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'THE POPISH ARMY OF THE NORTH': ANTI-CATHOLICISM AND PARLIAMENTARIAN ALLEGIANCE IN CIVIL WAR YORKSHIRE, 1642-46

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By the time of the outbreak of the Civil Wars, many educated British Protestants considered Roman Catholicism to be an anti-religion; indeed, the Cambridge divine William Fulke went so far as to equate it with devil worship.¹ Wealthy and powerful English Catholics attracted extreme hostility in moments of political crisis throughout the early modern period, but in 1642, fear of Roman Catholicism was even used to legitimate the terrible act of rebellion. Keith Lindley has emphasized the civil war neutrality of English Catholics,² while many current historians, nervous of displays of religious prejudice, have portrayed the anti-Catholic fears of parliamentarians as cynical propaganda. Michael Finlayson has condemned anti-Catholicism as 'irrational paranoia', to be compared with anti-Semitism, which might, had it not been for the growth of liberal traditions in nineteenth-century England, have led to some sort of 'Final Solution'.³ Yet despite John Morrill's support for Lindley's argument, the royalist activism of northern Catholic gentry has been clearly established by P. R. Newman, and Richard Cust has recently commented that: 'the image presented in much of the secondary literature-of a Catholic laity which was largely passive and quiescent-is in need of modification'.⁴ So propaganda apart, anti-Catholicism expressed genuine fears in Yorkshire, and its complicated manifestations require more considered analysis than that given by impulsive condemnation. Focussing on Yorkshire at the outbreak of the Civil War provides an example of a time and place where Roman Catholicism was especially feared, giving insights into how it was constructed and how it operated in practice.

By 1642, a breakdown in the credibility of Charles I's religious regime was a key factor in stimulating both anti-Catholicism and support for Parliament. Richard Neile, Archbishop of York from 1632-1640, had enforced innovations that many felt leaned towards Catholicism. Such misgivings were even voiced by future royalists,⁵ while as early as 1629, Sir Ferdinando Fairfax, Parliament's future general of the northern counties, felt England was facing 'an insensible subversion of the religion now established'.⁶ Neile employed commissioners to investigate churches suspected of dissent, and seventy out of

the hundred churches they visited coincide perfectly with parishes later known to have yielded substantial parliamentary recruitment, either adjacent to Hull or in the clothing districts of the West Riding.⁷ Conrad Russell's assertion that godly preaching traditions were common features in communities raising parliamentary volunteers certainly holds in Yorkshire.⁸

Tentative signs of disaffection from Neile's religious policies appear among sub-gentry groups. Oliver Heywood recalled, 'I can remember something of the warm spirit of prayer in those days . . . in the heat and height of the Bishops' tyranny over Godly Ministers.'⁹ On 13 March and 10 April 1642 riots occurred in Selby church disturbing the minister, and on 27 March a Selby tanner called out in church: 'I care not for the King nor his Lawes.'¹⁰ For many parliamentarians, the deceived Neile and his successor John Williams were firmly established confederates in a popish conspiracy, one pamphleteer warning in July 1642: 'for it is apparent (to us here) the Bishops and loose Clergie, and papists, joyn all their estates, some openly, others underhand, to destroy our Religion, and to ingage a Civill Warre, and our Archbishop of Yorke is not the least guilty hereof.'¹¹

Charles I's failed attempt to force the English Prayer Book on the Scots during the Bishops' Wars of 1638-40, discredited his Protestantism further. He appointed the Earl of Arundel, widely perceived as the leader of English Catholicism, as royal general. There were Catholic priests and nobles observed openly living in the royal army's camp as it lingered in Yorkshire.¹² Even the King's standard bearer believed Arundel plotted to lead the army to disaster,¹³ and Prince Gyorgy Rakoczi in far off Transylvania, argued that Charles I's policies were a Jesuit strategy.¹⁴ The royal army grew unruly, Sir Jacob Astley refused to commit one Yorkshire contingent to campaigning, arguing they were verging on mutiny, while two Yorkshire colonels

were dismissed for lacking enthusiasm.¹⁵ Some officers feared distri-

buted arms to their men, while one allegedly Catholic lieutenant was murdered by his troops at Berwick.¹⁷ Rumours that the northern trained bands among the royal army were mainly Catholic continued into the spring of 1641,¹⁸ and on 2 June three York aldermen were officially appointed to disarm papists.¹⁹

