

DANIEL O'CONNELL'S DEVELOPMENT OF COHESIVENESS
WITHIN THE CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION

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by
Mary Kay Royse

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David S. Mathews

Approved for the Major Department

James L. Byrd

Approved for the Graduate Council

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

As the rhetoric of the twentieth century has increasingly become the rhetoric of agitation and mass movements, interest in that type of rhetoric has blossomed. Any consideration of a specific movement's rhetoric, however, pre-supposes a basic recognition of the requirements of agitation. Bowers and Ochs explain that:

Agitation exists when (1) people outside the normal decision-making establishment (2) advocate significant social change and (3) encounter a degree of resistance within the establishment such as to require more than the normal discursive means of persuasion.¹

For such a social movement to succeed, however, certain conditions which seem to justify the movement must exist. Lomas contends that:

Neither rhetorical nor activist agitations can hope to succeed even partially unless social and political conditions are favorable to the initiation and growth of the movement. There must be clear evidence of injustice or apparent injustice deeply affecting the well-being of those who compose the audience.²

Lomas' general description bears a striking resemblance to the conditions existing in Ireland in the 1820's. Having been controlled by the government of England for centuries, the vast majority of Irish Catholics--and thus the largest segment of the Irish population--

¹John Waite Bowers and Donovan J. Ochs, The Rhetoric of Agitation and Control (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1971), p. 4.

²Charles W. Lomas, The Agitator in American Society (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), p. 8.

were landless, poor, and restricted from government participation.

As McCaffrey notes:

While most of the emotional content of the Irish question centered on the religious issue, its essence was the attempt of a besieged minority, aided by an alien legislature, to maintain religious, political, economic and social ascendancy over a deprived and resentful majority increasingly aware of the power of organized and disciplined numbers.³

Exacerbating the poverty of the Irish masses was the problem of over-population. Between 1750 and 1800, the Irish population doubled, exceeding five million. By 1820 the figure had jumped to 6,800,000 and ultimately exceeded 8,000,000 in 1845.⁴

This rapidly rising population quickly out-stripped the available land. Thus, to provide for the new generations, Irish farms were divided and sub-divided until they reached the point of economic inefficiency.⁵ This wasteful use of the land and reliance on a single crop, the potato, combined to make frequent famines inevitable.

One such crisis occurred in 1821, a famine which sparked wide-spread agrarian revolt. The weakness of such a revolt, however, was its lack of organization. A leader was needed to unite and direct Irish Catholic dissatisfaction. Such a leader appeared in the person of Daniel O'Connell.⁶

³Lawrence J. McCaffrey, The Irish Question, 1800-1922 (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1968), p. 2.

⁴Erich Strauss, Irish Nationalism and British Democracy (London: Methuen and Co., 1951), p. 80.

⁵Thomas N. Brown, Irish-American Nationalism 1870-1890 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1966), p. 2.

⁶Strauss, p. 92.

Born in 1775, O'Connell was a member of a rather wealthy Irish Catholic family. He circumvented the restrictions on Irish Catholic education by studying in France. In 1794 he returned to London, where he prepared for the legal profession. Admitted to the Irish bar in 1798, O'Connell quickly gained public attention by his opposition to the Act of Union in 1800. As his legal practice flourished, O'Connell inspired public admiration by his flamboyant, often irreverent actions in court.

As a member of the rapidly rising Irish Catholic middle-class,⁷ Daniel O'Connell faced none of the economic difficulties of the peasant. Instead, he resented the political restrictions on Irish Catholics, particularly those which prevented Catholics from representing Ireland in the British Parliament. McCaffrey observes:

Although the position of the Catholic gentry and middle-class had substantially improved in the course of the eighteenth century, they were still frustrated by the remaining Penal Laws, which denied them a significant role in the direction of Irish affairs.⁸

A faithful adherent of the non-violent principles of Jeremy Bentham, O'Connell set out to organize the Irish discontent by creating the Catholic Association in 1823.⁹ The single aim of the Association was Catholic Emancipation: removal of the restrictions which prevented Catholics from holding government office. The means

⁷Emily Hahn, Fractured Emerald: Ireland (Garden City: Doubleday, 1971), p. 220.

⁸McCaffrey, pp. 14-15.

⁹J. C. Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland 1603-1923 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), p. 299.

to this end was to be the creation of public pressure so potent that it forced a favorable response from the British government.

The adoption of this non-violent strategy relying on political pressure required the development of group unity: the unquestioning involvement of a large group of people in the movement. As Hoffer observes, "The vigor of a mass movement stems from the propensity of its followers for united action and self-sacrifice."¹⁰ This loyalty or dedication, however, must characterize a large number of followers if the agitation is to succeed. Edwards generalizes that "the agitator knows that his success depends upon the emotional and intellectual involvement of the full electorate."¹¹

Because of the emphasis on non-violent political pressure, the development of wide-spread support was especially crucial to O'Connell and the other members of the Catholic nobility and gentry who formed the leadership of the Catholic Association.¹² Such support, however, was difficult to achieve, because "the peasant masses, oppressed by political and economic systems, were poor materials for a successful agitation."¹³ The Irish peasants, faced with the problems of daily

¹⁰Eric Hoffer, The True Believer (New York: Harper and Row, 1951), p. 57.

¹¹Mary G. Edwards, "Agitative Rhetoric: Its Nature and Effect," The Rhetoric of Our Times, ed. J. Jeffrey Auer (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969), p. 8.

¹²Lawrence J. McCaffrey, Daniel O'Connell and the Repeal Year (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1966), p. viii.

¹³McCaffrey, Question, p. 18.

survival, were relatively indifferent toward the problems of political representation.¹⁴ Thus, Catholic Emancipation was a concern almost solely of the upper classes of the Catholic population. Macintyre argues that:

Emancipation was essentially the interest of a rising Catholic middle class; . . . a broad and growing class which demanded a full share in local and central government and of which O'Connell himself . . . was a perfectly representative member.¹⁵

To overcome the indifference of the peasants toward the political issue, O'Connell developed a scheme for a Catholic Rent. Through this contribution of one penny per month, the peasants became committed to the Association and its aim, thus providing the mass basis which was required.¹⁶

That O'Connell succeeded in developing mass support of the movement is undeniable. A modern commentator argues that O'Connell "re-created national feeling in Ireland."¹⁷ He inspired a "mobilized and disciplined Catholic opinion with . . . high morale and emotional commitment to a cause,"¹⁸ in effect achieving the rebirth of Irish nationalism.¹⁹ His success in the development of the Catholic

¹⁴Beckett, p. 273.

¹⁵Angus D. Macintyre, The Liberator (New York: Macmillan, 1965), p. 12.

¹⁶Strauss, p. 92.

¹⁷Robert Dunlop, "Daniel O'Connell," The Dictionary of National Biography (1917), XIV, 834.

¹⁸McCaffrey, Question, p. 25.

¹⁹C. W. Crawley (ed.), War and Peace in an Age of Upheaval, Vol. IX, The New Cambridge Modern History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), p. 173.

Association formed the "new model of modern political mass organization which had a powerful influence far beyond the limits of Irish politics."²⁰

Such devotion of varied sectors of the population to a single objective did not simply develop. The unity of objective had to be inspired and maintained. O'Connell had to develop "a cause . . . some issue which appealed to each section of the community."²¹ O'Connell, then, relied on strong persuasive appeals to develop group cohesiveness. As Beckett explains:

At first sight, it might seem that the admission of Roman Catholics to parliament . . . would make little or no difference to the mass of the people. But in the popular mind Emancipation had come to mean far more than this. The Irish peasant saw himself as the victim of injustice in almost all the relations of life Emancipation was to put an end to all these grievances, and to give the Irish Roman Catholic the freedom and the equality of opportunity hitherto denied him.²²

O'Connell's rhetoric is of particular interest to the rhetorical critic, then, because of his unprecedented success in allying varied groups and because of his influence on subsequent movements.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The purpose of this study is to identify the arguments and themes employed by O'Connell to develop and maintain group cohesiveness

²⁰Strauss, p. 92.

²¹Sir Robert Thompson, Defeating Communist Insurgency: Experiences from Malaya and Vietnam (London: Chatto and Windus, 1966), p. 21.

²²Beckett, p. 300.

within the Catholic Association. Generally, selected speeches by O'Connell are examined in an attempt to answer the question, What arguments and themes were employed to achieve group cohesiveness? More specifically, the following questions are considered: (1) What arguments and themes did O'Connell employ to inspire and maintain group cohesiveness among the peasants, the middle- and upper-class Catholics, and the Protestants sympathetic to the Association; (2) Did O'Connell adapt his arguments and themes to the varied social classes present in his audience; (3) Did O'Connell vary his arguments and themes as the Catholic Association developed?

A review of selected public speaking, argumentation, and communication texts²³ suggests definitions for the study. "Theme" will refer to a topic, subject, or major idea. "Argument" will refer to the rationale or line of reasoning used to develop or support the theme. "Group cohesiveness" will refer to the unity or solidarity of the members of a group.

A review of selected propaganda, public opinion, political campaign, and inter-personal communication texts²⁴ reveals three

²³James H. McBurney and Glen E. Mills, Argumentation and Debate: Techniques of a Free Society (2nd ed.; New York: Macmillan, 1964), p. 115; Wallace C. Fotheringham, Perspectives on Persuasion (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1966), p. 182; Wayne N. Thompson, Modern Argumentation and Debate: Principles and Practices (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), pp. 182-186.

²⁴Dan Nimmo, The Political Persuaders: The Techniques of Modern Election Campaigns (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1970), p. 53; Hans Toch, The Social Psychology of Social Movements (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1965), p. 11; Charles A. Siepmann, "Propaganda Techniques," Voice of the People: Readings in Public Opinion and Propaganda, eds. Reo M. Christenson and Robert O. McWilliams (New York: McGraw Hill, 1962), p. 338.

methods of developing group cohesiveness: identification of an enemy, identification of a common heritage, and development of the herd-instinct. For the purposes of this study, O'Connell's arguments and themes are viewed as directed toward the development of group cohesiveness to the extent that they serve these functions.

Selected speeches by O'Connell, drawn from the period 1823 to 1829--from the founding of the Catholic Association to the passage of the Catholic Emancipation bill--are included in the study. The speeches represent only those delivered to mass audiences; forensic speeches are not considered. Other criteria for selection of the speeches included are availability, verifiability, and representativeness.

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH

A review of Dissertation Abstracts, Speech Monographs, and Rhetoric and Public Address: A Bibliography, 1947-61 by James W. Cleary and Frederick W. Haberman reveals three previous studies concerning O'Connell. Useful background materials are presented in both William E. White's "The Oratory of Daniel O'Connell in the Irish Repeal Movement," a Ph.D. dissertation completed at the University of Wisconsin in 1954, and George Remington's "Rhetoric of Daniel O'Connell," a Ph.D. dissertation completed at the University of Illinois in 1960. More directly related to this particular study is Francis J. Griffith's "The Speaking of Daniel O'Connell on Catholic Emancipation: the Oratory of an Agitator," an Ed.D. dissertation

completed at the Columbia University Graduate School in 1958. None of these studies focus directly upon the achievement of group cohesiveness in the Catholic Association.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sources useful in obtaining background in the theories of agitation include Hans Toch's The Social Psychology of Social Movements, Lewis A. Coser's The Functions of Social Conflict, Barry McLaughlin's Studies in Social Movements: A Social Psychological Perspective, John Waite Bowers and Donovan J. Ochs' The Rhetoric of Agitation and Control, and William Bruce Cameron's Modern Social Movements: A Sociological Outline.

The most useful biographies of O'Connell, in terms of providing background information, are Denis Gwynn's Daniel O'Connell: The Irish Liberator, Sean O'Faolain's King of the Beggars, Robert Dunlop's Daniel O'Connell and the Revival of National Life in Ireland, Angus D. McIntyre's The Liberator, and William Edward Hartpole Lecky's Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland.

Sources dealing with the circumstances motivating the movement include A. V. Dicey's Law and Public Opinion in England During the Nineteenth Century, R. B. McDowell's The Irish Administration 1801-1914, Patrick S. O'Hegarty's A History of Ireland Under the Union, 1801-1922, James A. Reynolds' The Catholic Emancipation Crisis in Ireland, 1823-29, and Bernard Ward's The Eve of Catholic Emancipation.

O'Connell's speeches on Catholic Emancipation are available

in M. F. Cusack's The Liberator: His Life and Times, Political and Social, John O'Connell's Select Speeches of Daniel O'Connell, T. C. Luby's The Life and Times of Daniel O'Connell, and J. A. Mcgee's Life and Speeches of Daniel O'Connell. However, anyone undertaking an analysis of O'Connell's speeches must recognize the difficulties involved in achieving verification of these addresses. Perhaps the most serious obstacle to the authenticity of transcripts of O'Connell's speeches was the influence exerted on the newspapers by the government. Between 1798 and 1809, the majority of Irish newspapers were subsidized by the government either through direct grants or government advertising. Most newspaper owners, then, avoided offending Dublin Castle; consequently, few newspapers could be relied upon to present accurate reports of speeches critical of government policy. The government's control of the press was relaxed by Chief Secretary Wellesley Pole in 1809, but the policy was re-instituted in 1811 with the prosecution of six newspapers for their attacks on the government.²⁵

Contemporary journalistic conventions also impeded the accuracy of reports of speeches. Generally, public addresses were summarized rather than quoted. Reports were sometimes written in the third person--particularly in describing the speaker's opening remarks.

²⁵Brian Inglis, "O'Connell and the Irish Press, 1800-42," Irish Historical Studies, VIII (March, 1952), pp. 1-2.

Nevertheless, O'Connell's speeches were more faithfully and extensively reported from 1823 on--once he had established his pre-eminence as a leader and orator.²⁶ No newspaper that wished to survive could long ignore the agitation of an organization which claimed the entire Irish Catholic population as its membership.

A second factor favoring authenticity was government policy. During the period 1821-1828, Lord Wellesley--an open advocate of Catholic claims--was viceroy. Since his regime offered no apparent threat of suppression, Catholic newspapers began to circulate again. The Dublin Evening Post, The Morning Herald, The Freeman, and The Evening Herald, none of which had openly espoused emancipation since 1814, began to support O'Connell and to report his speeches in detail.²⁷

A journalistic innovation further enhanced the dependability of reports of O'Connell's speeches. In 1824 Staunton, a liberal Protestant who owned the fledgling Morning Register, employed a staff of skilled reporters on a full-time basis. The other Dublin newspapers soon followed suit, discontinuing their dependence on free-lance, part-time, and inexperienced contributors. Consequently, after 1824, O'Connell's speeches were transcribed verbatim and complete and often translated for foreign publication.²⁸

²⁶Francis J. Griffith, "The Speaking of Daniel O'Connell on Catholic Emancipation: the Oratory of an Agitator" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Columbia University, 1958), p. 81.

²⁷Inglis, p. 6.

²⁸Inglis, p. 9.

