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POPISH PLOTS: PROTESTANT FEARS IN EARLY COLONIAL MARYLAND, 1676–1689

BY

MICHAEL GRAHAM, S.J.*

In July, 1689, a small group of discontented Maryland planters marched on St. Mary's City. The Governor's Council surrendered almost immediately to these self-styled "Protestant Associators," and the Glorious Revolution in Maryland had succeeded. Within three years, the King replaced the Lord Proprietary as the chief figure of provincial politics; a royal governor was dispatched; Catholics were virtually excluded from political life; and new faces filled important provincial offices. It was as if the whole head of provincial Maryland's political life had been suddenly lopped off. While the Associators moved cautiously to consolidate support for their revolution at home and abroad, little sustained opposition to them crystallized within the colony. What the Protestant Associators had done in removing the proprietary party from its central place in provincial affairs was widely accepted.

Not only is it the single most important event in the political history of seventeenth-century Maryland; the Revolution of 1689 is likewise a watershed in early Maryland's religious history. It separates the broad religious toleration of seventeenth-century Maryland from the subsequent establishment of the Church of England and the elimination of this toleration in favor of an ecclesiastical settlement modeled on England's own. This new arrangement endured for the remainder of the colonial period. But Maryland's enactment of the Glorious Revolution has another significance for the religious history of the colony: as their name itself suggests, religion played a role in the rebellion the Protestant Associators wrought. This role, however, is both rich and complex: complex, because the place of religion within the Associators' many complaints touches and integrates the numerous other elements—social, political, economic—that together comprised early Maryland; rich, because that mix points to the deep connection between Maryland and England.

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In their masterful analysis of Maryland's Glorious Revolution, Lois Carr and David Jordan describe the destruction of the proprietary government as "the work of a small group primarily intent on increasing its own power but able to play off real anxieties and grievances perhaps heightened by long-continued hard times."¹ Their careful prosopographical analysis reveals that the revolutionary leadership consisted predominantly of recent Protestant immigrants for whom office-holding and significant political appointments had failed to keep pace with their levels of wealth and social prominence. For this status discrepancy they rightly blamed Charles Calvert, the third Baron of Baltimore, whose policy of Catholic and familial preferment in doling out important provincial offices resulted in the near-monopoly of these offices by a small clique of proprietary relatives and fellow Catholics.

Yet, the "revolution of government" of 1689 was the work of more than a revolutionary leadership who deftly used the occasion to advance its political fortunes; Maryland would not have had a revolution in 1689, glorious or otherwise, if the Associator leadership had failed to raise an army. The central question is this: how was the revolutionary leadership able to convince the small planters of the lower Western Shore who made up their army that a sufficient threat existed to demand a revolt against the proprietary government?

The answer, as Carr and Jordan adumbrate, is in the revolutionary leadership's manipulation of the issue of the proprietor's religion. A full generation and more of Protestant settlers had arrived in Maryland following the Restoration who not only were unaccustomed to the prominence of Catholic and Quaker dissenters in public life there, but who actively resented that pre-eminence, particularly when they contrasted Catholic and Quaker vitality with the chronically anemic state of the regular Protestant churches. Furthermore, the small Maryland planter in the 1680's found himself in the middle of a general transformation of Maryland society. Demographic forces had made a society there alien to his English experience, owing to the imbalance of the sexes, the altering of the life cycle through late marriages and early deaths, and the slowly increasing number of African slaves. International economic forces dictated the price his tobacco fetched, and, throughout the 1680's, led to the impoverishment of many small planters. Simultaneously, social opportunities dried up, especially in the older coun-

¹Lois Green Carr and David William Jordan, *Maryland's Revolution of Government, 1689-1692* (Ithaca, New York, 1974), p. 222.

ties of the lower Western Shore, the center of Associator discontent.² The broad transformation of Maryland society from the seventeenth century to the eighteenth century produced for many small planters a basic dissatisfaction with the concern over the quality of their life, and this discontent itself formed the background for the multiple issues of political debate throughout the 1680's. Small planters, besieged by the world around them but unable to explain their discomfort as resulting from the complex interaction of abstract social and market forces well beyond their grasp, sought an identifiable target on which to pin responsibility for the multiple dislocations they experienced. For the small planter of lower Western Shore Maryland in 1689, the culprit was not a force, but a man—Lord Baltimore—and his popish government.³

The Glorious Revolution seems to have caught Maryland's Governor's Council off guard. The provincial records from the preceding months reveal no awareness on the Council's part that such a crisis was imminent. To read the Council minutes, the Revolution came from nowhere. Yet, the petitions sent from the Associators' Convention—the "assembly" the Associators convened in August—are litanies of long-standing grievances against the proprietary government.⁴ Events which Baltimore's deputy governors regarded as neither related nor dangerous formed, for the Associators, a complex and threatening pattern demanding an extreme response.