To stimulate English sympathy, the Scots distributed papers throughout Yorkshire declaring that Charles I, affected by his popish ministers, sought to destroy British Protestantism.²⁰ This propaganda exploited existing fears in Yorkshire, which had occasionally surfaced in legal prosecutions for seditious words. In 1629, John Maud of Wakefield had been prosecuted in Star Chamber for saying that 'the King went to mass with the Queen; he would be provided with powder and shot; [and that there would be] another gunpowder blow.'²¹ In neighbouring Westmorland in 1639, Roger Moore was charged with saying that 'if the King should command him to turn Papist. or do a

thing contrary to his conscience he would rise up against him and kill him.²² John Troutbeck of Knaresborough was tried at the Assizes for claiming that the King could be deposed for breaching his coronation oath, and that they were 'as well without a king as with a king'.²³ By the end of 1640, rumours circulated that the Earl of Strafford, Lord Deputy of Ireland, had brought Irish soldiers to York to slaughter local Protestants.²⁴ Those found spreading such rumours were prosecuted for sedition. In January 1641, Thomas Stafford of Youghorpe, was charged with declaring at a local alehouse that 'the Kinge and the Queene was at Masse together and that such a Kinge was wourthe to be hang[e]d.²⁵ Stafford was also accused of singing 'God a-mercy, good Scot', a well known pro-Scots ballad.²⁶

'To play at boh peepe our Catholikes strive,
Who lately with the Devill a bargaine did drive,
The peace of the kingdome for ever to marre,
To change our late plenty to famine and warre:
But now 'tis believed theyle pay the whole shott
When th'reckoning doth come, God a'mercy, good Scott.'²⁷

Furthermore, he allegedly uttered that the 'souldgeares were all roges that came against the Scotese, and if it had not been for the Scotese, thirty thousand Irish had risen in armes and cut all our throtes. He hoped ere long Laslaye²⁸ would be Kinge, for he was a better man then any was in England.'²⁹

Thomas Stafford's prophecy appeared to come true when On 31 October 1641 Irish Catholics rose in rebellion. Richard Baxter wrote that 'the terrible massacres in Ireland, and the threatening of the rebels to invade England were the chief reasons why the nation moved to a state of war.'³⁰ The Irish rebellion of 1641 was crucial for Parliament's cause because it undermined royalist support. The insistence of the Irish rebels that they fought for the King's interests against a dangerous puritan Parliament eroded Charles I's credibility as defender of the Protestant faith.³¹ It is possible to see why the inhabitants of the

clothing districts in the western extremities of Yorkshire were so fearful when they heard that once Dublin was captured, the rebels were 'resolved for Lankeyshire and have barks ready to waft over twenty thousand men.'³² These communities believed they would be the next victims of the Irish and so displayed a new bitterness against English Catholics they perceived as secretly aiding the rebels.

By January 1642, Protestant refugees from Ireland arrived in Yorkshire, spreading panic with tales of horrific atrocities.³³ Joad Raymond has emphasized that a shortage of reliable news stirred up powerful rumours and fervent imaginations, the impact of which through printing became immense. Nineteen issues of the news book *England's Memorable Accidents* appeared between September 1642 and January 1643. Devoted to anti-Catholic stories, it especially warned of the dangers of Irish troops and Catholic risings in northern England.³⁴

In October 1642, in order that people could be guided in discovering and prosecuting Catholics, a parliamentary anti-popish handbook was produced in London, including special reference to the north.³⁵ Indeed, Yorkshire was felt particularly vulnerable to the Catholic menace, especially the West Riding with its close proximity to expected Irish landings in Lancashire. Even without the Irish threat, Yorkshire could draw little comfort from claims that more Catholics resided in Yorkshire and Lancashire than in the rest of England combined.³⁶

Given this charged atmosphere, it is unsurprising that Fairfax's secretary, Thomas Stockdale viewed the King's attempt to arrest the Five Members as a Jesuit plot.³⁷ On 14 January 1642, Stockdale suggested to Fairfax that a book be published for the common people detailing reports to Parliament of Irish rebel atrocities. He insisted powers at court were frustrating the relief of Protestants in Ireland, and even recommended to Fairfax the beneficial use of anti-royalist uprisings of 'ungoverned multitudes'. Considering most gentry were anxious that measures against Catholic gentry should be taken in an orderly fashion by their social equals, Stockdale's remarks reveal just how seriously he took the Catholic threat. Through anti-Catholicism, Stockdale aimed to instil popular support for Parliament in the event of conflict, writing to Fairfax: 'I find that the daily resort of the distressed Protestants of Ireland who come hither driven from their habitations by the Papists, do animate the people here against the Popish party, and make them distaste them exceedingly, which is one good effect of many evils.'³⁸