Finally, O'Connell himself diligently reserved space for journalists at his speeches. He took care that they could easily hear him and provided facilities for easy transcription of what he said. These efforts apparently produced results satisfactory to O'Connell. In protesting, later, the liberties taken by British reporters in publicizing his speeches in the House of Commons, O'Connell acknowledged that he "was long used to stenographic fidelity at home."²⁹

ORGANIZATION

The remainder of the study consists of five sections. Chapter 2 traces the development of the Catholic Association, identifies the factors which tended to prevent or impede the development of cohesiveness within the Association, and develops O'Connell's attitudes in regard to the necessity of cohesiveness in the Association.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 consider O'Connell's solution to the problem, explaining the methods of developing group cohesiveness and identifying the arguments and themes employed to create group cohesiveness within the Catholic Association. Chapter 3 focuses on the identification of an enemy; Chapter 4, the identification of a common heritage; and Chapter 5, the development of the herd-instinct.

²⁹W. J. Fitzpatrick (ed.), Correspondence of Daniel O'Connell, The Liberator (London: John Murray, 1888), I, 292.

The final chapter derives conclusions and generalizations apparent from the arguments and themes developed in Chapters 3, 4, and 5. Consideration is given to the validity of the suggested model, although no evaluation of specific arguments and themes is attempted. Suggestions for further research are also included.

Chapter 2

IMPEDIMENTS TO COHESIVENESS WITHIN THE CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION

INTRODUCTION

Daniel O'Connell's success at developing cohesiveness within the Catholic Association is certainly noteworthy, but the feat appears even more remarkable when the obstacles to that cohesiveness are considered. This chapter traces the development of the Catholic Association; attempts to identify those social, political, and economic factors which tended to prevent or impede the development of unity within the Catholic Association; and develops O'Connell's attitudes in regard to the necessity of cohesiveness in the Association.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION

A consideration of the development of cohesiveness within the Catholic Association presumes a knowledge of the history of the Catholic movement, beginning immediately prior to O'Connell's efforts. This period, from 1798 to 1829, involves a history of generally short-lived, unsuccessful efforts to attain Catholic relief from the Penal Laws.

Beginning in the reign of William III (c. 1690), limitations were placed upon Catholics in almost every phase of human activity. They were barred from the Irish Parliament, from teaching in schools, from serving in the military, and from holding any civil office.

Protestant heirs received preference over Catholic heirs. Inter-faith marriages were prohibited.¹ Catholic priests could not enter Ireland, and those already in the country had to register and post a security of fifty pounds that they would keep the peace and remain within their local district.

But the most important provisions of the Penal Laws were those relating to property. To secure the property and power of the Protestant Ascendancy, Catholics were prohibited from holding a lease for more than thirty-one years. All Catholics who held land before 1704 were required to divide it among all their heirs--disregarding the traditional right of primogeniture. Catholics were prevented from living or owning property in Limerick and Galway. The effect of such provisions was to reduce the area held by Roman Catholic landlords: by 1700 Catholic ownership in Ireland had shrunk to one-eighth of the entire area.²

The first important organized effort to protest the Penal Laws occurred in 1798. In that year a group called the United Irishmen instigated a rebellion against English influence. Its aim was to establish a democratic republic.³ The rebellion and rather half-hearted

¹Lawrence J. McCaffrey, The Irish Question 1800-1922 (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1968), p. 13.

²Emily Hahn, Fractured Emerald: Ireland (Garden City: Doubleday, 1971), p. 179.

³Lawrence J. McCaffrey, Daniel O'Connell and the Repeal Year (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1966), p. 1.

French efforts to invade Ireland and provide support were successfully suppressed by the British government. However, the rebellion "seemed to confirm the anxieties of the Establishment"⁴ and convinced the British that the best way to control Ireland was to assimilate her. Conventional military controls were too expensive and diverted needed manpower from the war with France. The Act of Union resulted.

This Act of 1800 abolished the Irish Parliament and provided that Ireland would be represented by 32 members in the British House of Lords and 100 members in the British House of Commons. The financial clauses of the Act of Union provided that Ireland should bear two-seventeenths of the whole expenditure of the United Kingdom, and that the British and Irish debts should be united when the Irish debt reached two-seventeenths of the whole amount owed by the United Kingdom. An implicit promise by Prime Minister William Pitt that political restrictions on Irish Catholics would be abolished failed to gain fruition due to the resistance of George III.⁵

A rebellion similar to that of 1798, led by Robert Emmett in 1803, was equally unsuccessful. His attempt to seize the capital of Ireland by force lacked sufficient preparation and support. He and his followers were easily repulsed and later executed for their efforts.

⁴McCaffrey, Question, p. 10.

⁵Harold J. Schultz, History of England (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1968), p. 187.

At this point, Catholic efforts to achieve equality began to follow a different course. Since many Irish Catholics were repulsed by violent tactics and since those tactics had proved futile, a new method of expressing discontent was adopted: the petition. Numerous Catholic Committees were formed, consisting mainly of Dublin traders and professionals--yet dominated by Irish Catholic peers and country gentry.⁶ Relying on an appeal to reason, the Catholic Committees drew up a petition and presented it to Parliament in 1805. The petition received such scanty encouragement and support that its supporters were discredited and the Committees dissolved. The Catholic Committees were succeeded by a Catholic Association which floundered from 1806 to 1811. This Catholic Association spawned a period of disorganized public discussions, speeches, and petitions.

Ultimately, in 1812, the Catholic Board was founded. This organization, to circumvent the British Convention Act of 1792, relied on aggregate meetings--open to all. The Board, however, was weakened by sharp divisions over the question of the veto. It was finally proclaimed by Sir Robert Peel in 1815--when Napoleon had been defeated and British resources could be safely diverted to suppress Irish dissidence.

The next nine years witnessed little agitation for Irish

⁶D. A. Chart, Ireland from the Union to Catholic Emancipation, A Study of Social, Economic, and Administrative Conditions, 1800-1829 (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1910), p. 6.

Catholic relief. Chart observes that "the Catholic attitude was marked by despondency and apathy."⁷ Finally, in 1823, Daniel O'Connell achieved a consensus with other Irish leaders on the veto issue and formed the Catholic Association on April 25. Even though the Association--like its predecessor the Catholic Board--relied on the aggregate principle, it initially received little support from the Irish populace. But on May 10, 1823, the proposal for the Catholic Rent was approved at an aggregate meeting. The Rent allowed those who could not afford the annual membership fee of one guinea to become associate members by subscribing a penny a month.

The effect of the strategy was stunning. As Roche notes, "Now the entire Catholic population was called in, enrolled in parish branches, officered by the priests, regimented in effect behind O'Connell."⁸ The peasant who contributed a penny a month to the Association felt that he was taking a real part in its work and that his own well-being was related to its success.

With a population of nearly six million Irish Catholics contributing, the Catholic Rent soon produced enormous sums. Within a short time, the Rent provided a weekly income of more than 1,000 pounds, more than 50,000 pounds per year. Although the bulk of the

⁷Chart, p. 11.

⁸Kennedy F. Roche, "Revolution and Counter-Revolution," Daniel O'Connell: Nine Centenary Essays, ed. Michael Tierney (Dublin: Browne and Nolan, Ltd., 1949), p. 106.

subscriptions came from the towns, even the rural peasants were convinced--and sometimes coerced--by their priests that it was their duty to contribute.⁹

Recognizing the danger implicit in the general strengthening of the Irish Catholic community, the British sought on numerous occasions to outlaw O'Connell's Association. Each proclamation, however, only resulted in a new organization with a new name.

The climax of the development of the Association--and the agitation for Catholic Relief--occurred in 1826. In that year, inspired by the leadership of their local parish priests, the Irish Catholic peasants ignored the traditional imperative that they vote in accord with their landlords' political views. Throughout the country, Association-approved candidates for Parliament defeated the Ascendancy candidates. This general election ". . . virtually decided the fate of the Catholic question. It showed that a new power had arisen which was likely in all future struggles to be irresistible."¹⁰ By 1828, with the Association adopting the strategy of simultaneous monster meetings throughout the country, the British government feared a general outbreak of violence and civil disturbance in Ireland--accompanied by a similar confrontation with sympathizers in Britain.

⁹Norman Gash, Mr. Secretary Peel, The Life of Robert Peel to 1830 (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1961), p. 385.

¹⁰William Edward Hartpole Lecky, Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland (3rd ed.; New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1903), II, 76.

As McCaffrey notes:

There was a strong probability that if the government frustrated the Catholic Emancipation movement, it would encourage the increase of nationalistic sentiment and lead to a powerful agitation for a repeal of the Union. And there was a possibility that the Irish masses might reject O'Connell's constitutional methods and attempt to assert their independence by physical force. In any event, if the government did not concede Catholic Emancipation, the task of governing Ireland would be extremely difficult. . . . There was . . . a good chance that rebellion in Ireland would encourage lawlessness and agitation in Britain.¹¹

The prospect seemed so real that 25,000 of Britain's 30,000 troops were stationed in Ireland. And to conciliate the Protestant supporters of Catholic Emancipation, the British in that year repealed the Test and Corporation Acts--disabilities affecting Protestant dissenters. An effort designed to deprive Catholic Emancipation of large bases of support served to make the denial of the concession all the more illogical.¹²

Yet the Irish Catholics had to demonstrate their power once again before the British government conceded. On July 5, 1828, the peasants--again led by the priests--repeated the political upset of 1826. But in this instance, the elected candidate was not only supported by the Catholic Association--it was Daniel O'Connell himself. As a Catholic, O'Connell could seek a position in Parliament; the oath of supremacy, however, effectively prevented any Catholic from taking his seat.¹³

¹¹McCaffrey, Question, p. 27.

¹²John W. Derry, A Short History of 19th Century England (New York: Mentor Books, 1963), p. 105.

¹³Bernard Ward, The Eve of Catholic Emancipation 1803-1829 (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1912), III, 377.

Facing a potential crisis, the British government conceded-- but ungraciously. George IV finally gave approval to Catholic Relief on April 13, 1829. Roman Catholics were declared eligible for all offices of state, except those of regent, lord-lieutenant, and lord-chancellor of either country. This concession was not obtained without sacrifice, however. The Catholic Association was outlawed. The forty shilling free-holders were denied the suffrage--reducing the Irish electorate from approximately 100,000 to around 16,000.¹⁴ Finally, the bill provided a special oath of office: one to which a Catholic could swear in accord with his conscience. But the Relief Bill was not judged to be retroactive: O'Connell must swear to the old oath or seek re-election. He selected the latter alternative and was re-elected on July 30, 1829.

LACK OF COHESIVENESS

Throughout the history of the Catholic cause in Ireland, two factors prevented any consistent, orderly, and direct efforts for relief: dissensions within the Catholic ranks and legal obstacles imposed by the government. These two factors predominated as O'Connell assumed the leadership of the Catholic cause.¹⁵

¹⁴McCaffrey, Question, p. 28.

¹⁵R. B. McDowell, Public Opinion and Government Policy in Ireland, 1801-1846 (London: Faber and Faber, 1952), p. 98.

Dissensions from Within

As O'Connell initiated his movement, there were three social classes apparent in Ireland: a large body of peasants, a small middle-class, and an even smaller upper-class.

The gentry. The gentry included the owners of small estates, landlords' agents, tithe collectors, a few rich resident noblemen with vast estates, and hangers-on of wealthy families.¹⁶ Traditionally, this group had provided the leadership of the Catholic movement. Though hardly representative of the Irish Catholic population, the gentry had assumed the responsibility of becoming the spokesmen for the movement--believing themselves to be the "natural leaders" of Irish Catholicism. Their resentment against the continuance of political disabilities, however, did not over-ride their caution: as wealthy, respectable people, they avoided any tactic which might provoke government reprisals.¹⁷ The great majority of them shrank from anything approaching popular agitation.¹⁸ Thus, by 1823, the gentry had opposed the proposals of the more radical middle-class and even argued

¹⁶Francis J. Griffith, "The Speaking of Daniel O'Connell on Catholic Emancipation: the Oratory of an Agitator" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Columbia University, 1958), p. 286.

¹⁷Jesse Dunsmore Clarkson, "The Irish Question," Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences (1932), VIII, 289.

¹⁸J. C. Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland 1603-1923 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), p. 296.

in favor of abandoning the strategy of petition. Despite the relative success of some earlier petitions to the British Parliament, the gentry preferred a policy of dignified silence. Reynolds' observation seems most accurate: ". . . a less revolutionary group can scarcely be imagined."¹⁹

The gentry's conservatism, as Roche notes, was a factor which tended to divide the Catholic community. The middle-class became:

. . . increasingly aggressive and uncompromising in its demand for complete emancipation . . . developing, under the influence of the French Revolution, a democratic liberal ideal, whilst the aristocratic party, trusting . . . to the exertion of influence on the Cabinet and Court for the removal of their disabilities, took their stand on the side of established authority.²⁰

Impeding the development of Irish Catholic unity, also, was the aversion of the gentry toward any alliance with the peasantry. This tendency toward dissociation was a natural reaction to the "agrarian disorder, almost always brutal, . . . endemic outside Ulster through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries."²¹ From the rural areas came continual reports of attacks on government officials, murder, rape, mutilation, theft of arms, burning, and assassinations of hostile witnesses.²² To men of property and prestige this

¹⁹James A. Reynolds, The Catholic Emancipation Crisis in Ireland, 1823-29 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), p. 11.

²⁰Roche, p. 68.

²¹Eugene C. Black (ed.), British Politics in the Nineteenth Century (New York: Walker and Co., 1969), p. 278.

²²Gash, p. 168.

violence and lawlessness was both unjustifiable and threatening. The result was alienation between the upper and lower classes. As the contemporary observer Gustave de Beaumont remarked: "Those in Ireland who do not oppress the people are accustomed to despise them."²³

The middle-class. Due to the gentry's conservatism, the leadership of the Catholic Association fell to the middle-class.²⁴ This group, described as "non-existent" at the end of the eighteenth century,²⁵ grew rapidly during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Virtually forced into commercial enterprises by the property restrictions of the Penal Laws, the group prospered partly because of the growth in trade and increases in prices resulting from England's warfare with Napoleon and partly because restrictions on Irish trade were lifted by the British in 1786.

Prosperity, and often the influence of Continental education, prevented the middle-class from developing any deep-seated concern for the problems of the lower-class.²⁶ Instead, they focused on the

²³Cited by James Carty (ed.), Ireland from Grattan's Parliament to the Great Famine (1783-1850), A Documentary Record (3rd ed.; Dublin: C. J. Fallon, 1957), p. 110.

²⁴Morley Ayearst, The Republic of Ireland: Its Government and Politics (New York: New York University Press, 1970), p. 16.

²⁵Constantia Maxwell, Country and Town in Ireland Under the Georges (London: George G. Harrap and Co., 1940), p. 20.

