protests in the late 1940s. As noted in Chapter Five, the response of the bishops was to order the priests not to preach at moments of particularly acute political tension. While the majority of priests did comply with the orders of their superiors, others felt justified in disregarding them, and opted for the intermediate solution of abstaining from preaching, whilst informing the congregation of the reasons for their silence in declarations such as the following:

> Pensábamos hablar sobre las huelgas y decir que no se cumplían debidamente las normas de la moral cristiana, pero el Obispo nos ha prohibido hablar de ellas y, por lo tanto, no vamos a predicar.[37]

The seemingly contradictory and disingenuous nature of the above declaration, claiming to respect the bishop's prohibition while ensuring nonetheless that the intended message was conveyed, is revealing of the difficult predicament this confrontation with their ecclesiastical superiors posed for the priests involved. The decision to disobey was not one that was taken lightly. Conscious of the impact that the stance they adopted would have on their followers, priests found themselves torn between their duty of obedience to their superiors and their duty to speak what they believed to be the truth and defend their people. One anthropologist recounts the example of a priest who, unwilling to disobey an order to refrain from preaching,

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[36] Frances Lannon, 'An Élite of Grace: The Spanish Bishops in the Twentieth Century', in Frances Lannon and Paul Preston (eds.) *Élites and Power in Twentieth-Century Spain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 11-31 (p. 14).

[37] Translation: 'We intended to speak about the strikes and say that the norms of Christian morality were not being complied with, but the bishop has prohibited us from speaking on the subject and, as a result, we are not going to preach.' Serafín Esnaola & Emiliano de Iturrarán, *El clero vasco en la clandestinidad (1940-1968)* 2 vols. (Bilbao, Donostia, Gasteiz, Iruña, [s.n.], 1994), VI p. 90.

suggested that the clergy simply stop opening correspondence from the bishop in order to avoid receiving such an order.[38]

Many Catholic priests felt that Vatican II had confirmed their duty to speak out against the human rights abuses committed by the government, particularly in cases involving their parishioners or militants of Catholic organisations. The regime, already suffering challenges to its authority from all sides, was not prepared to tolerate these attacks from the pulpit, and priests found guilty of sermons that were deemed seditious or offensive to the government were brought before a '*Tribunal de Orden Público*' (Public Order Court). The priests generally did not cooperate with these courts or comply with the sanctions imposed, refusing to pay fines and stating as their reason that they did not consider the civil authorities competent to judge the content of a sermon, that responsibility falling within the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical authorities. Chapter Ten will advance this analysis further, examining the repercussions of the activities of these priests on the relations between Church and State against the backdrop of the violent ETA campaign that would begin in 1968.

By the 1960s the foundations of Ecclesiastical authority in the Basque Country were being shaken by repeated challenges to the Catholic hierarchy, emanating primarily from a section of the lower clergy, and calling for a different kind of leadership from the Basque bishops, with a firm emphasis on communication and listening.[39] As the Franco dictatorship progressed, it became increasingly difficult to ignore the violent and repressive methods employed by the authorities, particularly after the Second Vatican Council confirmed the incongruous nature of the relationship between Church and State in Spain. From the late 1960s onwards, therefore, the bishops became increasing vocal in their criticism of the regime and would eventually lend important moral support to the democratic opposition.

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[38] Joseba Zulaika and William A. Douglass, *Terror and Taboo. The Follies, Fables, and Faces of Terrorism* (New York and London: Routledge, 1996), p. 40.

[39] A survey of priests in the Diocese of Bilbao, first published in 1970, revealed that the quality the majority of priests (91.41%) believed to be most important in a bishop was: 'Que sepa oír y escuchar a sus sacerdotes y fieles'. Translation: 'That he knows how to hear and listen to his priests and followers'. Departamento de Investigaciones Sociales (Bilbao, Diócesis), *Diagnóstico sociológico de los conflictos sacerdotales en la diócesis de Bilbao: ambiente, organización, carisma*, 2nd edn. (Bilbao: Departamento de Investigaciones Sociales, 1971), p. 181.

Efforts to implement the principles of Vatican II in Spain were further exacerbated by the difficulties involved in appointing more progressive figures to the hierarchy, since Franco was not prepared to relinquish his control over Episcopal appointments. The Basque bishops in the 1960s were presiding over what might be described as a transition phase, attempting to honour the new direction of the Church promoted by Vatican II within the constraints imposed by the nature of the Franco regime and the previous tradition of ecclesiastical leadership in the region. Their leadership was publicly challenged, and even rejected, by a section of the lower clergy frustrated by the nature of Church-State relations and impatient for change. In post-Vatican II Spain, the 'out-dated' Concordat was to take on a new significance, creating spaces for action for those opposed to the dictatorship. At the same time, however, it would ensure that the Catholic hierarchy was unable to distance itself from conflicts between the regime and its opponents.

Chapter Nine

The Catholic Bishops and the Northern Ireland "Troubles" (1968-1972)

> 'These days are quite unique – a continued flowing of peace-talk interviews, decisions etc. It is an altogether new experience for me – the problem of seeing things clearly in an atmosphere of crisis.'
>
> (Cardinal Conway, Journal Entry, August 1969)[1]

The emergence of the Provisional IRA at the end of 1969 led to a bitter battle for the hearts and minds of the Catholic community between Republicans and the Church, which was to continue throughout four decades of violent conflict. The Provisionals rejected the leadership of the hierarchy, and yet found its influence impossible to escape. At the same time, it proved extremely difficult for Church leaders to condemn IRA violence while members of the Catholic community, concerned for their safety, perceived such actions as legitimate and necessary self-defence. This chapter will analyse the challenges presented to the Catholic hierarchy during the early years of the Provisional IRA's campaign. The head of the Church during this period was Cardinal William Conway, a native of West Belfast, one of the areas worst affected by the conflict. Newly released material from the Cardinal's archive vividly conveys the atmosphere of fear and uncertainty that dominated the period from 1968 onwards, and the difficulties faced by the Primate, and other members of the hierarchy, in their attempts to provide leadership at this time of crisis.

In their analysis of the causes of the violence, the Catholic bishops shared with the Provisional IRA the belief that Catholic defence was necessary, and could not be provided by the security forces of the Northern Ireland state. The crucial difference was that while the Provisional IRA argued that Catholics were morally entitled to take up arms in self-defence, this view was not shared by their ecclesiastical leaders, who looked instead to the British army. The role of the British Army in Northern Ireland remains an

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[1] Journal Entry 10 August 1969, Armagh Archdiocesan Archive (AAA) Conway Papers.

extremely controversial issue, particularly in regard to its relations with the minority Catholic community. The situation was further complicated by the imprecise and fluid nature of the army's role, and the lack of a suitable legal framework for its actions.[2] As the 'Troubles' progressed, allegations of State violence by the hierarchy became increasingly pronounced and began to directly implicate the British government. With relations between the British Army and the Catholic population rapidly deteriorating, at the core of these allegations was the belief that Catholic nationalists could not expect fair treatment from the forces of law and order.

The barricades erected at the entrances to Catholic enclave areas in Derry, Belfast and other areas from late 1968 onwards were a powerful visual representation of the alienation of the minority community from the State and its security forces. According to Edward P. Moxon-Browne's definition of political alienation:

> In a political context the term alienation denotes the sense of being or feeling, foreign. The alienated group is one that feels foreign although it resides within the state; it feels that it does not fully belong to the wider society and often withdraws into itself and becomes increasingly aware of its separate identity. Such a group is often a numerical minority but it need not be so. The crucial attributes are that it sees itself as being subordinate or marginal to the dominant political culture.[3]

As has been outlined in preceding chapters, Catholic nationalists did not identify with the Northern Ireland state, perceiving its very foundation to be an act of injustice against their community. This situation was exacerbated by the government of the new state, which consciously inhibited Catholic participation. When attempts to address this alienation through the Civil Rights movement were met with violence, the sentiments outlined by Moxon-Browne above were compounded, and not for the first time, by the fear that the actual physical safety of the Catholic community was under threat. Behind the barricades defence committees were formed, creating 'no-go' areas for the State security forces who were accused not only of failing to protect Catholics, but also of active involvement in the attacks.[4] Despite the

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[2] Colonel Michael Dewar, *The British Army in Northern Ireland*, 3rd edn (London: Arms and Armour, 1997), p. 32.

[3] Edward P. Moxon-Browne, 'Alienation: The Case of Catholics in Northern Ireland', *Journal of Political Science* 14 (1986), pp. 74-88 (p. 74).

[4] This accusation was substantiated by the Cameron inquiry into the disturbances of the period October 1968 - March 1969, which found that policemen had been 'guilty of misconduct' involving 'assault and

participation of the Catholic clergy in Defence Committees, the alienation and insecurity of the Catholic minority was to converge into support for the Provisional IRA, particularly in the worst affected areas.

The direct causal relationship between the alienation and the violence was clearly articulated in the response of the Catholic hierarchy. The bishops refused to treat the violence in isolation, connecting it firmly with the political, economic, social and cultural grievances of the minority community. The Catholic hierarchy blamed the radicalisation of public opinion during the Civil Rights movement on the inaction of the Unionist and British governments: 'The sad fact is that virtually nothing was done until the people took to the streets.'[5] While the hierarchy blamed the government, others, including members of the lower clergy, also blamed the Catholic Church. Father Joseph McVeigh has suggested that a more active Catholic Church in Northern Ireland pursuing social justice on behalf of the nationalist community would have removed the perceived need for the use of armed force.[6] A similar idea was expressed in a pamphlet by Frs. Denis Faul and Raymond Murray, entitled *The Alienation of Northern Ireland Catholics*. Accusing Dublin, London and the churches of having failed the Catholic citizens of Northern Ireland, the priests claimed that the Catholic community did not want the IRA, but rather:

1. Security of life and home.
2. Freedom from daily oppression from draconian laws, and illegal actions by the RUC and Security forces – outside the law but covered up by the law.
3. Social justice – a share in jobs on merit and houses on need.[7]

Reflecting on the extent of the grievances of the Catholic community and the inadequacy of the responses to those grievances, Frs. Faul and Murray concluded by asking: 'Where is the alternative to violence?'[8] This question

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battery' and 'malicious damage to property' and 'the use of provocative and sectarian and political slogans'. *Disturbances in Northern Ireland. Report of the Commission appointed by the Governor of Northern Ireland* (Belfast: HMSO, 1969), par. 177.

[5] Statement by Cardinal Conway and the Bishops of Derry, Clogher, Dromore, Kilmore and Down and Connor, 19 January 1969. *ICD* (1970), p. 738.

[6] Joseph McVeigh, *A Wounded Church: Justice, Religion and Politics in Ireland* (Cork: Mercier Press, 1989), p. 11.

[7] Dennis Faul and Raymond Murray, *The Alienation of Northern Ireland Catholics* ([Dungannon]: [1984]), p. 3.

[8] Ibid. p. 8.

would be asked many times throughout the course of the conflict, often in response to ecclesiastical condemnations of IRA violence. In defence of the Catholic hierarchy, it should be noted that Chapter Five contains numerous examples of attempts by the bishops to address the grievances of the Catholic community in each of the areas listed by Frs. Faul and Murray. In the same chapter, however, it was also noted that in their public declarations, the bishops themselves had often expressed despair at the likelihood of Catholics receiving fair treatment from the Unionist government. Although clearly not intended as an endorsement of violence, these statements would have undoubtedly reinforced the feelings of alienation experienced by the Northern Catholic minority. The frustration of the bishops' efforts by successive governments made it difficult for them to present their followers with viable alternatives to violence.

By August 1969 Cardinal Conway was acutely aware of the sense of fear and alienation experienced by his people. In that month fierce rioting in Derry and Belfast caused several deaths, left hundreds injured, and saw almost 2,000 families driven from their homes, with the majority of victims coming from the Catholic community.[9] Writing in his journal on 15 August, after making a tour of several areas of Armagh, he stated: 'One could see why barricades are set up – it is a natural thing to do.'[10] That afternoon the Cardinal called the Northern Ireland Prime Minister, James Chichester-Clark, 'to suggest military for Belfast'. He was informed that 'this was already underway'.[11]

It was against this backdrop of alienation, insecurity and despair that the Provisional IRA emerged in 1969. In December of that year the Irish Republican Army split following disputes over ideology and strategy, including the issue of the organisation's response to the situation of the Catholic minority in the North. The old leadership, more ideologically inclined towards Marxism and seeking to move away from the tactic of armed struggle, became known as the Official IRA. The Provisionals, who broke away from the organisation, later cited as one of the reasons for the split the 'failure to give maximum possible defence in Belfast and other Northern areas

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[9] Michael Farrell, *Northern Ireland: The Orange State* (London: Pluto Press, 1976), p. 263.
[10] Journal Entry 15 August 1969, AAA Conway Papers.
[11] Ibid.

in August 1969'.[12] Concerned for their safety and lacking confidence in the security forces, residents of the worst-affected Catholic areas had called on the IRA for protection, but found the organisation unprepared and lacking in weapons, having begun to move towards a less militant, Marxist strategy. Popular frustration was expressed through the graffiti that appeared in Catholic districts declaring that IRA stood for 'I Ran Away'.

The self-image projected by the Provisional IRA was initially one of a defensive force: 'The first priority was defence of the beleaguered nationalist people in the north'.[13] Indeed, the organisation's first major operation was the defence of St. Matthew's Church in Belfast from loyalist attack on 27-28 June 1970 and the Provisionals claimed to have received 'lavish praise' from members of the clergy, including the personal secretary to the Bishop of Down and Connor.[14] Initial support for the Provisional IRA was thus intimately connected to the insecurity of the Catholic minority. As noted in Chapter Five, the failure of 'Operation Harvest', the IRA's border campaign of 1956-62, indicated a lack of support amongst the Catholic population for an offensive campaign against the State in the name of national liberation. Frank Burton has argued that 'without the civil rights consciousness there would be little support for the IRA's traditional goal of a united Ireland to be obtained by force'.[15]

The crucial difference between the two campaigns was the perceived need for defence of a threatened Catholic community. The Catholic bishops, in their statements, displayed sensitivity to this difference. The initial ecclesiastical reaction to the Provisional IRA was cautious, if not ambiguous. Burton has suggested that this was because 'the doctrinal complexion of the Provisionals was unclear and the Church would not quarrel with the immediate task the Provisionals had embarked upon, that of citizen defence'.[16] Cardinal Conway's request for British troops, however, leaves no doubt as to where he believed the response to the security problem lay.

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[12] *Freedom Struggle by the Provisional IRA* (Dublin: Irish Republican Publicity Bureau, 1973), p. 10.
[13] Ibid. p. 11.
[14] Ibid. p. 22.
[15] Frank Burton, *The Politics of Legitimacy – Struggles in a Belfast Community* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 121.
[16] Ibid. p. 93.

The reluctance to condemn the early actions of the Provisional IRA must be understood in the wider context of the response of the Northern Ireland state to attacks on the Catholic community. Ecclesiastical leaders were understandably anxious to avoid condemnations of members of their own community at a time when peaceful protests, deemed by the bishops to be an acceptable response to legitimate grievances, were being portrayed by the authorities as a problem of public order. In the bishops' view, the state was attempting to falsely portray their people, the victims of the violence, as perpetrators.

Revealing of this attitude is the journal entry from Cardinal Conway dated 7 July 1970 where he refers to discussions with Bishop Philbin of Down and Connor and Ronnie Burroughs, the British representative at Stormont, in relation to the St. Matthew's incident and the hierarchy's response to the violence. The Cardinal recorded that Burroughs had asked him to make a televised appeal against violence, but that Bishop Philbin was 'not enthusiastic – it would imply that we had been violent'.[17] The manner in which the violence was portrayed on television represented a further grievance for the Catholic hierarchy. This was particularly true of the BBC, accused not so much of a lack of balance in its reporting as the deliberate creation of a false sense of balance. Writing to the Chairman of the BBC Board of Governors in 1969, on behalf of the Catholic bishops, Cardinal Conway stated:

> The bishops are aware that in covering controversial issues the B.B.C. frequently receives complaints "from both sides" and that this is often regarded as a classic proof of impartiality. I have been asked to suggest that a grave issue of this kind deserves a more delicate yardstick. If a community has been subjected to a violent assault and if that fact is reasonably observable to responsible reporters then I am sure that the Governors will agree that it is the duty of the B.B.C. to say so whether this leaves it open to the accusation of "taking sides" or not.[18]

Despite what could be regarded as a mild initial response from the Catholic hierarchy, the Provisional IRA nonetheless sought to establish itself from the beginning as an organisation free from clerical interference. This represented a significant break with past nationalist tradition, as the following passage from Eamonn McCann's *War and an Irish Town* illustrates:

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[17] Journal Entry 7 July 1970, AAA Conway Papers.
[18] Cardinal Conway to Lord Hill, 20 August 1969, AAA Conway Papers.

> In the Bogside throughout the Troubles few meetings of any campaign involving Republicans have passed without a proposal that a letter be written or a delegation selected to visit the Catholic bishop to ask for some message or gesture of support. It has not been uncommon for this suggestion to come from a Sinn Feiner who has not darkened a church door in ages.[19]

The link between national identity and religious identity remained strong, so that even those who were not practising Catholics were prepared to exploit the identification of the nationalist community with the Catholic Church in order to obtain the influential backing of the bishops.

The ultimate aim of the Provisional IRA – an independent, united Ireland – was reflective of the tone of countless ecclesiastical declarations denouncing both the partition of Ireland and the Unionist government. Although, as has been noted, a more conciliatory attitude towards the Northern Ireland government had been adopted after the appointment of John D'Alton as Archbishop of Armagh, the public image projected by the hierarchy was nonetheless one of sympathy to the cause of Irish unity. The insurmountable obstacle preventing the hierarchy from supporting, or even tolerating, the Provisional IRA was thus not its aim, but its methods, and this issue was to be a major theme in episcopal responses to the IRA campaign. However, there is one further significant point of divergence between the Provisional IRA and the Catholic hierarchy, namely the understanding of the role of the British government, and, crucially, the British army, in the conflict.

The 'defenders' role of the IRA was challenged by the presence of the British army. As stated above, Cardinal Conway had personally recommended that the British army be sent into Belfast in August 1969 to protect vulnerable Catholic communities. In the Cardinal's view there was thus no need or justification for Catholics to take up arms in their own defence. The immediate response of the Catholic bishops to the violence had been to call on their followers 'to remain calm and to avoid all words or actions which could in any way increase tension'.[20] Defence was to be left to the army. Accordingly, the Catholic clergy began to liaise with the army and local

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[19] Eamonn McCann, *War and An Irish Town*, 3rd edn (London: Pluto, 1993), p. 38.
[20] *Irish News*, 25 Aug 1969.

communities to arrange the removal of the barricades. This was particularly the case in Belfast and was to be the source of much bitterness.

Bishop Philbin appeared completely unprepared for the outbreak of serious violence in his diocese in 1969. Writing in his journal on 15 August, Cardinal Conway noted that his colleague 'did not seem to realize the seriousness of the situation'.[21] While the Cardinal expressed understanding of the decision to erect barricades, Bishop Philbin and Fr. Padraig Murphy, a priest based in West Belfast, were actively working to have them taken down. In fact, the Provisional IRA has claimed that Bishop Philbin 'ordered' their removal, while Michael Farrell has stated that Fr. Murphy 'seemed almost as keen as the British Army and Chichester-Clark to get the barricades down and end the situation of dual power'.[22] Of course the Bishop of Down and Connor was arguably closer to the front line in the battle with the IRA than the Cardinal, but his response to the alienation of the Catholic minority and, in particular, the question of Catholic defence, was to be the subject of much bitterness in those communities worst affected by the violence.

The British troops were initially welcomed by some members of the Catholic community, who believed the army would protect them from attack. One soldier described to Peter Taylor how, upon arrival, the army were greeted by Catholics with shouts of: 'We're glad to see you. Thanks for coming. Thanks for saving us.'[23] Whatever the extent of popular sympathy with the British troops, however, one section of the Catholic population emphatically rejected their presence. The IRA, in a statement of August 1969, repudiated 'the British Government's political confidence trick of trying to represent her military forces as saviours of the people and arbiters between Irishmen'.[24] The statement contained a stark warning to the newly arrived British troops:

> Irishmen have no quarrel with you as individuals, but we warn you that until the Westminster Government disarms and disbands the B-Specials, legislates for the Civil Rights demands, and indeed removes you from the country altogether, you are in a very perilous situation. For this is not your country. It is our country, which your Government and Parliament have divided in order to serve the interests of the

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[21] Journal Entry 15 August 1969, AAA Conway Papers.
[22] *Freedom Struggle*, p. 22, and Farrell, p. 267.
[23] Peter Taylor, *Brits: The War Against the IRA* (London: Bloomsbury, 2001), p. 25.
[24] Irish Republican Army Statement, August 1969 in AAA Conway Papers.

> imperialist monopolies, financiers and aristocrats who are a curse to the people of England, Scotland and Wales, as thay (sic) have been a curse to Ireland.

Asserting that it was the IRA and not the British army who were the legitimate defenders of the Catholic people, the statement continued:

> We warn you that if you allow yourselves to be used to suppress the legitimae attempts of the people to defend themselves against the B-Specials and the sectarian Orange murder gangs, then you will have to take the consequences.[25]

Despite this threat it would be almost two years before the IRA killed a member of the British Army, by which time its image as a defensive force had been irrevocably tarnished in the eyes of many Catholics. In September 1969 Cardinal Conway issued a statement calling on his followers not to oppose the military:

> I am confident that the people in the barricaded areas will be truly wise and not allow themselves to be provoked into opposition to the military. Some people would dearly love to see conflict between the people and the military. Make sure they are disappointed.[26]

Instead it was Cardinal Conway who would be disappointed, both at the outbreak of the conflict he had dreaded and at the actions of military leaders.

Impeded by lack of military intelligence from identifying the members of the IRA, the British army adopted a 'counter-insurgency strategy', which targets the community that is allegedly supporting the 'insurgents'.[27] This strategy was to have devastating consequences for the relations between the army and the Catholic population, as was emphatically demonstrated by the Falls Curfew of July 1970 when the army carried out extensive searches in a Catholic area of Belfast, causing damage to homes and using CS gas against the population. Cardinal Conway was appalled by what he described as 'a too violent reaction'[28] and endeavoured to use his influence to bring the curfew to an end by means of official channels. He telephoned Ronnie Burroughs, informing him that, in his view, the army had been 'precipitate' in the use of CS gas. He then attempted to reach Chichester-Clark 'in the hope of getting

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[25] Ibid.