Warning signs of the revolution to come had been in the air for months. The final provincial assembly, lasting from November through early December, 1688, was filled with them. William Joseph, the new assembly

²From 1970 on, our understanding of life in the early Chesapeake has expanded enormously, and growth of scholarship on the early Chesapeake shows no signs of abating. To sample this literature, see two volumes of essays: Thad W. Tate and David L. Ammerman (eds.), *The Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century: Essays on Anglo-American Society* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1979), and Lois Green Carr, Philip D. Morgan, and Jean B. Russo (eds.), *Colonial Chesapeake Society* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1988). Some particularly important essays would include, in addition to the essays in these volumes, Lorena S. Walsh's "Servitude and Opportunity in Charles County, Maryland, 1658–1705," in Aubrey C. Land, Lois Green Carr, and Edward C. Papenfuse (eds.), *Law, Society and Politics in Early Maryland* (Baltimore, 1977), pp. 111–133; and Russell R. Menard, "Immigrants and Their Increase: The Process of Population Growth in Early Colonial Maryland," also in the Land, Carr, and Papenfuse volume, pp. 88–110. The most vivid description of the tone of early Chesapeake society, however, remains Edward S. Morgan's *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York, 1975).

³See Carr and Jordan, *Maryland's Revolution*, p. 200.

⁴For the longest such list of grievances, divided into sections on Lord Baltimore, his deputies, judges, and ministers (fifty-three charges altogether), see William Hand Browne *et al.* (eds.), *Archives of Maryland* (Baltimore, 1883–), VIII, 215–220 (hereafter cited as *Md. Archives*).

president only recently arrived in the colony bearing his commission from Baltimore, who had returned to England in 1684, launched that session with a lecture aimed especially at the Lower House.⁵ Beginning, "there is no power but of God and the Power by which we are assembled here is undoubtedly Derived from God, to the King, and from the King to his Excellency the Lord Proprietary and from his said Lordship to Us," Joseph outlined the legislative tasks before the Assembly. While Joseph's prologue may have been well conceived as a statement of divine-rights theory, it was seriously inappropriate to the realities of Maryland's political situation. The agenda he presented to the Assembly for their legislative attention was equally offensive: to declare the birthday of James II's young Catholic prince a day for provincial thanksgiving; to prohibit the exportation of bulk tobacco, and thereby improve the lot of large planters at the expense of many smaller planters; and to ensure the proper collection of the proprietor's fees. Joseph closed his address with yet another unfortunate demand:

That you and every one of you (as I for Example will) take the Oath of Fidelity to the Right Honourable the Lord Proprietary as the Law Directs which if any refuse to do the Government will according to that Law proceed, for if you Obey not the Laws that are made, who, think you, will obey the Laws that [you] are to make? So God in his Mercy Direct you as before is prayed.

And there he ended his speech.⁶

Joseph's demand that the Lower House take the oath of fidelity raised resentments over the proprietor's monarchical pretensions and froze all other business for five full days. The delegates simply refused. In mock innocence, they pointed out that

they cannot find nor do know of any Law of this Province nor any precedent of former times of former Assemblies that any such Oath was ever imposed upon the Lower House of Assembly as they were the Representative Body of the Province. But if the Upper House know or have any Law Imposing such Oath upon this house they are desired to Communicate the same.

The Lower House further observed philosophically that oaths were taken by individuals only, not by legislative bodies. The Upper House retorted

⁵William Joseph appeared before the Governor's Council on October 3, 1688, bearing a letter from Baltimore requiring the Council to recognize him as appointed to "preside upon all occasion of business either in my Council or Provincial Court there, and accordingly have named him first in a Commission which he will deliver to you." *Md. Archives*, VIII, 8.