²⁶John E. Pomfret, The Struggle for Land in Ireland, 1800-1923 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1930), p. 24.

political injustices of the remaining Penal Laws--issues of only secondary importance to the peasantry. Even as late as 1828, Catholics were barred from 257 posts in the administration of justice--ranging from lord-lieutenant down to sub-sheriff. Also out-of-reach were 653 offices of civil rank or honor, including seats in Parliament and corporate positions. Of the 4,347 minor positions available to Catholics in 1828, only 173 were filled by Catholics.²⁷ It is not surprising, then, that the sole aim of the Catholic Association--whose leadership came from the middle-class--was the removal of political disabilities.

The lower-class. The majority of the Catholic population was to be found in the lower-class. This group seemed poorly suited for involvement in an agitative movement, because of their poverty, political inexperience, and apathy.

The extreme poverty of this group can hardly be exaggerated. The average peasant rented a crude cabin with about one-and-one-half acres of land. On this small patch he would produce veal, pork, and poultry to pay the rent. He and his family subsisted solely on the potatoes and milk which the plot produced.²⁸

The primary cause of poverty was simply that the supply of arable land was inadequate to meet the demands of a growing population.

²⁷Reynolds, p. 65.

²⁸Great Britain, Evidence Taken Before the Select Committees of the Houses of Lords and Commons Appointed in the Sessions of 1824 and 1825 to Inquire into the State of Ireland (London: John Murray and Co., 1825), p. 144.

This situation resulted in a fragmentation of holdings as farm-land was leased and sub-leased to provide for the new generations. With increased competition for land and the introduction of middle-men in each step of the leasing process, the inevitable result was increased rent. The peasant frequently found himself months in arrears, and the one-year leases provided little protection from eviction. Further, if the rent was paid in the form of labor, the peasant's crops suffered as he spent the busiest seasons working in the landlord's fields. Finally, since the Irish lease was grounded in the concept of "naked land," any improvements to increase productivity resulted in further rent increases and the greater possibility of eviction.²⁹

Hiring out as an agricultural laborer to enhance the family income was practically impossible: few helpers were hired because family farms were so small that no help was needed. In any case, agricultural laborers' wages amounted to a mere pittance--six pence a day without a meal, four pence a day with it.³⁰

Another cause of the peasant's poverty was the encroachment on his meager income by the tithe and cess: taxes levied by the government to support the Church of Ireland and to provide for the maintenance of local churches. To the Catholic peasant, the requirement of contributing to the support of a church which most did not attend was

²⁹J. H. Whyte, "The Age of Daniel O'Connell (1800-47)," The Course of Irish History, eds. T. W. Moody and F. X. Martin (New York: Weybright and Talley, Inc., 1967), pp. 248-249.

³⁰Great Britain, p. 145.

oppressive and burdensome. And the fact that grazing land--which only the wealthy could afford--was exempt from the tithe was even more galling. This exemption encouraged the diversion of farming land, intensifying a shortage which contributed to the peasant's poverty.

Escape from poverty was virtually unavailable to the agrarian peasant. Until the educational restrictions of the Penal Laws were mitigated by the establishment of free public education in 1835, illiteracy among the Catholic lower-classes was widespread. Further, the Act of Union (1800) so crippled Irish industry that manufacturing labor was not in demand.³¹ Pitt's prediction that Union would encourage the flow of English capital into Ireland never came to fruition. Instead, the opposite occurred: profits from Irish land were continually invested in English manufacturing, but English capital was seldom invested in Ireland. Consequently, Irish industry--except for the linen industry of the North--simply could not compete with the gigantic growth of British industry made possible by the Industrial Revolution.³² And with the withdrawal of the national center of government from Dublin to London, the towns virtually decayed in the years subsequent to Union.³³ Finally, the virtual

³¹R. B. McDowell, "Ireland, History (to 1921)," Encyclopaedia Britannica (1970), XII, 580.

³²Giovanni Costigan, A History of Modern Ireland With a Sketch of Earlier Times (New York: Pegasus, 1969), pp. 137-138.

³³Denis Gwynn, Daniel O'Connell: The Irish Liberator (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., n. d.), pp. 208-209.

absence of a middle-class robbed of all reality any dreams the peasant might have of raising his social and economic status by self-denial and frugality.

The primary concern of the peasants, then, was their poverty. Limited land, competition, the discouragement of improvements, the ease of evictions, low wages, and the tithe and cess contributed to their economic predicament. Further, illiteracy and the weakness of Irish industry prevented economic advancement.

A second factor preventing successful peasant reform efforts was their political inexperience. As McDowell notes: "the great bulk of the people were restricted by poverty and persecution to political speculations of the simplest kind."³⁴ The common method of agrarian protest--burning, maiming, robbery, murder--had never produced results. And the Irish peasants had yet to learn the potential power of the ballot.³⁵

In Ireland, and also in England, an accepted axiom of agricultural ethics, sometimes inserted in the lease, was that the tenant conform in political affairs to the position of his landlord. More commonly, however, no explicit agreement was deemed necessary, for no resistance was even contemplated. All favors granted by a landlord to

³⁴R. B. McDowell, Irish Public Opinion 1750-1800 (London: Faber and Faber, 1944), pp. 5-6.

³⁵Derry, p. 572.

his tenant, all remissions or delays of rent, were understood to be conditioned on this relation--the duty of a tenant to vote with his landlord.³⁶ The landlords wrenched the greatest possible political leverage from this notion by allowing "subletting of little farms to increase the numbers of qualified voters on their estates."³⁷

The peasantry, then, had no experience in politics. Traditionally, they had expressed their frustrations through violent means. Even though the ballot offered a source of political leverage, this weapon was controlled by the landlord, not the peasant.

By far the most pressing obstacle to peasant involvement in a unified mass movement, however, was apathy. The peasant, living in constant dread of the landlord, tithe proctor, and magistrate, could scarcely be expected to risk eviction and imprisonment for a cause which appeared remote from the interests of a common man.³⁸ And certainly O'Connell's Association, by focusing on the removal of Catholic political disabilities which "affected only the educated middle-class,"³⁹ had little relevance to the peasants' grievances.

As MacDonagh notes:

The peasantry had no political aspirations. Content to till their holdings and pay rents and tithes so long as they had a shelter

³⁶ Lecky, II, 75.

³⁷ A. P. Ryan, Islands Apart (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1954), p. 53.

³⁸ Patrick Rogers, "Catholic Emancipation," Daniel O'Connell: Nine Centenary Essays, p. 134.

³⁹ Ayearst, p. 16.

over their heads and potatoes in the pot, they were indifferent to the struggle for the removal of their civil and religious disabilities.⁴⁰

Rather than offering a solution to the problems of the peasantry, Association leaders were identified with the problem. Members of the middle-class were required by law to serve as tithe proctors, ". . . one of the most disturbing elements in Irish life."⁴¹ They sometimes also served as middle-men between tenant and landlord, ". . . becoming members of a . . . class parasitical upon the peasantry."⁴² Even O'Connell was described as an "improvident landlord,"⁴³ and Thomas Wyse, official historian of the Association, had his fields overrun and his corn destroyed by angry tenants whom he had evicted. Generally, Catholic landlords were as uncompromising and demanding as their Protestant counterparts.⁴⁴

For decades, the peasants had been surfeited with talk about Catholic Emancipation. They had heard of debates in the House of Commons, of petitions ignored, of concessions demanded, and of compromises proposed. The finer subtleties of these political games "confused, confounded, and ultimately bored them. In the peasants'

⁴⁰Michael MacDonagh, The Life of Daniel O'Connell (London: Cassell and Co., 1903), p. 108.

⁴¹Lecky, II, 46.

⁴²K. H. Connell, The Population of Ireland 1750-1845 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), p. 85.

⁴³Reynolds, p. 73.

⁴⁴Reynolds, p. 73.

view, the attainment of Catholic Emancipation seemed highly improbable and its practical benefits were even more doubtful.⁴⁵ As early as 1817, Sir Robert Peel had argued against Emancipation on the grounds that:

. . . emancipation would confer no benefit on the mass of the Irish people; it would make no difference to the state of the peasantry. Privileges would be given to the Catholic aristocracy and middle-class; but nothing would be done for the lower classes.⁴⁶

The prospects for a successful assertion of rights did not seem promising in 1823, as Richard Lalor Sheil, one of O'Connell's associates, observed:

There was a total stagnation of public feeling, and I do not exaggerate when I say that the Catholic question was nearly forgotten. No angry resolutions issued from public bodies We sat down like galley slaves in a calm. A general stagnation⁴⁷ diffused itself over the national feelings.

Summary. Numerous factors within the Irish Catholic community impeded the development of cohesiveness. The gentry preferred extremely conservative forms of protest, feared the strategies proposed by members of the middle-class, and abhorred the violence employed by the peasantry.

The middle-class was concerned with political disabilities--restrictions which were of primary concern only to that group. Sometimes serving as tithe proctors and middle-men, they appeared to profit from the system which oppressed the peasant.

⁴⁵Rogers, p. 134.

⁴⁶Gash, p. 208.

⁴⁷Gwynn, p. 164.

The largest portion of the Irish Catholic populace was found in the lower-class. The primary and most pressing concern of this group was their poverty and the factors contributing to that poverty: limited land, competition, the discouragement of improvements, the ease of evictions, low wages, and the tithe and cess. They lacked political knowledge and skill, instead relying upon violence. The peasants had become weary of the political games of the upper-classes; viewing those efforts as unrelated to their needs and doomed to failure.

Legal Obstacles

Even though Catholic Ireland in the 1800's was disorganized and without direction, the British government and its officers in Ireland recognized the dangers if those obstacles were overcome. As early as 1809, Thomas Newenham had warned Parliament of the dangers of a unified Catholic body.⁴⁸ To avoid this contingency, the Irish government sought to blunt the radical, militant Protestant Orange societies which had originated in the disturbed period of the 1790's. It was one thing for the government to base the society on the ascendancy of a Protestant minority; but it was a different matter altogether to allow that minority to provoke the larger mass of Catholic Irish into lawless retaliation.⁴⁹

⁴⁸Thomas Newenham, A View of the Natural, Political, and Commercial Circumstances of Ireland (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1809), p. 274.

⁴⁹Gash, p. 145.

However, more direct tactics were available to the Irish government. One such tactic, the demand for securities, served to deepen the divisions of the Catholics, even though that was not the primary purpose of placing such emphasis on the question.

Securities. In 1808 Catholic Emancipation was proposed in the House of Commons, with the provisions that the crown could exert a negative control, or veto, on the appointment of Irish Catholic bishops and that the government would provide support of the Irish Catholic clergy. By 1810 the opposition of the Irish Catholic hierarchy and masses to these terms was clear. A small group of gentry, however, favored the concession⁵⁰ and believed that the prospects for early emancipation were being thwarted by ecclesiastical and nationalistic intransigence.⁵¹

The issue was complicated in 1814, when a Monsignor Quarantotti issued a papal rescript in favor of accepting the veto. He was immediately denounced as a meddling Italian ecclesiastic and assemblies of indignant clergy declared the rescript to be nonobligatory. These pronouncements proved to be unnecessary, because the House of Lords refused to consider Emancipation on any terms.

To the Irish Catholic hierarchy and emancipationists like O'Connell, the concessions involved much more than an appointment or series of appointments. At stake was a principle which would deflect

⁵⁰Ward, I, 145.

⁵¹Gash, pp. 153-154.

the spiritual influence of Irish Catholics in a general and permanent direction towards loyalty to England.⁵² The anticipated consequence was alienation of the Irish people from the Irish Catholic Church, thus causing the disintegration of the one institution which provided some sense of tradition in Ireland.⁵³

To an individual accustomed to the twentieth century concept of the separation of Church and State, the securities demanded by the British government may seem highly irregular. But in the nineteenth century they appeared indispensable. To those Englishmen favoring Emancipation, securities provided a means of mollifying the opposition. Emancipation could be granted without the admission of defeat, if certain protections were secured.⁵⁴ The opponents of emancipation, on the other hand, firmly believed that Roman Catholics simply could not be loyal to a state without giving securities. Some means of limiting allegiance to the foreign pope was deemed essential.⁵⁵ Even the proponents of emancipation admitted that European states commonly reached agreements with the Papacy to obtain such securities within their dominions.

⁵²Owen Dudley Edwards, "Ireland," Celtic Nationalism, eds. Owen Dudley Edwards and others (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 95.

⁵³Roche, p. 90.

⁵⁴McDowell, Public Opinion, p. 92.

⁵⁵George Kitson Clark, Peel and the Conservative Party (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1962), p. 8.

Nevertheless, the Catholic clergy and masses of Ireland rejected such proposals, and by their opposition created a dispute which "dissipated their energies and crippled their organizations."⁵⁶ The controversy over the veto simply widened the gap between the conservative and progressive wings of the Emancipation movement, between those who favored granting concessions to achieve Emancipation and those who viewed concessions as unnecessary and unjustifiable.

Wings. In later years, the government proposed another type of securities, less sectarian in nature, which produced the same divisive effect among the Irish Catholics. Two measures were proposed to ease the passage of a Catholic Relief bill proposed in 1825. The "wings," as they were dubbed, provided state payment of the Catholic clergy and raised the electoral requirements in Ireland so as to disqualify the forty-shilling voters.⁵⁷

O'Connell, who assisted in drafting the bill, agreed to the compromise because he recognized the influence exerted by landlords on their forty-shilling tenants. As a landlord himself--the O'Connells were among the few Gaelic landowners who had managed to retain their holdings during the Penal Era--O'Connell understood completely the political cooperation given by tenant to landlord.⁵⁸ No change in this relationship seemed likely. Thus, one way to limit landlords'

⁵⁶ McDowell, Public Opinion, p. 96.

⁵⁷ Reynolds, pp. 23-24.

⁵⁸ Alice Curtayne, The Irish Story (Dublin: Clonmore and Reynolds, 1962), p. 123.

influence on the tenants and at the same time weaken their political position was to disarm the army of voters found on every estate.

O'Connell's critical mistake was that he failed to inform the Irish people of his compromise. Convinced that emancipation was assured and believing that the joy of victory would far outweigh the concern for the "wings," O'Connell delayed. Unfortunately, the Relief Bill was defeated in the House of Lords and the newspaper reports informed the Irish of the failure and of O'Connell's compromise. His willingness to dispense with the forty-shilling voters was viewed by some as traitorous to the movement--an unwarranted act of expediency. Criticism of the compromise did not abate until 1828; the peasant electors of Clare disproved O'Connell's assumption by electing him to the House of Commons, and he reversed his position.

Convention Act of 1792. The most serious impediment to a successful popular movement was the Convention Act of 1792. This law represented an almost insurmountable obstacle, because it explicitly prohibited all elected political bodies other than Parliament and the administration. By barring the development of representative bodies, the act prevented the establishment of any permanent group and deprived any agitation the opportunity to demonstrate its strength in terms of the number of its supporters.

The Convention Act of 1792 was applied to the Catholic Board in 1811 and in 1815. To circumvent its restrictions, O'Connell established the Catholic Association on a nation-wide basis in 1823. Since the membership of the new organization was composed of the

entire Catholic population, the Association avoided the necessity of representation and could be defended on those grounds.⁵⁹

Goulburn's Act. With the apparent neutralization of the Convention Act, a new law was needed. Thus, in 1825, a bill entitled "against unlawful societies in Ireland" was adopted. The new law (Goulburn's Act) expressly prohibited political bodies of longer duration than fourteen days.

