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Protestant-Catholic Conflict from the Reformation to the Twenty-First Century

This book takes a fresh look at the roots and implications of the enduring major historic fissure in Western Christianity, which has had profound implications for culture, social life, politics and international relations across five centuries. It will be a central outcome from John Wolffe's project 'Protestant-Catholic Conflict: Historical Legacies and Contemporary Realities' funded by the AHRC and ESRC under the programme 'Global Uncertainties: Security for all in a changing world'. A pivotal objective of the book is to present expertly informed historical research in a manner that relates meaningfully to contemporary and cross-disciplinary concerns. In particular it is intended that new insights into the historic dynamics of Protestant-Catholic conflict will not only illuminate present-day contexts (such as Northern Ireland and the United States) where such polarities persist, but will also suggest instructive comparisons for approaching other seemingly entrenched conflicts in which religion is implicated, such as the perceived 'clash of civilizations' between Christianity and Islam, and the Palestine-Israel problem.

The following core questions will be addressed:
- Under what specific circumstances have underlying differences in religious belief led to insecurity and conflict, both within and between nations?
- What were the actual roles of religious belief in the development of 'Catholic' and 'Protestant' as tribal and political categories?
- How have historic conflicts of this kind been perpetuated, reactivated, and alleviated?
- How far is it possible to identify common characteristics of Protestant-Catholic conflict that transcend the specificities of particular geographical and historical contexts?
- What has been the role of nation states and governments in inciting, countenancing and mitigating anti-Catholic conflict?
- What insights can be applied to the better understanding and resolution of religiously-inspired conflicts in the contemporary world?

1. Introduction: Prof John Wolffe, The Open University
This substantial introduction explains and rationalises the scope and approach of the book, particularly in presenting Protestant-Catholic tensions as a religio-cultural-social fissure of enduring significance, and in establishing the context of case studies. The value of the *longue durée* is advocated as a counterweight to the contemporary preoccupations of late modernists and social scientists. The core questions as outlined above are highlighted. There is a selective survey of existing academic literature on Protestant-Catholic conflict, which views in both in terms of anti-Catholicism (and much less often anti-Protestantism) and in terms of actual or metaphorical religious warfare. The literature survey also draws out differences between various national contexts while advocating the value of a comparative approach.

The subsequent chapters are then introduced in a framework that sets out the overarching historical and analytical framework of the book. Key points made include
- The fluctuating nature of Protestant-Catholic conflict across time and place; in particular a pattern of resurgence in the nineteenth century after a relative lull (except in Britain) in the eighteenth.
- Emphasis on the variety and complexity of forms of Protestant-Catholic conflict and the importance of avoiding the imposition of anachronistic or stereotyped models;

- A key distinction between foundational events that have resonated across generations, and trigger events that have had a much more time-specific impact;
- The importance of leadership and personal contingencies in determining the course of particular manifestations of conflict and moves towards reconciliation.

2. Europe's 'Wars of Religion' and their Legacies
Prof Mark Greengrass, FRIAS School of Advanced Studies, Albert-Ludwigs Universität Freiburg

This chapter reflects upon what the religious conflicts in early modern France, especially the foundational event of the St Bartholomew's Massacre in 1572 and the way it has been viewed by later generations, have to tell us about the dynamics of religious difference. It concentrates on what it proposes as three legacies – and aims to derive various lessons from them for the study of contemporary religious conflict. The first concerns the legacy of mass religious violence, reviewing the approaches that historians of religious violence in the sixteenth and seventeenth century have taken to understanding such violence, appreciating the problems of evidence, and seeking to place it in a historical context that explains why religious violence takes certain patterns and has specific dynamics. The second concerns the construction and deployment of stereotypes, and how early-modern historians have come to understand their role in religious confrontation. The third concerns memory and the evidence we have for the way in which social or collective memory acts in relation to early-modern religious conflict. The chapter will emphasise the limitations, as commonly perceived by historians, upon how much historical experience can be used to derive 'lessons'. But the reality of negotiating difference - 'living religious conflict' as it were, is a central feature of the essay.

3. Eighteenth-Century British Anti-Catholicism: Contexts, Continuity and Diminution
Dr Colin Haydon, University of Winchester.

This chapter first investigates the religious and political factors which particularly sustained anti-Catholic sentiment within eighteenth-century Britain and promoted conflict with Catholic powers. It examines Protestants' attacks on Catholic theology and political charges. It describes the conduits for anti-Catholicism's perpetuation and factors which mitigated hostility. It charts the British state's anti-Catholicism through its retention, adjustment and implementation of the penal code (indirectly an incitement to popular harassment) and its piecemeal dismantling of that code – in itself setting new standards for sectarian relations.