[26] *Belfast Telegraph*, 13 September 1969.

[27] Details of this strategy are outlined by Brigadier Frank Kitson in his famous *Low Intensity Operations*. Borrowing the Maoist analogy of the guerrilla organisation as the fish and the community as the water in which it swims, he argues: 'But if rod and net cannot succeed by themselves it may be necessary to do something to the water which will force the fish into a position where it can be caught.' Frank Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations: Subversion, Insurgency, Peace-keeping* (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), p. 49.

[28] Journal Entry 3 July 1970 AAA Conway Papers [Punctuation as in original].

the military to [clear] out before dark'. Although unable to speak to the Prime Minister, he later concluded that this would have been a fruitless endeavour in any case since it was clear that General Freeland, the British General Officer Commanding, 'was determined to "wring the chicken's neck"'.[29]

In spite of his behind-the-scenes efforts the Cardinal maintained a public silence. His diary entry of 4 July 1970 expressed sympathy with '[t]he poor people of the Falls, battened down like chickens in a coop'. The Falls Curfew had taken the Cardinal completely by surprise and presented an altogether new challenge. He wished to speak out lest his failure to do so be interpreted as 'an embarrassed silence', but, reflecting on his first drafted statement, thought it sounded 'a bit defensive'.[30] The need to speak out in defence of the Catholic population was tempered by a fear of the possible inferences that could be drawn from a public declaration that military actions had been illegitimate. Where, then, were Catholics to turn for protection? Where did the legitimate authority in matters of law and order reside?

To the Cardinal's relief, the curfew was broken the next morning by a group of local women who marched through the soldiers to bring food and other supplies to the people. Referring to the event in his journal Conway remarked that he got 'enormous gut-pleasure out of the sight of a thousand women marching down the Falls into the area'.[31] Although personally supportive of peaceful protest against army abuses, the Cardinal was extremely cautious in giving public voice to such sentiments. Assertion of the right of the Catholic minority to resist was liable to be interpreted as support for the Provisional IRA, to which the Cardinal was utterly opposed. The difficulties involved were compounded in circumstances where the bishops were personally and emotionally involved. The Cardinal's anger at army actions is evident from a post-script added to a letter written to the British Lord Chancellor on 4 July 1970:

> This letter was dictated on last Friday before the latest turn of events. I would like to comment on these but I am really too angry with the Army high command (not with the soldiers) to do so. The Army high command treated the decent people of

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[29] Ibid.
[30] Journal Entry 4 July 1970, AAA Conway Papers.
[31] Journal Entry 5 July 1970, AAA Conway Papers.

> the Falls, who abhor violence and suffered so much last August, like a crowd of Coolies.[32]

That the Cardinal regarded army actions as completely illegitimate is evident from a letter written to Lord Longford several days later.[33] Cardinal Conway questioned the legality of 'General Freeland's extraordinary action in imprisoning thousands of innocent people – including old people living alone – in their homes for 36 hours last week-end'. Commenting on the impact on the local community the Cardinal stated: 'It caused immense nervous tension and suffering. People were allowed out for two hours to buy food and then herded like cattle back into their homes.' A particular source of frustration was the attitude of General Freeland, and the Army High Command in general: 'What we had was order without law and that is a pretty good definition of totalitarianism.' While confident in expressing his personal analysis of the situation to high-ranking British officials, the Cardinal displayed a far greater reserve in the public domain. The potential repercussions of denouncing British military leaders as totalitarian were considerable, both in terms of the standing of the Provisional IRA in the Catholic community and relations with the British government, regarded as a significant potential ally by the hierarchy.

The distinction between the Army High Command and the ordinary soldiers, articulated by Cardinal Conway, was generally shared amongst the hierarchy. While the bishops grew increasingly frustrated at the attitude of commanding officers, they retained a great deal of sympathy for the ordinary soldiers, many of whom were from working-class backgrounds.[34] On 6 February 1971, the IRA shot dead Gunner Robert Curtis, the first of 58 soldiers that would be killed before the Stormont parliament was prorogued in March 1972.[35] Gunner Curtis was killed on the streets of Belfast on a night that saw two other people, an IRA member and a Catholic civilian, lose their lives. Again the Cardinal hesitated in responding, noting in his journal that

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[32] Cardinal Conway to Lord Hailsham of Saint Marylebone, 4 July 1970, AAA Conway Papers. 'Coolie' is a pejorative term historically used to describe unskilled labourers from Eastern countries.
[33] Cardinal Conway to Lord Longford 9 July 1970, AAA Conway Papers.
[34] Author Interview with Bishop Edward Daly, 29 February 2008.
[35] Information from David McKittrick et al., *Lost Lives: The Stories of the Men, Women and Children who died as a result of the Northern Ireland Troubles* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 2007).

some people were 'very bitter against the military'.[36] Feeling that he was ill-equipped to provide an adequate response, the Cardinal cancelled a Mass he was scheduled to celebrate in Armagh Cathedral the next day and instead went to Belfast to 'try to take the temperature'.[37] Two days later he concluded that the 'emotional tension' was not so great as before, attributing this to the growing perception that the violent confrontations were now between the IRA and the British army.[38]

The gulf between the army and the Catholic community widened when the British government ceded to pressure from Chichester-Clark's successor Brian Faulkner and introduced internment without trial on 9 August 1971. Once again, the British government had accepted the Unionist portrayal of the conflict as a public order problem and admitted a military response. Internment caused irreparable damage to the image of the British army in the North: the measure was used almost exclusively against the Catholic population in spite of the very obvious presence of Protestant gunmen. Furthermore, the manner in which the arrests were made served to further alienate the population from the army. Soldiers forced their way into Catholic homes at half past four on the morning of 9 August, dragging bewildered individuals from their beds; many of these individuals and their families were indeed genuinely bewildered by their arrest, as the outdated intelligence provided to the army led to the arrest of many who were unconnected with the violence.[39] The Provisional leaders meanwhile, forewarned of what was to take place, were able to escape detention.

The Cardinal's initial reaction was to urge people to remain calm. While acknowledging the 'deep emotion, frustration and foreboding which grips the Catholic population at the present time', the Cardinal appealed to the Catholic people 'not to allow their feelings at the present time to lead them into

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[36] Journal Entry 6 February 1971, AAA Conway Papers.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Journal Entry 8 February 1971, AAA Conway Papers.
[39] Of 342 people interned 116 were released within 48 hours. Those arrested included elderly veterans of previous IRA campaigns, members of the People's Democracy and others involved in political opposition to the state. In one instance, troops arrived to arrest a man who had died four years previously. Farrell, p. 282. Monsignor Raymond Murray, working as a prison chaplain in Armagh during the period, estimates that out of 23 individuals interned from his area, no more than two or three were involved with the IRA. Author Interview with Monsignor Raymond Murray, 14 March 2008.

situations where they could suffer serious injury or death'.[40] Six days later, however, when it became clear that internment was being used predominantly against the Catholic community and that trade unionists and student leaders had been arrested, and as allegations of ill-treatment of detainees were beginning to emerge, the Cardinal issued a more detailed statement.[41]

It was a damning, but carefully worded condemnation, in which internment without trial was described as 'a terrible power to give to any political authority'. Cardinal Conway asserted that the vast majority of the Catholic people shared the bishops' opposition to violence, adding however: 'It is necessary to state that abhorrence of internment without trial and particularly its one-sided application, is especially deep and widespread among those same people.' The Cardinal called for 'the strong light of publicity [to] be focused not merely on the reasons put forward to justify interment but also on the manner in which it has been exercised', thereby inviting the media to play a role in the defence of human rights, while at the same time suggesting that the Unionist authorities could not be trusted to fulfil this task. Indeed, the Cardinal claimed that there was already 'prima facie evidence' of 'humiliating and brutal treatment' of detainees by the security forces, and called for a 'rigorous and independent examination' of these allegations:

> For an official spokesman to say, as he has done, that complaints should be forwarded to the police for examination must inevitably seem to those concerned in the climate of Northern Ireland at the present time as bordering on cynicism.

In his statement Cardinal Conway expressed the hope that 'British and world opinion will maintain close and impartial scrutiny over this terrible power.' This was the crucial point on which his analysis differed from that of Republicans. In the Cardinal's statement, the British are removed from direct involvement in the conflict and cast in the role of mediators or disinterested observers, capable of '*impartial* scrutiny'. The approach adopted by the Catholic hierarchy approximated closely to the British government's definition of its own role, but was in direct conflict with the IRA's

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[40] *Irish News*, 10 August 1971.
[41] *Irish News*, 16 August 1971.

presentation of its struggle as an anti-colonial one, directed against the illegitimate British occupation of the North of Ireland.

The Cardinal, aware that his condemnation of internment could be open to exploitation and misinterpretation, concluded his statement by reiterating his condemnation of IRA violence. This marked a further point of divergence from the Republican analysis – the appropriate response to the situation of the minority community:

> To say this is not to condone in any way activities of anyone who has deliberately stimulated violence and who therefore must share with others responsibility for deaths and the terrible suffering of so many thousands of people in recent weeks. Catholic people should not allow themselves to be persuaded into violent or sterile or self-destructive forms of protest.[42]

Journal entries for the month of August reveal that the Cardinal had 'conflicting emotions' in relation to internment. Anger and frustration at army actions were combined with the 'the knowledge that it was the bloomin (sic) Provisionals who deliberately hotted the thing up'.[43] The presence of the IRA made it difficult for the Cardinal to speak out against military abuses: 'The I.R.A. are wrong yet the situation is so confused people can't see this.'[44] The Cardinal was angered, firstly because '[t]he fact that the I.R.A. deliberately [provoked] all this seems to be lost sight of by [our] people',[45] and secondly because in the event of a 'Protestant backlash' the Catholic people would be defenceless. In the Cardinal's view the army was unable to fulfil the role it was intended for because 'the military are so occupied with the I.R.A. that they cannot defend the Catholics'.[46]

The nature of the violence was also changing. The Cardinal observed on 11 August that there seemed to be 'less stone-throwing on the streets but more gun-battles with the I.R.A. and this seems to be satisfactory to the military'.[47] It would appear that in the Cardinal's view neither the IRA nor the British army was particularly concerned for the safety of the Catholic community. The Provisional leader Joe Cahill made a public appearance a few days after the introduction of internment, declaring the leadership of the

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[42] Ibid.
[43] Journal Entry 9 August 1971, AAA Conway Papers.
[44] Journal Entry 10 August 1971, AAA Conway Papers.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Journal Entry 11 August 1971, AAA Cardinal Conway.

movement to be intact.[48] The British army was proving to be a very effective recruiting agent for the IRA, and this trend would continue over the coming months.

The introduction of internment was accompanied by what Cardinal Conway described as 'a string of rather ruthless shootings by the Army'.[49] Of the fourteen deaths that took place on 9 August, eleven were believed to have been caused by the British army, although in several cases the circumstances were disputed. Among the dead were a Protestant mother of nine, a Catholic mother of eight who had gone out to search the streets for her children, and Fr. Hugh Mullan of Ballymurphy.[50] Fr. Mullan had been shot dead whilst attempting to give the last rites to a man who had been killed during an exchange of gun-fire between British soldiers and gunmen. Local people blamed the army for the shooting, but the accusation was denied.[51]

Bishop Philbin publicly called for an investigation in a statement issued on 10 August 1971: 'The circumstances of Father Mullan's death call for the most vigorous investigation in the interests of justice and truth and in the hope of bringing the present dreadful contagion of killing to an end.'[52] The Bishop, in his caution against further violence, openly acknowledged that the people had suffered: 'We are never at liberty – *even under extreme emotional stress, or in reaction to injury* (emphasis added) – to take leave of our Christianity.'[53] Cardinal Conway attended Fr. Mullan's funeral together with Bishop Philbin, noting in his journal that he was glad to have had 'an opportunity of mixing a bit with the Ballymurphy people'.[54] Less than a year later, in July 1972, he would attend the funeral of Fr. Noel Fitzpatrick, another priest from the same parish, shot in almost identical circumstances.[55]

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[48] Cahill declared, 'Internment has failed, Partition has failed, British rule in Ireland has failed. There will be no peace in our country until the British Army has withdrawn from our shores.' *Irish News*, 14 August 1971.
[49] Journal Entry 9 August 1971, AAA Cardinal Papers.
[50] For details see McKittrick et al., pp. 79-86.
[51] Ibid. p. 82.
[52] *Irish News*, 10 August 1971.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Journal Entry 12 August 1971, AAA Conway Papers.
[55] Father Fitzpatrick had been trying to give the last rites to a man who had been shot near his home, again during an exchange of gunfire between the army and paramilitaries. At the inquest local residents testified that soldiers had been firing indiscriminately into the estate, but this was denied by the army. McKittrick et al., p. 216.

As detainees began to be released, disturbing allegations of torture and ill-treatment began to emerge.[56] Cardinal Conway unquestionably regarded these allegations as serious from the first instance and sought to inform himself of the situation, reviewing a substantial body of evidence that had been collated by members of the lower clergy. Based on this evidence, the Cardinal was convinced of the need for an enquiry and a selection of cases was later passed to Lieutenant General Sir Harry Tuzo of the British army.[57] In addition to this private direct contact, the Cardinal also exerted additional pressure on British authorities through statements to the press:

> I must say quite frankly ... that I was shocked and stunned by the evidence I have seen of brutality. It makes me terribly sad to see how a situation of the kind that exists here can have this effect on some members – and I emphasise the word some – of an army which has a very high reputation indeed.[58]

The findings of Sir Edward Compton's enquiry, published the following November, were rejected by the nationalist community. While acknowledging that 'ill-treatment' had taken place, the report denied that this amounted to 'physical brutality'.[59] Cardinal Conway emphatically disagreed with this assessment.[60] Also in November the Northern bishops issued a statement condemning both the violence of the Provisional IRA and the army. Of 'interrogation in depth' they said:

> We condemn this treatment as immoral and inhuman. It is unworthy of the British people. It is the test of a civilised people that the methods of its elected government remain civilised even under extreme provocation ... People will never understand the terrible situation here until they appreciate the intense bitterness which excessive or unjust methods of repression engender throughout a whole community.[61]

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[56] For details of the allegations see: Denis Faul and Raymond Murray, *The Hooded Men: British Torture in Ireland, August, October 1971* (Dungannon: Denis Faul, 1974); Amnesty International, *Report of an Enquiry into Allegations of Ill-treatment in Northern Ireland* (London: Amnesty International Publications, 1974).

[57] See Tuzo file in AAA Conway Papers.

[58] *Sunday Telegraph*, 22 August 1971.

[59] *Report of the enquiry into allegations against the security forces of physical brutality in Northern Ireland arising out of events on the 9th August 1971* (London: HMSO, 1971).

[60] In a letter to Sean MacBride on the subject of 'interrogation in depth' in 1972, the Cardinal stated: 'I have no doubt that some arrested persons were subjected to direct physical violence – and that this is continuing – but I have the impression that the people in charge of the interrogation in depth were particularly anxious to avoid this. The really sinister aspect of this method of interrogation was its assault on the mind.' Cardinal Conway to Sean MacBride, 3 January 1972, AAA Conway Papers.

[61] *Justice, Love and Peace: Pastoral Letters of the Irish Bishops 1969-1979* (Dublin: Veritas, 1979), pp. 42-43.

The bishops' carefully worded statement contrasts with the much stronger line taken by Frs. Denis Faul and Raymond Murray in their pamphlet on the treatment of detainees entitled *Long Kesh: The Iniquity of Internment*. Here Britain's role is portrayed in a different light, with the Long Kesh internment camp described as 'the masterpiece of British lies, hypocrisy and deceit'.[62] Together with Fr. Brian Brady of the Diocese of Down and Connor, Frs. Faul and Murray made approximately two thousand formal complaints in relation to alleged human rights violations by the State during the course of the Northern Ireland conflict. The details of many of these cases were reproduced in pamphlets that condemned State violence in the light of the teachings of Vatican II.[63]

While the Catholic hierarchy attempted to use its influence with high-ranking officials and privileged access to the media, members of the lower clergy were working on the ground, actively campaigning alongside the people. Despite the contrast between the two approaches, none of the priests involved was told by his superior to desist from these activities.[64] Indeed, the two strategies might be regarded as complementary. In this way the Church was able to maintain a presence in both critical sectors with the condemnations of the lower clergy strong enough to satisfy the victims of alleged State abuses, while the more measured statements of the hierarchy were sufficiently diplomatic to avoid alienating the civil authorities.

A further dimension the hierarchy brought to the condemnation of State violence was the international status afforded by its relationship with the ecclesiastical authorities in other nations, as well as the Vatican. Conway, in particular, was a figure of significant standing in international ecclesiastical circles.[65] In a telegram to the Australian Catholic Bishops on 10 February

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[62] Denis Faul and Raymond Murray, *Long Kesh: The Iniquity of Internment* (Dungannon: Denis Faul, 1974), p .6.

[63] Author interview with Monsignor Raymond Murray, 12 March 2008. Copies of 101 of these leaflets and pamphlets have been deposited by Monsignor Murray in the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland. PRONI, Private Records, D3564.

[64] Ibid. It is true, however, that Cardinal Conway spoke out against criticisms made by Fr. Faul of the judiciary in November 1969. For details see: Gerald McElroy, *The Catholic Church and the Northern Ireland Crisis, 1968-86* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1990), pp. 121-122.

[65] In 1967 he was one of three co-chairs of the first Synod of Bishops. In addition, he was a member of four Roman congregations and in 1972 would travel to India as the Pope's special envoy at the centenary celebrations for St. Thomas.

1972 the Cardinal explained the significance of the controversy surrounding internment as follows: 'When those charged with upholding the law appear to violate it with impunity in this way the foundations of respect for law and order are eroded.'[66] According to Monsignor Raymond Murray, the telegram was a 'ploy for publicity' and represented a 'mild threat'.[67] Calls for international involvement in the conflict were a source of irritation to the British authorities, determined to portray the situation as a domestic problem and prevent outside interference.

'Another rather painful day and I am beginning to wonder whether I shall not end up with a heart-attack or a stroke', wrote Cardinal Conway on 4 September.[68] The frequent repetition of the word 'painful' in the Cardinal's journal entries for the weeks following the introduction of internment conveys the extent of his personal distress at the situation unfolding within his community. As he elaborated: 'The painful is composed of two elements a) pain at the suffering of our people – the refugees and those who remain behind. b) the fact that it is very difficult for me to say anything.'[69] As head of the Church, Cardinal Conway felt a particular obligation to respond to the concerns of his community, namely 'internment, military brutality and intimidation'[70] but was unsure of the best means of doing so. While he categorically disapproved of the actions of the military, he was concerned that public condemnation from him would be interpreted as justification for the IRA campaign. At the same time he was acutely aware that support for the IRA stemmed from the insecurity of the Catholic community and that this insecurity had been considerably increased by what he described as 'military brutality'. Faced with this vicious cycle of violence – a situation 'much worse than 1969'[71] – combined with the rapid pace of traumatic events, and all under

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[66] Text in *The Catholic Church in Ireland. Information and Documentation* (Dublin: Catholic Press and Information Office of Ireland, 1981), p. 39.
[67] Author interview with Monsignor Raymond Murray, 12 March 2008.
[68] Journal Entry 4 September 1971, AAA Conway Papers.
[69] Journal Entry 12 August 1971, AAA Conway Papers [Punctuation as in original].
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid.

the constant glare of the media, the Cardinal felt increasingly helpless: 'It now seems impossible to avoid a catastrophe...'[72]

Although it was the Cardinal's view that the IRA had deliberately, and successfully, provoked the British army into committing acts of violence against ordinary people, the ranks of that organisation had now been swelled by new recruits motivated to join by their experiences at the hands of the military. As one Provisional member wrote: 'Any moral resistance I had to violence was being rapidly undermined by the actions of the British Army and the RUC during and after the introduction of internment.'[73] In spite of his inability to accept some of its actions, the Cardinal maintained a good deal of respect for the British Army, commenting to the British Prime Minister Edward Heath in September 1971:

> I said I still believed what I said to General Tuzo in the Spring namely, that if we had to have an army in Northern Ireland I would prefer the British army certainly to the French or the German or the U.S. army. They had shown a great deal of restraint but they were human and unfortunately the Provos had succeeded in sucking them into a Vietnam situation while they had inevitably come into conflict with the civilian population.[74]

While armed battles were being waged on the streets, another battle was being fought within the Catholic community itself. According to Eamonn McCann, by the time the Provisionals had intensified their campaign of violence, provoking a response from the bishops, they had 'acquired sufficient strength in the community to challenge the authority of the Church'.[75] While rejecting the leadership of the Catholic hierarchy, members of the Provisional IRA did not wish to end their identification with the Catholic Church; instead, their propaganda justified their struggle in explicitly Catholic terms. Although the primary motive for the 1969 split was the question of how to respond to the situation in the Northern Ireland state, other underlying ideological differences, namely disagreement with regard to political strategy and division along Marxist lines, also had an influence. Those who remained in

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[72] Journal Entry 14 August 1971, AAA Conway Papers.
[73] Danny Morrison, *All the Dead Voices*, (Cork: Mercier Press, 2002), p. 213, quoted in Richard English, *Irish Freedom: The History of Nationalism in Ireland* (London: Macmillan, 2006), p. 370.
[74] Minutes of a Conversation between Cardinal Conway and Edward Heath, 2 September 1971, AAA Conway Papers [Punctuation as in original].
[75] Eamonn McCann, *Dear God: The Price of Religion in Ireland* (London: Bookmarks Publications, 1999), pp. 81-82.

the Official IRA were committed to a Marxist strategy of undermining partition by uniting the working classes North and South of the border. The more traditionalist element of the organisation went to the Provisional IRA, and its first leaders were known to be the most conservative in religious matters.[76]

Séan MacStiofáin, the first Provisional Chief of Staff, had been suspended from the IRA for 6 months (later reduced to 2) in 1966 for refusing to sell the *United Irishman* when it carried an article claiming that the practice of saying the rosary at Republican commemorations was sectarian and should be stopped.[77] Maria McGuire has claimed that when leader of the Provisionals, MacStiofain refused to smuggle condoms from the north to the south of Ireland (where the sale was restricted) for use in bomb-making.[78] Similar accounts are given of other Provisional leaders, such as the following:

> At the helm of the Provisionals was Billy McKee ... He was regarded as a disciplinarian by his men, single, and a devout Catholic attending Mass daily; he was a traditionalist in the mould of the old I.R.A.[79]

> In August 1969, Jimmy Steel was an elderly married man, renowned not only for his devotion to Ireland but for his deeply religious personal life. He was a Pioneer of long standing, totally honest in word and deed, never heard to speak uncharitably of others, a daily communicant over a lifetime when that meant getting up very early in the morning.[80]

That the members of the Provisional IRA would continue to identify themselves with the Catholic Church, despite their rejection of the leadership of the Catholic hierarchy, is unsurprising. The passages quoted above are illustrative of the close association of Catholicism with past nationalist tradition. Coming from Catholic families and educated in Catholic schools, the world-view of the early Provisional members would have been conditioned to a great extent by Catholicism. McCann has described how, in the Catholic family home,

> One learned, quite literally at one's mother's knee, that Christ died for the human race and Patrick Pearse for the Irish section of it. The lessons were taught with dogmatic authority and were seemingly regarded as being of equal significance.[81]

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[76] Richard English, *Armed Struggle: The History of the I.R.A.* (London: Macmillan, 2003), pp. 130-131.
[77] Séan MacStiofáin, *Memoirs of a Revolutionary* ([London]: Gordon Cremonesi, 1975), p. 96.
[78] Maria McGuire, *To Take Arms: a Year in the Provisional IRA* (London: Macmillan, 1973), p. 75.
[79] Raymond J. Quinn, *A Rebel Voice: A History of Belfast Republicanism 1925-1972* (Belfast: Belfast Cultural and Local History Group, 1999), p. 156.
[80] *Republican News*, 21 July 1973.
[81] McCann, *War and an Irish Town*, p. 65.