O'Connell responded by forming the New Catholic Association, an organization whose constitution denied any political objectives.⁶⁰ Instead, it proposed to promote public peace, encourage a liberal and religious system of education, conduct a census of the Catholic population, promote liberalization of the press, and to perform acts of public charity--all double-talk--but clearly within the limitations of the new law.⁶¹

When the act expired in 1827, no replacement provision was proposed. By that time it was apparent that banning O'Connell's associations was worse than useless. Each proclamation to abolish his organization brought merely a change of name to the prohibited body. The only substantive results were increased Irish enthusiasm for O'Connell's efforts and new recruits for the new organizations.⁶²

⁵⁹Roche, pp. 105-106.

⁶⁰Reynolds, pp. 116-117.

⁶¹Reynolds, pp. 24-25.

⁶²Roche, p. 106.

Litigations. Other government efforts to weaken the Emancipation movement also proved counter-productive. In 1814, the government brought a libel action against John Magee, the liberal Protestant editor of the Dublin Evening Post. The prosecution was intended as a warning to any other Irish Protestants who might have felt inclinations to sympathize with O'Connell's agitation. The strategy served to deprive the Catholics of a means of disseminating their appeals, but O'Connell frustrated the effort. In his defiant speech in defense of Magee he castigated the government's officials and established his leadership of the Irish Catholics.⁶³

An attempt to prosecute O'Connell for a seditious speech failed in December, 1824, and only served to enhance O'Connell's reputation as a man who could challenge and defeat the government.⁶⁴ Even efforts to conduct a campaign against O'Connell and his confederates in the government press proved fruitless. Government officials soon learned that a paper which did not at least print the speeches of the Association leaders was destined for bankruptcy.⁶⁵

Counter-activity. It would be a gross over-simplification, however, to imply that all government efforts were directed in opposition to the Association and the concerns of the Irish people. In fact, government efforts were often conciliatory. The Relief Act

⁶³Gwynn, pp. 116-118.

⁶⁴Ward, III, 119.

⁶⁵Gash, p. 158.

of 1782 permitted Catholics to purchase and bequeath land and vote in Parliamentary elections. The Relief Act of 1793 went even further--granting the franchise to tenants who paid an annual rent of forty shillings or more, opening up professional and educational opportunities, and repealing the restrictions on Catholic property rights.⁶⁶ Several Irish viceroys, Fitzwilliam, Anglesey, and Wellesley for example, were noted for their sympathies to the Catholic claims. In both 1817 and 1822, the English made substantial contributions to alleviate the distress of famine.⁶⁷ Grattan, Brougham, Plunket, Burke, Fox, Canning, and others had provided continual support to Catholic claims in the House of Commons.⁶⁸

By 1820, there had developed a strong body of opinion in Parliament favoring emancipation. A series of divisions during the decade demonstrated that the House of Commons was almost evenly divided on the issue, with a slight and growing majority supporting the Catholic claims. Only in the House of Lords did substantial opposition exist. Thus, no extreme policy--either of repression or of conciliation--could survive.⁶⁹ To avoid a fatal division over "The Irish Question," each British ministry evaded a confrontation on the issue, attempting to maintain a neutral posture and consequently providing an impediment to the growth of agitation.

⁶⁶Roche, p. 51.

⁶⁷Reynolds, p. 64.

⁶⁸Oliver Macdonagh, Ireland (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), p. 43.

⁶⁹Whyte, p. 254.

Summary. Recognizing the potential danger of a unified Irish Catholic opinion, the British government sought to obstruct O'Connell's efforts. The Orange Societies were restrained so that their actions would not provoke the Catholics. Concessions--in the form of a veto over the appointment of Irish Catholic bishops, the state payment of the Irish Catholic clergy, and the disqualification of the forty-shilling voters--were demanded in return for Catholic Relief. The various Catholic organizations were proclaimed. O'Connell and some of his supporters were prosecuted for libel and sedition. Newspapers were instructed not to report on Emancipationist activities.

At the same time, the British made some conciliatory gestures to sustain the hope that Emancipation would be granted. The restrictions of the Penal Laws were gradually repealed. Men sympathetic to Emancipation were appointed to positions in the Irish government. Supporters of Emancipation expressed their position in Parliament.

O'CONNELL'S ATTITUDES TOWARD COHESIVENESS

An analysis of O'Connell's efforts to achieve cohesiveness in the Catholic Association assumes that O'Connell was aware of the necessity of such cohesiveness. Such an assumption, however, is unnecessary: O'Connell repeatedly and explicitly emphasized the necessity of unity, in his letters and particularly in his speeches. As early as 1808 he warned of the dangers of division. During a meeting of the Catholic Committee in Dublin, O'Connell cautioned:

"Nothing but disunion among ourselves can ever retard the Catholic cause. Division, while it renders us the object of disgust to our friends, will make us the scorn and ridicule of our enemies."⁷⁰ Much later, in a speech delivered to an aggregate assembly in Dublin on July 2, 1812, O'Connell noted the hazards of disunity. Catholics had failed to achieve emancipation in 1793 and 1800, he argued, because they were divided among themselves. The necessary course was to achieve unity of the Irish.⁷¹

O'Connell continually made the plea for unity. In a speech entitled "Speech on Unanimity," delivered February 9, 1811, he proclaimed:

I seek only for unanimity among Catholics When are our petty and miserable squabbles to have an end? . . . I entreat you to consider if it is not an evil of the utmost magnitude to divide us, as it will show our enemies, who are secretly exulting at the prospect of division, that we are to the last a divided and, therefore, a contemptible people, objects for the derision of our malignant enemies.⁷²

He repeated the necessity of cohesiveness in concluding the speech:

"It is by perfect unanimity alone that we can triumph."⁷³

O'Connell realized that cohesiveness could not simply develop; it had to be conscientiously sought. Thus, in a speech before the Catholic Board, December 5, 1812, he pleaded: "Let us make peace among ourselves and carry on the war of words only with our enemies."⁷⁴

⁷⁰John O'Connell (ed.), Select Speeches of Daniel O'Connell (Dublin: James Duffy, 1868), I, 14.

⁷¹Griffith, p. 104.

⁷²O'Connell, I, 42-43.

⁷³O'Connell, I, 42.

⁷⁴O'Connell, I, 137.

This particular appeal was repeated to the masses, at an aggregate meeting in Dublin, December 2, 1824. In concluding that speech he admonished:

Conciliate--conciliate--conciliate. Let every effort be used to bring Irishmen of every creed and persuasion into terms of harmony and good will towards each other. The only resource of the corruptionists is to be found in religious discord. Let ours be to ally, and if possible, to extinguish that unholy flame.⁷⁵

Another aspect of O'Connell's conception of cohesiveness should be noted from the preceding citation: O'Connell sought the involvement of Irish Protestants as well as Catholics. The support of liberal Protestant groups and individuals was to be welcomed and encouraged. In 1811 he acknowledged, "I do greatly admire the friends of religious and civil liberty, the Presbyterians of Ireland."⁷⁶

O'Connell viewed Protestant support as a requisite to Catholic success. In June 1812, he observed, "It is a new source of unconquerable strength to our cause to have Protestant and Catholic equally ardent in the struggle in which we are engaged,"⁷⁷ and a month later he asserted the importance of Protestant support:

"... we owe to the cordial re-union of every sect and denomination of Irish Christians the progress of our cause."⁷⁸ Twelve years later, at the height of agitation, O'Connell predicted that emancipation was assured, partly because of "the union that exists between the

⁷⁵O'Connell, II, 433.

⁷⁶O'Connell, I, 56.

⁷⁷O'Connell, I, 70.

⁷⁸O'Connell, I, 93.

Catholics and so great and so good a portion of the Protestants of the land."⁷⁹

Cohesiveness, then, was recognized by O'Connell to be of the utmost importance. As Dunlop notes, "His great object was to reconcile the differences that existed among the catholics themselves."⁸⁰ He sought to develop unity among the Irish Catholic population and to encourage as much as possible the support of Irish Protestants.

⁷⁹O'Connell, II, 430.

⁸⁰Robert Dunlop, "O'Connell, Daniel," The Dictionary of National Biography (1917), XIV, 818.

Chapter 3

THE DEVELOPMENT OF COHESIVENESS WITHIN THE CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION: IDENTIFICATION OF THE ENEMY

INTRODUCTION

Recognizing the necessity of unity, O'Connell placed much emphasis on the rhetorical devices which contributed to the achievement of that goal. Identification of an enemy, a device commonly employed in agitative movements, is particularly notable in Daniel O'Connell's rhetoric from 1823-1829. This chapter examines the theoretical background of the device, considering its values and effects. Secondly, the arguments and themes used by O'Connell to identify an enemy are detailed.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Identification of an enemy is generally one of the first tasks of the leaders of an agitative campaign. This strategy allows the movement to assume an aggressive posture, in effect to define the political situation.¹ The leaders of a movement are able to determine events, rather than merely to react to them.

¹Dan Nimmo, The Political Persuaders: The Techniques of Modern Election Campaigns (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1970), p. 53.

In practice, the strategy is quite simple: some individual or group or institution which is especially susceptible to the charges made against the establishment² is designated as the source of all grievances.³ The motivations of the "enemy" are viewed as unimportant; instead, an ambiguous perception of some vague and sinister coalition of antagonists is created.

The agitator, however, must be careful to portray the "enemy" as weak or vulnerable. Even though the enemy currently possesses power or a position which he uses in a manner unfavorable to the members of the movement, his power is not intrinsic. Because he possesses certain vices and defects, the enemy can be over-powered. He may be forced to compromise, concede, or relinquish his control.⁴

Thus, in identifying an enemy, the agitator commonly appeals to the prejudices of his audience. Those attitudes, actions, or associations against which the audience recoils are attributed to the enemy. To intensify further the audience's prejudices, the agitator relies on the audience's prior knowledge of their condition, cites

²John Waite Bowers and Donovan J. Ochs, The Rhetoric of Agitation and Control (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1971), p. 27.

³Jacques Ellul, Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes, trans. Konrad Kellen and Jean Lerner (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), p. 73.

⁴William Bruce Cameron, Modern Social Movements: A Sociological Outline (New York: Random House, 1966), pp. 129-130.

examples akin to their own experiences, and attempts to couch his arguments in emotional, ambiguous, and personal terms.⁵

It is not necessary that the agitator's interpretation or explanation of the situation be accurate. As with virtually any persuasive appeal, it is merely imperative that the followers accept his view and develop some association between their grievances and the designated enemy. If his arguments are sufficiently ambiguous, the members of his audience can project into them the precepts relevant to their own particular experiences.⁶

The advantages of the strategy of identifying an enemy are two-fold. First, the strategy tends to simplify issues. By identifying the evil forces which are conspiring against his followers, the agitator provides a demonological interpretation of the situation. He presents the problem in black-and-white terms--the view commonly adopted by members of the lower-class.⁷

Secondly, the strategy of identifying an enemy increases solidarity. By providing some type of contrast, the agitator assists the movement in developing a sense of its own identity.⁸ Coser

⁵Wayne N. Thompson, Modern Argumentation and Debate: Principles and Practices (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), pp. 182-186.

⁶Nimmo, p. 181.

⁷Seymour Martin Lipset, Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1963), p. 115.

⁸Frederick L. Schumann, "The Origins of Nationalism," Readings in Modern and Contemporary History, ed. Arthur N. Cook (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1937), p. 157.

explains the process as he writes that: "Conflict with other groups contributes to the establishment and reaffirmation of the identity of the group and maintains its boundaries against the surrounding social world."⁹ With a sense of group identity established and the belief that the group is somehow threatened, the inevitable result is increased cohesion of the group.

The importance of the strategy to an agitation movement probably cannot be exaggerated. In fact, Schumann claims that, "No emotion unifies a group so readily as hatred for a common enemy."¹⁰ Conscientious effort is usually made to identify the enemy of a movement. Thus, Coser notes, "Rigidly organized struggle groups may actually search for enemies with the deliberate purpose . . . of maintaining unity and internal cohesion."¹¹

O'CONNELL'S IDENTIFICATION OF AN ENEMY

In his agitative oratory, Daniel O'Connell placed great emphasis on the identification of an enemy. Most critics describing O'Connell's rhetoric note his reliance on abusive, denunciatory, and sometimes offensive language. His speeches were liberally sprinkled with such terms as renegade, miscreant, and ruffian. He described

⁹Lewis A. Coser, The Functions of Social Conflict (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1956), p. 38.

¹⁰Schumann, p. 158.

¹¹Coser, p. 110.

his opponents as foul and faithless wretches, vindictive, odious and mischievous vermin.¹² The deliberate violence of O'Connell's language was purposive. He believed that Roman Catholics had for so long been accustomed to accepting an inferior status that they had lost confidence in their ability to assert their rights. He felt it was his duty to set an example by fearless defiance of the ascendancy.¹³ Thus, O'Connell's language set the tone for the arguments and themes he employed to develop his followers' conception of their enemy.

This strategy was particularly appropriate to O'Connell's audiences. The peasants, who tended to make up the majority of his audiences, generally viewed their grievances fatalistically. By emphasizing the identification of an enemy, O'Connell taught them ". . . to relate their miseries to the British Parliament rather than exclusively to the inscrutable will of God."¹⁴

The British Government

The primary group specified by O'Connell in identifying the

¹²Francis J. Griffith, "The Speaking of Daniel O'Connell on Catholic Emancipation: the Oratory of an Agitator" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Columbia University, 1958), p. 253.

¹³J. C. Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland 1603-1923 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), p. 300.

¹⁴Thomas N. Brown, "Nationalism and the Irish Peasant, 1800-1848," Review of Politics, XV (October, 1953), p. 434.

enemy was the British government. O'Connell continually stressed the tyranny and rigorous impositions inflicted upon Irish Catholics. Their distress, he claimed, was caused by the cruel and unjust use of power. The policy and the very existence of the British government's influence in Ireland were inimical to the interests of the Irish nation.

First of all, he claimed the British sought to divide the people of Ireland: "The English were here exactly 652 years; before their coming the Irish were divided--they came because they were divided; division was the great engine of their policy."¹⁵ The preceding claim was supported in the same speech to an aggregate meeting in Dublin, 1824, by noting the fear provoked by Irish unity. O'Connell called attention to "the writhings and contortions of our enemies," when they recognized that Emancipation was inevitable.¹⁶

Nevertheless, British-provoked disunity--"the serpent of division"¹⁷--had had its effect on Ireland. O'Connell viewed British oppression as the cause of the bloodshed, prejudice, and violence endemic to Ireland. He frequently expressed his belief that the outbreak of 1798 was fomented by the British government to facilitate

¹⁵John O'Connell (ed.), Select Speeches of Daniel O'Connell (Dublin: James Duffy, 1868), II, 432.

¹⁶O'Connell, II, 430.