In addition, the chapter seeks to set eighteenth-century British anti-Catholicism in a wider context by, for instance, comparing it with conspiracy theories in this and other states and periods and by examining paranoid attacks, frequent/universal charges brought against 'outgroups' and ideologies which promote political/national/social bonding by targeting minorities. It concludes by exploring possible lessons for mitigating or resolving religious conflict such as the need to take risks, in the face of public hostility, in negotiations with leaders who can 'deliver'; and the need to distrust black-and-white stereotypes, recognize the dangers of self-confirming ideologies, and to appraise realistically changes in a perceived enemy's stance.

4. The *Longue Durée* of Religious Conflict in Germany?
Prof Helmut Walser Smith, Vanderbilt University

This chapter explores the question of whether in Germany religious conflict, as it crystallized in the late nineteenth century, and proved a defining moment of German

society for the next century, is the product of a long history, or whether it was reconfigured in essentially new and modern terms.

The chapter takes as its starting point 1648, the end of the Thirty Years War, and argues that the subsequent growth of territorial states, with a secular raison d'état, introduced a fundamentally new dynamic into what had hitherto been a close connection between religion and war and peace. As late as the 1790s, Kant still considered religion one of the main reasons of human conflict. But, as far as his own contemporary history was concerned, he was actually mistaken. Religion had not determined the line-ups of continental wars for a very long time, and in the Seven Year War, the fact that France and Austria should be fighting on the same side against Protestant England and Prussia was seen as a remarkable turn of events. But unlike in England and France, where religious hostility reinforced emerging national hostility, religious antagonism across states remained muted in Germany. It was not until the nineteenth century, and the rise of the new understanding of subjectivity, that such a conception was again possible in Germany. The reorientation began in the Napoleonic Wars, but even here, a nationalism coded with the language of religious conflict can only be discerned among a small minority of intellectuals. It is not until the 1840s, and the politicizing of the rejuvenated religious sphere, often against the claims of the state, that we see the outlines of Protestant-Catholic conflict in recognizably modern terms.

5. Religious conflict in Ulster, c. 1780-1886
Dr Andrew Holmes, School of History and Anthropology, Queen's University Belfast

Over the past four decades historians have produced a significant amount of research on the chronology of religious conflict in Ulster. Much of this has been on well-known incidents such as the 1641 rising, the Williamite Wars, the 1798 rebellion, the Dolly's Brae massacre in 1848, or the 1857 riots in Belfast. This essay provides an overview of how historians have tackled the issue of religious conflict from the late eighteenth century to the first Home Rule crisis of 1886. By doing so, it addresses a number of assumptions made by scholars about the persistence and transmission of conflict, the binary nature of the conflict in Ulster, and the extent to which it can be described as religious. Three broader arguments are developed. First, religious conflict in Ulster during this period was not exceptional and it shared many of the characteristics common to contemporary Britain and North America. Second, though the polarisation of politics and identity along religious grounds had powerful antecedents, this essay stresses the importance of contingency and human agency, that religious conflict could adopt different forms and could vary over time and space. Finally, this essay emphasises the importance of religious ideas and motivations, that antagonism between Catholics and protestants often had a basis in genuine religious differences. That is not to say that the conflict in Ulster was and is essentially religious, but it was and is interpreted as a religious conflict by many. At every period from the seventeenth century to the early twentieth, Catholic-protestant conflict has been one element in a complex pattern of political, social, and communal relationships. The essay is divided into three sections that cover the early modern background to the outbreak of rebellion in 1798, developments in the first half of the nineteenth century, and the concentration of inter-communal violence in Belfast. It ends with the first Home Rule Crisis in 1886 that set Ireland and especially Ulster on a different trajectory to the rest of the United Kingdom that ultimately ended with partition and the formation of the Northern Ireland state in 1921. It was this historical development that intensified tensions between Catholic nationalists and protestant unionists in Ulster while religious conflict elsewhere diminished as the twentieth century dawned.

6. 'The Catholic Danger' Anti-Catholicism in Sweden and Scandinavia
Prof Yvonne Maria Werner, University of Lund

In Scandinavia the connection between Lutheran culture, anti-Catholicism and national identity remained strong in the 19th and 20th century, even after the disappearance of religion as an all-encompassing norm in daily life. The heritage of the Reformation constituted a natural and important part of national identity, whereas Catholicism was considered as a superstitious heresy and a dangerous ideological system. Scandinavian anti-Catholicism remains, however, a neglected field of study. International research has emphasised the importance of anti-Catholicism for processes of identity formation, both within established Protestant churches and national liberal movements and identified connections between anti-Catholicism and other anti-movements such as anti-Semitism, anti-feminism and anti-socialism. Much like these movements anti-Catholicism was a transnational cultural phenomenon, and similar accusations and stereotypes can be found in a number of countries. Anti-Catholic literature formed a veritable international canon, which also spread in Scandinavia.