⁶The text of his speech, delivered November 14, 1688, is found in *Md. Archives*, XIII, 147–153.

that the Assembly members were being asked to take the oath as individuals, and that if they desired to be delicate about their privileges, that was fine, but no business would get done in the meanwhile. For the next several days, progressively more threatening messages flew back and forth between the two houses. The Lower House refused to attend the Upper House when desired to do so, but eventually conceded; Joseph vaguely hinted that the behavior of the Lower House bordered on treason; the Lower House replied with a salvo of resolutions. Joseph resolved the impasse on November 17 by proroguing the Assembly for two days. During those days, the members of the Lower House all took the oath of fidelity—except for Thomas Thurstone, a Quaker—as private citizens.⁷

The Lower House quickly irked Joseph again. Ignoring the legislative agenda he had presented to it, the Lower House submitted its own. The Assemblymen urged adoption of their eight-point program “in the name of the Inhabitants and freemen of this Province [who] Complain of Several grievances and Burthens which we now feel and Lye under.” Most of their program addressed economic grievances—high fees, lack of coin—while complaining as well about inadequate legal representation and the difficulties of attending provincial court sessions in the dead of winter. The Upper House responded politely, indicating that such were complicated matters, requiring careful study.⁸ But when the Assembly concluded its work early in December, it had voted on a number of laws. Maryland would henceforth observe the royal birthday every tenth of June. Linen and woolen clothmaking was encouraged, as was the sowing of hemp and flax. The delegates funded statehouse repairs and paid themselves. The Lower House’s request concerning the “burthens” under which the people groaned remained untouched.⁹

By March, 1689, new problems presented themselves: rumors of an Indian invasion electrified the colony. Reports circulated depicting an army of unfamiliar Indians massing for an attack. One rumor warned of nine thousand Indians “landed at the mouth of Patuxen River and 900 more landed at Choptico, who it was said had killed severall of the Inhabitants.” Another rumor in Anne Arundell County agreed “that there is nine thousand French and Senecoës at Capt Bournes upon the Clifts.” Still another

⁷The disagreement stretched from November 14 to 19 (*Md. Archives, XIII*, 154–163; quotation at p. 156).

⁸Text of grievances delivered to the Upper House on November 22, 1688, is at *Md. Archives, XIII*, 171–173; see also p. 174.

⁹Texts of Acts passed by the 1688 session at *Md. Archives, XIII*, 210–227.

urged that "Major Bell liveing at the head of Patuxen River above thirty miles above him had discovered a fort of foreigne Indians being in number as he could guess ten thousand."¹⁰

The Council immediately dispatched several trusted militia commanders to investigate these mounting rumors. All proved false. The Council soon discovered, however, that the reports of an Indian invasion came swaddled in layers of religious paranoia. Maryland's Roman Catholics were allegedly allied with French Canadian Catholics and their Indian clients to massacre Maryland's Protestant colonists. Several drunk Indians reportedly blurted out, "that they were hyred or Employed by Coll Henry Darnall"—a Catholic—"to fight against the English," although the Indians later denied this story after they sobered up. A similar rumor bubbled up from Stafford County, Virginia: "the Catholics and Indians have plotted together to disturb [and] cutt off all the protestants in the province, and the Indians doe already appeare, and begin to Inform themselves at the head of the [Patuxent] River." Important members of the Governor's Council were likewise implicated in the plot. Catholic Councillor Henry Darnall was said to be one of the "great men of Maryland [who] hath hired the Seneca Indians to kill the Protestants." William Pye, another Catholic Councilman, was whispered to have hoped "before Easter day to wash his hands in the protestants blood," and was further rumored to have fled the colony to avoid being around while the Indians did his dirty work for him. The governor and council worked frantically to demonstrate the rumors false, and their efforts met with some success. A petition from the Cliffs in Calvert County certified that

the late feares and disturbances raised concerning nine thousand Indians French and papists landed at the mouth of patuxen is utterly false and was only a wicked report raised as wee are well satisfied by some evil minded persons only to make dissention in this province.

Some few clearly believed the Catholic Council's explanation that the invasion was only a malicious hoax, but the alleged complicity of several of the Catholic Councilmen in the conspiracy doubtless rendered their assurances suspect for many others.¹¹

Within weeks of the reports of an Indian-Roman Catholic-French conspiracy, a new problem confronted Joseph and his Council, eclipsing the division between the houses of the Assembly and the rumors of an Indian