Stockdale was right. Parliamentarians owed their success in raising the trained bands around Hull to widespread fears that encouraged by the Irish rebellion, East Riding Catholics were arming themselves.³⁹

The three most famous accounts of members of Yorkshire's middling sort all use the Irish revolt to legitimize their parliamentary allegiance.

) Joining Fairfax's army in December 1642 as an ensign, John Hodgson of Coley recalled 'that noise of the dreadful massacre in Ireland startled many, and constrained them to whet their swords, and to prepare such instruments as they possibly could to defend themselves'.⁴⁰ Likewise, Jonathan Priestley of Soyland wrote that his brother Samuel went to war because of the Irish Rebellion or 'so most honest men thought in those times, when hundreds of Protestants were daily murdered in Ireland, and fearing the same tragedy would be enacted in England; so he went, and was with my Lord Fairfax about Selby and Tadcaster.'⁴¹ Pamphlets highlighting the fate of Irish Protestants were abundant in York by March 1642, while parliamentary fast days were linked to Irish events to bolster support for Parliament.⁴² Joseph Lister of Bradford remembered the panic caused by the man who ran into Pudsey church crying that Irish rebels had landed and were already at Rochdale:

'my pen is not able to describe the confusion and disorder of the whole congregation; some ran out in the greatest consternation, others began to talk to their friends, the women in general wrung their hands and wept, the children screamed aloud and clung to their parents. ,43

Predictably, this community later furnished strong support for Parliament. Writing sixty years after the time that Robin Clifton asserts the Catholic threat was generally recognized as having been hollow,⁴⁴ Lister recalled his childhood expectations of being murdered by the Irish:

'O what a sad and sorrowful going home had we that evening, for we must needs go to Bradford, and knew not but Incarnate Devils and Death would be there before us, and meet us there. What sad and strange conjectures, or rather conclusions, will surprize and fear make! Methinks I shall never forget this time.'⁴⁵

At nearby Otley, in the parish church of the Fairfaxes, David Ellison thundered out in defence of the needy Protestants in Ireland:

'You christians in England, if you lend them not a lift under their burden you are never His friends nor any members of our Church forsaken: the feare of God's church calls for it, and the state. In this the antichristian hierarchy are said to afflict England even more than Ireland and that, if the Church is not defended against them it will be deprived of public assemblies, bibles taken, children murdered and wives ravished. ,46

The threat from Ireland dominated Otley's sennons, and William Sheils has asserted the preachers there were soon preparing the congregation for armed resistance.⁴⁷ The anxiety must have been excruciating for Walter Stanhope of nearby Horsforth, who received a letter describing his son's flight from his Irish estates at Lisnegarvey. A year later, the whole family supported Parliament, with two of Walter's sons serving Fairfax as captains.⁴⁸

In January 1642, stores of gunpowder were discovered in Bingley church, allegedly laid by four local Catholic gentry intending to detonate it while the congregation were within. They immediately fled and arms for one hundred men were discovered in their houses.⁴⁹ Such episodes, however fictionalized, allowed Thomas Stockdale to raise local trained bands and frame a county petition calling for the 'securing' of papists, the punishment of 'malicious delinquents', and the moving of the country into a state of defence, further declaring that those hindering relief to Ireland had 'reduced the fonner untainted Honour of this Nation to an Object of Scorn and Obloquy',⁵⁰

In this atmosphere, boisterous or drunken words could have serious consequences. On 11 February 1642, Sir Edward Rodes wrote to inform Fairfax that Kellam Homer, armour dresser to the Earl of Arundel himself, had been heard to say 'that before May day they should have a peal rung in Sheffield as had not been heard these hundred years.'⁵¹ Homer was a known Catholic, so an inventory was made of all the arms in his charge, which were then removed to Sheffield castle. Although

Homer pleaded his innocence, Sir Edward noted that local inhabitants were 'specially apprehensive', recommending urgent action to disarm recusants, and secure county magazines.⁵² Two months later on 13 April 1642, public outcry against the Irish led to the executions at York of the Catholic priests John Lockwood and Edmund Catterick.