This chapter draws on the author's ongoing research project on anti-Catholicism and the formation of a Nordic national identity, 1815–1965. Its main purpose will be to investigate the significance of anti-Catholicism in the construction of Scandinavian identity, which expressions it took and how it changed over time. Crucial here is the relationship between the existence of a common body of European ideas and developments specific to the Nordic countries. The project hypothesises that anti-Catholicism played an important part in the conceptions of Scandinavian national identity that developed during the nineteenth century, and that Catholicism came to serve as a counter-image to the notion of 'national' values articulated in the same period. The chapter focuses particularly on the impact of anti-Catholicism in German Swedish cultural relations in the inter-war period, examining how anti-Catholicism was part of a wider climate of insecurity, relating to fears of Soviet Russia and Communism, and arguably stimulating sympathy for National Socialism in Germany.

7. Protestant-Catholic Tensions in Modern England: Persistence and Resolution
Prof John Wolffe and Mrs Philomena Sutherland, The Open University

The mid-nineteenth century saw an upsurge in Protestant-Catholic conflict throughout the North Atlantic world, followed by an erratic and uneven diminuendo. Whereas in some localities the intensity of conflict waned quite rapidly, in others sectarian polarization persisted well into the twentieth century. This chapter explores this variety of experience through a focus on changes in the two cities of Liverpool and Birmingham between 1850 and 2010. Whereas Liverpool's community divide for long seemed intense and intractable, in Birmingham the tensions that exploded in the Murphy Riots of 1867 proved more exceptional and transient. Emphasis is given to the role of Evangelicalism and Orangeism in sectarian conflict, the response of the Roman Catholic Church to the rise of Irish nationalism, and the contribution of the churches to the attenuation of religious hostilities within the communities, notably in the partnership between Bishop Sheppard and Archbishop Worlock in Liverpool in the 1980s. The impact on the two cities of external events such as Fenianism, IRA bombing campaigns, hunger strikes and the papal visits of 1982 and 2010 are also a focus of attention.

8. Protestant-Catholic Conflict in the Later Twentieth-Century United States: The Cases of John F. Kennedy and Ronald W. Reagan

Prof Thomas Carty, Springfield College

This chapter discusses how two iconic, but very different, leaders born in the second decade of the 20th century, navigated the Scylla and Charybdis of Protestant-Catholic tensions. John F. Kennedy's life and election as the nation's first Catholic president inspired Americans to believe in interfaith cooperation. Ronald W. Reagan's presidency bonded conservative Catholics and Protestants in a "Moral Majority" against secularization of U.S. politics and culture.

Kennedy contributed to the creation of secular norms in the United States. Despite rising to national prominence from the Catholic bastion of Boston, Massachusetts, Kennedy ironically achieved the presidency in 1960 by proclaiming strict separation of church and state. Protestant suspicions of a Catholic conspiracy for domination largely dissipated after Kennedy's declaration that the constitution required government neutrality toward all religions. Yet conservative Protestants and Catholics soon rebelled against the resulting secularization of U.S. public life, which contributed to the rise of Reagan. Despite having achieved national recognition through the modern corporate media and technological innovations of radio and motion pictures, Reagan embodied nostalgia for religious traditionalism.

These two presidents contributed to a blending of Protestantism and Catholicism. Kennedy achieved the assimilation of Catholics into the Protestant elite, which his father strived to breach all his life. Reagan--the second president with a Catholic father (although the new president followed his mother's Protestant precepts)—rallied Protestant and Catholic conservatives against the exclusion of God from the Soviet Union, U.S. public schools, and a woman's decision to have an abortion.

9. The Dynamics of Religious Difference in Contemporary Northern Ireland
Dr Neil Jarman and Mr John Bell, Institute for Conflict Research, Belfast

This chapter draws on interview research currently being conducted in Belfast, County Armagh and County Tyrone in 2010 and 2011, with a view to elucidating a cross-section of attitudes to religion and their implications for community difference, confrontation and reconciliation. Interviewees are being drawn from a range of churches, community and victims groups and from political parties. The research also includes observation of parades and other occasions that assert community identities in Northern Ireland, and monitoring of press coverage of current and recent events.

Key themes in the analysis include changing attitudes in Northern Ireland, both over the life course of respondents, and in the community as a whole since the paramilitary ceasefires of the 1990s and the 'Good Friday Agreement' of 1998. The chapter illustrates the complexity of contemporary relationships to religion and the community divide in Northern Ireland, showing that while at one level religion continues to define a fundamental social and political division, there are also significant cross-currents that suggest it may also have a substantial role to play in long-term conflict resolution.

10. Conclusion: The Legacy of Protestant-Catholic Conflict
Prof John Wolffe – The Open University

This final chapter draws together the implications of the book for current thinking about religious conflict and its resolution. It reviews the core questions in the light of detailed material presented in the earlier chapters. It looks both at the specificities of the Protestant-Catholic divide, noting in particular its recent transmutation into more secular forms, and at parallels with other contemporary forms of religious conflict, notably the perceived 'clash of civilizations' between the West and the Islamic world. The very diversity of the contexts and experiences explored in the book invalidates

simplistic generalizations and prescriptions for the present. At the same time the progress made towards resolving these historic conflicts – even in Northern Ireland – suggests some lines of development and thinking that may be relevant to the task of resolving seemingly intractable contemporary divisions.