Richard English however has argued that 'it would be misleading to present the IRA's politics as too formalized, elaborate or coherent. They emerged out of turbulence and crisis, and were as frequently visceral as intellectual or philosophical in approach'.[82] According to Edward Moxon-Browne: 'Republicanism, like any nationalist ideology, weaves together divergent threads of argument into a messy tapestry.'[83] An unmistakeable Catholic influence was nonetheless present during the organisation's early ideological development. For instance, a 1970 statement outlining the aims of the Republican movement declared its intention 'to promote a social order based on justice and Christian principles'.[84] While the strategic value of references to 'Christian principles' by an organisation vying for support in a Catholic community would not have been lost on the early Provisional leaders, it is clear from the evidence cited above that the inclusion of such references was not merely tactical, but reflected genuinely held beliefs. The psychologist Ken Heskin in his study of paramilitary organisations in Northern Ireland concluded: 'It is, in fact, not quite so absurd to imagine a young Irishman tossing up a coin to decide whether to join the priesthood or the IRA'.[85] There were practising Catholics who believed that they were entitled, or perhaps obliged, to take arms to defend their people from injustice.

An effective illustration of this argument can be found in a series of articles that appeared in 1970 in the April, May and June issues of *An Phoblacht*[86] by a writer who identified himself as a member of the Provisional IRA. The first, entitled 'A Sickening Society' reminded readers of the Vatican II message that 'Christians must **care**' and expressed concern that 'a society becoming more callous and less tolerant and with abuses by authority against minority groups becoming more common is developing in this Ireland of

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[82] English, *Armed Struggle*, p. 133.
[83] Edward Moxon-Browne, 'The Water and the Fish: Public Opinion and the Provisional IRA in Northern Ireland' in *British Perspectives on Terrorism*, ed. by Paul Wilkinson (London: Allen &Unwin, 1981), pp. 41-72 (p. 47).
[84] *Freedom Struggle*, p. 11.
[85] Ken Heskin, 'The Psychology of Terrorism in Northern Ireland' in *Terrorism in Ireland* ed. by Yonah Alexander and Alan O'Day (New York, St. Martin's Press, 1984), pp. 86-106 (p. 96).
[86] Following the split in the Republican movement the newspaper *An Phoblacht* was founded by the 'Provisional' wing. Its first edition appeared on 31 January 1970.

ours'.[87] The writer declared that the time had come 'to examine our consciences and to react positively'.[88] The direction that action should take was indicated in the second article, 'A Theology of Protest', which argued that the denunciation of injustice is the duty of bishops, priests and all the faithful. Tellingly, the article concluded that 'the questioning of authority, in fact, may be a sacred duty' even when this act of giving witness to Christ involved braving a police cordon.[89]

The final article was entitled 'A Theology of Violence' and stated that 'though to be violent may be a very human failing, it is the duty clearly, of the Christian in the world to try to solve the problem by attacking the causes – often by public protest against patent injustice'. The article then moved to a discussion of the theology of violence within the Church, stating that

> the obligation is to seek for peace at all times and to take the line of non-violence, as dictated by the precept of charity ... But one may defend oneself; one may kill in self-defence; one may take part in a just war or revolution. How and when and where all go back to one's conscience with the proviso that there is an obligation to inform that conscience.

The author argued that while the Christian will always prefer non-violent forms of protest in 'normal circumstances', these do not apply in the case of tyranny:

> The moral argument here is that the sustained violence of tyranny is a corruption which must be ended as the human spirit thrives only in freedom; therefore, if there is no alternative, violence may be used to regain the lost freedom.[90]

The Catholic hierarchy was thus being challenged to respond to a moral analysis justifying the Provisional IRA's campaign in specifically Catholic terms. The task was not an easy one, as the experience of systematic discrimination had given rise to an acute sense of injustice amongst the Catholic community – and this sense of injustice had often found its most articulate expression in the public declarations of the Catholic hierarchy. The refusal of the Belfast and London governments to respond to the appeals of the Catholic bishops on behalf of their community, and the violent response to

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[87] *An Phoblacht*, April 1970 [Emphasis from the original].
[88] Ibid.
[89] *An Phoblacht*, May 1970.
[90] *An Phoblacht*, June 1970.

attempts at peaceful protest, meant that the hierarchy had little to offer by way of viable alternatives to the Republicans' armed struggle.

In May 1970 the Northern bishops released a joint statement on the increasing violence.[91] This statement focused primarily on the consequences of IRA violence, particularly the fact that 'the people who would suffer most are the innocent and the poor'. Violent actions that inflicted suffering and death on the Catholic community were condemned as 'a stab in the back'. '[I]t is the people, human beings, that matter', wrote the bishops, 'not causes or ideologies'. While once again acknowledging the significance of injustice as a causal factor, the bishops denied that Catholics were entitled to respond with the use of force:

> It is no justification for such conduct to say that there was provocation or to say, even with some justice, that much worse deeds have been done by others and have gone unpunished. Two wrongs do not make a right.

The bishops went further in their joint statement of 12 September 1971;[92] here the balance of condemnation was firmly weighted against the IRA as the hierarchy challenged its claim to be acting in defence of the Catholic community. Dismissing the organisation as 'a handful of men, without any mandate from the people', the bishops attempted to portray their campaign as absurd: 'Who in his sane sense wants to bomb a million Protestants into a united Ireland?' This unfortunate choice of phrase, while sufficiently dramatic to capture public attention, was not reflective of the rationale underlying the IRA campaign. IRA members and supporters were thus able to argue that their campaign had been misinterpreted, or misrepresented, by the bishops, since its aim was not to 'bomb' Protestants into submission, but rather to force a British withdrawal from Ireland. The analysis of the damage and destruction caused by the IRA campaign – more difficult to refute – could thus be overlooked.

Speaking on World Peace Day, 1st January 1972, Bishop Cahal Daly, who would later have many public clashes with Republicans as Bishop of Down and Connor (1982-1990) and Primate of All Ireland (1990-1996), addressed the problematic issue of the complexity of the Church's responses

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[91] *Justice, Love and Peace*, pp. 37-39.
[92] Ibid. pp. 39-41.

to Ireland's revolutionary past. Arguing that what was needed was a 'demythologising of revolutionary violence', Bishop Daly stated that 'both the methods and the consequences of revolutionary violence have so altered for the worse that, although sometimes justifiable in principle, violence can extremely rarely be justified in practice'. According to Bishop Daly's analysis, revolutionary violence threatened democracy by damaging 'the very fabric of civil society'. In the sermon the bishop addressed the problematic issue of the Church's posthumous acceptance of the 1916 Easter Rising, from which the Provisional IRA claimed direct descent. While asserting that he was 'personally convinced that our fight for national freedom was just and necessary', the bishop warned against a repetition of the legacy of that struggle, which he summarised as 'division, polarisation, recrimination, social stagnation and economic regression'.[93]

In its counter argument, the Provisional IRA claimed that its campaign was a necessary response to the situation of the Catholic minority, and challenged the analysis put forward by the bishops. Gerald McElroy has identified three broad phases in the Republican attitude to the Church, as expressed through the pages of Republican publications, the first two of which are relevant to the period covered in this study. According to McElroy, until 1971 the Republican view of the Church was 'muted.' A second phase began in the early 1970's and lasted until the end of the decade; during this time Republican criticism was 'predictably fierce, but in some ways qualified.' By the late 1970's however the ideological shift to the left that had taken place within the Provisional IRA had led to the adoption of an increasingly secular viewpoint, and criticism of the Church became more straightforward.[94]

As an illustration of the type of comment that characterised the second phase, McElroy has analysed the Editorial from *Republican News,* 30 October 1971.[95] This piece is particularly useful as it brings together a number of the key issues discussed in this chapter:

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[93] Text of the sermon in Cahal B. Daly, *Violence in Ireland and Christian Conscience* (Dublin: Veritas, 1973), pp. 25-39.
[94] McElroy, p. 159.
[95] *Republican News*, 30 October 1971, quoted in McElroy, p. 160. Republican News was founded by

> Since August '69 Catholics in the North have been looking to the Hierarchy for some indication of leadership. They looked in vain. As the repression gained in intensity, they found the twisted speeches of their Bishops becoming more and more irrelevant...

The implication of this statement is that the outbreak of violence in 1969 left Catholics in need of leadership. Since the Catholic hierarchy proved unequal to the task, the Provisional IRA stepped into the breach. Criticism of the IRA was therefore, by extension, an attack on the Catholic population as a whole; a further betrayal of the people the hierarchy had failed to adequately defend. Recurring themes in Republican responses to criticism from the hierarchy included the claim that their campaign was being misrepresented, accusations of double-standards – condemning IRA actions while ignoring violence from other sources – and criticism of the failure to show leadership and present viable alternatives. The hierarchy were further portrayed as the traditional enemies of Irish nationalism: 'Throughout the age-old Irish struggle against British imperialism one of the most treacherous forces has been the Catholic Church Hierarchy'.[96]

In an article entitled 'The Theology of the IRA' Berman *et al* argue that the Provisional IRA made a distinction between 'good' Catholics and 'bad' Catholics, where the 'good' were the priests and the people and the 'bad' were the Catholic hierarchy.[97] This analysis was not without foundation, as Republican propaganda often contained articles and quotations from sympathetic members of the lower clergy. In addition, priests also issued statements distancing themselves from the response of the hierarchy. For instance, a statement published by 60 Catholic priests in Fermanagh on 22 January 1972 challenged the view that only bishops and priests 'can decide when armed resistance has become lawful' and argued that 'the right of an oppressed community to rebel against aggression and gross injustice' had 'always been recognised in the Christian tradition'. The statement concluded with a thinly veiled attack on the authority of the bishops to make pronouncements on these matters:

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the Northern Republican leader, Jimmy Steele, six months after the emergence of *An Phoblacht*, with the first edition published in July 1970.

[96] *Freedom Struggle*, p. 41.

[97] David Berman et al. 'The Theology of the IRA', *Studies* XXII 286 (1983), 137-144 (p. 137).

> In search of justice we must listen especially to those who have suffered most from injustice. Those who, by position of power, are immune to the justice of the system are not always the best informed to give guidelines to the oppressed.[98]

Viewing the members of the IRA as their protectors, many Catholics showed themselves to be increasingly willing to challenge the leadership of the bishops. Criticism of the IRA from the Catholic hierarchy thus risked further alienating a section of the Catholic minority from the Church. As Eamonn McCann has pointed out in reference to the situation in Derry:

> The church's open entry into politics had deprived it of the total inviolability normally conferred on it by its 'spiritual' role. Those who wished to 'stand by the IRA' had to oppose the clergy on this issue. If the role of the IRA was being openly questioned for the first time in ten months, the role of the church was under similar scrutiny for the first time in fifty years.[99]

The most prominent example of such a challenge is the protest to Bishop Philbin's house by a group of women from the Ballymurphy area of West Belfast in January 1971. The protest had been organised in response to a sermon by Bishop Philbin on 17 January in which he had spoken out against the membership of an 'illegal organisation'. A group of about fifteen women from Ballymurphy Women's Action Committee brought a letter to the bishop's house, which they then read to the press: 'His Lordship has shown very little interest in our affairs in the past and we feel you are completely out of touch with the problems here.' The women went so far as to argue that the very church in which the bishop gave his sermon would not be standing were it not for the actions of the organisation he condemned:

> The men you spoke of on Sunday are needed here to keep our estate free from crime, protect our homes and keep us from being trodden into the ground ... We think we have enough problems without the Army adding to them. Peaceful protests carry no weight. So we rely on our own men and boys and back them in all their efforts. God guide them all, they are doing a grand job.[100]

It was to be a frequent accusation made by Bishop Philbin's opponents that he displayed a definite bias against those members of his flock from lower socio-economic backgrounds: 'His epitaph will be this: he did nothing for the ordinary people of his diocese.'[101] Some members of his diocese thus experienced a double alienation – from both Church and State. That this protest was organised by women is revealing of the depth of alienation, since

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[98] Quoted in McVeigh, p. 80.
[99] McCann, *War and an Irish Town*, p. 166.
[100] *Irish Times*, 22 January 1971.
[101] 'The Churches in Northern Ireland', *Belfast Bulletin* 8 (Spring 1980), p. 28.

women represented the section of society that identified most strongly with the Church.[102] Significantly, the Northern Bishops had appealed in a particular way to women in their joint statement against violence in May 1970, stating that they were 'often the people who suffer most'.[103] Yet here was a group of women claiming that their bishop did not understand them, particularly their need for defence.

Criticism of the Provisional IRA's campaign by the hierarchy during the early 1970s thus led to challenges to ecclesiastical authority, both from within the Catholic lay community and the lower clergy. However, opponents of the IRA too were far from satisfied, deeming the hierarchy's response unduly lenient. A key issue was the excommunication of members of the IRA, a measure strongly resisted by the Catholic bishops. This question has been analysed in detail by Bishop Edward Daly:

> I do not believe that excommunication by the Church would help the situation in any way. Communication is much more important where these young men are concerned. They are victims of history and victims of the circumstances of today in Northern Ireland. Whilst hating the sin, we must be willing to love the sinner, and endeavour to bring God's healing forgiveness and God's word to him.[104]

The bishops recognised not only that experiences of injustice and ill-treatment could prompt practising Christians to become involved in acts of violence, but also that the widespread feelings of alienation within their community, including alienation from the Church, was a contributory factor. Furthermore, the experience of the excommunication and refusal of the Sacraments to members of the Anti-Treaty IRA during the Irish Civil War had convinced them that this policy simply would not be effective.[105] Republican propaganda warned that '[a]n effective excommunication could leave the Catholic Churches practically empty.'[106]

The issue of excommunication was particularly significant in relation to the funerals of those members of the IRA killed while on 'active service'. These funerals had a particular significance for both supporters and opponents

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[102] This view is confirmed by the findings of the social anthropologist Jeffrey A. Sluka in his study *Hearts and Minds, Water and Fish: Support for the IRA and INLA in a Belfast Ghetto* (Grenwich, Conn.: JAI Press, 1989), p. 249.
[103] *Justice, Love and Peace*, p. 38.
[104] Edward Daly, 'In Place of Terrorism', *The Furrow* 26.10 (1975), pp. 587-599 (p. 591).
[105] Author interview with Bishop Edward Daly, 29 February 2008.
[106] *Republican News*, 30 October 1971, quoted in McElroy, p. 160.

of the Republican movement. The following extract, from a Unionist pamphlet in Northern Ireland, is a good illustration of the view that the celebration of funerals for IRA members causes the Catholic Church's condemnations of violence to appear hollow:

> For those republicans who lose their own lives in advancing their struggle, there is available the full solace of their Church as IRA murderers are buried with no lesser Roman Catholic Church rites that the very priests of that Church. Glorification rather than the more seemingly fitting excommunication is the response of the Roman Catholic Church to the IRA terrorist.[107]

In February 1971 the Northern Ireland Prime Minister, James Chichester-Clark, announced measures to curb paramilitary displays at funerals, following clashes between mourners, loyalists and members of the security forces at the funeral of James Saunders, an IRA man shot by the army. The Prime Minister declared that police should enforce the law against the display of the Irish flag in circumstances likely to lead to a breach of the peace, adding 'I think that such a possibility is only too likely to arise where that flag is flaunted at the demonstrative funeral of a man killed in pursuit of subversive activities.' He then attacked the Catholic Church, stating that the way such funerals had been conducted was totally irresponsible provocation and was simply making a mockery of Christian burial.[108]

The decision not to excommunicate, however, enabled the Catholic hierarchy and lower clergy to play a significant role as peace-makers and mediators throughout the conflict. In December 1971, the Archbishop of Dublin, John Charles MacQuaid, arranged a meeting with leading members of both the Official and Provisional IRA to request a Christmas truce. The Archbishop stated that his appeal was 'not a judgement on the situation, North or South', nor was it a 'political initiative'.[109] In a report to the Apostolic Nuncio, MacQuaid described both meetings as 'cordial' and stated that the representatives of both organisations had promised to give consideration to his request.[110] Séan MacStiofáin of the Provisional IRA later wrote: 'What I particularly appreciated was that he had gone privately about proposing the

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[107] J. Allister, *Irish Unification Anathema: the reasons why Northern Ireland rejects unification with the Republic of Ireland* (Belfast: Crown Publications, no date), pp. 20-21, quoted in Steve Bruce, *God Save Ulster: the Religion and Politics of Paisleyism* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), p. 122.
[108] McKittrick *et al.*, p. 63.
[109] 'A Christmas Appeal', Dublin Archdiocesan Archive (DAA) MacQuaid Papers.
[110] MacQuaid to Alibrandi, 23 December 1971. DAA MacQuaid Papers.

truce instead of exploiting the situation by calling for it in the media first, the usual tactic of certain other churchmen who won more publicity than concrete results.'[111]

Throughout this period relations between the Catholic community and the army continued to deteriorate. In a letter to Ronnie Burroughs dated 30 December 1971 Cardinal Conway confided:

> The situation here is very bad and relations between the Catholic population and the Army could scarcely be worse; ... I am utterly depressed. Effective communication has virtually broken down; when I try it I get the impression that I am talking to a pillow.[112]

Just one month after the Cardinal's letter to Burroughs the events of Bloody Sunday would irrevocably tarnish the image of the British army in the Cardinal's eyes. On 30 January 1972 British paratroopers opened fire on a protest march against internment in Derry, resulting in fourteen deaths.[113] The paratroopers' claim that they had engaged armed targets subsequent to being fired upon was challenged by eye-witness accounts, including the testimonies of priests who were present at the scene. One of the priests, Fr. Edward Daly (later to succeed Bishop Farren as Bishop of Derry), had been standing beside one of the victims, 17 year old Jackie Duddy, when he was shot. The image of Fr. Daly waving a white handkerchief as he accompanied the body of the young victim was transmitted around the world. Interviewed by journalists from both newspapers and television soon after the event, the priest was unequivocal in his condemnation of the British army: 'The British Army should hang its head in shame after to-day's disgusting violence. They shot indiscriminately and everywhere around them without any provocation.'[114]

Bishop Daly recalls that upon his return home after the incident he was met by Bishop Farren, who told him to expect a phone call from Cardinal Conway. Predictably, the media response was swift and overwhelming. A particularly vivid memory for Bishop Daly, and one that encapsulates the difficulties experienced by an elderly hierarchy in attempting to come to terms with the modern mass media of the late 1960s, is the bewilderment of

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[111] MacStiofáin, p. 200.
[112] Cardinal Conway to Ronnie Burroughs, 30 December 1971, AAA Conway Papers.
[113] Thirteen people died at the scene and another died later in hospital from injuries received.
[114] *Irish News*, 31 January 1972.

Bishop Farren at having received a telephone call from a journalist in New York asking for information on the day's events. The modern concept of the twenty-four hour global media was then entirely new and beyond the bishop's comprehension.[115]

Having been informed of the facts by Fr. Daly, Cardinal Conway sent the following telegram to Edward Heath: 'I beg you to believe that an immediate, independent and impartial public enquiry into to-days (sic) events in Derry is absolutely imperative.'[116] Heath replied several days later, informing the Cardinal that an enquiry would be held, but reminding him of the illegal nature of the march, which, like others before it, had been banned by the Belfast authorities:

> The procession was of course illegal and the reason why such marches had been banned was the risk that hooligans and terrorists might use them as a cover, and that there would be violence and loss of life. The events in Londonderry have tragically confirmed this view.[117]

Bloody Sunday unleashed a wave of anti-British feeling in Ireland, North and South of the border that found its most vivid expression in the burning of the British Embassy in Dublin. It has been claimed by Ciarán De Baróid that, in the aftermath of Bloody Sunday, '[t]he Catholic hierarchy was thrown into confusion in its attempt to find a comfortable position for itself, being temporarily muzzled in its anti-republican tirade.'[118] While Bloody Sunday marked a definite turning point for the image of the British army in Northern Ireland, a fact recognised by the Catholic hierarchy,[119] the bishops continued to warn their followers against resorting to violence.