With the outbreak of civil war, the danger of Catholics in arms in England became very real. On 23 September 1642, despite an earlier declaration forbidding them from his forces,⁵³ the King commanded the Earl of Newcastle to allow recruitment of Catholics into his northern army:

'This is to tell you that this rebellion has grown to that height, that I must not look what opinion men are who are at this time willing to serve me. Therefore, I do not only permit, but command you, to make use of all my loving subjects' services, without examining their consciences (more than their loyalty to me) as you shall find most to conduce to the upholding of my just regal power.'⁵⁴

One newsbook reported that Fairfax abandoned his treaty of neutrality in reaction to this and began to muster forces. ⁵⁵ In his study of the Yorkshire gentry, I. T. Cliffe calculated 86 out of 242 Yorkshire royalist families had Catholic sympathies and connections.⁵⁶ P. R. Newman has shown that after Newcastle's army crossed the River Tees into Yorkshire in December 1642, its officer class became heavily Catholic, identifying 97 out of 266 traceable northern royalist officers as Catholic. What made the north unique was that active Catholic royalism was actually encouraged. Referring to Yorkshire and the north as 'the heartland of Catholic Royalism', Newman shows that over forty per cent of royalist colonels in the northern counties were Catholic, and that Newcastle's army employed 49 out of the total of 117 Catholic royalist colonels throughout the country. ⁵⁷ These Catholics were no ordinary soldiers, but well-known figures holding positions of power and trust, sometimes commanding thousands. The Catholic Lord John Belasyse was appointed Governor of York, and commanded Yorkshire's royalist army from January to April 1644.⁵⁸ Sir William Widdrington, president of Newcastle's council of war, was also widely suspected of

Catholicism. ⁵⁹ By the end of 1642, Newcastle's armlo was being

described in monolithic terms as 'the army of Papists.' ⁶⁰ The largest royalist army of the Civil Wars, by July 1643 it numbered 19,000 men. It dominated the northern counties and presented Charles I with his finest chance of victory.

The Queen's arrival at York in March 1643, with arms and soldiers from the continent deepened the Catholic appearance of Newcastle's forces, reinforcing and directing anti-Catholicism against the Queen's person. Parliamentary newsbooks claimed she forced her co-religionists into Newcastle's command, one even declaring: 'The Queen is the very president of the Councill Table.'⁶¹ In 1646, the dyer Thomas Beevers was tried for declaring that the king was a cuckold and that his wife

had gone off to 'Holland to play the whore. ,62 Hatred for Henrietta Maria's Catholicism in the West Riding outlasted the war. In 1660, Richard Smith of Northowram was charged with uttering 'The King is a bastard and the sonne of a whore. I hope to see Lord Lambert Kinge'. William Poole of Barkisland was tried for saying that 'wee should have notheinge but Popery, as formerly hath beene, and that the Queen hath broughte a Pope with her from beyond the sea.'63 Such views persisted in these districts, and militated towards support for the Northern Risings of 1663.64

A keen sense of Protestant heritage, and a place in a wider struggle echoes through the language of anti-Catholicism. John Shaw, vicar of Rotherham, preached of the 'Egyptian darknesse of popery', and rejoiced that the devil was recoiling before successive waves of English reformation.65 A declaration, supposedly from Hull's inhabitants, was presented to the King at Beverley:

'We adhere to your Parliament, rather than to You, seduced by Jesuiticall Counsell and Cavaliers, and in these Resolves we will live and dye for Religions sake. And this lesson we learn' d of our fathers and Predecessours, who nobly and valiantly defended the good cause; and kept their Liberty of Conscience and exercised our Protestant Profession and religion . . . all the time of the Marian Persecution, when all the rest of this Kingdome suffered Martyrdome by fire, under that Tyrannicall Queene, and Papisticall Bishops and Pemitious Councillours.'66

Any comparison between their plight and that of the Marian Martyrs was High Treason; the very printing of these sentiments amply demonstrates a collapse in Charles I's religious credibility. When William Styles, parliamentary vicar of Hull, was approached by Lady Bland to change allegiance, he curtly reminded her that the royalists were an army of papists who would 'without the immediate interdisposition of Providence, totally eradicate the Protestant religion in these Kingdoms and light up again those flres that had already consumed so many of its sincerest professors.'67

