

BOOK REVIEWS

development and potential of environmental politics in Italy. The work is divided into three sections addressing the inter-relationship between environmentalism and public opinion, Green activism and organisation and the political manifestations of the ecologist movement. The essays trace the growth of the movement as it rapidly gravitates from a disparate collection of conservation clubs towards a formal national political structure. As the authors point out, this is an increasingly important new political force with profound implications for the Italian party system, particularly in the aftermath of the Chernobyl disaster and the recent successes of the Green Lists (Lista Verde) in the June 1987 election.

According to Melucci's introduction, the basis of the Green movement lies not only in the reaction to the environmental crisis, but more importantly in a fundamental re-definition of individual and collective needs which has taken place in the last few years. The nature of these new, non-economic priorities conforms closely to Inglehart's model of inter-generational value change outlined in *The Silent Revolution*. Although all the authors give largely sympathetic accounts and take the presence of post-materialist values as self-evident, the book is thoroughly researched and makes liberal use of opinion polls and surveys from well-established sources. Biorcio's work, for example, gives a revealing account of the relationship between public opinion and potential and actual voters, while maintaining a clear delineation between them.

Lodi's contribution documents the factors which account for the increased co-operation in the environmentalist movement and the processes which have been established to co-ordinate further activity. The second section of the book deals with the organisational and political characteristics of the movement at local level, while Fulvia Fazio documents the feminist connection. The studies concentrate on the three main environmental bodies in Italy (La Lega per l'Ambiente, Italia Nostra and the WWF), whose members and activists are utilised as models for the wider movement. Perhaps the least convincing part of the study is the attempt to differentiate, in the light of increasingly overlapping structures and members, between three sub-cultural groups within the movement, 'Conservation', 'Political Ecology' and 'Environmentalism'.

The last chapters are dedicated to the new political dimension presented by the Green Lists which marks the birth of an institutionalised and legitimised environmental political actor in Italy. Clearly, the formation of a Green parliamentary group has fundamental implications for other institutional actors, particularly as the movement evolves towards full party status. Biorcio's final essay is perhaps the most revealing, as it offers the informed reader a detailed and comprehensive account of the values, motivations and dynamics of the Green constituency, which contains many interesting and idiosyncratic features.

From these essays it is clear that the green wave has reached Italy, and presents a powerful challenge to the established parties and institutions. *La Sfida Verde* is an essential acquisition for students of environmental and Italian politics; it should prove to be the basis for a new and exciting body of literature.

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Moral Monopoly. The Catholic Church in Modern Irish Society. By T. INGLIS.
Dublin: Gill and Macmillan. Pp.xi + 251. £7.95.

The Roman Catholic Church has been insufficiently studied by political sociologists and political scientists. Yet, it offers a potential research mine for those interested

in studying the origins of the modern Occident, international institutions, economic enterprises, and organisational hierarchies based on subordination of conscience and intellect to the following of other-ordained rules. In this able and well-written study, Tom Inglis examines a society in which the power of the Roman Catholic church has arguably been greater than in any other 'liberal' democracy. It is a useful read for both political scientists and sociologists of religion.

His book is an excellent supplement to John Whyte's *Church and State in Modern Ireland* (1923–79), because Inglis seeks to explain the historical and present foundations of the Catholic Church's contemporary power in Ireland. He first provides a useful summary of the religious behaviour of Irish Catholics, demonstrating the conclusions of survey data on the prevalence of magical superstition and legalistic morality in the Catholic population, and (more questionably) the absence of an ethic of individual responsibility among Irish Catholics. Second, he examines the organisational power of the Catholic Church in Ireland – its famous hierarchy, para-religious lay organisations and decisive grip on education and health administration in the Republic. Third, he examines the social, economic and political power of the Church, paying special attention to the abortion and divorce referenda of 1983 and 1986 which have been widely interpreted as victories for Catholic and peasant Ireland over the latent forces of pluralist cosmopolitanism.

Inglis explains the institutional power of the Catholic Church in Ireland as an essentially nineteenth-century achievement. The ethnic identification of the native Irish with the Church had taken place as an equal and opposite reaction to the penal laws, which had expropriated the natives by outlawing their religion. The Catholic Church's organisational power stemmed from a deliberate policy of the British imperial state in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century to abandon the attempt to Anglicise the Irish through coercion. The Catholic Church was given state support in pacifying and civilising the native Irish, most importantly in education and social welfare. Inglis correctly notes the important role played by the Church in building a reformist Irish Catholic rural bourgeoisie with a stake in the imperial order, and is an astute guide to the social relations in the Irish household in which priest and mother organised postponed marriage and permanent celibacy as population-control mechanisms. The intricate linkages between the stem family system (in which one son inherits all the land), postponed marriage, emigration, permanent celibacy, Irish matriarchy and the Church are all intriguingly and insightfully explored in passages which will help outsiders understand a great deal of nineteenth and twentieth century Irish politics and literature – although Inglis does display the sociologist's vice for functionalist reasoning a little too frequently.

Moreover, Inglis is surely right to argue that 'the long nineteenth century of Irish Catholicism is drawing to a close'. Surprisingly perhaps – the referenda on abortion and divorce demonstrate the validity of his argument. The abortion referendum was a pre-emptive blow by Catholic revanchists – fearful that liberal judges and the Dublin bourgeoisie would soon import foreign and more secular norms into the Irish polity. Although the referendum making abortion unconstitutional was carried by three to one, 40 per cent of Catholics did not vote even though instructed by the Church to do so, and over 25 per cent of those who did rejected the proposed amendment. The divorce referendum by contrast was pushed by liberals, socialists and feminists anxious to rationalise Ireland's absurd marriage laws. Moreover, the pro-divorce lobby confidently expected to win. Its defeat seemed to owe most to the Church's success in mobilising farmers' wives' fears that they would be abandoned without property rights by their feckless husbands if the bill was passed. Earthy materialist concerns were more important than religious piety in persuading many Irish women that voting for divorce would be like turkeys

voting for Christmas. However, although the tidal waves of modernisation and secularisation now breaking on Irish shores might seem unstoppable, the tenacity, adaptability and sheer organisational panache of the Roman Catholic Church should never be underestimated. The longest running Western institution has not survived by mere accident.

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