Cardinal Conway joined Bishop Farren in officiating at the funerals. Once again the expression of solidarity with the suffering of the people was combined with a warning against further violence. In his sermon Bishop Farren called for restraint, telling mourners: 'The eyes of the world are on our city at the present time and anything that happens here is known all over the

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[115] Author interview with Bishop Edward Daly, 29th February 2008.
[116] Cardinal Conway to Edward Heath, 30 January 1972, AAA Conway Papers.
[117] Edward Heath to Cardinal Conway, 2 February 1972, AAA Conway Papers.
[118] Ciarán de Baróid, *Ballymurphy and the Irish War*, New edn, (London: Pluto Press, 2000), p. 97.
[119] Cardinal Conway wrote to the British Lord Chancellor: 'Things will never be the same after that Sunday.' Cardinal Conway to Lord Hailsham of Saint Marylebone, 9 February 1972, AAA Conway Papers.

world.'[120] The Dublin government declared the day of the funerals, 2 February, a day of national mourning. Preaching in St. Mel's Cathedral, Longford, Bishop Cahal Daly warned that '[i]t would be irresponsibility, bordering on madness, for anyone, but especially for the British Government, to underestimate the depth and the danger of the emotion gripping the country at this time.'[121]

In his sermon Bishop Daly condemned the failure of the British government to fulfil its responsibilities to the Irish people. He argued that the British army in Northern Ireland was being 'committed to behaviour of which British people should be ashamed and by which British people are being disgraced in the eyes of the world'. The sermon encapsulated the frustration of the Catholic hierarchy, particularly in the North, whose appeals for justice had been ignored, with devastating consequences:

> Britain's leaders were warned again and again of the gravity of the situation existing in the North of Ireland and of the increasingly dangerous state of emotion and feeling in the rest of Ireland. They were warned of the grave and urgent need for resolute political action, for radical and structural reforms. They did not listen. Will they listen now? Will they ever learn to take Irishmen seriously? Must there be tragedy piled upon Derry's tragedy before Britain's leaders learn that there is not a military solution, that there is now no alternative to a radical new deal for all Ireland?

The 'new deal' for Ireland came in the form of the proroguing of the Stormont parliament and the return to direct rule from Westminster on 30 March 1972. Paul Bew and Henry Patterson have argued that Heath's decision to abolish the Stormont parliament 'was a direct response to the sudden withdrawal of Catholic support for the existing state after internment and "Bloody Sunday"'.[122] In addition to the strength of Catholic opposition to the State, the interest of the international media, and the international community more generally, was a source of considerable concern to the British authorities. The decision was welcomed by the Catholic hierarchy, who began to exert pressure on the IRA to call a ceasefire. The call was rejected.[123] In April the Cardinal explained to a Scottish Protestant Minister that things were in a

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[120] *Irish News*, 3 February 1972.
[121] Daly, *Violence in Ireland*, pp. 13-19.
[122] Paul Bew and Henry Patterson, 'The Protestant-Catholic Conflict in Ulster' in *Dimensions of Irish Terrorism* ed. Alan O'Day (Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1993) pp. 223-234 (p. 230).
[123] See *Freedom Struggle*, p. 62.

'continual state of flux'. He described how Catholics were 'torn apart by horror at some of the things the I.R.A. are doing and near despair at some aspects of military behaviour, of which Derry 30 January was the worst example'.[124] This 'state of flux' was to continue throughout the following decades.

Writing in August 1972, Cardinal Conway described the mood of the Catholic community during the last two years of the Stormont regime as 'one of black and utter despair'. He elaborated:

> They felt themselves trapped under a Northern Ireland Government in which they had no confidence, which was progressively becoming more 'hard-line' in composition and repression, and which seemed to be backed to the hilt by an army which was raiding thousands of homes in the small hours of the morning and interning hundreds without trial.[125]

The failure by the State to protect the Catholic community from attack, coupled with what was perceived as the excessive and illegitimate use of force by the State against that same community, presented considerable challenges to the Catholic hierarchy. Foremost amongst these challenges was the need to condemn injustice without appearing to give justification to the campaign of anti-State violence being waged by the IRA.

The emergence of the Provisional IRA in December 1969 and its claim to be acting in defence of the beleaguered Catholic minority left the Catholic hierarchy fighting a war on two fronts. Opponents of the Provisionals accused the Church of not having done enough to condemn the violence, while the organisation's supporters accused the Catholic hierarchy of throwing its weight behind the establishment and turning a blind eye to the injustices inflicted on the community. The violent response to Catholic attempts to address their grievances within the context of the Northern Ireland state, and the failure of the governments in both Belfast and London to protect the Catholic population from this violent backlash, created the conditions necessary for a reorganised IRA to present itself as a defensive force. When evaluating the response to the outbreak of violence, it is vital to take into consideration the experience in the Catholic community itself, swept by fear,

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[124] Cardinal Conway to Reverend John Prescott, 26 April 1972, AAA Conway Papers.
[125] Cardinal Conway to the Lord Chancellor, Lord Hailsham of St. Marleybone, 30 August 1972.

panic and confusion. The Catholic bishops were no more prepared for the situation than their followers. This view is supported by Bishop Edward Daly:

> When the first bombs exploded and the first guns were fired in the North of Ireland, nobody knew quite what to do. There was horror and revulsion at the deaths and destruction, there was dismay that such a thing could happen in our community. I suppose there was also embarrassment at the scandal created abroad by such incidents in a Christian community. I would hasten to add, with respect, that it is very simple to tut-tut from hundreds or thousands of miles away at acts of terrorism.[126]

Analysis of the causes of the conflict, which necessarily formed a core element of declarations by the hierarchy on violence, proved a significant source of contention. Father Joseph McVeigh has criticised the failure of the hierarchy in the North of Ireland to acknowledge that violence coming from the Catholic community was 'secondary' and to address the primary source of violence, namely the British authorities.[127] Gerald McElroy in a survey of the lower clergy carried out in the 1980s found them to be almost evenly divided on this issue, with 43.1% of priests agreeing, and 47.8% disagreeing with the statement: 'The hierarchy has not done enough to criticise various forms of State violence.'[128]

Central to this dispute is the question of balance. Republicans frequently complained that the hierarchy's condemnations of violence were one-sided and focused only on the activities of the IRA while ignoring the violence perpetrated against their own community. This accusation was adamantly refuted by the Catholic bishops. For instance, Bishop Cahal Daly, speaking on 12 December 1971, argued that while the bishops had repeatedly condemned murder and bombings, they had 'no less courageously condemned the brutalities and inhumanities of the other violence which is military repression'.[129] Investigation of the Republican claim highlights the significant difference between public perception and reality, and the crucial role played by the media. Bishop Edward Daly has argued that the false perception that the hierarchy only opposed IRA violence can be attributed to the fact that condemnations of State violence were made privately, while condemnations of the IRA, given the secretive nature of the organisation, necessarily had to

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[126] Daly, 'In Place of Terrorism', p. 588.
[127] McVeigh, p. 84.
[128] McElroy, p. 82.
[129] Daly, *Violence In Ireland*, p. 11.

be public. In the case of State violence the bishops had clearly identifiable individuals who could be contacted by phone or private letter. This was not the case with the IRA; hence condemnations of IRA violence were aired in the public domain.[130] The material from Cardinal Conway's archive analysed in this chapter corroborates this view – the preferred vehicles for condemnation of State violence used by the Cardinal were private meetings, letters and phone calls, details of which were rarely released to the press.

A further significant factor influencing this decision is, once again, the limits of episcopal authority. Who should the bishops address in their condemnations? While the bishops clearly have an obligation, emphasised in *Gaudium et Spes*, to speak out against injustice, a bishop's first responsibility is 'to teach his own people and to give moral leadership in his own community'.[131] The bishops felt morally obliged to contradict the IRA's assertion that its actions were compatible with the teachings of the Catholic Church, and that it was acting with the support of the Catholic community.[132]

Finally, a crucial factor influencing this question of balance, and one which is often overlooked, is the extent to which the agenda of the various media agencies themselves impacts upon the message that is conveyed from the bishops. The attributes that make the Catholic bishops prime targets for media attention have already been enumerated in the introduction to this study, namely the fact that they hold positions of supreme authority within their own diocese, representing the highly influential institution of the Catholic Church, whilst at the same time being readily identifiable individuals with names and faces to add personal depth to the story. These elements take on a new significance in the context of a military struggle being waged against the State by an organisation claiming to represent the Catholic community. In this context of competing claims of 'national liberation' and 'national defence', the power of the Catholic hierarchy to confer or deny legitimacy is highly significant.

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[130] Bishop Edward Daly, 'The "Troubles"' in *History of the Diocese of Derry from Earliest Times*, ed. by Henry A. Jeffries and Ciarán Devlin, (Dublin: Four Courts, 2000), pp. 259-296 (p. 281).
[131] Author interview with Bishop Edward Daly, 29th February 2008.
[132] Ibid.

The position of the media, whether from Northern Ireland, the Republic or the UK, was overwhelming opposition to the Provisional IRA.[133] As a consequence, journalists were quick to contact the bishops in the aftermath of an IRA killing, and noticeably more reticent in seeking statements on killings by the military.[134] While the bishops were equally opposed to all killings, irrespective of the source, condemnations of the IRA were actively sought, and they often felt they had no choice in the matter, as refusal to comment would, in itself, be interpreted as a comment. Condemnation of military actions, however, required the bishops to take the initiative themselves. The failure to do so can, in many cases, be attributed simply to 'human nature'.[135] Constantly under pressure for statements while attempting to carry out their normal pastoral and administrative duties against a backdrop of violence and suffering, the bishops were understandably reluctant to seek out the media, particularly when their intervention was almost certain to produce further controversy.

It could be argued that the bishops should have paid more attention to public perceptions of their position, particularly in relation to this critical question of balance. Bishop Cahal Daly, however, in an address for World Peace Day 1st January 1972, explained the bishops' motivations as follows:

> They have not been cultivating a public image, but trying to perform a duty in conscience before God – and have therefore not sought to publicise the constant and insistent representations they have been making to the responsible authorities to impress on them the need to abandon ruinous policies and be seen to be implementing radical structural reforms.[136]

While the bishops may have felt justified in leaving the judgement of their actions to God (and posterity), there is little doubt that a stronger *public* stance in condemnation of State violence would have been welcomed by many in their community. Indeed, while the difference between the interventions of the hierarchy and the activities of priests such as Frs. Denis Faul, Raymond Murray and Brian Brady was fundamentally one of style and technique, the public efforts of these members of the lower clergy to address the issue of State violence proved crucial in enabling the Church to retain a measure of

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[133] This is the view of Bishop Edward Daly, ibid.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Cahal B. Daly, *Violence in Ireland and the Christian Conscience* (Dublin: Veritas, 1973), p. 35.

support in the communities most affected by the violence, which had begun to feel frustrated at the perceived failure by the Church to defend their rights.

Chapter Ten

The Catholic Hierarchy and the Basque Conflict (1968-1975)

> 'La Iglesia jerárquica, el Vaticano, nos apoyará, como a todo el mundo, cuando hayamos triunfado y tengamos fuerza. Es lo que aprendieron los Obispos en tiempos de Teodosio. Y, desgraciadamente, no piensan olvidarlo.'[1]
>
> (ETA, 'La Iglesia sigue siendo con Franco', 1962)[2]

Even more controversial than the Irish case is the nature of the relations between the Catholic Church and the radical Basque nationalist group, *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (ETA), meaning 'Basque Country and Freedom'. Alvaro Baeza has famously claimed that ETA was 'born in a seminary',[3] while more recently, in 2004, the journalist Carmen Gurruchaga listed the Catholic Church as one of the 'accomplices' of ETA,[4] and that same year Jesús Bastante published *Los curas de ETA* (The priests of ETA).[5] The nature of the relations between ETA and the Church will be explored in this chapter with specific reference to the Catholic hierarchy.

Although many of the accusations made against the Church refer to the lower clergy, the Basque bishops have been accused of failing in their Christian duty in relation to ETA in several areas: it is claimed, firstly, that they facilitated the logistical organisation of this armed group by turning a blind eye to the use of Church buildings for meetings and other activities; secondly, that the bishops refused to bring the full force of their moral authority to bear on ETA in order to put an end to its campaign. Instead, they refused to explicitly condemn the organisation by name, limiting their interventions to more general condemnations of violence, which placed ETA violence on a par with the use of force by the State.

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[1] Translation: 'The hierarchical church, the Vatican, will support us, as they have everyone else, when we have triumphed and grown strong. This was what the bishops learned during the time of Theodosius, and, unfortunately, they do not intend to forget it.'
[2] *Zutik*, December-January 1961-2. *Zutik* collection in Aguirre Archive.
[3] Alvaro Baeza, *E.T.A. nació en un seminario: El gran secreto – Historia de E.T.A. 1952-1995* (San Sebastián: ABL Press, 1996).
[4] Carmen Gurruchaga, *Los "cómplices" de ETA* (Madrid: Esfera, 2004).
[5] Jesús Bastante, *Los curas de ETA* (Madrid: Esfera, 2004).

In recent years sources close to the Catholic hierarchy have attempted to refute these allegations, publishing individual and collective statements by the bishops condemning violence.[6] This chapter will place these statements in context, examining the reaction of the Catholic bishops to the emergence of ETA and the guidance they offered to their followers during the turbulent final years of the Franco dictatorship. Accounts both condemning and defending the role of the Church will be considered in an attempt to provide a balanced assessment of the role of the hierarchy. Marked similarities can be noted with the Irish case – here too a guerrilla organisation emerged from within a minority community alienated from a State whose authority it deemed illegitimate. The two situations were, however, very different from the perspective of the hierarchy; while in Northern Ireland only one side of the political divide identified itself with the Catholic Church, in the Basque Country both sides in the conflict regarded the Catholic bishops as their spiritual leaders. The hierarchy thus saw itself as equally obliged to provide a moral analysis of the violence of 'national liberation' and of 'national defence'.

Paul Preston has observed that: 'Until Franco's death Spain was governed as if it were a country occupied by a victorious foreign army.'[7] This was particularly true in the Basque Country, and most of all in the "traitor provinces" of Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa, where official policies aimed at the elimination of local culture and symbols of Basque uniqueness served to reinforce the impression of 'foreign' domination. This chapter will argue that the evolution of the relations between the Basque hierarchy and the Franco regime can be traced through ecclesiastical declarations (or lack thereof) on the theme of State violence. The silence of the bishops on the brutality of Franco's troops during the civil war and their subsequent collaboration in the suppression of the regime's political opponents were gradually replaced towards the end of the dictatorship by unequivocal public condemnations of

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[6] José Antonio Pagola, *Una ética para la paz: los obispos del País Vasco, 1968-1992* (San Sebastián: Idatz, 1992; *Al servicio de la palabra: cartas pastorales y otros documentos conjuntos de los Obispos de Pamplona y Tudela, Bilbao, San Sebastián y Vitoria (1975-1993)* (Bilbao, Ega, 1993); *La Iglesia frente al terrorismo de ETA*, ed. by José Francisco Serrano Oceja (Madrid: BAC, 2001).

[7] Paul Preston, *The Politics of Revenge: Fascism and the Military in twentieth-century Spain* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 42.

the actions of the State authorities. Although the distancing of the Catholic hierarchy from the Franco regime could be seen throughout the Spanish dioceses by the 1960's, it was in the Basque Country that this rupture was most visible in public declarations of the hierarchy, provoked by the intensity of the violence in the region.

The social anthropologist Marianne Heiberg, in her study of Basque nationalism, concluded that 'the role of the Catholic Church in the Basque Country is essential to understanding the nature of ETA'.[8] While the claim that the organisation was 'born in a seminary' is clearly exaggerated, even those who staunchly defend the role of the Catholic Church in relation to ETA do not attempt to deny the Catholic influence that was prevalent during its early years. Many of the founding ETA members had links to the Catholic Church, either as seminarians or as members of Catholic organisations. ETA rejected Sabino Arana's insistence on race and religion as the defining characteristics of the Basque nationality, basing instead its criteria for inclusion in the nation on language and culture. Angel María Unzueta, however, has claimed that this concern had its origins in the local associations run by the Church, which were working to promote the Basque language and local culture. Unzueta stresses that while young people from church-run organisations went on to become members of ETA, double membership was rare and these young people tended to leave the Christian organisations on joining ETA.[9]

Studies by anthropologists of radical Basque nationalism have highlighted the significance of the formation received by militants during their youth under the auspices of the Catholic Church. Joseba Zulaika has further claimed that 'the ethos of militantism and primacy of *ekintza* [action] formed within the Catholic movement evolved naturally into the *burruka* (fighting) mentality, which perceives combat to be the necessary business of life'.[10] Begoña Aretxaga has observed in the case of María Dolores González

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[8] Marianne Heiberg, *The Making of the Basque Nation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 103.
[9] Angel María Unzueta Zamalloa, *El Vaticano II en una iglesia local: recepción del Concilio Vaticano II en la diócesis de Bilbao* (Bilbao: Universidad de Deusto, 1995), p. 16.
[10] Joseba Zulaika, *Basque Violence: Metaphor and Sacrament* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1988), p. 89.

Catarain (Yoyes), who joined ETA during the early 1970s, that her religious beliefs led her to be concerned with social issues such as poverty, freedom and political inequality:

> With these preoccupations Yoyes felt the need for social action; she did not yet know however, in what direction to pursue that need. She deliberated between going far away to be a missionary and staying to fight for her people.[11]

Zulaika has also put forward a convincing sociological explanation for the numbers of seminarians who joined ETA: those from rural (*baserritar*) backgrounds were often younger sons excluded from the family property by virtue of a single-heir inheritance system; free of the responsibility that fell to their older brothers, they were also acutely conscious of the threat to their cultural roots and way of life.[12]

Fernando García de Cortázar has suggested that the 'bankruptcy' of Basque religiosity during the 1960's provoked an identity crisis within Basque nationalism, which led to its progressive radicalisation.[13] Membership of Catholic associations raised the consciousness of these young people, and awakened a will to action, but the tight control exercised by the bishops then made it impossible for militants to realise their aspirations within the organisation. Despite the apparent homage to the Catholic tradition of its predecessors in the date chosen for its foundation in 1959 (ETA, like the PNV, was founded on 31st July – the feast day of St. Ignatius), the organisation declared itself to be a-confessional and advocated the unification of the Basque regions and the establishment of a democratic state with freedom of religion and *Euskera* as its official language.[14] This, as Francisco Letamendia Beluze has argued, was a truly revolutionary stance, representing a break with both traditional nationalism and the Catholic Church.[15]

When evaluating the reaction of the Catholic Church to ETA during the early years of its existence it is vital to stress the non-violent nature of the

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[11] Begoña Aretxaga, *States of Terror: Begoña Aretxaga's Essays*, ed. by Joseba Zulaika, (Reno: Center for Basque Studies, 2005) pp. 149-150.
[12] Zulaika, p. 106.
[13] Fernando García de Cortázar, 'La Iglesia vasca, entre la profecía y la sumisión', *Cuenta y Razón* 33.1 (1988), pp. 31-35 (p. 31).
[14] *Documentos Y*, 18 vols., (San Sebastián: Hordago, 1979-1981), VI pp. 532-533.
[15] Francisco Letamendia Belzunce, *Historia del nacionalismo vasco y de ETA*, 2 vols. (Donostia-San Sebastián: R&B, 1994), VI p. 252.

group's early activities, and the overtly cultural aims they represented. During this period ETA militants confined their activities to the painting of graffiti, the hanging of *ikurriñas* (Basque flags), and the defacing of monuments to Franco, and the organisation was not responsible for any loss of life until 1968. In fact, ETA's early activities were not very far removed from what was happening in a section of the Basque lower clergy. As seen in Chapter Eight, members of the clergy were at this time involved in their own battle against the symbols of the regime: removing plaques from churches, banning the Spanish flag and the playing of the national anthem and omitting the prayers for General Franco from religious services. In response to criticism of the practice of allowing church buildings to be used by ETA, Unzueta has pointed out that ETA was not the only non-religious organisation to be granted the use of parish buildings for its meetings during the dictatorship. A generous interpretation on the part of the ecclesiastical authorities of the protection afforded to church property under the terms of the Concordat, meant that virtually all those groups in opposition to the Franco regime had access to these buildings.[16]

A section of ETA's *Libro Blanco* (White Book – its handbook for militants) is devoted to the discussion of 'Responsibilities before God' and affirms the importance of Christianity in the Basque national heritage, with particular reference to the Christian principles that guided Sabino Arana.[17] Writers in the early editions of ETA's publication *Zutik*, while advocating religious liberty, openly affirmed their own personal religious beliefs, claiming that they, as practising Catholics, advocated the separation of Church and State for the benefit of the Church.[18]

On 18 June 1961, however, the group demonstrated its intention to employ more violent methods, although still with a clearly symbolic significance, using explosives for the first time in an attempt to de-rail a train carrying civil war veterans to a rally. The plot was unsuccessful and the reaction of the regime, given that there was no loss of life, could only be described as excessive: over one hundred people were arrested and tortured,

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[16] Unzueta Zamalloa, p. 16.
[17] *Libro blanco* (1960), pp. 15-16, in Aguirre Archive, Monasterio de Santa Teresa, Lazkano.
[18] *Zutik Caracas* No. 13, in *Documentos Y*, VI p. 478.

and those charged with offences were given long jail sentences or sent into exile.[19] These events brought ETA to the attention of the wider Basque population.[20] Members of Catholic youth organisations were among those arrested, and the actions of the authorities were criticised by the wider Catholic community.

Any hopes the bishops might have held of distancing the Church from the conflict were dashed by the outspoken response of a member of the lower clergy. In a sermon of 27 August, Fr. Joseba Ulazia of Tolosa stated that while there was no justification for an act of sabotage that endangered lives, the suppression of the people's freedom of expression made it understandable:

> Ahora bien, ¿cuál es la causa última de estos brotes de terrorismo ...? Pues, sencillamente, la falta de una sana libertad de opinión. Este es el gran sabotaje. He ahí el gran atentado, no contra unas personas, sino contra un pueblo. Ante ese sabotaje no reaccionamos con la debida energía y los hombres van embruteciéndose lentamente.[21]

He further asserted that innocent youths had been arrested and tortured by the regime.[22] As a result of this intervention Fr. Ulazia was denounced to the civil authorities for an 'apology of terrorism'. At his trial the priest explained that the sermon had been motivated by the need to defend justice and assert the independence of the Church, according to Catholic doctrine. Nevertheless, the charge was upheld by Bishop Bereciartúa, who informed Ulazia that he was 'most disgusted' at his actions and removed him from his parish. The bishop denied that there was a lack of freedom in Spain, adding: 'Y aunque fuera verdad, yo prefiero esta situación a la de la República.'[23]

The causal link between violence and injustice, clearly articulated by the Catholic hierarchy in Northern Ireland, was thus initially denied by the Basque hierarchy, despite the protestations of members of the lower clergy.