The people of Halifax in their declaration of 5 April, 1643 defamed Newcastle's army as an 'Army of Atheists, papists, constreyned protestants & other ill affected p[er]sons' who practice 'such Cruelty, & barbarisme upon the well affected & religious Ministers & subjects as hath secretly beene observed to be used by the Turkes, & heathens. ,68 A further paper impertinently suggested:

'Wonder not dread sovereigne if wee hardly beleeeve that those come now to save us who in 88 & in the Powder plott would soe cruelly have destroyed us . . . Blame us not wee beseech you to feare while we see noe contradiction appeare to Monnsier de Chesu his booke sold openly for many years not in Paris onely but in London & read att Courte w[hi]ch records your ma[jes]ties letter to the Pope promiseinge to venture Crowne & all to unite us to Rome again. ,69

In alleging the King was no longer defending the Protestant faith, they implied he was unfit to rule. Yet most of the inhabitants of nearby Bradford would have sympathized, one reporting in January 1643: 'out goes our Royalists to bring in the King's Catholick army.'70

Throughout the summer of 1642, tales of undisciplined cavalier raiding parties blackened the royalists' reputation; plate and money were looted from George Marwood's house at Nun Monkton and his wife scorned as a 'Protestant whore' .71 The soldiers responsible were found not guilty at the York Assizes, despite one of them confessing in pre-trial investigations.72 The approach of Newcastle's forces could inspire terror among Yorkshire Protestants. Shortly after Fairfax's defeat at Adwalton Moor on 30 June 1643, Nicholas Pearson, parish clerk of Saint Mary's, Beverley, commented in the registers: 'War in our gates . . . All our lives now at stake. Lord deliver us for Xt saike. Note this forever after to all ages to come.' 73 At the same time, the minister of nearby Rowley lamented 'the clouds are so exceeding darke and thicke' .74 In June 1643, the royalist Sir Hugh Cholmley wrote to the parliamentary Captain William Goodricke advising him to lay down his arms. Goodricke's confident reply reflected his conviction that God was on his side, urging Cholmley 'to draw away with you those protestants, whom you misled by fair and specious pretensions of being the KINGS friends, when indeed it is to be the popish parties friends; (with whom as this, all treacherous plots are hatched).' 75 The religious selfassurance that anti-Catholicism provided for some parliamentary officers nurtured in them the inner strength to fight pre-war friends. When Fairfax's army took Wakefield on 21 May 1643, a royalist regiment under the Catholic Colonel William Lambton was trapped in the market

place.76 A parliamentary officer present wrote to a friend in London: 'whea did oppose us but a guide friend of ours, Sir William Lambton with his regiment. I was wea at harte for him and for his pretty Bames, for he answered our Trumpeter he scorned Quarter.' Upon being ordered to attack, he recalled: 'in discharge of the imployment I undertooke, on my saule, I know it is mare for the guide of my dreade Sovereigne, than the Queen and all her Papists in her Army doe for him, I let drive at him [Lambton] and whewed him soundly.'77 He had been Lambton's friend despite Lambton's Catholic background and saw in him an object of pity. His explanation for his ferocity illustrates how religious hatred was focussed more upon strangers and distant figures, especially the Queen.

Newcastle's honest and spirited defence of his employment of Catholics was unlikely to penetrate such prejudice. He admitted in his declaration of 2 February 1643:

'That I have in mine Army some of the Romish Communion I doe not deny; yet but an handfull in comparison to the whole body of it, I believe not above one of fifty . . . These I admitted for their Loyalty and Abilities, not

for their Religion . . . Certainly in this particular service they shew themselves better friends to the Protestant Religion than the others.' 8

He accused Fairfax's supporters of antinomianism and nurturing more dangerous recusants than Catholics in the form of Anabaptists and sectaries. In an earlier declaration he argued that Catholics were obliged to defend the realm from foreign invasion, so why not also against rebellion from within, adding that 'I shall use all possible care, that they do nothing against the Laws of this Kingdom, for I have received them not for their Religion, but for their Allegiance which they professe.'⁷⁹ He would not turn away Catholic support just because they refused the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, at a time when his parliamentary foes were already in breach of these oaths by their act of rebellion.