¹⁷O'Connell, II, 431.

the extinction of the Irish Parliament.¹⁸ In describing the state of the country to a Dublin aggregate meeting, May 10, 1823, O'Connell contended:

I ask, what can be assigned as the cause of this monstrous and unnatural inveteracy of bigotry on the one side, and of the spirit of insubordination and wild outrage on the other? The answer is not far, nor hard to find. The cause of this distracted state of our land, and of the dwellers in it, is to be traced and found in the long series of misrule and misgovernment by another country.¹⁹

Ordinarily, O'Connell simply relied on general arguments, similar to those cited previously. However, when an issue arose, O'Connell rarely failed to take advantage of the situation.

One such instance occurred in 1827, when the British Parliament enacted revisions in the tithe laws. O'Connell argued that the new law placed unjust and inequitable responsibilities upon Irish Catholics. Contrasting the attitudes governing the tithe in England and Ireland, O'Connell observed:

In England there is a natural and just sensitiveness as to allowing one man to put his hand into another man's pocket and take out his money. . . . But matters have been managed quite in another guise with us. Here it has been for near two centuries the ruling principle of state policy to allow every body connected with the Established Church to dip as deeply into the people's pockets as they pleased, and to take out as much as they possibly could.²⁰

¹⁸Kennedy F. Roche, "Revolution and Counter-Revolution," Daniel O'Connell: Nine Centenary Essays, ed. Michael Tierney (Dublin: Browne and Nolan, Ltd., 1949), pp. 78-79.

¹⁹O'Connell, II, 196-197.

²⁰James Sheridan, A Full Report of the Speech of Daniel O'Connell on the Subject of Church Rates and Parish Cess as Delivered at a Meeting of Catholics on Wednesday, the 10th of January, 1827 (Dublin: Richard Coyne, 1827), p. 4.

The new tithe act was unequalled in its cruelty. In O'Connell's eyes, only the British could perpetrate such treachery:

. . . the Turks, although they took away the ancient churches from their Greek slaves, had too much humanity to make them build new ones for the Mahometan [sic] worship. In this as in many other Acts towards this unfortunate country, the English stand unrivalled. They beat the Turks all to nothin', and Ireland stands alone in the sad story of variegated and unremitting oppression.²¹

To O'Connell the bill, which gave local branches of the Church of Ireland greater latitude in levying assessments on Irish Catholics, was simply another step in the process of the abasement of the Irish Catholic Church--a process begun with the Reformation. In O'Connell's eyes, the Reformation was simply a policy of the British government, and the Established Church was but an arm of that government--the Reformation and the Established Church being equally harmful. He claimed that the Reformation:

. . . took away the revenues of the church and appropriated them to lay hands--it robbed the people of their rights--it robbed the poor of their property--it destroyed the funds to relieve the indigent, to solace the sick, to clothe the children of poverty, to sustain the wretched orphan, and to comfort the desolate widow.²²

The Reformation, by requiring Irish Catholics to serve as tithe proctors, had even forced Catholic to oppress Catholic. In describing this situation O'Connell exclaimed:

Whenever the vestry had occasion, or thought fit to make a large or heavy assessment, they uniformly selected two of the wealthiest Catholics--farmers or gentlemen as Churchwardens. These persons were placed in this disagreeable predicament--if they did not collect the Cess, they must pay out of their own pockets the full

²¹Sheridan, p. 6.

²²Sheridan, pp. 6-7.

amount. If they did collect it, all the odium of levying a burdensome, a hateful, an unnecessary, and an oppressive rate from wretched Catholics, fell in the first instance on Catholics themselves.²³

Even though the Reformation provoked division within the Irish Catholic population, O'Connell recognized an even greater harm which it produced. Claiming that it weakened the moral fiber of the populace, O'Connell described the Reformation as:

. . . a monstrous evil, for in the first place it corrupted to the core the public and private morals. The deluge of immorality and vice that followed it, was its immediate and most striking feature--profligacy and perfidy and crime. The disregard of every law of man, and the contempt for every restraint of the law of God, characterized its infancy and announced its progress.²⁴

Thus, the Established Church, like the British government, had attempted and succeeded in impoverishing--virtually enslaving--the Irish people:

We have no controul over our own. We are the serfs, the slaves of our masters--the Protestants, in vestry assembled. For them we plough, for them we reap--or if any part shall hereafter be allowed to us for use, we will owe it to the courtesy or contempt of the vestry.²⁵

A similar opportunity presented itself to O'Connell in 1829, near the end of the Emancipation campaign. With the creation of a vacancy in the House of Commons, a new election was necessary to determine the representation of the County of Clare. O'Connell entered and won the election, although he knew he was prevented from taking his seat by the required oath.

²³Sheridan, p. 6.

²⁴Sheridan, p. 6.

²⁵Sheridan, p. 55.

Parliament, faced with the definite possibility of outright rebellion in Ireland, relented by passing the Catholic Relief Bill. They refused, however, to allow retroactive application of its provisions. Thus, O'Connell had to stand for election a second time.

Although unopposed, O'Connell conducted a vigorous campaign. His major argument was that, once again, the British had violated the interests and rights of the Irish people. They had made an "attempt to exclude your representative from the House of Commons."²⁶ They had demanded that he take a "horrible oath," denouncing the Mass and other Catholic practices.²⁷ "The House of Commons," he said, "have deprived me of the right conferred on me by the people."²⁸

Even though Catholic Relief had been legislated, the British Parliament was not responsive to Irish Catholic interests. It was still necessary that the Catholics continue to exert political pressure, that they defeat: ". . . the insidious policy of those men who, false to their own party, can never be true to us, and who have yielded not to reason, but to necessity, in granting us freedom of conscience."²⁹ O'Connell called on his followers to assert themselves--

²⁶M. F. Cusack, The Liberator: His Life and Times, Political and Social (Kenmare Publications, n. d.), II, 544.

²⁷Cusack, II, 543.

²⁸Robert Huish, The Memoirs Private and Political of Daniel O'Connell (London: W. Johnston, 1836), p. 654.

²⁹T. C. Luby, The Story of Ireland's Struggles for Self-Government (New York: Gay Brothers and Co., 1893), p. 528.

just as he had done in 1823:

And will you, my countrymen, submit to this bartering of your privileges and liberties? Will you, like torpid slaves, lie under the lash of the oppressor? If we are not free, let us, at least prove ourselves worthy of being so.³⁰

Even though O'Connell continually recited the litany of British oppression, he avoided creating the impression that the enemy could not be overcome. He, instead, argued that the government and its authorities were weak, dishonorable, or dishonest. Griffith claims that: ". . . he did not speak of ascendancy officials as if they were his superiors or even equals. He talked about them as if they were his inferiors in talent, fortune, and ability."³¹ O'Connell's own words certainly seem to justify this conclusion. Consistently throughout the Emancipation campaign, he avoided any statement which would appear deferential or respectful toward the British government. Thus, in 1824 he claimed that any reputable government would have granted Emancipation: "If there were honesty in England . . . emancipation would have been granted long ago; and there will be honesty in England again, as soon as they are in danger."³² The British, O'Connell claimed then, were both dishonest and cowardly.

Later in the campaign, O'Connell emphasized the treachery, the criminality, of British policy. In reference to the tithe provisions he proclaimed:

³⁰O'Connell, II, 202.

³¹Griffith, p. 189.

³²O'Connell, II, 304.

There is but one country capable of inflicting so complicated and treacherous a cruelty. For it has not occurred in France, nor yet in Spain Neither is Algiers nor Constantinople stained with oppression of this description. This pre-eminence belongs to England.³³

Obviously, to O'Connell anyway, any government which pursued such a policy was immoral; consequently, it could be successfully challenged by a group, such as the Catholic Association, which "acts from principle, and from principle only." With truth, reason, and justice supporting Emancipation, the British would have to succumb.

O'Connell also developed the weakness of the British government by deprecating British officials. He frequently called attention to their rhetorical inabilities, their religious intolerance, and their lack of sincerity and conviction. Stanley was "Scorpion Stanley," Lord Alvanley was "a bloated buffoon," the Duke of Wellington was a "stunted corporal." Others were described as "a mighty big liar," "a lineal descendant of the impenitent thief," "a contumelious cur," "a sow," and "a fellow whose visage would frighten a horse from its oats."³⁴

Perhaps the most frequent victim of O'Connell's derogatory capabilities was Sir Robert Peel who served as Chief Secretary of Ireland, Home Secretary, and ultimately Prime Minister of the British government. O'Connell was uninhibited in revealing his dislike and

³³ Sheridan, p. 65.

³⁴ William Edward Hartpole Lecky, Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland (3rd ed.; New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1903), II, 34.

lack of respect for Peel. For example, in 1827, O'Connell recalled that his participation in the framing of the 1825 Catholic Relief proposal had provoked objections from Peel. To the Catholics of Dublin, O'Connell exclaimed: "How a creature who could make such a childish point could be one of the statesmen of a nation, may be accounted for if that nation be in its dotage."³⁵

Lord Wellington also came under attack by O'Connell. He vilified the Prime Minister and military hero for disloyalty to his homeland. No honest, principled Irishman would ignore or oppose the interests of Ireland. Yet Lord Wellington consistently sacrificed Irish interests to the expediencies of British policy.

Undoubtedly, however, O'Connell's most unkind comment was directed against Lord Eldon, a member of the House of Lords notorious for his opposition to Catholic Emancipation. O'Connell claimed that Eldon was guilty of a charge more serious than bigotry--he was ugly: "He is the great, the permanent foe of our name and nation. Is it a source of pleasure or of sorrow that he exhibits a visage such as never before disfigured a creature having an immortal soul."³⁶ These invectives and deprecating descriptions were designed to demonstrate that British officials were not invincible. They could be defied, challenged, and defeated.

³⁵ Sheridan, p. 22.

³⁶ Sheridan, p. 26.

The Orange Lodges

The second major enemy identified by O'Connell was the Orange Lodges. He noted that these groups continually tormented, badgered, and provoked the Irish Catholics by malicious attacks.

Organized in the 1790's, the Orange Lodges sought to maintain Protestant Ascendancy--often by committing acts of singular cruelty. O'Connell assured that these outrages became public.³⁷

Noting that the ultimate object of the Orangemen was "blood and murder,"³⁸ O'Connell argued that these groups were a wicked conspiracy, organized to provoke and attack Irish Catholics. In an address to the Catholics of Tipperary in 1823, O'Connell warned:

. . . they seek to continue an unjust and odious monopoly, by shedding the blood of the people. These wicked and sanguinary men have subscribed large sums of money, for purposes which they, depraved though they be, are ashamed to avow; but which must be, amongst other bad intents, to hire spies and informers, and other wretches, who would mingle amongst the people, instigate them to acts of violence, fabricate false plots and conspiracies, and betray the people in every way to their enemies.³⁹

O'Connell's auditors were well aware of the violent acts committed by the Orange Lodges, but O'Connell went one step further. He noted that these marauders were agents of the British government. Such a claim was made in 1827, when O'Connell noted that even the most brutal factions in history were surpassed by the Orangemen:

³⁷Cusack, I, 313.

³⁸O'Connell, II, 304.

³⁹Huish, p. 493.

Oh! calumniated Algerines! Oh! slandered Moslems! You never invented so emaciating a system of domestic, village, and parish tyranny as the vile Orange faction, to whom England so long flung this ill-fated country as a spoil, and for devastation.⁴⁰

O'Connell argued, further, that the Orange Societies could not be placated. Their lack of honor prevented any sort of meaningful agreement:

The Orangemen accuse us of not keeping faith with heretics, but they have kept no faith with us, from the Treaty of Limerick to the dinner at the Mansion-house. They never made a treaty with us they did not violate, when it was their interest or pleasure to do so.⁴¹

This lack of honor, however, pointed to the weaknesses of the Orange Societies. In 1824, O'Connell emphasized these weaknesses: ". . . Orangemen are wholesale calumniators, and effect a strength they possess not; government, if it knew that, would despise them; and so would the people of Ireland if they were not unarmed."⁴² The Orangemen could be overcome; yet O'Connell, consistent in his opposition to violence, did not advocate forcible retaliation against Orange terrorism. Instead, he suggested unity among Irish Catholics as the only possible protection.

The Press

The third enemy suggested by O'Connell was the press. O'Connell viewed the press, largely controlled by the British government, as both deceitful and disrespectful. Referring to government-controlled

⁴⁰Sheridan, pp. 23-24.

⁴¹O'Connell, II, 300.

⁴²O'Connell, II, 304.

journalists as "a herd of renegades to defame the religion and character of Irishmen,"⁴³ he argued that the Emancipation movement could not hope to receive fair and accurate coverage from the Irish newspapers. In some of his strongest language, O'Connell referred to: ". . . the frantic ribaldry and scandal of the miscreant Mail and ruffian Star, . . . the abominable falsehood of the Courier, and the beastly calumnies of The Times and Morning Post."⁴⁴

As he did in regard to the Orange Lodges, O'Connell argued also, and certainly with more justification, that the Irish press was subsidized by the British government. In fact, even the London newspapers experienced this government pressure. His most precise statement of this argument came in 1824:

The paymasters of these detestable engines of discord seem latterly to have transferred their patronage to the hirelings of the London press. In Ireland the traffic in falsehood has been avowedly set up as a livelihood.⁴⁵

Finally, O'Connell made what must have been to the Irish people the most damning accusation: charitable contributions were being diverted by the government to bribe the press. As O'Connell put it, "The tithes of the Irish poor are going over rapidly to bribe the base press of London."⁴⁶

O'Connell's suggested response to the harassment of the press was the same as that to be applied to the Orange Societies. Conciliation was doomed. Violence was counter-productive. Instead, Irish

⁴³O'Connell, II, 431.

⁴⁴O'Connell, II, 430.

⁴⁵O'Connell, II, 431.

⁴⁶O'Connell, II, 431.

unity had to be cultivated: "Should we wait until the Orange press has created a ferment? No, we should exhibit a legal and unanimous combination."⁴⁷

Extremists

Even though the Irish Catholics were opposed by the British government, the Orange Societies, and the press, O'Connell did not advocate a forcible reaction. Instead, he maintained that political solutions were necessary. However, O'Connell went even further; he noted that extremists were simply another enemy to the Catholic cause.

O'Connell's abhorrence of violence became apparent in 1797. After reading William Godwin's Political Justice, he noted in his diary that a man's miseries can be traced inevitably to the government under which he lives. Yet, any physical assault on the oppressive system must be counter-productive--creating difficulties even more severe than those originally existing.⁴⁸

This opposition to violence reflected O'Connell's Christian background, as well as his observations of revolutionary trends in the outside world. But even more importantly, O'Connell's opposition to violence responded to the requirements of the immediate situation. The British were simply so powerful--in terms of position, arms, and money--that any frontal assault was doomed to failure.⁴⁹

⁴⁷O'Connell, II, 304.

⁴⁸Roche, pp. 73-77.

⁴⁹Roche, p. 99.