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[19] Robert P. Clark, *The Basques: The Franco Years and Beyond* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1979), p. 157.

[20] John Sullivan, *ETA and Basque Nationalism: The Fight for Euskadi 1890-1986* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 35.

[21] Translation: 'So what is the ultimate cause of these outbreaks of terrorism...? Well, it is simply the lack of freedom. This is the greatest sabotage. Here we have the greatest attack, not against individiual people, but against a whole people. We do not react with sufficient energy to this sabotage and men are slowly becoming like brutes.' Text of the sermon in Serafín Esnaola & Emiliano de Iturrarán, *El clero vasco en la clandestinidad (1940-1968)* 2 vols. (Bilbao, Donostia, Gasteiz, Iruña, [s.n.], 1994), VI pp. 379-380.

[22] Ibid. p. 380.

[23] Translation: 'And even if that were true, I prefer this situation to that which existed under the Republic.' Ibid. p. 381.

The contrast in approach is explained by the divergent stances hitherto adopted by both hierarchies to alleged injustices against the minority community. In the context of Northern Ireland, the Catholic bishops had publicly denounced perceived injustices, cautioning that there would be serious consequences if these were not addressed. In the case of the Basque bishops, however, the acknowledgement that injustice was a root cause of the violence would raise questions about their own role during the previous decades of the Franco dictatorship: if there was injustice, and lack of freedom, why had the ecclesiastical authorities not spoken out before? Such questions, however, could not be avoided and would be clearly articulated in the propaganda of ETA.

The repression which followed the failed sabotage attempt smashed the structure of the nascent ETA and forced its leadership into exile. It was here that the organisation held its first assembly in May 1962, in a Benedictine monastery in France, once again utilising church infrastructure in the planning and preparation of its campaign. ETA did not develop a clearly defined ideology until 1963, drawing inspiration from the analysis of the Basque situation outlined in Federico Krutwig's *Vasconia*, first published in Buenos Aires in 1962. Krutwig stressed that the religious and racial overtones of Arana's ideology had to be removed from Basque nationalism and that the emphasis instead should be placed on language and culture. Significantly, the work also attacked the Catholic Church as an agent of 'denationalisation' and presented the ancient Basque paganism as an alternative to Catholicism. Krutwig lamented that religious differences did not separate the Basques from their neighbours and political opponents, thereby depriving them of this potential 'barrier'.[24]

Rather than seeking to replace Catholicism with an alternative religion, or replace God with the nation as an object of devotion, ETA simply rejected the tendency to consider religion 'una condición sine qua non del vasquismo' (a *sine qua non* condition of Basque identity) that had characterised the nationalism of its forebears. Instead it declared that the future Basque state

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[24] Federico Krutwig [published under the pseudonym Fernando Sarrailh de Ilhartza], *Vasconia: estudio dialéctico de una nacionalidad*, 2nd edn (Buenos Aires: Editorial Norbati, 1973), p. 75.

would be a-confessional, with the independence of both political and religious authorities.[25] In a 1965 letter the organisation stated its case clearly:

> En cuanto al problema religioso del hombre vasco, siempre tan importante (y decimos bien, religioso no católico), ETA ni entra ni sale en las creencias religiosas de sus militantes o del pueblo en general.[26]

Nonetheless, its founders had not completely rejected their Catholic roots. Krutwig has been quoted as describing the early ETA leaders as 'super-Catholics' who would never eat meat on Fridays.[27] Letamendia concurs in this assessment of the religiosity of the early members, noting that they were frequent communicants.[28] Be that as it may, the first generation ETA leaders shared Krutwig's antagonism towards the leadership of the Catholic Church, as is revealed in the virulent attacks on the Catholic hierarchy in the clandestine publications produced by the organisation.

ETA's attitude to the hierarchy was succinctly summarised in a 1962 article from *Zutik* entitled 'The Church is still with Franco'. The author contrasted the Church's condemnation of Fidel Castro with its support for the Franco regime, claiming that Franco had learned that bestowing 'social prestige' on the bishops was infinitely more important than 'principles, or Christianity, or human rights, or social justice'. The author concluded, however, that the hierarchical Church and the Vatican would support ETA when it had triumphed and achieved power, as had been the case with other regimes.[29] The Catholic hierarchy was thus presented as dominated by concerns for self-preservation, to the exclusion of its moral and pastoral responsibilities.

This challenge to the leadership of the bishops was not merely accidental, but rather occupied a specific place in ETA's strategy. This was explicitly recognised in the pamphlet *Insurrección en Euskadi* (Insurrection in the Basque Country) where the Catholic hierarchy was listed as part of the

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[25] 'Carta a los intelectuales' *Zutik* 30 (June 1965) quoted in Anabella Barroso Arahuetes, *Sacerdotes bajo la atenta mirada del régimen franquista* (Bilbao: Desclée de Brouwer, 1995), p. 263.
[26] Translation: 'As regards the religious problem of the Basques, always so important (and we state clearly religious, not Catholic), ETA takes no interest in the religious beliefs of its militants, or the people in general.' Ibid.
[27] José María Garmendia, 'La crisis del nacionalismo en la posguerra y el nacimiento de ETA', in *La historia de ETA*, ed. by Antonio Elorza, (Madrid, Temas de Hoy, 2006), pp. 83-106 (p. 99).
[28] Letamendia, p. 256.
[29] *Zutik*, December-January 1961-1962.

State apparatus to be destroyed by ETA and replaced through the creation of 'parallel hierarchies'.[30] The aim of the parallel hierarchies was to weaken the State by encouraging disobedience.[31] In 1963 *Zutik* called on Basque Catholics to withhold financial donations from the Catholic Church until its hierarchy had been replaced by one that paid more attention to the voice of Pope John XXIII than that of exploitative capitalism and foreign tyranny.[32]

There was a marked contrast between the scathing attacks on the Catholic hierarchy and the more respectful tone adopted towards the Papacy. In addition to the praise for Pope John XXIII noted above, a 1963 article from *Zutik* pointed out that the word 'liberty' had been used seventeen times in his encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, published in April of that year.[33] The organisation also wrote a letter to Cardinal Montini of Milan, the future Pope Paul VI, welcoming his plea to Franco on behalf of three Catalan men sentenced to death, and reminding him that the Basque people were subject to the same tyranny.[34]

ETA's early propaganda asserted the morality of its violent challenge to the State, phrased in explicitly Catholic terms. The introduction to *Insurrección en Euskadi* declared that where political means had been exhausted the just war of liberation became necessary.[35] In its *Libro Blanco* the organisation referred to the writing of Catholic moralists such as Jacques Maritain, who declared that the question of morality is much more flexible in the case of a people engaged in acts of resistance, than for an individual. Consequently, it was concluded, actions which under other circumstances would be considered immoral, in the context of the revolutionary war waged by ETA became, not merely licit, but obligatory.[36] ETA's struggle was thus presented not only as a just war, but an 'ethical' one since the organisation was fighting a more powerful opponent.[37] The struggle was not, however,

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[30] [Julen de Madariaga], *Insurrección en Euskadi* (Bayonne: Goiztiri, 1964), p. 26. Copy in Aguirre Archive.
[31] Ibid. p. 31.
[32] *Zutik*, November 1963.
[33] *Zutik* Tercera Serie – No. 12.
[34] *Zutik Boletín de Noticias* in *Documentos Y*, VII p. 476.
[35] *Insurrección en Euskadi*, p. 1.
[36] *Libro blanco*, p. 196.
[37] *Insurrección en Euskadi*, p. 10.

without hope of success – a crucial criterion of the Catholic theology of the just war – since history had demonstrated that David could defeat Goliath.[38]

References to the Church in ETA publications became less prevalent with the progressive secularisation of the organisation and the move towards a more openly left-wing ideology that was becoming apparent from 1967 onwards. *Insurrección en Euskadi* did, however, note a number of parallels between Christianity and Communism, declaring that ETA members should be as dogmatic in essential principles as 'the crusader of ancient times or the modern-day communist apostle'.[39] A section entitled 'Man needs Hope,' explained that the reason both Christianity and Communism attracted millions of followers was that they proclaimed the eventual victory of the humble and the oppressed – an ideal which ETA sought to emulate.[40] At the same time Marxists were criticised in an ETA pamphlet for being as intolerant as fundamentalist Catholics.[41]

According to José María Garmendia, indicative of ETA's ideological shift was the fact that only five of the forty delegates present at the second part of ETA's fifth assembly, held in a Jesuit residence during Holy Week 1967, attended the mass celebrated on Holy Thursday.[42] By the time ETA began to escalate its activities in 1968, resulting in loss of life, it had ceased to justify its actions in Catholic terms. This, however, did not prevent the regime's press from accusing the Catholic Church of bolstering ETA violence through its moral authority.

Although by 1968 ETA had definitively adopted a revolutionary aim, it still lacked the capacity to launch a full-scale guerrilla war against the State. Krutwig, in *Vasconia*, had advocated a cycle of action-repression-action and this strategy was later amplified by the ETA member Julen de Madariaga in *Insurrección en Euskadi*. In practice, however, this cycle was to be set in motion by unforeseen events and would dominate the final years of the Franco dictatorship in the Basque Country. On 7 June 1968, the ETA leader Txabi

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[38] Ibid. p. 6.
[39] *Insurrección en Euskadi*, p. 8.
[40] Ibid. p. 20.
[41] *Cuadernos ETA – Marxismo*. Aguirre Archive.
[42] Garmendia, p. 134.

Etxebarrieta shot *Guardia Civil* José Pardines in order to avoid arrest. The *Guardia Civil* continued the cycle of action-repression-action by shooting Etxebarrieta dead at a checkpoint, thus providing ETA with its first martyr.

The perception of repression spread beyond ETA members to the wider community with the decision by the civil authorities to prohibit the celebration of funeral masses for the deceased. ETA distributed leaflets calling on people to attend the funeral as an act of solidarity:

> AVISO AL PUEBLO DE MONDRAGON
> El domingo día 16, a las 10,30 horas se celebrará una misa en la Iglesía (sic) de San Francisco, en homenaje póstumo a nuestro querido amigo y compañero Xabier Etxebarrieta Ortiz, asesinado en Tolosa por la Guardia Civil.
> Mondragoneses apoyad con vuestra presencia los ideales y actitud de este insigne gudari perseguido y ejecutado – por imperialismo opresor – en defensa de los derechos del Pueblo Vasco.[43]

The prohibition was not supported by the ecclesiastical authorities, who maintained a neutral silence. The heavy police presence at the churches nonetheless turned the funerals into the first real act of collective public protest in the region under the dictatorship, representative of a broad spectrum of nationalist opinion.[44] This measure led to a wave of disturbances in the region, culminating in the imprisonment of two Franciscan priests, found guilty of 'insolence to the forces of order'.[45] For the remainder of the dictatorship attendance at the funeral of an ETA militant would be perceived as an act of protest against the regime. According to Begoña Arteaga:

> Si la muerte es en este contexto un duro golpe político, organizativo y psicológico real, el ritual funerario crea un cambio radical en su percepción, transformando una situación de debilidad en una de fuerza y de resistencia, en la cual el golpe recibido es el signo de la victoria final.[46]

The significance was not lost on the political authorities, who had already demonstrated their willingness to bypass ecclesiastical authority despite the

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[43] Translation: 'NOTICE FOR THE PEOPLE OF MONDRAGON. On Sunday 16th at 10.30 a Mass will be celebrated in the Church of St. Francis, in posthumous homage to our beloved friend and comrade Xabier Etxebarrieta Ortiz, killed in Tolosa by the Civil Guard. People of Mondragon, support with your presence the ideals and attitude of this distinguished warrior, persecuted and executed – by oppressive imperialism – in the defence of the rights of the Basque people.' *Documentos Y*, VI p. 525.

[44] José María Lorenzo Espinosa, *Txabi Etxebarrieta: Armado de palabra y obra* (Naffaroa: Editorial Txalaparta, 1994), pp. 136-137.

[45] Barroso, p. 264.

[46] Translation: 'If death in this context is a hard blow, on a political, organisational, and psychological level, the funeral ritual creates a radical change in perception, transforming a situation of weakness into one of force and resistance, in which the blow received is a sign of the final victory.' Begoña Aretxaga, *Los funerales en el nacionalismo radical vasco* (San Sebastián: La Primitiva Casa Baroja, 1988), p. 56.

clear spiritual significance of the ceremonies in question. Furthermore, as the funeral of Etxebarrieta was the first of its kind, the decision by the civil authorities pre-empted the response of the hierarchy, indicating a reluctance to trust the bishops to deal with the situation in a satisfactory manner. The reaction in the Spanish press was equally hostile to the Basque bishops. The newspaper *ABC* would later argue that by permitting these displays the Church was committing a 'social crime':

> Elevar a la categoría de ejemplo una acción execrable, merecedora de castigo extremo en todos los Códigos Penales vigentes del mundo entero, es también un crimen social. De un asesino no se puede fabricar un héroe. Los mártires no fueron asesinos, sino asesinados.[47]

The following August ETA retaliated by assassinating the police commissioner, Melitón Manzanas. The choice of Manzanas as the organisation's first official victim was a significant one. Anecdotal evidence paints a picture of a sadistic torturer; it was claimed in an article in *The Times*, for example, that Manzanas would tape-record the screams of tortured subjects to play to their wives.[48] Sullivan has argued that this killing would have been popular with a section of the population as it demonstrated ETA's ability to strike back at the oppressor.[49] The reaction of the regime was swift and extreme: a State of Exception was declared in the province of Guipúzcoa. This measure, according to Robert P. Clark, is 'one step short of martial law', and involves the temporary abrogation by the government of six basic rights: (i) freedom of expression; (ii) privacy of the mail; (iii) *habeus corpus*; (iv) freedom of assembly and association; (v) freedom of movement and resistance; (vi) freedom from arbitrary house arrest. Clark argues that under such circumstances 'police brutality is encouraged and even protected'.[50]

In an article entitled '*La responsabilidad moral*' (Moral Responsibility), published 5 August, *ABC* blamed the Basque Church for promoting a 'new consciousness' that tolerated violence. If the 'material

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[47] Translation: 'To elevate to the category of an example an execrable action, worthy of extreme punishment according to all the existing penal codes of the entire world, is also a social crime. From a murderer one cannot fashion a hero. The martyrs were not assassins, they were assassinated.' *ABC*, 5 August 1968.
[48] *The Times*, 5 December 1970.
[49] Sullivan, p. 72.
[50] Clark, p. 170.

author' of the killing of Pardines was 'a young fanatic', the paper argued others too must bear a share of the responsibility:

> Otros que exaltan la violencia desde un pedestal, apoyados en un respeto antiguo que les ha sido conferido para un ministerio sublime y muy distinto. Otros que, en lugar de pistolas, utilizaron antes palabras de amor y caridad, extraídas del mismo Evangelio, donde se advierte que quien a hierro mata a hierro muere.[51]

The Bishop of San Sebastián responded in a Pastoral Exhortation read at Masses on 31 August and 1 September 1968 which addressed both the activities of ETA and the response of the State, without referring to either by name, condemning instead a series of serious incidents whose 'common denominator is violence and the abusive use of force'.[52] The Pastoral marked a change in direction in Bishop Bereciartúa's dealings with the regime. This was the same bishop who had denied, in the context of the Ulazia case, that the Spanish government had deprived people of liberty. Signs of change were already evident, however, in the bishop's Easter Pastoral of the previous April. While stating clearly that violence could not be used to solve problems, with clear echoes of Vatican II the bishop had added:

> La convivencia humana exige en toda la línea una base de respeto mutuo. El pluralismo, de cualquier clase que sea, tanto religioso como social o político, tiene unas reglas basadas siempre en el respeto a la dignidad de la persona humana y a la libertad.[53]

The bishop qualified this assertion by stating that this freedom was not limitless, ending at the point where the rights of others began. The influence of the Second Vatican Council and the teachings of Pope John XXIII and Paul VI were obvious.[54] The August Pastoral Exhortation would continue this trend, focusing in a particular way on the freedom of the Church.

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[51] Translation: 'Others who exalt violence from a pedestal, supported by an ancient respect that has been conferred on them by a sublime, and very distinct, ministry. Others who, instead of guns, use words of love and charity, extracted from the very Gospel that warns that he who lives by the sword will die by the sword.' *ABC*, 5 August 1968. Copy in 'Dossier relativo a la exhortación pastoral pronunciada el día 22 de agosto de 1968 por Don L. Bereciartúa'.

[52] Text of the Pastoral can be found in the *Boletín Oficial del Obispado de San Sebastián* (1968), pp. 223-229.

[53] Translation: 'Human co-existence demands mutual respect from all. Pluralism, of whatever class, religious as much as social or political has rules that are always based on human dignity and freedom.' Text of the Pastoral can be found in the *Boletín Oficial del Obispado de San Sebastián* (1968), pp. 94-95.

[54] In *Pacem in Terris*, for instance, Pope John XXIII stated: '[I]n human society one man's natural right gives rise to a corresponding duty in other men; the duty, that is, of recognizing and respecting that right. Every basic human right draws its authoritative force from the natural law, which confers it and attaches to it its respective duty. Hence, to claim one's rights and ignore one's duties, or only half fulfil

The civil authorities, forewarned of the subject of the Pastoral, did their utmost to dissuade the bishop from making it public, but the demand was ignored. The following extract illustrates the careful balance between the condemnation of violence and support for human rights as advocated by the Second Vatican Council: 'La Iglesia repugna con energía todo derramamiento de sangre y toda suerte de crimen. Repugna así mismo toda forma de violación de le persona humana y de sus sagrados derechos como criatura e imagen de Dios.'[55] In a clear break with past tradition, the bishop reserved his bitterest criticism for the actions of the authorities, claiming that police searches of religious establishments attacked the independence of the Church and represented a violation of the Concordat with the Vatican. The reporting of such incidents by the regime's servile press was also condemned, and journalists were reminded that truth should be their motto and their obsession.

The reaction to the letter at national level was predictably fierce. Unlike in the case of the 'Document of the 339' the Spanish press did print Monsignor Bereciartúa's Pastoral. In many of the papers, however, it was accompanied by investigation carried out by the government agency *Cifra*, refuting the allegations made by the bishop.[56] The pro-regime press stated that since neither the Episcopal Conference nor the Papal Nunciature had complained to the government of a breach of the Concordat, the bishop's allegations were clearly false.[57] In spite of the careful balance adopted by the bishop, responses to the Pastoral focused on his criticism of the authorities. This was true at both a national and international level, as is revealed in the headline adopted by *The Times*, 'Bishop attacks actions of Franco's police'.[58] In the wake of the controversy, the Diocesan Office took the unusual step of producing a dossier that set the Pastoral in context. The document outlined the various circumstances that had combined to motivate Bishop Bereciartúa to write the letter. These included, the climate of violence in his diocese, the

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them, is like building a house with one hand and tearing it down with the other.' *Pacem in Terris* (11 April 1963), par. 30. Papal Archive, www.vatican.va [accessed 13 October 2007].

[55] Translation: 'The Church energetically repudiates all bloodshed, and all sorts of crime. In the same way it repudiates all forms of violation of the human person and his sacred rights as a creature and image of God.' Text of the Pastoral can be found in the *Boletín Oficial del Obispado de San Sebastián* (1968), pp. 223-229.

anti-clerical campaign being waged in the press, the State of Exception and tensions amongst the clergy and the Catholic organisations.[59]

A speech given by Franco in the town of Fuenterrabia (Guipúzcoa) on 19 September was interpreted by the *Oficina Prensa Euzkadi* (Press Office of the Basque Country – the clandestine publication of the Basque Nationalist Party) as a response to the pastoral. Franco declared:

> Somos un Movimiento Nacional y Católico, y como católicos somos subordinados y respetuosos con los principios religiosos de la Iglesia, pero no confundimos los principios religiosos con los políticos. En lo religioso tiene toda la autoridad la jerarquía, en lo político la tiene el pueblo, al que nosotros encuadramos y conducimos hacia su grandeza.[60]

The contradictions within National Catholicism, which would ultimately lead to its disintegration, were becoming increasingly difficult to ignore during the late 1960s. The violent response of the State to acts of resistance was to be a pivotal factor in the parting of ways between the political and ecclesiastical authorities. General Franco, who had attempted to make the Catholic Church the cornerstone of his regime, was now asking the bishops not to interfere in political matters. As the *Oficina Prensa Euzkadi* pointed out, Franco's intervention in the naming of bishops contradicted his own profession of respect for ecclesiastical authority.[61] Once again, it was made abundantly clear that public declarations from the bishops would only be welcomed when these were in support of the regime. When the statements made by the bishops appeared unfavourable, they were accused of interfering in matters beyond their jurisdiction.

Unfortunately for the regime, something that unquestionably did fall within the bishops' jurisdiction was the prosecution of priests for criminal offences. The juridical privileges contained in Article XVI of the Vatican Concordat ensured that members of the clergy could only be tried with the

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[56] See for example ABC, 2 September 1968. Copy in 'Dossier relativo a la exhortación pastoral pronunciada el día 22 de agosto de 1968 por Don L. Bereciartúa'.
[57] *Arriba*, 1 September 1968. Copy in Ibid.
[58] *The Times*, 2 September 1968.
[59] 'Dossier relativo a la exhortación pastoral pronunciada el día 22 de agosto de 1968 por Don L. Bereciartúa.'
[60] Translation: 'We are a National and Catholic Movement, and as Catholics we are subordinate to and respectful towards the religious principles of the Church, but we do not confuse the religious principles with the political. In religious matters the hierarchy has all the authority, in political matters this rests with the people, embodied and led towards greatness by us.' *OPE*, 27 September 1968.
[61] Ibid.

permission of their superiors, and that priests who received custodial sentences had to serve their confinement in religious establishments or, where this was not possible, in locations which were to be separate from those used for lay prisoners. Crucially, the Concordat specifically stated: 'El proceso se rodeará de las necesarias cautelas para evitar toda publicidad.' [62] At the time of signing in 1953 it may have appeared that this provision primarily favoured the Church, avoiding the embarrassment that might ensue from the involvement of members of the clergy in criminal activities. In the changed climate of the late 1960s, however, the significance of this provision for a regime that had made Catholicism its ideological cornerstone and was now beset with clerical protests, was obvious.