Exaggerating the Catholic contingent in Newcastle's army made effective parliamentary propaganda, yet it must be remembered that the full extent of Catholic involvement was unknown to Fairfax, and the intelligence that he received correctly indicated that much of the Catholic contingent were commissioned and in positions of command. Fairfax argued it was unlawful for Newcastle to arm recusants, never mind commission them as colonels. He answered Newcastle's declarations of 2 February by claiming there was 'more in them of the Jesuit than of the States-man or Lawyer.'⁸⁰ He had recently informed Parliament on 26 January that many royalists recently captured at Malton and Guisborough were Catholic,⁸¹ attaching a list of twelve commissioned Catholics in Newcastle's army and claiming that Mass was openly read in York. Parliament declared Fairfax's letter showed the world that Newcastle was raising a Catholic army to destroy British Protestantism, and denounced the royalists in absolute terms as 'Enemies of God, Piety, their Country and common Wealth.'⁸²

London newsbooks began to savage Newcastle's arguments: 'This is your Lordship's ignorance or rather your Chaplain's malignity, for I read clergy in all your paper . . . that an Army of Papists should fight for the Protestant Religion, and that to fight against a Parliament should be the next way to defend the Lawes.' The author continued to demolish Newcastle's points:

'That I have in my army some of the Romish Communion, I do not deny . . . Of the Romish Communion, a very cleanly and neat expresse for so foul

a businesse . . . the ever known enemies of our Religion and Lawes . . . what concord hath Christ with Baal?,'⁸³

Newcastle suffered personal abuse from the London press, being referred to as 'the Atheisticall Marquesse', a 'Semi papian and an Athisticall [sic] person, as was more declared afterward by that horrid crew he brought in with him.'⁸⁴ Convinced by such opinion, John Hutchinson refused to surrender Nottingham castle to a 'papistical army

led by an atheistical general'. His brother warned that if Newcastle wanted the castle he 'must wade to it in blood.'⁸⁵ Newcastle was frequently charged with atheism because many readily believed his arming of so many Catholics was so irreligious, that he must be an atheist.

This propaganda was worthwhile to radical parliamentarians because it enabled them to stress the war as a religious struggle. John Vicars celebrated Fairfax's forces trapping twenty Catholics inside burning houses during the battle for Tadcaster.⁸⁶ The royalist Earl of Clarendon realized that such writers defamed Newcastle's army as the 'Queen's Army' or the 'Catholic Army' in order 'thereby to expose her Majesty the more to the rude Malice of the People and the Army to their prejudice; persuading them that it consisted of none but profess'd papists, who intended nothing but the extirpation of the Protestants, and establishing their own Profession.'⁸⁷ He further noted that 'the imputation raised by Parliament upon the King, of an intention to bring in, or . . . of conniving at and tolerating, Popery, did make a deep impression upon the people generally.'⁸⁸ Bulstrode Whitelocke also reflected that the radical Yorkshire minister, John Saltmarsh, recommended to 'cherish the war under the notion of Popery, as the surest means to engage the people.'⁸⁹

Clarendon and Saltmarsh were right; joining parliamentary armies through fear of Catholics rather than for preservation of liberties and property appealed to those with little property to protect.⁹⁰ With anti-Catholicism long inculcated in the people by Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Gunpowder Treason Day celebrations,⁹¹ and with local Catholic personalities often likely to be their social superiors, a civil war now appeared to offer them the possibility of bringing them down. Parliamentary propaganda adopted a language that everyone could understand, and among people who found the outbreak of war inexplicable, fantastical pamphlet literature found a ready audience. In 'the Papists Petition to England' of 1642 'the Devil's Counsel to the Pope' advised 'to cut them off by some damnable plot, by your adherents among them confiscate their pernicious Parliament, destroy and put to the sword the principal men thereof, confound them in their devices by civil mutiny.'⁹² Another, boldly titled 'Trust a Papist and trust the Devill' recounted news of a priest's failed attempt to force his lecherous intentions upon a Yorkshirewoman, whose husband and neighbours whipped and castrated him, the tract reflecting: 'Were all Romish priests so handled they would say marriage were lawfull, and no more abuse other men's Wives.'⁹³ Such propaganda was of more appeal to the uneducated than learned disputations over controversies of episcopal government.