Thus, in identifying the enemy, O'Connell argued that extremists only retarded the Catholic effort. Those who rioted, burned, and murdered simply provided the authorities with a further excuse for continued oppression and harassment.

Rather than violate the laws, the Catholic Association and its members must adhere faithfully to them. In that way they would be immune from prosecution. The government would be rendered powerless: it would have no justification for interference.

O'Connell particularly emphasized the dangers of extremist tactics in 1827. As he reorganized the Catholic Association after the expiration of Goulburn's Act, O'Connell emphasized the absolute necessity of adherence to the law:

There is but one real enemy to Ireland, and that is the man who violates the law--one thing can alone injure the cause of civil liberty in Ireland, and that is, any violation of the law. Could I but persuade the Irish people of the great injury which they inflict on themselves . . . by a violation of the law, their physical force . . . would be united with an immense moral strength, and such a combination of powers would render it impossible for any species of misgovernment to continue in this country.⁵⁰

A second problem with lawless extremist reactions to oppression and harassment was that such tactics discouraged Protestant support. By illegal actions, the Irish Catholics alienated those Protestants who believed in civil liberties. In 1823, O'Connell noted that many Irish Protestants: ". . . are equally desirous with the Catholics themselves for the extension of the blessings of civil liberty, and

⁵⁰Sheridan, p. 1.

equally prepared to leave the corporate bigots to their fate."⁵¹

O'Connell, in developing the Protestant desire for the extension of civil liberty, argued that Protestants had often sought to cushion the effects of unjust laws. For example, they had avoided prosecuting Catholics who were responsible for collecting the tithe and cess.

Thus, in 1827, O'Connell observed:

Individual Protestants, nay, many, very many Protestants, were better than the laws. . . . In despite of clerical rapacity, many, very many, Irish Protestants were found, who generously and nobly refused to be the oppressors of their Catholic neighbors, or to lend their names to suits against them, for not collecting the parish cess when it was too oppressive and odious.⁵²

Since many Protestants sympathized with the aims of the Irish Catholics, O'Connell argued that caution in selecting methods was in order. Extremism which would alienate potential supporters must be avoided.

SUMMARY

O'Connell specified four groups in identifying the enemy of the Catholic Emancipation movement.

Oppression was charged against the British government which had adopted the policy of divide-and-conquer. This policy, he maintained, was the primary cause of Irish violence and instability. Further, the British government had imposed an unjustifiable responsibility on the Irish people--forcing them to support an alien church

⁵¹O'Connell, II, 203.

⁵²Sheridan, pp. 24-25.

and at the same time crippling the Irish Catholic Church. Thirdly, the British had ruthlessly trampled on Irish political rights. By requiring a sacrilegious oath of office, the British government refused to recognize the representative selected by the electors of County Clare.

The British, however, were not invulnerable. British policies were dishonest, cowardly, and criminal. British authorities were inept, intolerant, and without principle. Unsupported by reason or justice, the British policy and authorities could be challenged by a legal, righteous coalition.

The Orange Lodges represented a second major enemy. These groups sought to maintain the Protestant Ascendancy, with the support of the British government. Their tactics included murder, bribery, infiltration, and false accusation.

The Irish press, also with government support, sought to misrepresent the Emancipation movement. Irish, and sometimes British, newspapers maligned the Roman Catholic faith and sought to arouse the prejudice and bigotry latent in Ireland.

Extremists comprised the final enemy to the Catholic Emancipation movement. Their actions only harmed the Catholic position. Extremism provoked the British to further oppression and harassment. It alienated many Irish Protestants who sympathized with the principles of Catholic Emancipation. Rather than violate the law, Catholics should adhere to it. Thus, the British government would have no justification for interference.

Recognition should be given to the fact that the extremists represented a type of enemy unlike the others designated by O'Connell. The British government, Orangemen, and Irish press could not possibly be viewed as potential followers of the Emancipation movement. Their actions, in effect, provoked the movement. The extremists, however, were enemies in a different sense. They represented a faction within the Irish Catholic population, even though they tended to retard the progress of the Emancipation movement. Thus, by attacking a group of possible supporters, O'Connell probably abandoned any hope of persuading the extremists to modify their tactics. He apparently viewed the dangers of their association with the movement as outweighing the advantage of their added numbers.

O'Connell's identification of an enemy certainly seems to conform to the theoretical construct. He characterized the British government as a sinister coalition, with agents in the Established Church, the Orange Lodges, and the press.

His "enemy" was not clearly defined however. His references to "the British" were not necessarily applied to the entire British population or even to all government officials. O'Connell frequently expressed his appreciation of those British citizens and members of Parliament who gave support to the movement. Even his attacks on the "Orange faction" were not directed at Protestantism per se. Again O'Connell sought support where he could find it, and publicly acknowledged the necessity and desirability of enlisting Protestant support in the movement.

If O'Connell stretched the truth in certain instances, his audience seemed not to mind. He appealed to their prejudices and fears, and he helped them to identify the source of their grievances.

Chapter 4

THE DEVELOPMENT OF COHESIVENESS WITHIN THE CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION: A COMMON HERITAGE

INTRODUCTION

Even though identification of an enemy may serve to define a group by clarifying its opposite, the development of cohesiveness may require a more positive approach. To strengthen the cohesiveness of a group, agitators in general--and Daniel O'Connell in particular--must sometimes identify a common heritage shared by the members of the group. This chapter considers the theoretical rationale of the device and traces O'Connell's employment of religion, natural resources, and courage to develop the device.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The particular advantage to the agitator of identifying a common heritage is that the strategy appeals to one of man's basic needs, (the need to belong to a group. Sociability is as important a source of human motivation as self-interest.¹ As Coutu explains, "The very nature of the social process on the personic level compels man

¹Robert T. Oliver, The Psychology of Persuasive Speech (2nd ed.; New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1957), p. 59.

to identify with cultures, nations, . . . social classes, . . . [and] churches."²

The usual method of fulfilling this need is to align with others who share certain characteristics. As Keisler and Keisler note, "If people perceive some similarity with others . . . then they will tend to align themselves with those others."³

The advent of an agitation movement, however, intensifies the individual's need for an alliance. By challenging existing institutions, such a movement questions beliefs and denies authority. To replace the vacuum of ambiguity created by agitation, then, new group norms must be established.⁴ As Brandes explains the process:

One notable characteristic of the rhetoric of the first stage of a revolution stems from the revolutionary's need for identification, because in the process of divorcing himself from the images of the past, he welcomes new symbols to restore his security.⁵

These new images involve both beliefs and principles; they become a new tradition for defining and evaluating the individual's role and

²Walter Coutu, Emergent Human Nature (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), p. 119.

³Charles A. Keisler and Sara B. Keisler, Conformity (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1969), p. 28.

⁴Muzafer Sherif, The Psychology of Social Norms (New York: Octagon Books, 1965), p. 112.

⁵Paul D. Brandes, The Rhetoric of Revolt (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971), p. 4.

actions.⁶ Opinions and attitudes can be changed or intensified ". . . by creating new reference groups with which the individual can identify."⁷

The agitative movement, then, must supply sources of stability. New forms of authority must be recognized.⁸ But, commonly, strength is derived not from the novel, but from earlier, more glorious periods in the history of the group. Ethnic identification becomes centrally important,⁹ and some past epoch is idealized. A revivalistic emphasis, "exalting the traditions, accomplishments, ideals, mission, and valor"¹⁰ of the group, develops.

O'CONNELL'S IDENTIFICATION OF A COMMON HERITAGE

The agitation for Catholic Emancipation created the same type of vacuum in 1820-1830 Ireland. Until O'Connell organized his protest,

⁶Muzafer Sherif and Carolyn W. Sherif, An Outline of Social Psychology (rev. ed.; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956), p. 732.

⁷Eugene L. Hartley, "The Social Psychology of Opinion Formation," Public Opinion Quarterly, XIV (1950-1951), 674.

⁸Richard T. LaPiere, A Theory of Social Control (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1954), p. 550.

⁹Bernard Berelson and Gary A. Steiner, Human Behavior: An Inventory of Scientific Findings (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1964), p. 520.

¹⁰Walter Phelps Hall and William Stearns Davis, The Course of Europe Since Waterloo (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1941), p. 4.

most Irish Catholics accepted their grievances as inevitable.¹¹ They realized that petitions would be accepted and relief granted only when it was in the British interest to do so. They perceived no opportunity for prestige or professional success. They recognized their inability to defend themselves against the landlord, sheriff, tithe proctor, or middleman. Lecky claims the Catholics were:

. . . as broken in spirit as they were in fortune; [it was obvious] that they had adopted the tone of the weakest mendicants; that they seemed ever fearful of wearying the dominant caste by their importunity, and that they were utterly unmindful of their powers and their rights.¹²

Further, the Irishman rarely thought of himself as an Irishman. The concept of an Irish nation was vague and relatively unimportant.¹³ Instead, most Irishmen felt a strong attachment to the clan and the family.¹⁴

With his agitation, however, O'Connell challenged those assumptions. He questioned the authorities and roles which had been

¹¹James A. Reynolds, The Catholic Emancipation Crisis in Ireland, 1823-29 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), p. 64.

¹²William Edward Hartpole Lecky, Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland (3rd ed.; New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1903), II, 12.

¹³T. C. Luby, The Story of Ireland's Struggles for Self-Government (New York: Gay Brothers and Co., 1893), p. 5.

¹⁴John J. Horgan, "O'Connell--The Man," Daniel O'Connell: Nine Centenary Essays, ed. Michael Tierney (Dublin: Browne and Nolan, Ltd., 1949), p. 301.

accepted for so long by the Irish Catholics. In Brown's terms:

By his leadership and agitation he taught the Catholic people of Ireland the value of pride and even arrogance, encouraging them to abandon the craven slouch of Penal Times, and to combine in order to gain for themselves political power and social reforms.¹⁵

To replace the old order, O'Connell preached a new doctrine: reminding the Irish Catholics of the proud heritage which they shared. He made the Irishman aware of his national affiliation. He attempted to "arouse the peasantry to a national sense"¹⁶ and effectively "re-created national feeling in Ireland."¹⁷

To identify the common heritage, O'Connell relied on three themes: Irish religion, Irish natural resources, and Irish courage.

Irish Religion

O'Connell's emphasis on Irish religion as a part of a common heritage was most appropriate. The theme suggested permanence because of the long history of an Irish Catholic tradition. It recognized the stability of an association with a revered institution. Finally, the theme emphasized that the Catholic Association was guided by principle.

In developing the Irish religion as a theme, O'Connell argued

¹⁵ Thomas N. Brown, "Nationalism and the Irish Peasant, 1800-1848," Review of Politics, XV (October, 1953), 431.

¹⁶ Owen Dudley Edwards, "Ireland," Celtic Nationalism, eds. Owen Dudley Edwards and others (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 105.

¹⁷ Robert Dunlop, "O'Connell, Daniel," The Dictionary of National Biography (1917), XIV, 834.

that the Church was a righteous institution. He made numerous references to "our ancient, our holy Church." The Irishman could be proud of his affiliation with such an institution.

O'Connell's primary argument in relation to the Church, however, was that the Irish Catholic Church was powerful. O'Connell emphasized the strength of individual Catholics, frequently noting that they were motivated by principle and not by the prospects of material gain: "even our enemies concede to us that we act from principle, and from principle only."¹⁸ That principle, he explained, was civil and religious liberty. "Every religious sect should receive the ". . . same political immunity. . . . All we ask is that everybody should be left to his unbiased reason and judgment."¹⁹ After his election to the House of Commons, he claimed that the moral strength of the Irish Catholics had caused the success:

A sober, a moral, and a religious people, cannot continue slaves; they become too powerful for their oppressors; their moral strength exceeds their physical powers, and their progress towards prosperity, and liberty is in vain opposed²⁰

O'Connell also argued that the Roman Catholic Church as an institution was powerful. Its monuments and edifices were elaborate and its clergy above reproach.

¹⁸John O'Connell (ed.), Select Speeches of Daniel O'Connell (Dublin: James Duffy, 1868), II, 304.

¹⁹O'Connell, II, 305.

²⁰Robert Huish, The Memoirs Private and Political of Daniel O'Connell (London: W. Johnston, 1836), p. 663.

A representative statement of the argument that the Church possessed material strength was made in 1827, as O'Connell attacked the tithe system: "Our Catholic ancestors built churches to serve for them and their posterity, with splendid revenues to sustain them."²¹ He reminded his audience that: "You cannot stroll for a mile . . . without seeing the ruins of the ancient church of some parish or monastery."²²

In the same speech, O'Connell made his common reference to the contrast between the upright Catholic clergy and the leaders of the Irish Protestant sects. He characterized the latter as ". . . a married and heartless clergy, and . . . a profligate gentry, who controul that clergy"²³

Irish Natural Resources

The resources of Ireland was a second important theme in O'Connell's identification of a common heritage. As John Mitchell noted in the contemporary work, Introduction to the Jail Journal:

Our poor people were continually assured that they were the finest peasantry in the world. . . . They were told that their grass was

²¹James Sheridan, A Full Report of the Speech of Daniel O'Connell on the Subject of Church Rates and Parish Cess as Delivered at a Meeting of Catholics on Wednesday, the 10th of January, 1827 (Dublin: Richard Coyne, 1827), p. 5.

²²Sheridan, p. 5.

²³Sheridan, p. 7.

greener, their women fairer, their mountains higher, their valleys lower, than those of any other lands²⁴

Although Mitchell rather sarcastically noted the emphasis on Irish resources, he ignored the value of the theme. To a people such as the Irish, the land was a basic source of livelihood. Consequently, most Irishmen felt a strong attachment to the Irish soil and resources.

In developing the theme, O'Connell argued simply that Ireland was one of the most, if not the most, richly endowed nations of the world. He consistently repeated the argument--changing its substance little during the course of the agitation.

Two examples should clarify the argument and demonstrate the repetition. In the May 10, 1823, speech to a Catholic aggregate meeting in Dublin, O'Connell proclaimed:

We live in the richest country in the universe . . . admirably situated for a ready intercourse with all parts of the world; our coast every where indented with excellent harbors, affording shelter against every wind; its soil fertile to a proverb, producing ten times more than could be consumed by ten times its population.²⁵

Six years later, in the May 25, 1829, address to the electors of County Clare, the thrust of the argument was identical. Even though O'Connell referred to a wider variety of resources, his argument was still that Ireland was one of the most bountiful nations of the world:

²⁴Cited in James Carty (ed.), Ireland from Grattan's Parliament to the Great Famine (1783-1850), A Documentary Record (3rd ed.; Dublin: C. J. Fallon, 1957), p. 150.

²⁵O'Connell, II, 195.