Article XVI was of crucial importance during the famous Burgos Trial of December 1970 where sixteen ETA members were to be tried by court martial for a range of offences, including the murder of Manzanas. In addition to a number of ex-seminarians, the accused included two Catholic priests, Jon Etxabe and Julen Kalzada. The regime attempted to hold the trial *in camera*, according to the provisions of the Concordat, which would have permitted the identities of the priests to remain secret. This had been the procedure followed in 1969 for the trial of priests from Bilbao accused of aiding the escape of an ETA member.[63] This time, however, the efforts of the regime were thwarted by the Bishops of Bilbao and San Sebastián, who demanded a public trial. This decision was taken following a request from the priests themselves, and consultation with the Apostolic Nuncio.[64] The Church was thus presenting an uncharacteristic united front in its response to the trial. Faced with the choice between preventing public knowledge of the involvement of the priests, and potentially covering abuses of human rights by the regime, the bishops opted firmly to direct the glare of publicity on both the activities of the lower clergy and the regime.

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[62] Translation: 'The process will be carried out with due care and caution in order to avoid all publicity'. For text of Article XVI see: Fernando Díaz-Plaza, *La posguerra española en sus documentos* (Barcelona: Plaza y Janés, 1970), pp. 305-325.

[63] Margaret Woods de Vivero, 'Clerical Opposition to the Franco Regime in Dioceses of Barcelona, Vitoria and Bilbao after the Civil War (1939-1975)' (PhD, Trinity College Dublin, 2001), p. 151.

[64] Salaberri, p. 102.

Arguably more damaging still for the regime was the joint Pastoral released by the Basque bishops on 21 November 1970, outlining their attitude towards the trial.[65] Firstly, the bishops declared that they had asked for an ordinary trial in place of the military court martial, since this allowed 'a more complete defence of the accused with recourse to higher tribunals'; secondly, the bishops issued a pre-emptive plea for those sentenced to death 'given the speed with which execution tends to follow sentencing in military tribunals.' The statement included a condemnation of all types of violence, listed as 'structural, subversive and repressive'. Clearly the balance of criticism was weighted against the regime, responsible for two of the three types of violence named. This fact was not lost on the Spanish Ministry of Justice, which promptly released a statement condemning the 'equal treatment' given to 'the violence of the delinquent' and the 'actions of the authorities in the enforcement of the law'.[66] The statement was described by *The Times* as 'the clearest recent sign of the Government's inability to undermine sympathy for those prepared to use violence for Basque objectives'.[67] This assessment is indicative of the tightrope walked by the episcopal authorities in their condemnations of violence. Expressions of concern about potential repressive measures from the regime could easily be translated into declarations of support for ETA.

It was certainly not the intention of the bishops to bolster sympathy for violent challenges to the regime. Nevertheless, as a result of their decision, the declarations of the accused, outlining their reasons for supporting ETA and describing how they had been tortured in police custody, were reported by journalists and transmitted around the world. This trial represents a crucial moment in the history of ETA. As Robert P. Clark has observed, it appeared that it was Basque nationalism itself that was being put on trial.[68] The leadership structure of ETA was by now so severely weakened by the widespread repression that the organisation might have disappeared had it not

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[65] Ibid. p. 106.
[66] Quoted in Ibid, p. 101.
[67] *The Times*, 5 December 1970.
[68] Robert P. Clark, *The Basque Insurgents: ETA 1952-1980* (Madison, Wisc.: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), p. 185.

been for the publicity surrounding the trial, publicity made possible by the actions of the ecclesiastical authorities.

Despite its opposition to the court martial, however, the Church did not escape criticism in the declarations of the defendants. Fr. Kalzada declared that, although not himself an ETA militant, he approved of their analysis of the Basque situation. Of the Church he stated that while its word was with the poor and oppressed, its actions were with the powerful.[69] The declaration of Fr. Etxabe is particularly interesting. An active member of ETA, his testimony confirms many of the explanations offered above for the link between involvement in Church organisations and ETA. Fr. Etxabe began his social activism in the Catholic worker organisations Hermandad Obrera de Acción Católica (HOAC) and the Juventud Obrera Católica (JOC). Finding the social analysis and possibilities for activism offered within the constraints of these organisations 'stunted', Fr. Etxabe became involved with ETA. Asked if he saw any contradiction between his role as a priest and his membership of ETA he replied: 'ETA está totalmente vinculada al pueblo, el sacerdote también es hombre para el pueblo, por lo tanto encontrarse con ETA es lo más normal en un sacerdote.'[70] These declarations prompted the President of the court to intervene to remind those present that they were not there to judge the Church.[71]

On 2 December the Spanish Episcopal conference released a statement to the press in support of their Basque colleagues, expressing understanding of the difficulties they faced and confidence in their leadership. The statement lamented the 'misunderstandings and distortions' to which they had been subjected. Here too a careful balance is evident in the inclusion of a condemnation of the kidnapping by ETA of the German consul two days before the trial's opening for use as a hostage.[72] This would be a recurring pattern in responses to State violence during the final years of the Franco regime: events in the Basque Country, often with prominent involvement of

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[69] Salaberri, p. 191.
[70] Translation: 'ETA is totally connected to the people, the priest too is a man of the people, therefore to find oneself on the side of ETA is utterly normal for a priest.' Ibid. p. 217.
[71] Ibid. p. 191.
[72] *Diario Vasco*, 3 December 1970.

the lower clergy, would prompt a response from the Basque hierarchy, and the subsequent backlash by the regime and its supporters would implicate both the Spanish Episcopal Conference and the Vatican. Public confrontations with the regime thus became increasingly difficult to avoid for the Church as a whole.

When the final verdict was announced on 28 December all but one of the sixteen defendants were found guilty, and six were sentenced to death. Franco revoked the death sentences two days later and his decision was praised by the Basque Bishops and the Pope. This praise was of course reported in the Spanish press. The Bishop of San Sebastián described Franco's decision as a great contribution to the 'pacification of Guipúzcoa',[73] while the Vatican praised the fact that 'Christian clemency' had prevailed.[74] The regime had successfully transformed negative publicity, and the alliance with the Church appeared, momentarily, as solid as ever. Etxabe and Kalzada were sent to a special prison for priests that had been opened by Franco in the city of Zamora in 1968. This prison became a powerful visual symbol of the inherent contradictions within National Catholicism, and its clerical inmates did their utmost to publicise their situation and use it to draw attention to the wider issue of the treatment of political prisoners in general.[75]

While the bishops wished to distance themselves as much as possible from conflicts between the regime and the lower clergy, the provisions of Article XVI of the Concordat made this impossible. The prison's first inmate was a Basque priest, Father Alberto Gabicagogeascoa, sentenced to three months and one day in prison for a sermon in which he called for freedom of expression for all and denounced the use of torture by police.[76] The authorities applied to Bishop Gúrpide for the name of a convent or monastery where Gabicagogeascoa might be confined for the duration of his sentence. The bishop indicated that he might be sent to the *Convento de Dueñas* in Palencia. However, following complaints from the Abbot, Gabicagogeascoa

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[73] *Diario Vasco*, 31 December 1970.
[74] *Unidad*, 31 December 1970.
[75] The significance of this prison has been considered in further detail in Nicola Rooney, 'A Prison for Priests in a Catholic State: The Cárcel Concordatoria in Zamora during the Franco Dictatorship' *Journal of Postgraduate Research* (Trinity College Dublin) 5 (2006), pp. 34-45.
[76] Barroso, pp. 161-166.

had to be removed. On 26 July the President of the TOP informed the bishop that Gabicagogeascoa was to be moved to the Provincial Prison of Zamora, with the application of the necessary measures as stipulated in the Concordat. Three days later Gúrpide informed the Civil Governor that since he had been unsuccessful in his efforts to find a religious institution for several other members of his clergy, facing imprisonment for non-payment of fines, they too could be sent to Zamora.[77]

From this point onwards priests found guilty of offences were sent automatically to Zamora without the consent of the bishop of the diocese concerned. Basque priests would make up the majority of the hundred or so inmates that would serve sentences in this institution. The difficulties involved in imprisoning the clergy meant that only the most conspicuous opponents of the regime were sent to Zamora.[78] The problem with this practice however was that the high level of publicity surrounding their trials and the media interest aroused by protests and demonstrations organised in support of their cause meant that their imprisonment in Zamora provided the opposite of the quiet solution the authorities were hoping for. In fact, as the historian Fernando García de Cortazár has rightly concluded:

> Muy equivocado estaba el régimen franquista si pensaba que la oposición clerical quedaba ahogada entre los muros de la cárcel zamorana. Antes el contrario, la prisión concordataria se convirtió en algo más que un símbolo de la represión franquista: fue un verdadero laboratorio de acciones de oposición y una auténtica pesadilla para mandamases civiles y obispos.[79]

All the clerical inmates of Zamora resented their segregation from the rest of the prison community, and while some were prepared to accept transfer to religious establishments, others demanded the right to serve their sentence in the same conditions as their fellow citizens. Inside the prison priests adopted an attitude of non-cooperation that led to daily clashes with the authorities. A propaganda war with the regime ensued, as the priests used protests such as

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[77] Vicente Cárcel Orti, 'La cárcel "concordatoria" de Zamora y el "caso Añoveros"', *Revista Española de Derecho Canónico* 54.142 (1997), pp. 37-93 (p. 39).

[78] Payne, *The Franco Regime*, p. 560.

[79] Translation: 'The Franco regime was very much mistaken if it believed that clerical opposition could be stifled between the walls of the prison in Zamora. On the contrary, the Concordat prison was converted into something more than a symbol of Francoist repression: it was a true laboratory of acts of resistance and an authentic nightmare for the civil and ecclesiastical bosses.' Fernando García de Cortázar: 'La Iglesia que Franco no quiso: Religión y política en el País Vasco (1936-1975)', *Saioak* 5, (1983), pp. 49-76 (p. 69).

hunger strikes to draw attention to their particular situation, and also to the wider effects of the repressive measures employed by the Franco dictatorship. Determined that the regime would not conceal their situation, the inmates smuggled out of the prison documents describing who the priests were, the reason for their imprisonment and the treatment they were receiving.[80] The priests wrote letters to the civil and ecclesiastical authorities in which they rejected the possibility of a pardon that would apply only to priests. They also declared that they felt abandoned by the hierarchy and institutions of the Catholic Church.[81] The attitude of the Zamora priests towards the hierarchy was to grow increasingly hostile over the next few years and on numerous occasions the inmates would refuse to see the bishops who visited the prison.

The priests also employed more dramatic methods in an effort to gain support for their cause. In 1971 prison authorities discovered a tunnel that had been dug by the prisoners, apparently using only their fingers and teeth![82] The discovery came just as they had reached the final stages, narrowly averting what would have been an extremely embarrassing situation for both Church and State. Details of the incident were, however, leaked to the international press and *The Times* of 18 October ran a story under the bizarre headline 'Spanish priests caught digging way out of jail'.[83] On 6 November 1973 the priests took the more drastic action of setting fire to the altar and destroying the furniture in their wing of the prison. The action had been carefully planned with a statement prepared and smuggled out of the prison in advance. The priests were going on hunger strike and used the fire to draw attention to their protest; once again the incident was reported in the international press.[84]

In their statement the priests declared that they had resorted to burning the prison after attempts to rectify the situation by legal means proved fruitless. They denounced in the strongest possible terms the existence of a prison that was 'nothing more than the bastard fruit of the relations of mutual

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[80] See for example, 'Para que tengas una idea de aqí (sic) – Cárcel Concordatoria – y se enteren hasta los sordos' and 'Informe: Zamora. Prisión concordataria de la Iglesia Católica y del Estado Español', Manterola Archive.
[81] 'Carta dirigida al Ministro de Justicia, al Nuncio y otras Autoridades Civiles y Religiosas', Manterola Archive.
[82] 'Comunicado de los Sacerdotes Presos en Zamora'.
[83] *The Times*, 18 October 1971.
[84] See for example 'Imprisoned Spanish priests riot' in *The Times*, 7 November 1973.

interest between the Church and the State'. The statement firmly situated the Zamora issue within the context of the wider repression experienced by the population as a whole under the Franco regime. Finally the priests announced the beginning of their hunger strike and made two demands: of the State they demanded a transfer to a different prison, and of the Church they demanded the closure of the 'cárcel concordatoria.'[85] The Zamora protests not only represented a challenge to the authority of the government, but also expressed a rejection of the official Church, especially the leadership of the hierarchy. Alarmingly for the leaders of both Church and State these protests were echoed in the wider population.

Priests expressed support for their imprisoned colleagues in sermons, and protests were organised in solidarity with their cause. The hunger strikes of 1973 had a particularly powerful effect on public opinion and prompted a wave of protests across Spain. The Episcopal offices in Bilbao were occupied by 51 priests, a further 128 occupied the Seminary in San Sebastián and a group of approximately 120 people, representing both the clergy and laity, occupied the Nunciature in Madrid. All three groups of protestors declared their support for the priests of Zamora and made appeals to the Vatican and the hierarchy. A statement issued by the priests involved in the Bilbao occupation was read in numerous churches in the province of Vizcaya on Sunday 11 November.[86] The Madrid protest prompted an announcement from the capital's auxiliary bishops in support of an amnesty for Spanish political prisoners and the abolition of the special prison for the clergy.[87] On 14 November a group of theology students from the Universidad de Deusto, Bilbao, staged a sit-in protest in their faculty which lasted five days, and released a statement declaring their solidarity with the imprisoned priests and all those suffering oppression under the Spanish state.[88] The protests even extended beyond the Spanish border when a group of emigrants occupied the Papal Nuniciature in Paris in December and issued a statement denouncing

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[85] 'Comunicado de los Sacerdotes Presos en Zamora'.
[86] 'Los Sacerdotes reunidos en el Obispado de Bilbao ante el motín y la huelga de hambre en la cárcel de Zamora', Manterola Archive.
[87] *The Times*, 14 November 1973.
[88] 'Comunicado de un Grupo de Alumnos de Teología', Manterola Archive.

the Spanish hierarchy and the Vatican as accomplices in the establishment of the prison.[89]

The combined effect of the protests, the accusations and the threat of a rupture with the regime put the hierarchy under increasing pressure to resolve the situation. In 1972 the imprisoned priests sent a report to the Spanish Episcopal Conference that demonstrated their awareness of the anomalous situation created by the existence of the Concordat prison, the only one of its kind in the world. The document concluded by indicating three options for the Episcopal Conference: (i) negotiation (ii) an ultimatum from the Vatican to the Spanish government regarding the application of the Concordat (ii) denunciation of the Concordat.[90] At the request of the bishops of San Sebastián and Bilbao, the Episcopal Conference formed a special commission, composed of Cardinal Bueno y Monreal,[91] the Bishops of San Sebastián and Bilbao and the Bishop of Zamora, to cooperate with the government on the issue of Zamora prison. The Commission visited the Minister for Justice and the Director General of Religious Affairs and made the following four requests:

(i) the closure of the special prison for priests in Zamora

(ii) that priests should be allowed to serve sentences with lay prisoners

(iii) that the government observe Article XVI of the Concordat that allowed priests to choose whether to serve their sentence in a convent or a prison

(iv) some act of amnesty for all political prisoners

The Minister replied to the Commission that the government did not maintain the prison for priests at Zamora out of self-interest, but that the Concordat prohibited the confinement of priests with lay prisoners. In relation to religious establishments the Minister stated that the government had to take the due security precautions, as it considered some of these priests to be dangerous.[92]

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[89] 'Hoja remitida desde París sobre la ocupación de la Nunciatura Vaticana', Manterola Archive.

[90] 'Informe Enviado a la Conferencia Episcopal Española sobre la Cárcel Concordatoria de Zamon el 3.XI.1972', Manterola Archive.

[91] Vice-President of the Episcopal Conference, Cardinal Bueno y Monreal had been Bishop of Vitoria until 1955.

[92] *Vida Nueva* 907, p. 7 quoted in Cárcel Orti, p. 42.

Following the disturbances of November 1973 the Bishops of Bilbao, San Sebastián, and Segovia felt the need to defend themselves against the accusations of complicity and inactivity with regard to the Zamora prison. In a document addressed to their priests, the bishops outlined, year by year, from 1969, the various measures undertaken by the hierarchy in an effort to resolve the Zamora issue.[93] The majority of the bishops' interventions involved letters and petitions to the civil authorities. It was clear that the bishops preferred priests to serve their sentences in religious establishments; despite the difficulty involved, the hierarchy put great effort into negotiating alternative arrangements with the authorities and with the religious orders. In 1969 Monsignor Cirarda, Apostolic Administrator of Bilbao, made arrangements for those confined in Zamora to complete their sentences in premises belonging to the Jesuit order. Although a number of the inmates did accept his offer, six priests refused to accept any kind of privilege.[94]

The bishops' explanation was rejected by a section of the lower clergy who met in the Diocesan Offices in Bilbao and released a statement. The priests criticised the secretive nature of episcopal interventions, including the decision to address this communication specifically to priests, rather than the wider public. The bishops, they argued, were unwilling to openly confront the injustices perpetrated by the Franco regime. Furthermore, such interventions as had been attempted had been ineffective:

> Estas gestiones, como los mismos obispos dan a entender, han sido estériles. A través de ellas han manifestado una postura de servilismo hacia el poder civil. No negamos su buena voluntad. Pero, en ningún momento han sido capaces de enfrentarse públicamente a una situación que los mismos obispos reconocen hoy como injusta.[95]

Although the bishops' interventions may not have gone far enough for some of their priests, they proved a significant cause of concern for the regime, which certainly did not regard their attitude as 'servile'. The bishops

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[93] Copy in Manterola Archive.
[94] Cárcel Orti, p. 40.
[95] Translation: 'These interventions, as the bishops themselves indicate, have proved sterile. Through them they have assumed a servile posture towards the civil power. We do not deny their good will. However, at no time have they been capable of publicly facing up to a situation that today the bishops themselves recognise as unjust.' 'Los sacerdoes reunidos en el obispado de Bilbao ante el motín y la huelga de hambre en la cárcel de Zamora.' Archivo Eclesiástico Histórico de Vizcaya (AEHV), Private Archive of Fr. Anastasio Olabarría.

categorically declared that they had not given consent for their priests to serve their sentences in Zamora and such statements often involved a clear contradiction of the version of facts presented by the regime. The time when the bishops were seen as officials of the State had clearly come to an end. Ecclesiastical declarations no longer echoed the official policy of the regime. In 1970 Monsignor Cirarda, Apostolic Administrator of Bilbao, released a statement condemning the detention of nine priests from the diocese who had been taken to Zamora without his permission. In Cirarda's view the detention of the priests, for offences committed during the exercise of their pastoral ministry (all nine were accused of offending the military authorities in sermons preached in 1969, ironically in defence of priests on hunger-strike in Zamora), called into question the freedom of the Church. Furthermore, the arrest and trial of the priests without prior permission from their bishop represented an infraction of the Concordat.[96]

The issue of political prisoners had been causing difficulties in the area of Church-State relations since the appeals for clemency from both the Spanish hierarchy and Rome during the Burgos Trial. Now the Pastoral Letters of the bishops were expressing sympathy with the cause of the imprisoned priests in Zamora. Particularly worrying for the regime were the Pastoral Letters of Monsignor Añoveros, who replaced Cirarda as Bishop of Bilbao. Following the disturbances of November 1973, the bishop appealed for understanding for the imprisoned priests in view of the difficult circumstances and 'disproportionate' sentences they faced,[97] and in December called for their sentences to be reviewed.[98] Although the Vatican remained silent on the issue of the Zamora prison, its existence was a glaring indication that the 1953 Concordat was incompatible with the principles that had emerged from the Second Vatican Council, asserting the independence of the Church from the State. From 1968 onwards the Vatican attempted to negotiate

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[96] 'Dolorosa situación pastoral en nuestra diócesis', *Ecclesia* 1495 (13 June 1970). Text of the Pastoral in *La Iglesia Frente al Terrorismo de ETA*, pp. 179-184.
[97] *Vida Nueva* 908, p. 13 quoted in Cárcel Orti, 46.
[98] 'Situaciones intraeclesiales y extraeclesiales: reflexión y soluciones', *Boletín Oficial del Obispado de Bilbao* (1973), pp. 691-698 quoted in Serrano Oceja, pp. 184-186.

a new Concordat. This, however, would not be achieved until after Franco's death.

ETA had by now definitively evolved towards a more secular, left-wing ideology and was firmly committed to violent action. Nonetheless, the organisation was not condemned by name by the bishops until 1981.[99] Throughout the remaining years of the Franco dictatorship the ecclesiastical authorities would attempt to maintain a careful balance between the condemnation of both ETA violence and the abuses perpetrated by the regime. This was a difficult task in which the bishops could not rely on the full support of either their clergy or the lay community.

A May 1975 article from *The Times* entitled 'Terror and Counter Terror' praised the 'considerable moral courage' shown by Monsignor Añoveros in appealing to both sides to end the violence, when many members of his clergy would have preferred him to lay the blame exclusively on the government.[100] An example of the expression of such sentiments by clergy can be found in the reaction to his Pastoral Exhortation of 8 October 1972,[101] circulated in a clandestine document. In response to the bishop's expressed opposition to all forms of violence, the priests asked: '¿Se puede reprobar "toda violencia" tan tajantamente? Siempre hemos sabido que la defensa propia es lícita, incluso la violenta, cuando no haya otro medio.'[102] With echoes of the Irish case, the problematic theology of the just war was being invoked in support of violent acts of resistance. Referring once again to the example of leadership coming from Rome the document reminded the bishop that even Pope Paul XVI's Encyclical *Populorum Progressio* permitted a violent response in extreme cases.[103] Finally, the document dismissed as too abstract the bishop's conciliatory reference to 'the right of peoples to

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[99] Unzueta, p. 17. The Pastoral Letter in question was entitled 'Salvar la libertad para salvar la paz' (Save Freedom in order to Save Peace) and was a joint Pastoral issued by the Basque Bishops on 1 April 1981. Text in *Al Servicio de la Palabra*, pp. 302-307.