Certain Informations of 17 July 1643, continued this tradition, detailing atrocities committed by Newcastle's army at Bradford. They were accused of slaying women and children, not leaving a man in

town under the age of sixty, and also: 'most shamelessly they stripped the women and maidens naked, and ravished and deflowed them.'⁹⁴ The London artisan, Nehemiah Wallington viewed papists to be more barbarous than Turks, recording with horror the story of the royalists capturing and raping to death Lady Fairfax's maidservant before slashing her body to pieces. 'God deliver us from the hands of such blood thirsty Cannobals', another tract reflected.⁹⁵ Cavaliers came to be known as 'rutters' in accordance with such perceived sexual excess, a characteristic so inherently associated with Roman Catholic clerics that Sir John Hotham had called for the castration of priests and Jesuits in 1641.⁹⁶ This propaganda was identical to representations of the Irish rebels the previous year; London newsbooks increasingly alleged that Newcastle's army and the Irish rebels were confederates.⁹⁷ Indeed, Nehemiah Wallington kept his account of the 'most savage cruelties of Bradford and Leeds' alongside an account of the 'cruelties in Ireland.'⁹⁸

A language of propaganda in which common images of brutality linking royalists with Roman Catholics and foreigners, and their behaviour with violence, rape and bestial conduct had emerged. It was finnlly rooted in 'the Black Legend' of English depictions of the Spanish from 1588 onwards, but now used to demonize Englishmen as 'wolves, dragons and other malicious beasts', bent on infanticide, rape and cannibalism.⁹⁹ Joshua Witton's thanksgiving sermon for the victory of Marston Moor, starkly illustrates the Black Legend's presence in his condemnation of the royalists:

'men of cruelty, men of bloud, men as yet not satiated with the bloud of the Saints, many of them forraign and savage beasts, in the shapes of men; others of them bloudy, obstinate and malicious Papists, who are glad to see the day when they are loosed out of their Collers, to worry such as have for many years kept them in by the power of good Lawes.'¹⁰⁰

Witton was among Lord Fairfax's favourite ministers, yet far from dehumanizing them, the Fairfaxes endeavoured to protect their Catholic friends, neighbours and relatives. Only as long as papists remained anonymous, could such comments be made without reservation.

The continued willingness of Catholic officers to serve in royalist armies was, Newman argues, because they took up arms for the same principles of loyalty, duty and honour as their protestant counterparts. Many royalists were prepared to extend a measure of religious toleration to their commanders' consciences providing that their loyalty and allegiance to the king overrode their Catholicism. ¹⁰¹ However, the high concentration of Catholics in Newcastle's command on occasion could alienate royalist support. Lord Spencer complained in a letter to his wife: 'If the King, or rather the papists prevail, we are in a sad condition, for they will be insupportable to all.'¹⁰² William Bushell and Sir Edmund Duncombe both claimed they deserted Newcastle because of the Catholics in his command.¹⁰³ Perhaps they believed Parliament would favour their conversion more if they explained it in this way.

Apparently for similar reasons, Captain John Fenwick deserted Newcastle to join Fairfax. The motto on his standard read 'For the King and the Protestant Religion' .¹⁰⁴ One London newsbook enhanced the story, claiming Fenwick's desertion was provoked by Newcastle's officers' boasts that they would have Mass established by Act of Parliament before they were disbanded.¹⁰⁵ Given the heavy contribution of Catholics to Newcastle's army, speculation on their repayment was natural, one tract predicting: 'such are the engagements which the Papists boast they have laid *ufon* him [the King] that a Toleration will not be recompense enough.'¹⁰

However, anti-Catholicism did not always produce parliamentary allegiance or desertion from royalism. Sir Henry Slingsby angrily condemned Archbishop Neile for edging too close to Popery, but never faltered in his loyalty to Newcastle's 'papist army'. ¹⁰⁷ Even after defecting to the royalists, Sir Hugh Cholmley did not soften his antiCatholic temper. William Vavasour, a Catholic royalist in flight from Marston Moor, claimed Cholmley refused him and other Catholics sanctuary, and Jack Binns has commented on Cholmley's 'strong antipathy to papists' .¹⁰⁸ Anti-Catholicism could also be found among royalists and not all parliamentarians were violently anti-Catholic. The missionary priest Edmund Catterick felt no danger in revealing his vocation to the magistrate and future parliamentarian John Dodsworth of Watlas, who had married one of his relatives and was soon tragically confronted with having to preside over his trial.¹⁰⁹ Cross-confessional marriages occurred among parliamentary gentry; Captain Arthur Beckwith and Sir Philip Stapleton both married Catholics. The parliamentarians Christopher Percehay of Ryton and Henry Thomson of