The rich teeming soil of Ireland--her ever-verdant plains--her sunny hills and rich meadows--the luxuriant limestone districts, and the hardy and steady fertility of her gravelly mixture of soil, render her the fit nursing mother of her neighbouring artisans and operators by her superabundance of food.²⁶

Nor did O'Connell neglect another important natural resource--the Irish intellect. He frequently emphasized the mental capabilities of Ireland's inhabitants. Thus, in 1823 he described Ireland as:

. . . a country possessing every natural capability of being great and happy--a country remarkable for the ready intellect and mental qualifications of her sons, which improved by the blessings of a sound education, might be rendered so eminently conducive to her prosperity and lasting tranquility.²⁷

In this resource, as in others, Ireland was superior to any other country. O'Connell developed the comparison of intellect by referring to the Irish response to the English educational system:

The Lancreastian system of education had been founded in England for educating children up to the age of fourteen years; it was introduced into Ireland, and it was found that here the children had, by the eighth year, consumed the entire of the system.²⁸

Irish Courage

The final theme employed by O'Connell to identify a common heritage was the theme of Irish courage. Virtually instructing his listeners in Irish history, O'Connell sought to remind them of the strength and valor of their forefathers. His implication, of course, was that any lesser sacrifice for Ireland--and more specifically, for the Catholic Association--would be unworthy of Irishmen.

²⁶Huish, p. 661.

²⁷O'Connell, II, 195.

²⁸O'Connell, II, 195.

As Griffith notes, O'Connell was rather unique in his emphasis on Irish history:

His historical references were to Irish history, which had never seemed important to Grattan, Burke, Sheridan, Flood, Curran or any other previous Irish orator, perhaps because they were representatives of the ascendancy and hence predisposed by religious and cultural ties to favor the landlord aristocracy.²⁹

In developing the theme of Irish courage, O'Connell argued that previous generations of Irish had never avoided their responsibilities. He sometimes referred to "our ancient chieftains,"³⁰ the medieval lords of Irish estates, as he did in his victory speech immediately after the Clare election. In regard to the 1690 effort of the Irish to restore James II to the English throne, O'Connell reminded his audience that even the Irish women had fought courageously. During the seige of Limerick:

. . . the women threw themselves into the breach, and checked the assailants. King William saw that, and slunk away; he took the city the next year; but he obtained possession on the faith of treaties, which he afterwards violated. How otherwise than by a violation of pledge could he have conquered Limerick, protected, as it then was, by the heroine bravery of its defenders.³¹

More commonly, however, O'Connell referred to more recent examples of Irish courage. In 1823 he reminded his listeners that:

²⁹ Francis J. Griffith, "The Speaking of Daniel O'Connell on Catholic Emancipation: the Oratory of an Agitator" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Columbia University, 1958), p. 250.

³⁰ Michael MacDonagh, The Life of Daniel O'Connell (London: Cassell and Company, 1903), p. 165.

³¹ O'Connell, II, 305.

"There was not an army in Europe but was led by Irishmen; there is not a corner of the world but resounds with their achievements."³² Further expounding on the reputation which Irish soldiers enjoyed, O'Connell noted that: "When Maria Theresa founded a new order of honour and merit, out of the first fifty who received the decoration, no less than forty-two were Irishmen."³³

In a later speech, O'Connell presented a more immediate and specific example. He referred to the Irish soldiers who had fallen for Britain in the Napoleonic Wars: "There is not one who hears me who did not mourn in affection, in dress, or in heart, for some relative or friend who fell in the field of battle."³⁴

O'Connell did not treat Irish courage, however, solely as a thing of the past. He argued that his immediate listeners were being challenged to exhibit the same sense of honor. In 1823, he phrased the challenge most explicitly:

The Catholics are called upon, by present circumstances to do something for their country, unless they are content to be abandoned by their friends,³⁵ or trampled down by the infuriated rancour of a vile faction.

From O'Connell's speeches, anyway, it is apparent that he assumed this challenge would be accepted by his contemporaries. He characterized them as follows:

Standing . . . as men, upon the same ground with their enemies-- equal to them in talents, in courage, in physical and intellectual

³²O'Connell, II, 196.

³³O'Connell, II, 196.

³⁴O'Connell, II, 298.

³⁵O'Connell, II, 195.

capacity, attached to the constitution of the country, and anxious for the preservation of the throne³⁶

Finally, in developing the theme of Irish courage, O'Connell argued that failure to equal the traditional Irish courage would bring disgrace to Ireland. He described the situation as threatening the honor of previous Irish generations: "Catholics can not endure being trampled on, much less can they suffer the graves of their parents to be trodden irreverently."³⁷ Irish Catholics had to respond to the call of the Catholic Association and demonstrate their courage. In an early speech to his followers, he exclaimed:

Let us never consent that she [the Irish Catholic Church] should be made the hireling of the ministry. Our forefathers would have died, nay, they perished in hopeless slavery rather than consent to such degradation.

Let us rest rather upon the barrier where they expired, or go back into slavery rather than forward into irreligion and disgrace!³⁸

SUMMARY

O'Connell's identification of a common heritage parallels the theoretical rationale of that device. Fulfilling to some extent the human need to identify with a group, O'Connell suggested several: the Irish Roman Catholic Church, the group of those who respected Ireland's natural resources, and the group of those who had somehow made sacrifices for Ireland.

³⁶O'Connell, II, 437.

³⁷O'Connell, II, 304.

³⁸O'Connell, II, 278.

Further, O'Connell's identification of a common heritage supplied new values and roles for the Irishman. Rather than accepting the British view of the Irishman as irresponsible and degenerate, the Irish Catholic could now feel moral and righteous. Previously forced to humble himself to officials of the government and Established Church, the Irishman could feel pride in his small patch of farmland and in his own courage. Having previously assumed that no one expected anything from him--except perhaps his rent and tithe contributions, the Irishman now felt required to meet the standards set by his ancestors.

O'Connell developed three themes in identifying a common heritage for his followers.

The Irish religion was treated as an integral part of the Irish heritage. Historically, the Catholic Church had played an important role in Irish history for centuries. O'Connell emphasized the morality interjected into the Irish heritage by the Catholic Church. Further, he argued that individual Catholics were morally strong; the institution, materially strong.

Irish natural resources provided the second theme in the identification of a common heritage. Recognizing the individual Irishman's attachment to the soil, O'Connell emphasized the wealth of Irish resources. To develop the theme, he argued that Ireland was one of the most richly endowed nations of the world. Further, O'Connell emphasized the superiority of the Irish intellect.

Finally, O'Connell developed the theme of Irish courage to further identify a common heritage. He referred constantly to Irish history to instill a pride in Ireland's past. In developing the theme, O'Connell argued that previous generations of Irish had borne their responsibilities to defend Ireland. Faced with a similar threat, the Irishman of the 1820's could behave no differently. It was incumbent upon him to display the traditional Irish courage; otherwise Ireland would be disgraced.

Two factors seem to justify O'Connell's failure to attempt to idealize a specific social class. First, his audiences represented disparate social classes--whose interests tended not to coincide. Secondly, the prevailing economic conditions and legal restrictions prevented social mobility. It would have been ridiculous for O'Connell to idealize the Irish middle-class, for example: the gentry tended to despise them and the peasantry had little opportunity to advance to that status.

Chapter 5

THE DEVELOPMENT OF COHESIVENESS WITHIN THE CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION: THE HERD-INSTINCT

INTRODUCTION

A final tactic employed by Daniel O'Connell in establishing group cohesiveness within the Catholic Association was the development of the herd-instinct. This chapter examines the theoretical framework of the device, detailing its values to the followers in a movement. Secondly, the arguments and themes used by O'Connell to develop the herd-instinct--precedent, support, and leadership--are detailed.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The development of the herd-instinct assumes the existence of a human tendency to prefer conformity and gregariousness. A type of "everybody's doing it" appeal,¹ the thrust of the tactic is to provide the members of a movement models which they can imitate.² Previously successful movements and sympathetic reactions to the movement are cited to create the impression that the movement has support and can succeed.

¹Charles A. Siepmann, "Propaganda Techniques," Voice of the People: Readings in Public Opinion and Propaganda, eds. Reo M. Christenson and Robert O. McWilliams (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), p. 338.

²Wallace C. Fotheringham, Perspectives on Persuasion (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1966), p. 34.

The first advantage of the strategy is that it provides an indispensable element of hope--a belief that the movement really can succeed. If the morale of group members is low, the models provided can alleviate that condition.³ As Toch suggests, "For a person to be led to join a social movement . . . at the very least, he must feel that the status quo is not inevitable, and that change is conceivable."⁴

Secondly, the development of the herd-instinct provides direction for the members of the movement. By suggesting models worthy of imitation, the agitator provides a channel for the frustrations of his listeners. It is not sufficient that the followers of a movement feel dissatisfaction with their conditions; they must express that frustration in a manner which produces results. The agitator's models supply examples of the methods for accomplishing that expression.

Finally, the strategy of developing the herd-instinct reduces the element of risk for the followers of a movement. Since an agitation challenges the values and institutions of the status quo, retaliation is a very real threat. This danger, however, is minimized if comparisons are drawn between the agitation and previously successful ones. The recognition that others, too, give support to the movement dissipates any feeling of isolation harbored by the followers--further reducing the sense of risk involved.

³Alexander L. George, Propaganda Analysis (Evanston: Row, Peterson and Co., 1959), p. 138.

⁴Hans Toch, The Social Psychology of Social Movements (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1965), p. 11.

O'CONNELL'S DEVELOPMENT OF THE HERD-INSTINCT

The situation in Ireland in the 1820's certainly seemed to force O'Connell to employ the strategy of developing the herd-instinct. Previous scattered agrarian revolts had never produced lasting results. In fact, as Lecky points out, "The Roman Catholics had hitherto shown themselves absolutely incompetent to take any decisive part in politics."⁵

By offering himself as a leader and providing examples of successful agitations, O'Connell disparaged the failures of the past and suggested an alternative course of action. His Catholic Association served:

. . . to replace the secret societies of terror with an organization of such overwhelming size and perfect discipline that it would once and for all silence the conviction that the Irish could not rule themselves by presenting the English with what amounted to a de facto government.⁶

Finally, the Association provided the Irish with an established group of confederates. Since a large number of people were involved in the movement, the danger of reprisal to a given individual was minimized and, in any case, defense and support from other followers could be anticipated.

⁵William Edward Hartpole Lecky, Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland (3rd ed.; New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1903), II, 18.

⁶William Irwin Thompson, The Imagination of an Insurrection (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 34.

In developing the herd-instinct, O'Connell relied on three themes: precedent, support, and leadership.

Precedent

Precedent, or the idea that previous challenges to tyranny had succeeded, was most appropriate during the period 1823-1829. The American Revolution, with its successful assault on British tyranny, was still remembered by many of O'Connell's listeners. The French Revolution was even more immediate. These two events provided O'Connell with the bulk of his examples in developing the theme of precedent.

In regard to the American example, O'Connell argued that the situation in the colonies had been comparable to that being experienced in Ireland. The English had attempted to impose unjust restrictions on the colonists. In fact, O'Connell claimed that Britain's successful repression of Ireland had induced Parliament to attempt the same approach to her colonies:

In the experimental despotism which England fastened on Ireland, her mighty appetite for slavery was not gorged; and because our unfortunate country was proximate, and polite in the endurance of the burden so mercilessly imposed, it was inferred that slavery could be safely extended far and wide, and an attempt was therefore made on the American colonies.

The Americans, O'Connell argued, did not tolerate intrusions upon their rights. Instead the colonists protested and successfully defended their liberties:

⁷John O'Connell (ed.), Select Speeches of Daniel O'Connell (Dublin: James Duffy, 1868), II, 296.

. . . the Americans--the great God of Heaven bless them for it!--shook off the thralldom which a parliament, representing an inglorious and ignominious funding system, had sought to impose.⁸

Thus, O'Connell argued that the American Revolution intensified the Irish awareness of their predicament, while at the same time providing a model for Irish defiance:

The independence of America was the first blush of dawn to the Catholics, after a long and dreary night of degradation. Seventy years had they been in a land of bondage; but like the chosen people. Providence had watched over, and the progress of events had liberated them, and redeemed them for the service of their country.⁹

O'Connell, in developing the theme of precedent, also referred to the French Revolution. His approval of that challenge to repression was not total, however. O'Connell seemed to feel that the Irish must learn from both the strengths and weaknesses of that revolt. Ireland could draw inspiration from the French success, but she should not slavishly imitate the French methods.

O'Connell's tempered approval of the French Revolution was influenced by his opposition to violence. Throughout his life, O'Connell adopted the position that the ends of civil and political freedom did not justify the means of violence. Thus, O'Connell could not countenance the immoderate slaughter and destruction which occurred--and to which he was an eye-witness--during the French Revolution.

⁸O'Connell, II, 296.

⁹O'Connell, II, 297.

That event was tainted especially by the revolutionaries' attacks on the Church. With the overthrow of the monarchy, the French republicans closed Catholic schools and churches and expelled Catholic priests from the country. O'Connell simply could not countenance such policies, which were both violent and irreligious.

But expediency also dictated that O'Connell give only qualified support for the French Revolution. Reactions to that event were definite, but polarized. Anyone who either supported or opposed the French actions was likely to provoke hostility from a major segment of his audience. Consequently, O'Connell steered a middle-of-the-road course: he cited the French example to instill belief in the probable success of his methods but cautioned against the excesses used to produce French success.

O'Connell's most cogent statement of this position came in his speech to an aggregate assembly of Catholics on February 24, 1824:

Next came the French Revolution. That Revolution produced some good, but it was not without alloy: it was mingled with much impiety. Liberty and religion were first separated. The experiment was a "bad one. . . . The people of France should have remembered that Liberty is the first instinct of a generous religion. . . . The French, in folly, set religion at nought, they profaned the sanctuary, and they suffered for it. And if they are now settling into quiet, it is because they are settling into religion.¹⁰

To further develop the theme of precedent, O'Connell argued that the time was ripe for an Irish Catholic challenge to repressive British policies. He suggested that the efforts and attitudes of

¹⁰O'Connell, II, 297-298.

other nations indicated sympathy with the Irish Catholic position.

Thus, in 1824 he referred to other European movements seeking political and religious liberty:

Look to Russia sending a force of 200,000 men against Constantinople, and thus breaking up the holy alliance. Look to Greece, struggling for freedom, look to Spain, look to Portugal. In those countries we see the inquisition and the tithe system abolished.¹¹

In a later address which provoked an attempted government prosecution, O'Connell suggested other movements similar in philosophy to that of the Catholic Association. These movement's successes, he argued, could inspire his followers:

I hope Ireland will be restored to her rights; but if that day should arrive--if she were driven mad by persecution, I wish that a new Bolivar might arise--that the spirit of the Greeks and of the South Americans might animate the people of Ireland!¹²

Support

The second theme employed in the development of the herd-instinct was the theme of support. To enhance his followers' conception of the desirability of allying with the Catholic Association, O'Connell emphasized that many varied individuals and groups had endorsed the Association.

In developing the theme of support, O'Connell argued first that the Irish commitment to the Association and its goal of Catholic Emancipation was virtually unanimous. O'Connell even went so far as

¹¹O'Connell, II, 160.