[100] *The Times*, 21 May 1975.

[101] Text of the Pastoral in *Boletín Oficial del Obispado de Bilbao* (1972), pp. 533-536.

[102] Translation: 'Can one reproach "all violence" so strictly? We have always known that self-defence is permissible, even in violent form, when no other means are available.' *Hoja Informativa/Iglesia Vizcaya* noviembre 1972, Manterola Archive.

[103] Ibid

conserve their identity'.[104] Equally disappointed with the bishops' response to violence, however, were those sections of the community loyal to the government. In a document addressed to the 'Church of Vizcaya' by 'A group of the faithful of Bilbao', a section of Monsignor Añoveros' followers complained that the prohibition of 'political acts' in churches was being applied in a one-sided manner. While commemorations for those killed during the civil war were not permitted, the bishop allowed churches to be used for the funerals of ETA militants, even in cases where the individuals in question had openly declared themselves to be atheist.[105]

From the moment of his arrival in Bilbao, Bishop Añoveros had been surrounded by controversy. His appointment had been opposed by a large section of the clergy, who regarded him as yet another bishop appointed by Franco. Strictly speaking, however, this appointment had not followed the normal tercio system specified in the Concordat. Determined to appoint more progressive figures to the Spanish hierarchy, the Vatican had begun to present a single candidate for vacant sees, and this was the case of Monsignor Añoveros.[106] The rejection of Añoveros by some of the lower clergy was unrelated to the bishop's personal attributes; indeed, the Basque clergy praised his defence of the rights of the workers in his previous Diocese of Cádiz and Ceuta. He was also a native of Navarre, but crucially did not speak Euskera. Furthermore, the Diocesan Council was concerned that his appointment could be interpreted as Vatican disapproval of Monsignor Cirarda's leadership of the diocese, which, as noted in Chapter Eight, was regarded as a turning point in the relations between the hierarchy and that section of the clergy sympathetic to Basque nationalism:

> El pueblo cristiano que se ha mostrado fiel a su línea pastoral se sentiría defraudado al ver que los intereses políticos superan los intereses pastorales. Y los que no estaban plenamente satisfechos o estaban en contra de su gestión se confirmarían en su convencimiento de que la Iglesia en el momento actual renuncia a dar una respuesta pastoral y evangélica por estar sometida o condicionada por el poder político.[107]

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[104] Ibid

[105] 'A La Iglesia en Vizcaya', AEHV Personal Archive of Fr. Anastasio Olabarría.

[106] Cárcel Orti, p. 53. Under the norms established by the Concordat the Vatican was required to present three candidates for a vacant See, of whom Franco would select one.

[107] Translation: 'The Christian people who have proved themselves faithful to his Pastoral approach would feel defrauded upon seeing that political interests superseded pastoral interests. And those who were not fully satisfied or were opposed to his management would be confirmed in their conviction that

Cirarda had begun to involve the priests in the running of the diocese, as demanded in the protests against his predecessor, Monsignor Gúrpide. They need not have feared, however, since Añoveros continued in the same vein, demonstrating his respect for the local culture[108] and implementing key principles of Vatican II in the diocese, such as the principles of co-responsibility and de-centralisation.[109] The bishop was also an outspoken defender of the freedom of the Church, particularly the right to preach, and condemned the attendance at religious services of civil authorities when their sole intention was to judge the content of the sermon. This was particularly offensive when they went so far as to bring recording equipment into places of worship.[110]

On 20 December 1973, in an act that could be deemed to have changed the course of Spanish history, ETA assassinated Admiral Carrero Blanco, Franco's second-in-command, believed to be the only individual capable of carrying on the dictatorship after his death. The Admiral, together with two others, was killed by a car bomb as he made his way to morning Mass in Madrid. Responding to the deaths in a press release the Cardinal Archbishop of Madrid, Vicente Enrique y Tarancón, condemned this 'serious' crime with its potential consequences for 'the co-existence and peace of the Spanish community'.[111] Preaching at the funeral the Cardinal declared that love of Church and love of one's homeland were not mutually exclusive, and that responsible service to the nation, particularly when this entailed personal sacrifice, could represent a religious virtue.[112] Nevertheless the Catholic Church was held responsible by some of the regime's extremist supporters, as

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the Church at the present moment is refusing to give a pastoral and evangelical response because it is subjugated or conditioned by the political power.' 'Reflexiones del Consejo del Presbitero de la Diócesis de Bilbao con motivo del nombramiento de un nuevo Obispo Residencial', AEHV Private Archive of Fr. José Luis Villacorta.

[108] See for example, his first sermon in the diocese: '[m]i respeto y alta estima por vuestras mejores tradiciones, por vuestra lengua vasca, por vuestra cultura milenaria, por vuestra historia e idiosincrasia de firmeza de carácter, de almas abiertas y generosas, de iniciativas para grandes empresas cristianas, humanas.' Translation: 'My respect and high esteem for your best traditions, for your Basque language, for your milennial culture, for your history and idiosyncratic strength of character, open and generous souls, initiative for great Christian and human endeavours'. *Antonio Añoveros. Agur Jauna* (Bilbao: Obispado de Bilbao, 1988), p. 40.

[109] Cárcel Orti, p. 56.

[110] 'Nota del Vicario Episcopal de la Zona' in AEHV Personal Archive of Fr. Anastasio Olabarría.

[111] Text of the Press Release in Serrano Oceja, pp. 328-331.

[112] Text of the sermon in Ibid. pp. 331-335.

was made clear in demonstrations held after the funeral. Shouts of 'Tarancón al paredón'[113] (Tarancón before a firing squad) indicated that the Spanish Church as a whole, and not merely the Basque Church, was being blamed. ETA violence was thus fanning the flames of the emerging right-wing anti-clericalism, as the new direction adopted by the Church in its relations with the regime was deemed a contributory factor in support for the organisation.

The most convincing piece of evidence for the evolution in the position of the hierarchy is the fact that the greatest crisis in Church-State relations during the dictatorship was provoked by the actions of a bishop. This was the famous *Caso Añoveros* (Añoveros case) of 1974. The crisis was provoked by the preaching of a sermon entitled '*El Cristianismo, mensaje de salvación para los pueblos*' (Christianity, a message of salvation for the nations), the final sermon in a series produced by the Diocesan Secretariat and approved by the Bishop, aimed at addressing some of the key concerns of the clergy and faithful of the Diocese of Bilbao. This last sermon was particularly controversial, since it dealt directly with the 'Basque question' and concluded:

> El pueblo vasco, lo mismo que los demás pueblos del Estado español, tiene el derecho de conservar su propia identidad, cultivando y desarrollando su patrimonio espiritual, sin perjuicio de un saludable intercambio con los pueblos circunvecinos, dentro de una organización sociopolítica que reconozca su justa libertad.[114]

Recognising the diversity of political opinion that existed within his diocese, Añoveros informed the clergy that the preaching of these sermons was not obligatory; each priest was free to decide whether or not the sermons were appropriate for his parishioners. A note accompanied this final sermon stating that where a priest chose to read the homily it must be read in its entirety, with nothing added and no omissions.

Monsignor Cirarda, however, was concerned and arranged a meeting between Bishop Añoveros and Cardinal Tarancón to discuss the issue, prior to

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[113] Quoted in Juan J. Linz, 'Church and State in Spain from the Civil War to the Return of Democracy' in *Religion and Politics* ed. by John T. S. Madeley, (Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing Company, 2003), pp. 353-372 (p. 370).

[114] Translation: 'The Basque people, like the other peoples within the Spanish state, have the right to conserve their own identity, cultivating and developing its spiritual patrimony, without prejudice to a healthy exchange with the neighbouring peoples, within a socio-political organisation that recognises their rightful liberty.' Text in *Antonio Añoveros. Agur Jauna* (Bilbao: Obispado de Bilbao, 1988) pp. 163-168.

making the sermon public. Although Añoveros assured the Cardinal the sermon was 'not worth worrying about', Tarancón decided to send a copy to Cardinal Jubany of Barcelona to ascertain his views.[115] Jubany raised a number of serious concerns, including the way in which the word 'pueblo', meaning 'people', had been employed, which varied throughout the text and did not always correspond to the meaning attributed to it in Pontifical texts. Citations from these same Pontifical texts too, he argued, were problematic: appearing out of context in the homily, the scope or limits intended by the relevant Popes were not always apparent.[116] Although unnerved by Jubany's response, Añoveros decided to proceed and remained determined even when the Minister for Justice called both Cardinal Tarancón and the Papal Nuncio, asking them to use their influence to prevent the preaching of the sermon. Having already distributed the document to his priests, Añoveros felt that to risk incurring government wrath was the lesser of two evils.[117]

The homily was read on 24 February 1974 and immediately denounced by the government, now under the leadership of Carlos Arias Navarro, as an attack on the unity of the Spanish state. The government had the bishop placed under house arrest and made preparations to have the prelate, together with his Vicar General, expelled from Spain. Añoveros defended the sermon, asserting that it in fact represented the first attempt to situate the recognition of the rights of the Basques within the context of the Spanish state. The bishop threatened to excommunicate anyone who attempted to remove him and a major diplomatic crisis was only averted when Franco himself intervened to prevent the expulsion. Once again the exaggerated response of the civil authorities had the counter-productive effect of making the sermon more widely known than would otherwise have been the case. While the sermon was not printed by the national press, the high level of clandestine copies distributed has led Carmelo Cabellos to classify the event as 'the first great triumph of photocopies as a political weapon'.[118]

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[115] For Tarancón's account of his involvement in the *Caso Añoveros* see: Vicente Enrique y Tarancón, *Confesiones* (Barcelona: Círculo de Lectores, 1997), pp. 627-692.
[116] Ibid. p. 628.
[117] Ibid. pp. 628-630.
[118] Carmelo Cabellos, 'El absurdo caso Añoveros', *Diario 16* 109 (16 October 1983), pp. 34-37 (p. 34).

Vicente Cárcel Orti has suggested that the blatant over-reaction on the part of the government to the *Caso Añoveros* was motivated by a desire to silence the Church and put an end to the ecclesiastical protests that were continually troubling the regime. He claims that the authorities intended to exploit the episode as a means of reducing the Church's influence in socio-political matters, and provoking divisions amongst the members of the hierarchy.[119] By now, however, it was clear that the Franco regime would not survive after his death and both the Spanish hierarchy and the Vatican were attempting to distance themselves from the dictatorship. The support for the Bishop of Bilbao was overwhelming: a majority of the clergy of the diocese had opted to read the sermon,[120] the members of the Spanish Episcopal Conference declared themselves in total support of their colleague in Bilbao, and the Vatican refused to summon Monsignor Añoveros. The final defeat for the government was the rejection of the measures adopted by General Franco himself. The Catholic Church had demonstrated its willingness to confront the regime openly and directly; any illusions of harmony and unity in Church-State relations were now dispelled.

On 27 September 1975, only two months before Franco's death, two members of ETA were executed together with three members of the left-wing *Frente Revolucionario Antifascista y Patriótica* (FRAP). A note was issued by the Spanish Episcopal Conference, and there were three separate pleas for clemency from the Vatican.[121] This time, however, Franco was unmoved by protests from the Church, and the executions went ahead on 27 September. A personal condemnation was issued by the Pope that same day. Reiterating his condemnation of ETA violence, and rejecting claims that it represented a legitimate instrument of political struggle, the Pope condemned, with equal force, the government repression. He concluded his address by praying for the souls of the deceased and expressing the wish that, 'sobre la querida nación católica, después de tanta, demasiada, sangre vertida de diversas fuentes,

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[119] Cárcel Orti, pp. 67-68.

[120] Of 720 priests in the Diocese of Bilbao, over 600 expressed their support for the bishop. Cabellos, p. 35.

[121] For Spanish Episcopal Conference see: Harry Debelius, 'No Spanish executions for at least a week' *The Times,* 20 September 1975, p. 4, and for pleas from the Vatican see *Ecclesia* 1975, p. 1322, quoted in Serrano Oceja, p. 6.

descienda lo deseada paz y con ella la justica, en la renovada armonía de todos sus hijos'.[122] Implicit in this call for peace 'with justice' was an acknowledgement that the rights of all citizens of Franco's Spain were not being respected. The executions sparked worldwide condemnation, with the withdrawal of foreign ambassadors from Spain and protests outside Spanish embassies abroad. Paul Preston has suggested that a possible motive for the decision to proceed with these executions, in contrast to the granting of clemency to the accused at Burgos, was a desire for revenge for the death of Carrero Blanco.[123]

The death of Franco on 20 November 1975 ushered in a new era for Spain. Prince Juan Carlos of Borbón was declared King, announcing his intention to return power to the people of Spain. Although by no means a smooth or easy process, the transition to democracy in Spain was characterised by a broad social consensus and a concerted effort to encourage widespread engagement with the political process.[124] The depth of alienation and the impact of the violence militated against this engagement in the Basque Country, and hopes that the transition would allow the beginning of peaceful progress towards self-determination were dashed. Rather than scaling down the violence, ETA stepped-up its campaign, engaging in increasingly indiscriminate attacks.

The significance of the historical centrality of the Catholic Church in the debate between competing claims of national identity had taken on a new significance in the Basque Country with the emergence of ETA and the emphasis placed on moral justifications of violence and the demands and limits of episcopal responsibility by both sides in the conflict. Denunciation by the ecclesiastical authorities of violations of human rights and dignity by the Franco regime inevitably entailed an implicit degree of self-criticism, although there was a marked reluctance on the part of the Catholic hierarchy to examine its own role in the creation and preservation of the structures it

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[122] Translation: "...on this beloved Catholic nation, after so much, too much, blood spilt from different sources, might descend the desired peace, and with it justice, in the renewed harmony of all her children." Ibid.
[123] Paul Preston, *Franco* (London: Fontana, 1995), p. 776.
[124] Paul Preston, *The Triumph of Democracy in Spain* (London: Methuen, 1986).

now deplored.[125] While there was no condemnation of the Franco regime *per se*, by the time of Franco's death it was evident that the Catholic hierarchy had no wish to be associated with it. The evolution towards the principles of Vatican II was manifest in ecclesiastical declarations that asserted the independence of the Church. It was in the Basque Country that the distancing of the Catholic hierarchy from the Franco dictatorship, gradually taking place throughout the Spanish dioceses, was most clearly discernible in the public statements of both civil and ecclesiastical authorities. This distancing would allow the Church to retain a measure of credibility, thereby enabling it to participate in the transition to democracy that followed the death of Franco.

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[125] A notable exception was the declaration by the Joint Assembly of the Spanish Priests and Bishops (1971) on the failings of the church during the Spanish Civil War: 'We humbly recognize and ask forgiveness for the fact that we failed to act at the opportune time as true ministers of reconciliation among our people who were divided by a war between brothers.' Quoted in José M. Sánchez, *The Spanish Civil War as a Religious Tragedy* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987), p. 203.

Conclusion

> 'It isn't difficult to speak of violence if it is either to condemn it out of hand, from afar, without bothering to examine its various aspects or seek its brutal, and regrettable, causes... What is difficult is to speak of violence from the thick of the battle...'
>
> (Bishop Helder Camara, *Violence – the only way?*, 1968)[1]

This study has attempted to assess the impact of the interventions of the ecclesiastical authorities during the early stages of the violent conflicts that have dominated the last forty years of the history of both Northern Ireland and the Basque Country. As spiritual leaders of a minority community alienated from a State it deemed illegitimate and hostile towards its national identity, the Catholic bishops of Northern Ireland and the Basque Country throughout the twentieth century faced a series of complex challenges, foremost amongst which was the challenge to respond to political violence. These men were indisputably attempting to respond to violence 'from the thick of the battle', keeping pace with often rapidly changing circumstances.

Chapters One and Two have outlined the centrality of the influential position occupied by the Catholic Church and its leaders to any understanding of the two conflicts. In both cases the local clergy were considered to have been, historically, close to the people. This resulted in a situation where members of the clergy were frequently involved in political matters and a great deal of significance was attached to their viewpoint. Where political leadership was found wanting, or rested on unsteady foundations, there was increasing pressure on the bishops, in particular, to step out into the political arena. While the frequency of episcopal incursions into the political field noted throughout the period under study might give the impression that this was a task eagerly embraced by the ecclesiastical authorities, for the bishops – even those attempting to carry out their ministry in a highly charged political atmosphere – the 'political' dimension represented only a minor aspect of a role that was dominated by pastoral and administrative duties.

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[1] Helder Camara, *Church and Colonialism* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1969), p. 101.

Here the contrast between public perception and reality is significant. The greater distance of the hierarchy from the people, in comparison with the lower clergy, meant that many, particularly those outside the community of practising Catholics, were only aware of the presence of the bishops when their 'political' interventions were reported in the media.

It was often impossible, however, for the bishops to draw a clear dividing line between spiritual and moral concerns and matters that were purely political, as virtually any 'political' decision can be deemed to have moral implications. Following this rationale, the Catholic hierarchy in both regions engaged in overtly political involvement that extended to direct intervention in elections. Such interventions invariably expose the hierarchy to questions and accusations: is episcopal authority being abused to promote a particular political option when other options would be equally morally acceptable? Has the support of the Church been 'bought' through privileges, concessions or other guarantees? What will be the cost of this support? While the responses to these questions will vary according to the specific circumstances of each particular case, one over-arching conclusion is unavoidable: alliance with a particular political party or regime will alienate a section of the bishops' followers and result in challenges to ecclesiastical authority. It thus entails a significant potential to weaken, rather than strengthen, the position of the Church. Responses to political violence are particularly contentious as a result of pressures on the ecclesiastical authorities to adopt a public stance in favour of one of the parties to the conflict at the expense of the other.

Chapters Three and Four examined the response of both hierarchies to situations of acute civil conflict and violence. Ecclesiastical responses to political violence will inevitably spark debate about the appropriateness and legitimacy of episcopal interventions in this area, with the motives of the bishops frequently called into question. A common accusation from those ideologically opposed to a particular stance adopted by the Church is the attribution of the bishops' motivations to the desire to obtain and retain power

for the Church as an institution, with a view to achieving social control.[2] This accusation has always been strongly refuted by the bishops who consistently explained their motivations in terms of the welfare – either spiritual, material, or both – of their followers. According to Max Weber, however, 'political' interventions cannot be separated from the notion of power:

> If one says that a question is a 'political' question, or that a minister or official is a 'political' official, or that a decision is determined 'politically', what is meant in each case is that interests in the distribution, preservation or transfer of power play a decisive role in answering that question, determining this decision or defining the sphere of activity of the official in question. Anyone engaged in politics is striving for power, either power as a means to attain other goals (which may be ideal or selfish), or power 'for its own sake', which is to say, in order to enjoy the feeling of prestige given by power.[3]

The key question thus becomes: to what end are the bishops seeking to influence decisions on the 'distribution, preservation or transfer of power'? Weber defines power as 'the chance of a man or a number of men to realize their own will in a command action even against the resistance of others who are participating in the action'.[4] The concept thus clearly evokes a sense of seeking to control and dominate others – a perception frequently expressed by those opposed to the direction of ecclesiastical interventions in matters relating to the situation of the minority community.

While the hierarchy undeniably sought to exert a controlling influence on the actions of members of the Catholic community in matters that were deemed to be of moral significance, the bishops considered this to be the legitimate exercise of their authority as spiritual leaders. According to Hannah Arendt:

> The authoritarian relation between the one who commands and the one who obeys rests neither on common reason nor on the power of the one who commands; what they have in common is the hierarchy itself, whose rightness and legitimacy both recognise and where both have their predetermined stable place.[5]

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[2] See for example Eamonn McCann's assertion that: 'If there's one thing Catholic bishops understand – and some say there's only one – it's power and how to hold onto it.' Eamonn McCann, *Dear God: The Price of Religion in Ireland* (London: Bookmarks Publications, 1999), p. 81.

[3] *Weber: Political Writings*, ed. by Peter Lassman and Ronald Speirs, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 311.

[4] *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* ed. and trans. by Hans H. Gerth and Charles W. Mills, 2nd edn (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1991), p. 180.

[5] Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971), p. 93.

Perceptions of legitimacy thus prove to be the decisive factor in determining whether or not the interventions of the Catholic hierarchy will be interpreted as the exercise of legitimate authority or the pursuit of power.

Unsurprisingly, in disputes over the question of legitimacy considerable weight was accorded to the view of the Vatican – the source of episcopal authority. Both Basque and Irish nationalists during this period expressed the view that they were at a disadvantage in relation to the more powerful nations of England and Spain, who held more influence at the Vatican, complaining that Rome was too ready to accept one-sided information. This view was reinforced by the secretive nature of Vatican politics and the importance of indirect channels of communication. It would appear that the bishops, despite the significance of their office to the Church did not enjoy privileged access to the Vatican in terms of information transmission. In fact, secular diplomatic representatives appeared better placed to influence Vatican policy than the bishops, who generally conveyed information directly to Rome only through their infrequent ad limina visits.

It could be argued, in fact, that actions of the Vatican throughout this period came close to jeopardising the prestige of the national hierarchy, often it would appear, with a view to appeasing the dominant political power. Both the British government and the Franco regime hoped to achieve a papal condemnation of their political opponents. The importance they attributed to this indicates a belief that Irish and Basque nationalists would place obedience to Rome before national identity. In both cases the Vatican refused to issue a condemnation, demonstrating that while it wished to avoid giving offence to the leading political powers, it was not willing to become a slave to their interests. Particularly significant from the perspective of this study is the fact that the Vatican did not automatically consult the diocesan bishop concerned when making decisions with such significant political implications. It would appear that the Papacy was, on several occasions, considering a condemnation of Sinn Féin without prior consultation with the Irish bishops. While it could be argued that this was a political matter, which did not impact on the running of the diocese, the same could not be said of the case of Bishop Múgica, who learned of his replacement as head of the Diocese of Vitoria through the press.