Esholt both had pre-war Catholic backgrounds. Benjamin Norcliffe, eldest son of a parliamentary colonel, married into the Catholic Fairfaxes of Gilling; a family enjoying the protection of Sir Thomas Fairfax himself, who even helped arrange a Catholic marriage for Viscount Fairfax's sister. After the war, Captain Edward Saltmarsh married a Catholic and converted to Catholicism himself, while Sir Thomas Fairfax's secretary, John Rushworth, negotiated loans to save estates of Catholic gentry from ruin.¹¹⁰ Indeed, Barbara English has highlighted a solidarity among Yorkshire landowning gites to protect the property rights of their recusant equals.¹¹¹ After Newcastle's army was destroyed on Marston Moor on 2 July 1644, the threat of papists in arms receded. Pre-existing ties of kinship and neighbourliness across the religious divide, never entirely neglected in gentry circles, could now once more be fully resumed.

While even a fervent anti-Catholicism did not necessarily immediately lead to parliamentary allegiance, there can be no doubt that the parliamentary cause largely benefited from such prejudice, especially in Yorkshire. The location of anti-Catholic panics in 1641-2 at Halifax, Bradford, Pudsey, Bingley, Sheffield and Hull,¹¹² all correspond to

subsequent regions of strong parliamentary activism. Parliament, the London press and Lord Fairfax all agreed that anti-Catholic propaganda, especially about the Irish rebellion and Newcastle's 'Popish Army', was extremely justified. Newman has argued that the success of parliamentary anti-papery propaganda lay in the 'association of inherently seditious Catholicism with socially acceptable Laudian revisionism.' 113 Yet a broad Protestant anti-prelatical consensus existed that refused to accept Archbishop Laud's reforms. Parliament's propaganda was successful and they were able to recruit armies not because people wanted to rebel, but because they felt the King no longer protected their religion. Newman comments with hindsight that 'too many educated men, and not all of them Puritans or Parliamentarians, viewed the Catholic presence as a threat.' 114 Parliamentary propaganda undoubtedly capitalized on anti-Catholic prejudice, but it must be stressed how unwise it would be to divorce ourselves from the very real fears and uncertainties felt by seventeenth-century people. Newman correctly stresses how the inexact usage of the insult 'papist' came to encompass and blacken the entire royalist party, yet his moral judgement of anti-Catholic parliamentary attitudes as 'socially divisive, intolerant and verging on the genocidal' is, betrays the common tendency of those wishing morally to condemn anti-Catholicism to slip into language resounding with twentieth-century overtones. The historians whom J. F. Bosher refers to as 'neo-Jacobite and Catholic', 116 neglect to point out the shifting local contexts and determinants of anti-Catholic feeling. In Yorkshire the survival of the Protestant religion was genuinely held by many to have been in doubt. With Fairfax's forces defeated by the greatest royalist army of the entire civil wars, an army largely officered by Catholics, such fears begin to appear more understandable. Throughout much of the Stuart period anti-Catholic prejudices were grounded in tradition, fear and suspicion, but anti-Catholicism in northern England during the early 1640s was unique because there it was based on solid fact. Catholic gentry engaged themselves in raising and commanding royalist troops, so for many parliamentary sympathizers, local hearsay and rumours of popish plots appeared at last to have been confirmed. To maintain the bitterest divisions of the First Civil War, anti-Catholic prejudices could now be directed more violently than ever before at fellow English gentlemen. Sir William Fairfax's intimate reflections to his wife were unlikely to be those of cynical propaganda and leave little doubt of the terms in which he viewed the war: 'For Thomas's part and mine, we rest neither night nor day, nor will willingly till we have done God some good service against His and our enemies.' 117

ABBREVIATIONS

ASSI

Clerks of the Assize records, northern circuit

B.L.
Clifton
n
H.M.C.
ML C. w.T.
P.R.O.
The Old Service

T.T.E.
W.Y.R.O.
Y.A.S.

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Robin Clifton, 'Popular Fear of Catholics in England during the English Revolution', *Past and Present*, 52 (1971).
Historical Manuscripts Commission
York Minster Library, Civil War Tract
Public Record Office
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Thomson Tract
West Yorkshire Record Office
Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Clarendon, Leeds

NOTES

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