¹²M. F. Cusack, The Liberator: His Life and Times, Political and Social (Kenmare Publications, n. d.), II, 498.

to assert that the British populace, if not the British government, sympathized with the Association. In fact, he frequently acknowledged that his purpose was to develop "a holy alliance between Catholic and Protestant--between Englishman and Irishman."¹³

Even as early as 1824, O'Connell predicted that Emancipation was inevitable. One rationale suggested for this prediction was the support given to the movement by Irishmen of all denominations:

We really are to be emancipated I can perceive it in the intellect, and the firmness, and the glorious unanimity, which are now exhibited by the Catholic millions of Ireland. I perceive it in the union that exists between the Catholics and so great and so good a portion of the Protestants of the land.¹⁴

As the Emancipation movement progressed, O'Connell perceived support from an ever-widening range of groups. Nor was O'Connell unjustified in these claims. Even financial support for the Association poured in from many countries, particularly America where many Irish emigrants had settled.

Finally, near the end of the Emancipation agitation, O'Connell argued that world-wide support had been given to the efforts of the Irish Catholics. As he campaigned for the right to represent the County of Clare in the House of Commons, O'Connell observed that Parliament's refusal to seat a Catholic would provoke a world-wide censure:

The discussion which the attempt to exclude your representative must excite, will create a sensation all over Europe, and produce such a burst of contemptuous indignation against British bigotry

¹³O'Connell, II, 433.

¹⁴O'Connell, II, 430.

in every enlightened country in the world, that the voice of all the great and good in England, Scotland, and Ireland, being joined to the universal shout of the nations of the earth, will overpower any opposition.¹⁵

Leadership

The final theme employed by O'Connell to develop the herd-instinct was the theme of leadership. By emphasizing the capabilities of certain members of the Catholic Association, O'Connell provided models with which his followers could immediately identify.

The theme of leadership was developed, first of all, by emphasizing the contributions of the Catholic priests to the movement. Because many priests weekly instructed their parishioners in Association doctrines and urged them to contribute to the Catholic Rent, the priests provided the most immediate contact with the Association.

To enhance an almost unfaltering respect for the priests, O'Connell argued that they were talented and virtuous. He spoke frequently of the "merits of the Catholic clergy"¹⁶ and of "their splendid talents and their profound learning."¹⁷

" Developing this argument with a specific example, O'Connell emphasized the characteristics of the Jesuit priests. This group, he argued, had always been:

¹⁵Cusack, II, 544.

¹⁶O'Connell, II, 437.

¹⁷O'Connell, II, 437.

. . . the most enlightened in every age since their original formation. The tuition of the youth of Europe had been committed to them, and they had acquitted themselves nobly. There was no subject of science or elegant literature which they had not touched, and they certainly improved and adorned every subject on which they had written.¹⁸

But even more importantly, the Irish Catholic priests had used their endowments for the benefit of Emancipation. O'Connell claimed that they had exhibited:

. . . eloquence which Demosthenes would admire, but could not imitate; with the reasoning of Locke, and the sublimity of Burke, they combined all the purity, the modesty and the humility of priestly character . . . They proved that God had not forsaken the cause of poor Ireland.¹⁹

In developing the theme of leadership, O'Connell did not restrict his references to the Irish Catholic priesthood. Instead, he repeatedly emphasized his own dedication to the movement. O'Connell argued that throughout his life he had unswervingly devoted himself to the Catholic Association. Thus, as early as 1824, O'Connell described himself as a "humble, but ardent and faithful Irishman"²⁰ who had contributed "twenty-three years' exertions in his country's cause."²¹

Much later, in 1828, O'Connell repeated the argument that as a leader of the movement, he had devoted his life to Catholic Emancipation. In a speech delivered in June of that year, he described himself as:

¹⁸O'Connell, II, 301.

¹⁹O'Connell, II, 431.

²⁰O'Connell, II, 204.

²¹O'Connell, II, 204.

. . . one who has devoted his early life to your cause, who has consumed his manhood in a struggle for your liberties, and who has ever lived, and is ready to die for the integrity, the honour, the purity, of the Catholic faith, and the promotion of Irish freedom and happiness.²²

To lend further impact to this argument, O'Connell relied upon the rhetorical question. He challenged his audience to consider:

Who shall repay me for the years of my buoyant youth and cheerful manhood? Who shall repay me for the lost opportunities of acquiring professional celebrity and for the wealth which such distinctions would ensure?²³

On a less abstract level, O'Connell frequently described his activities in pursuit of Catholic Emancipation. He claimed to have devoted at least several hours to the cause of Emancipation each day, even when the demands of his legal practice were most pressing. He noted that often the responsibility for forwarding the movement had been solely his. And he repeatedly reminded his audience that he had received no remuneration for his efforts.²⁴

SUMMARY

O'Connell relied on three themes in developing the herd-instinct. Faced with an audience whose political efforts had heretofore been indecisive, he provided them with models by stressing precedent, support, and leadership.

In developing the theme of precedent, O'Connell argued that in a similar predicament the Americans had overcome British repression.

²²Cusack, II, 516.

²³Lecky, II, 112.

²⁴Lecky, II, 111.

He also cited the French Revolution as a successful, if not non-violent, revolt against tyranny. Finally, O'Connell argued that world opinion was conducive to a successful Irish effort. He cited the actions and attitudes of Russia, Greece, Spain, Portugal, and South America to convince his audiences that the time was ripe for an Irish Catholic challenge to repressive British policies.

The theme of support served to reduce the feelings of isolation and risk experienced by O'Connell's followers. He argued that the Irish populace was virtually unanimous in its agreement with the Catholic Association's aims. Even the British people--if not the British government--had recognized the validity of the Irish Catholic claims. Finally, O'Connell claimed that every righteous nation in the world indignantly opposed Britain's Irish-Catholic policy and would assist in the political effort to reverse that policy.

O'Connell's theme of leadership served to provide his followers with more immediate models to imitate. He pointed to the leadership provided by the Irish Catholic priests. These talented, educated, skilled individuals had demonstrated their attachment to the Catholic cause. Secondly, O'Connell referred to his own efforts on behalf of the movement. He reminded his followers of his uninterrupted dedication to the attainment of Emancipation--even when others had abdicated their responsibilities. He emphasized his own sacrifices to the Association--in terms of time, prestige, and monetary reward. And he claimed that he was even prepared to offer his life for the cause of Catholic Emancipation.

O'Connell's development of a herd-instinct appears to parallel the theoretical framework of that strategy. His arguments and examples provided a world-wide herd, as it were, with which his listeners could band, imitate, and if necessary, conform. By emphasizing the successes of recent challenges to tyranny--including British tyranny, O'Connell implied that repression was not necessary or inevitable. He attempted to leave his followers no reason to fear that they would fail. Finally, by references to the priests and to himself, O'Connell suggested a course of action to his followers. Dedication and a willingness to sacrifice were espoused as the essential characteristics of anyone who hoped to assist the movement.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

As the Catholic Association developed, numerous factors within the Irish Catholic community impeded the development of cohesiveness. The members of the upper-class were extremely conservative, fearing the strategies proposed by members of the middle-class and abhorring the violent methods adopted by the peasantry.

The middle-class focused its efforts on the political restrictions of the Penal Laws--disabilities which only tangentially affected the other segments of the Irish Catholic population. Members of the middle-class, by serving as tithe proctors and middle-men, sometimes appeared to profit from the very system which oppressed the peasants.

The lower-class, which formed the bulk of the Irish Catholic population, was primarily concerned with poverty and related problems. The members of this class relied on violent tactics to protest their situation, unmindful of political strategies and their potential political power. They viewed efforts to achieve Catholic Emancipation as irrelevant to their needs and doomed to failure.

The policies of the British government served further to impede the development of cohesiveness within the Catholic Association. The British, in return for Emancipation, demanded concessions which heightened disagreements among the Irish Catholics. Catholic organizations were outlawed, and their activities excluded from the press. At the same time, provisions of the Penal Laws were repealed, men

sympathetic to Emancipation held offices in the Irish government, and proponents of Emancipation spoke out in Parliament.

Recognizing the necessity of cohesiveness--particularly in a non-violent agitation, O'Connell employed rhetorical devices which furthered that objective--identification of the enemy, identification of a common heritage, and development of the herd-instinct.

He identified an ambiguous and sinister coalition which obstructed the rights of the Irish Catholics. This enemy, and not God, was responsible for the Irish Catholic's predicament. The British government sought to create disunity within the Irish Catholic population. It forced them to support the Established Church while crippling the Irish Catholic Church. It restricted the political rights of Irish Catholics and refused to seat their elected representative. These policies were dishonest and criminal. The British officials were inept, intolerant, and without principle. O'Connell noted that the Orange Lodges--with the support of the British government--sought to maintain the Protestant Ascendancy. Their violent tactics included murder, bribery, infiltration, and false accusation. The Irish press, and ultimately the British press, were influenced by the government to misrepresent the Emancipation movement. These newspapers, O'Connell claimed, maligned the Roman Catholic faith and sought to arouse the people to hatred of the Irish Catholics. Finally, extremists harmed the Catholic position by provoking the British government and alienating many Irish Protestants. To overcome this multiple enemy, O'Connell instructed his followers to unite and adhere to the law.

In identifying a common heritage, O'Connell provided his listeners certain groups with which they could feel affiliated. He first stressed the Irish religion, noting that the Irish Catholic Church was materially strong; its members morally strong. Irish natural resources provided another element of the common heritage. O'Connell sought to instill pride in the superiority of Ireland's wealth and intellectual capabilities. Irish courage provided a third facet of the common heritage. Traditionally, Irishmen had been courageous in their defense of Ireland. In a similar situation, O'Connell argued, his contemporaries could do no less. Failure to respond to the challenge would bring disgrace.

To develop the herd-instinct, O'Connell provided his followers with a variety of models. By developing the theme of precedent, O'Connell demonstrated to his audiences that tyranny could be defeated: the Americans and French had already done so. By stressing the support which Catholic Emancipation received, O'Connell minimized the degree of risk threatening his followers. The Irish, the British people, and the righteous nations of the world provided a large group of allies in the Emancipation movement. Finally, by stressing the leadership which he and the Catholic priests provided, O'Connell supplied his followers with a set of models immediately available.

Because O'Connell's aggregate audiences contained all three of the Irish socio-economic classes, it is impossible to determine conclusively which of O'Connell's arguments and themes were directed at a specific group. Nevertheless, his arguments and themes did respond to the basic concerns of his listeners.

For example, to the members of the nobility who abhorred the violence of the lower-class, O'Connell's opposition to extremism would have been appealing. Also, his development of the theme of precedent--as he expressed his disapproval of the French experience--conformed to their attitude. Finally, he noted that it was the British government--and not the Irish peasantry--which provoked the violence prevalent in Ireland. However, O'Connell's themes further served to allay the nobility's fears of provoking the British. To a group conscious of its past such as the nobility, the history of Irish courage would be a particularly powerful theme. And the themes of precedent and support would further reduce the fear of British retaliation.

For the members of the middle-class, the purpose of the Catholic Association responded directly to their interests. Thus, less attention needed to be given to insure their commitment to the movement. Nevertheless, by identifying the British government as an agency which trampled on the Irishman's political rights, O'Connell intensified their sense of injustice and their attachment to the cause. Secondly, O'Connell provided for the middle-class a rationalization for the fact that they sometimes served as tithe proctors and middle-men. He noted that these roles were forced upon the middle-class--by the British government, the Established Church, and the Penal Laws.

O'Connell placed by far the most emphasis on appeals to the lower-class. He reminded the peasants that the British government

contributed to their poverty by maintaining the Ascendancy. The British government, not the middle-class, was responsible for the oppression by the tithe proctor, the middle-man, and the landlord. O'Connell sought to give the peasants encouragement by noting that the violence and unrest in Ireland was the result of the British attempt to arouse disunity in Ireland. Rather than employ extremist tactics, the peasantry should adopt political methods. O'Connell instructed them in political tactics by developing the theme of leadership; and he assured them of the success of political tactics by stressing precedent and support.

To overcome the apathy of the lower-class, O'Connell emphasized the Irish religion and Irish natural resources. These themes emphasized that the Irishman did have valuable institutions to protect. But more importantly, they gave the peasant a sense of righteousness, strength, and superiority. Finally, the Irish peasant was challenged to emulate the courage of his ancestors and assured that he would have support in so doing.

To the Protestants, O'Connell explicitly appealed for support. He explained to them that the Irish press and the Orange Lodges sought to malign the Emancipation movement and the Catholic religion. Violence was the fault of the British government, not the members of the Association. The individual Protestant could be assured that his sympathy with the movement was not unique. Irish Protestants had often attempted to mitigate the effect of the Penal Laws, and the people of Britain and other righteous nations shared their sympathy with the Catholic cause.

From the preceding chapters, it is apparent that throughout the agitation O'Connell did not significantly change the substance of his appeals. This practice reflects his belief that constant repetition is necessary in politics. Since these arguments and themes contributed to O'Connell's aims of Irish unity and security, he expounded them over and over again. Nevertheless, when new situations arose--when the British government, in his eyes, was guilty of a new treachery, O'Connell made the new oppression known to his listeners. As he instructed his audiences in the cause of their predicament, in their strength, and in their inevitable success, O'Connell availed himself of any new examples available. This tactic is particularly notable in O'Connell's identification of the enemy.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study has relied on a model consisting of three strategies for developing group cohesiveness. Such a model has the advantages of providing perspective and permitting classification. However, such a model is invariably artificial--it tends to ignore the relationships among the various parts. Thus it should be recognized that the strategies employed to develop group cohesiveness are mutually reinforcing.

For example, as O'Connell identified the common heritage, he noted the strength of the Irish religion and the abundance of Irish resources. Yet, his listeners knew that the Catholic churches were in ruins and that many suffered extreme poverty. The cause of these

problems must be the British government and the Established Church. Thus, by identifying the common heritage, O'Connell allowed his audiences to draw further inferences in the identification of the enemy. Secondly, O'Connell's emphasis on the leadership provided by the priests served also to strengthen the concept of the righteousness and power of the Irish religion. And the emphasis on the righteousness of the Catholic Church would make the Irish press and the Orange Lodges--who continually attacked that religion--all the more detestable.

As a final example, the themes of courage and precedent would also tend to support each other. Irish courage would tend to instill in the Irishman a sense of his own strength, while precedent would assure him that his courage would not be wasted. Even though the Irishman previously had not been particularly successful, tyranny could be overcome.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Numerous studies are yet to be completed in regard to group cohesiveness or Daniel O'Connell. The strategies of contemporary agitators to develop group cohesiveness should be examined. The attempts of modern agitators to enlist support--or at least tolerance--from "outsiders" provide ample cases for consideration.

Secondly, the non-verbal means of achieving group cohesiveness deserve attention. These elements of persuasion have for too long been neglected or disregarded.

Finally, useful generalizations might be derived from a comparison of O'Connell's strategies in the Emancipation and Repeal movements--one successful in achieving cohesiveness, the other unsuccessful. O'Connell was one of the first to recognize the potentials of the masses in exerting political leverage. Consequently, his successes and his failures should provide a wealth of valuable insights.

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