Chapters Five and Six argued that the Catholic hierarchy was a vital reference point for the minority communities in the Northern Ireland state and the Basque Country under the Franco regime. Episcopal policy both shaped the response of the minority community to the State, and was in turn shaped by the demands of that community. The established position of the Catholic hierarchy within the community, as the voice of moral authority, ensures that the nature of Church-State relations will have an impact on how the legitimacy of the political authority in question is perceived by the bishops' followers. This was clearly recognised by both the Franco dictatorship and the Unionist government of Northern Ireland. The bishops of these two regions followed diametrically opposite paths in their relations with the political power: the hierarchy of Northern Ireland moved from a policy of non-recognition towards the Unionist government to a gradual acceptance of its authority, while the Basque hierarchy began by bestowing legitimacy on the Franco regime, but gradually withdrew its support as the dictatorship progressed.

The principal means of communication employed by the bishops throughout this study has been the Pastoral Letter, described by the Irish Cardinal Joseph MacRory above as 'intimate, important and exclusive'.[6] The examples considered have shown, however, that the bishops in their Pastoral Letters did not shy away from dealing with the dominant political issues of the moment. Indeed, the annual Lenten Pastoral often provided the context for an analysis of the contemporary political situation. With a few notable exceptions,[7] neither the Franco dictatorship nor the Unionist regime in Northern Ireland attempted to interfere with the Pastoral Letters of the bishops, even though their content often gave serious cause for concern. Criticism in a bishop's Pastoral was of course more worrying for the Franco regime, which had actively sought the support of a Catholic population and based its claims for legitimacy predominantly on its professed loyalty to the

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[6] ICD (1942), p. 656.

[7] The Franco regime suppressed Cardinal Gomá's 1939 Pastoral (Chapter Six) and allowed Monsignor Bereciartúa's 1968 Pastoral to be attacked through its press (Chapter Ten), while the censor, under the control of the Belfast government, held up the distribution of Bishop MacRory's Lenten Pastoral without explanation in 1941 (Chapter Five).

Church. The Northern Ireland government on the other hand, while not wholly unconcerned by negative pronouncements on its leadership by the Catholic hierarchy, was largely indifferent to winning the loyalty of the Catholic minority, and owed its position to the support of Protestant voters, many of whom regarded the Catholic community as a threat to their security. Statements by the Catholic bishops that could be construed as attacks on the Northern Ireland state only served to strengthen the government's position, allowing it to portray itself as the last defence of Protestants against the domineering force of Catholicism.

It is perhaps ironic that in Northern Ireland, under a regime whose relations with the Catholic Church were openly antagonistic, the Catholic hierarchy had greater freedom of expression in the media. The *Irish News* virtually acted as the mouthpiece of the hierarchy, providing it with an alternative means of influencing public opinion.[8] In the Basque Country, where the media was rigidly controlled by the Franco regime, statements by the bishops were guaranteed wide diffusion only when they were in support of government policy. Criticism of the government by the ecclesiastical authorities was either ignored in the press or presented in a biased manner, as in the case of Monsignor Bereciartúa's 1968 Pastoral Exhortation.[9] Press coverage, in addition to carrying the bishops' message to a wider audience, can also transmit a different type of message from the hierarchy: speeches and statements reported in the press have a greater immediacy and generally convey more of the personal opinion of the bishop concerned than the more carefully chosen and measured language of a Pastoral Letter.

The cases of Northern Ireland and the Basque Country provide two contrasting examples of the Catholic hierarchy as a source of cultural continuity (for Northern nationalists after the partition of Ireland) and as a point of rupture (for Basque nationalists after General Franco's victory in the Spanish Civil War). In the first case no effort was made to disguise the rejection by the Catholic hierarchy of the legitimacy of the new state and its government. The bishops remained in place in their dioceses, four of which

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[8] Pat Buckley, *Faith and Fatherland: the Irish News, the Catholic hierarchy and the management of dissidents* (Belfast: Belfast Historical and Educational Society, 1991).
[9] See Chapter Six.

were divided by the newly established border, and the ecclesiastical geography of the island was not modified to reflect the changed political situation. In the Basque Country the image projected was one of harmony and unity in Church-State relations. Behind this facade, however, lay the reality of an exiled bishop, hundreds of exiled and imprisoned clergy, and a conscious manipulation of ecclesiastical geography to promote the ideals of the regime above the aspirations of Basque nationalists. Referring to Northern Ireland, Eric Gallagher has argued that the sense of security and belonging and structure of authority provided by churches have a significant effect on people who feel insecure or unsure of their identity.[10] Catholics in Northern Ireland, while not unsure of their identity, perceived it to be under threat, and welcomed, particularly during the early years of the state, the support of the ecclesiastical authorities. Comparison with the case of Basque nationalists in Franco's Spain, however, reveals that where the discourse of the ecclesiastical authorities is in conflict with the national identity of the people, the authority structures of the Church are perceived as a further source of oppression.

Chapters Seven and Eight examined the impact in both societies of the new challenges emanating from the Church at a global level as a result of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). Questions of social justice and human rights featured prominently in the appeals to the hierarchy from the alienated minority. The impact of the evolution of the social doctrine of the Catholic Church on an international level can be detected in changing paradigms of ecclesiastical interventions in questions of political, social, cultural and economic rights. This is most patent in the echoes of the Second Vatican Council's emphasis on the freedom and dignity of the human person that characterised the responses of the Basque bishops to the question of political violence from the late 1960s onwards. A further consequence of such directional changes in the winds blowing from Rome was that they provided the minority community with a marker against which the standards of the national hierarchy might be judged. Where the local bishops were perceived

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[10] Eric Gallagher, 'The Faith and Its Forms in Times of Strife', in *Northern Ireland: Living with the Crisis*, ed. by Alan J. Ward, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1987), pp. 102-123 (p. 112).

as not being sufficiently active or vocal on questions of justice, Papal statements and Encyclicals could provide the basis for a challenge to their authority.

A further interesting element of Arendt's definition of authority is the reference to the stability of the hierarchical structure. A core finding of this thesis has been that political violence and conflict over national identity upsets this stability, identified as necessary by Arendt, resulting in challenges to the authority of the Catholic hierarchy. Frequently, these challenges found expression through appeals to Rome from both State and anti-State forces, dissatisfied with the leadership offered by the Catholic hierarchy. Closer examination reveals that the apparent simplicity of the authority structure of the Church – the 'hierarchical army' of Christ the King 'led by the Bishops together with the Supreme Pontiff'[11] – masks a far more complex reality. This becomes apparent at times of political conflict when the attitude of the local hierarchy is not always reflected at Vatican level, indicating a significant degree of freedom on the part of the bishops to respond to matters arising within their own dioceses as they see fit. As Anthony Rhodes, has concluded: 'The Vatican, although in theory the most absolutist of States, often had less control over its hierarchy than the most constitutional monarch has over his Ministers.'[12]

Tensions arise as a result of the fact that while the perspective of the national hierarchy is acutely focused on the national context, the Vatican, mindful of the global geo-political picture, seeks to distance itself from local conflict. Rome was, however, responsible for appointing bishops and shaping the environment in which they worked through its organisation of ecclesiastical geography. The decision to maintain the all-Ireland structure of the Catholic Church after the creation of the Northern Ireland state, with the Primate in Armagh remaining Primate of All-Ireland, was highlighted by Basque priests, who expressed the hope that the same recognition might be

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[11] Papal Nuncio to Spain, speaking on 30 October 1960, quoted in Serafín Esnaola & Emiliano de Iturrarán, *El Clero Vasco en la Clandestinidad (1940-1968)* 2 vols. (Bilbao, Donostia, Gasteiz, Iruña, [s.n.], 1994), VI, p. 283.

[12] Anthony Rhodes, *The Vatican in the Age of the Dictators 1922-45* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1973), p. 354.

bestowed on the claims of the Basque Country.[13] In the Basque case, it proved even more difficult for the Vatican to distance itself from the conflict as a result of the close identification between Church and State enshrined in the 1953 Concordat.

Chapters Nine and Ten have shown that very similar challenges faced both the Basque and Irish bishops in their responses to political violence, despite their contrasting responses to the alienation of the minority community.[14] If, and when, to respond was the first crucial question, closely followed by considerations such as the choice of language and means of diffusion of the message. A number of common threads can be detected running through the condemnations of violence issued by the bishops of both regions during the 1960s and 1970s. Firstly, the statements of the bishops represent an attempt to analyse the causes of the violence in full. This was true in the Irish case from the beginning and progressively so in the case of the Basque hierarchy. Such analyses invariably involved reference to the grievances of the minority community and were thus unwelcome to the State. Secondly, underlying the interventions of the hierarchy in both cases was an awareness of the potential impact of their statements, open as they were to misrepresentation and exploitation. Those challenged by the bishops frequently accused them of abusing their position to promote a political agenda, leading Bishop Edward Daly of Derry to remark in 1975: 'Perhaps God was a secret member of some political party when he gave Moses the tablets of stone.'[15]

In terms of objectives, the comparison between the two cases is an interesting one. In the Irish case the Catholic hierarchy openly and publicly shared the ultimate objective of the IRA – an independent, united Ireland - disagreeing only with the methods employed by the organisation to achieve that goal. The Basque hierarchy, on the other hand, had never supported ETA's goal of achieving an independent Euskadi. Both organisations,

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[13] *Egiz* 7 (September 1950).
[14] Sections of the analysis which follows have been published as Nicola Rooney, 'Violent Nationalism in Catholic Communities: the Provisional IRA and ETA', *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, (Conference Special Edition 2008), pp. 64-77.
[15] Edward Daly, 'In Place of Terrorism', *The Furrow* 26.10 (1975), pp. 587-599 (p. 591).

however, experienced a progressive evolution away from the Catholic roots of their members, and a world-view conditioned by Catholic education. Although ETA has a much more defined ideological structure, a number of parallels can be detected between the core of its ideology and that of the Provisional IRA. Despite declaring themselves a-confessional (a move which entailed not only a rejection of identification with the Catholic Church, but also a break with past nationalist tradition), neither organisation attempted to establish an alternative to religion, or replace God with the nation as an object of devotion during the early years of their existence.

Although it may appear contradictory for members of the IRA and ETA to claim to be practising Catholics while engaged in activities so clearly at variance with the doctrine of their Church, in particular the Fifth Commandment, the propaganda of both organisations presented their struggle as a 'moral' one. Rather than offering, as might be expected, an alternative to Catholic morality, based on patriotic rather than religious considerations, both organisations firmly rooted the justification of their struggle in Catholic teaching, claiming to be engaged in a 'just war', as recognised and permitted by the Catholic Church under specific conditions: (i) the damage inflicted on the nation must be grave; (ii) all other means of putting an end to it must have failed, (iii) there must be a significant prospect of success and (iv) the damage inflicted must not be greater than the evil to be eliminated.[16]

The question of who has the authority to declare a war just or otherwise was to form the crux of the dispute between both organisations and the ecclesiastical authorities. In opposition to the authority of the bishops, ETA and IRA propaganda defended the right of the individual to follow his or her own conscience. The assertion of the morality of the struggle thus entailed an attempt to undermine the leadership of the Catholic hierarchy. The challenge to the leadership of the ecclesiastical authorities was undoubtedly easier in the Basque Country, where the Catholic bishops were closely identified with the State. The same could not be said of the situation in Northern Ireland, given the bishops' role as spokesmen for Catholic

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[16] Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 1050 in Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Dublin: Veritas, 2006) No. 2309, p. 500.

grievances and the fact that ecclesiastical geography did not recognise the existence of the Northern Ireland state. In fact, it could be argued that the stance adopted by the Irish hierarchy towards the Unionist government, particularly during the early years of the State, gave credence to the Provisionals' claim that Unionist rule was a form of tyranny.

In spite of the fact that the bishops in both regions had followed opposing paths in their relations with the political power and their response to the alienation of the minority community, striking similarities can be noted in the criticism of the ecclesiastical authorities from both groups. The bishops were presented as having been seduced by power, wealth and privilege. In the attempt to establish the legitimacy of their own leadership, ETA and the Provisional IRA argued that the leadership of the Catholic hierarchy had betrayed the minority community, by failing to adequately condemn injustice. By virtue of this failure the bishops were portrayed as traitors to the nation. What is particularly significant is that the Catholic bishops were criticised by both the Provisional IRA and ETA, not because they represented the Catholic Church, but rather for failing to adequately represent the teachings of that Church. Both organisations were challenging the bishops, not merely from within their community, but within the Church itself. This was recognised by the author of the *Zutik* article 'The Church is still with Franco', who stated that the reason that he and others were reacting with such indignation to the behaviour of the Catholic hierarchy was precisely because they themselves had not yet lost their faith.[17]

The attacks on the hierarchy contrasted with the frequent praise for the actions of members of the lower clergy in the publications of both organisations, which often included articles or interviews contributed by priests. While it is an excessive generalisation, this distinction does make sense if one considers that the legitimate self-defence argument put forward by both organisations was accepted by some members of the lower clergy, many of whom had also come into conflict with the authorities as a result of their activities on behalf of the community. The continued identification of IRA and ETA members with the Church, and the justification of their struggle

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[17] *Zutik*, December-January 1961-2.

in Catholic terms has been the source of recurring controversy, with allegations from both political leaders and the media that the Catholic hierarchy did not do enough to prevent violence. This charge has been repeatedly and emphatically denied by the bishops of both regions.

Since IRA and ETA members claimed to be practising Catholics, many of their political opponents believed that excommunication would prove an effective weapon for the suppression of these movements. Both hierarchies refused to employ this measure. Interestingly, the same justification has been offered in both cases, namely, that Catholic teaching instructs that one should hate the sin and not the sinner.[18] Therefore the bishops were acting in accordance with the teaching of their Church by denoting particular actions as sinful, rather than condemning individuals as sinners. Emphasis was placed instead on reconciliation. This view was well expressed by Bishop Daly in 1975 when he argued that communication, rather than excommunication was the most effective way of dealing with the problem of violence.[19] In a 1979 statement from the Bishops of Bilbao and San Sebastián, reflecting on the Church's response to ETA violence, they explained that the Church preferred to 'analyse and denounce sinful attitudes, rather than point the finger at the sinner'.[20]

The issue of excommunication takes on an even greater significance in the context of political funerals. These funerals were of great importance to both the Provisional IRA and ETA and are indicative of the meaning that Catholicism, or at least Catholic tradition, continued to hold for the members of both organisations. The concept of martyrdom enshrined in these funeral ceremonies would not make sense in a strictly Marxist interpretation of their struggle. Benedict Anderson in his seminal exploration of the development of nationalism, *Imagined Communities*, has noted the strong affinity between 'nationalist imagining' and 'religious imagining', pointing out that religion provides a sense of 'continuity' by establishing links between the dead and

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[18] Daly, 'In Place of Terrorism', p. 591, and Angel María Unzueta Zamalloa, *El Vaticano II en una iglesia local: Recepción del Concilio Vaticano II en la Diócesis de Bilbao* (Bilbao: Universidad de Deusto, 1995), p. 17.
[19] Daly, p. 591.
[20] 'La Iglesia en el País Vasco decidida a proseguir su lucha en favor de la paz' in *La Iglesia frente al terrorismo de ETA*, ed. by José Francisco Serrano Oceja (Madrid: BAC, 2001), p. XVIII.

the yet unborn.[21] However, as the social anthropologist Begoña Aretxaga has observed, on application to the political arena, religious models were infused with new meanings. In this way the Christian ideal of sacrifice became a model of resistance.[22]

Crucially for the Church the Catholic funeral ceremony occupies a central position in this strategy: here the moral legitimacy of the struggle is reinforced and the image of the 'martyr-hero' is used to counter the image of 'terrorist' presented by the State.[23] Political funerals thus pose a considerable challenge to the ecclesiastical authorities as the personal and the political are combined in an acutely emotive context.[24] Those who believe the IRA and ETA to be terrorist organisations maintain that their members should not be entitled to a Catholic funeral, given that they have been engaged in activities that are condemned by the teaching of that Church. A moral and political minefield ensues from the Church's duty to provide a Catholic burial for those who died as baptised Catholics and pastoral care to the bereaved families.

The manner in which funerals are conducted for both the perpetrators and victims of violence has important implications for the perception of the Church's position, yet there is no central policy on the issue, with the onus resting on the national hierarchy, and the lower clergy of the parish concerned. As seen in Chapters Nine and Ten, the result was often conflict between the Church, the paramilitary organisations, the State authorities and the mourners. State authorities in both regions expressed dissatisfaction at the manner in which these funerals have been handled by the Catholic Church, and went so far as to intervene directly, bypassing the authority of the Catholic hierarchy. The passage of the corpse during the funeral from home to Church to cemetery has a sacred significance in the Catholic tradition; any obstruction of this route by the State security forces therefore has a deeper

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[21] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism.* (London: Verso, 1991 Revised and Extended Edition – Previous 1983) pp. 10-11.
[22] Begoña Aretxaga, *States of Terror: Begoña Aretxaga's Essays*, ed. by Joseba Zulaika, (Reno: Center for Basque Studies, 2005), p. 51.
[23] Ibid. pp. 52 and 158.
[24] Inter-church Group on Faith and Politics, *Burying our Dead: political funerals in Northern Ireland* (Belfast: Inter-church Group on Faith and Politics, 1992), p. 8.

symbolic significance.[25] Perceived violations by the State of the liberty of the minority community increased alienation and bolstered support for anti-State violence.

If, for Weber, the State was defined by its monopoly on the legitimate use of force, denunciations of State 'violence' had serious implications. The impact of such denunciations was amplified when the source was the Catholic bishops, custodians of moral authority. In both regions the perceived failure of the Catholic hierarchy to adequately address this issue was to be a cause of alienation from the Church. Basque and Irish nationalists criticised the failure of the Catholic hierarchy to recognise that ETA and the IRA were not the only sources of violence in their respective regions, nor even, it was claimed, the primary source. As shown in Chapters Nine and Ten, it has been argued that one-sided condemnations of violence issued by the hierarchy were open to exploitation by the State as justification for the violent repression of those who asserted their right to a separate national identity. The issue of State violence is of course inextricably linked to the issue of political violence from within the minority community, representing one of the root causes of the alienation of that community from the State. Acutely conscious of this fact, the bishops, in condemning violence, examined the reasons why that violence had found support in their communities, and questioned why it persisted.

Since condemnation of State violence by the bishops detracted from the legitimacy of the State, it could also be construed as transferring that legitimacy to other anti-State groups. Conscious of this danger, the bishops strove to maintain a careful balance in their interventions, condemning violence from all sources, and denying that it represented a legitimate response to injustice. Here, the role of the media in shaping public perception is crucial. It is clear that in both cases the Catholic hierarchy preferred to avoid publicly challenging the State on the issue of violence where possible. Recently released material from Cardinal Conway's archive clearly shows that the Northern Irish bishops were actively challenging both civil authorities and the military, but through private communications. It is not yet possible to verify the extent to which this may also have been true in the case of the

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[25] Aretxaga, *Los funerales*, p. 47.

Basque Country as the archives for the period remain closed. We do know however that in the face of mounting pressure the Basque bishops chose to make public their intervention in relation to the Zamora prison issue.[26]

The issue of State violence was clearly most problematic for the Basque hierarchy. This was a result, not only of its close connection to the Franco regime, but also of the fact that both sides of the political divide identified with the Catholic Church. For the Catholic bishops of Northern Ireland, the path to be taken was much clearer – defence of the interests of their Catholic community against perceived abuses from a Protestant state. Nonetheless, as seen in Chapter Nine, the implications of denunciations of State violence were not taken lightly. Paramount amongst the concerns of the hierarchy was the fear that criticism of the State could be interpreted as support for the activities of the IRA. In relation to the question of balance, this comparison is particularly instructive. The Irish bishops felt obliged to speak out publicly against the IRA because the organisation claimed to represent their community, and its members declared their actions to be consistent with Catholic beliefs. In the Basque Country, however, both sides of the political divide identified with the Catholic Church, forcing the Church to assert its moral authority in both directions. In this context, it is noteworthy that the only time a Basque bishop threatened to use the most powerful weapon at his disposal – excommunication – was against members of the regime.

An analysis of ecclesiastical responses to violence in both contexts reveals considerable points of commonality between the stances adopted by ecclesiastical leaders in both regions. In the context of cycles of State and anti-State violence such as those seen in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country the question of balance in condemnations is clearly of paramount importance. Critical evaluation of the interventions of the bishops would suggest that this was an area to which they did not always pay sufficient attention in their public pronouncements. However, on a more personal, human level, any analysis of the statements issued by the Catholic hierarchy during periods of violent conflict must take into account the practical

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[26] See Chapter Ten.

difficulties involved in informing oneself of all the pertinent facts in such a context. It must be remembered that these were responses offered 'from the thick of the battle'.

This thesis has attempted to show the value of comparative analysis of episcopal responses to political violence in the cases of Northern Ireland and the Basque Country. The hope that the successes of the Northern Ireland peace process could be replicated in the Basque Country has found expression through the work of Fr. Alec Reid, who worked in Belfast with the Redemptorist peace mission during some of the critical years for the Irish peace process and in more recent years has been attempting to apply the lessons learned there to the Basque conflict.[27] The contribution of the churches to efforts to arrive at a peaceful resolution of both conflicts is thus one obvious area for further exploration in a comparative framework.

Indeed, given the prominence of their role outlined above, the churches have, unsurprisingly, been challenged to engage in critical self-reflection and participate in initiatives currently underway in both societies aimed at addressing the legacy of the past. Comparative analysis can also make a valuable contribution to such processes, deepening our understanding of the motivations of ecclesiastical leaders and shedding light on the constraints under which they worked. For instance, despite the contrasting attitude adopted by both hierarchies to the States in question in this study, the numerous points of commonality evident in their responses to the violence that characterised the final years of both regimes serves to illustrate the extent to which the 'religious' question has been exaggerated in the case of Northern Ireland. Drawing on newly-released material from ecclesiastical archives in Northern Ireland, this thesis may offer a useful stepping-stone to further research in the Basque case that might be pursued if the opening of archives envisaged under the provisions of the *Ley de la Memoria Histórica* (2007) takes place.

Although, in the twenty-first century, levels of religious practice have declined considerably in both societies, the Catholic bishops remain highly

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[27] Begoña Kareaga and Susana Mediavilla, "La sociedad entera tiene una obligación con las víctimas", *Comunicación Alkarren Barri* 141 (2006), pp. 16-17.

influential public figures, particularly from the perspective of the media. The challenge of responding to political violence continues to be a pressing concern and one of the most significant demands of episcopal leadership in divided societies.