¹⁰*Md. Archives, VIII, 84, 93, 94.*

¹¹*Md. Archives, VIII, 71, 72, 77, 78, 85, 91, 94.*

war: the Protestant Associators had marched. While their origins are obscure, the failure of the Council to proclaim the accession of William and Mary galvanized them into action. They coalesced in Charles, Calvert, and St. Mary's Counties in July. Led by John Coode, a former Anglican minister with a long-standing grudge against the proprietor, the Associators marched to St. Mary's City and picked up recruits along the way. Although alerted, provincial militia men refused to fight and often defected. The Associators issued a manifesto on July 25, detailing their grievances with the proprietary government, grievances which included many of the same complaints lodged by the Lower House of the Assembly in its remonstrance of the previous November but which added to them complaints concerning Baltimore's consistent favoritism of his fellow Catholics. Faced with defections from the provincial militia and the support tendered the Associators—one ship's captain donated cannons to them, for example—the Council surrendered on August first.¹²

While the exact tactics by which the Associator leadership persuaded small planters to join them in rebellion are obscure at this distance, the manifesto the leadership issued at the end of July undoubtedly summarizes the arguments they had urged on the small planters and others from the lower Western Shore. Their catalogue of "the injustice and tyranny under which we groan" detailed their constitutional, economic, and religious complaints. The document claimed that Charles Calvert had usurped prerogatives properly belonging only to the King; had ignored his own charter's mandate to establish churches in conformity with the ecclesiastical laws of England, erecting instead churches "to the use of popish Idolatry and superstition"; and had tinkered with Assembly membership, subverted the courts, and poisoned the laws. The complaint likewise capitalized on a host of miscellaneous complaints, ranging from the high fees for provincial officers to discontent over the murder of a royal customs official by a Catholic Councilman. Finally, the document explained that "wee have

¹²*Md. Archives*, VIII, 67–69. Carr and Jordan, in accounting for the Council's failure to proclaim the accession of William and Mary, write, "It is less likely, however, that the councillors were withholding the order of proclamation; indeed, it is doubtful that they ever received one. Lord Baltimore later explained to English officials that his messenger had died at Plymouth. Baltimore claimed to have dispatched a duplicate dated February 27, 1688/89, but no trace of that document has survived" (Carr and Jordan, *Maryland's Revolution*, p. 52). Charles M. Andrews doubted that "a duplicate was actually sent, or if sent, was received, or if received was ever acted upon" (Charles M. Andrews, *The Colonial Period of American History* [New Haven, 1934], II, 372). For the best account of the origins of the rebellion of 1689, see chapter 2 of Carr and Jordan's *Maryland Revolution*.

great reason to think ourselves in eminent danger by the practises and machinacons that are on foot to betray us to the French, Northern, and other Indians,” and thus set the local conflict in Maryland against the larger stage of international politics where England and France were at war. Issued by the prominent revolutionary leaders—John Coode, Kenelm Cheseldyne, Nehemiah Blakiston, and Henry Jowles, among others—the charges contained in this document captured in one sweep the wide variety of concerns expressive of the small planters’ discontents. Even those planters who could not bring themselves to take up arms seem to have been in substantial agreement with these charges against the government of Maryland’s Catholic proprietor; the provincial militia collapsed when many of its Protestant members refused “to fight for the papists against themselves”—a measure of the success of the Associators in casting problems in religious terms.¹³

Two points concerning these charges are especially significant. First, while each individual charge was important enough by itself, together they constituted a cluster of charges all too familiar to Protestant Englishmen because the charges describe perfectly the perceived threat of a Catholic prince: the destruction of honored English traditions and liberties; the assault on property rights; the perversion of true religion; and the link with a foreign Catholic power. Second, none of these charges was especially new in 1689. All already had their own history within Maryland. It is worthwhile to consider several previous episodes in which these various fears appeared in order to see how they fit together and described both long-standing grievances and generalized Protestant fears of Catholic misrule, fears born first in England but successfully transplanted to Maryland.

On September 3, 1676, a rebellion erupted in Maryland’s Calvert County. William Davies, William Gent, Giles Hasleham, and John Pate brought together a force of about sixty men on the “Plantation of Thomas Barbery” and read to them a letter they had written to the Provincial Council urging the Council to look carefully to the “liberties of the freemen of this Province.” Hearing of this uprising, the Council ordered the rebels to “lay downe & yield up their Armes & to retire to their own houses,” and promised that it would look into their complaints. The rebels rejected the Council’s overture, and Davies and his troops “did from thence march away with drummes beateing and Collours flying in despight and defiance of his Lordshippes government and to the Terror of the good people of this Province.” The Council issued a sterner ultimatum, offering a general par-

¹³*Md. Archives, VIII*, 101, 102, 105, 148.

don except to the leaders if the rebels would come in, lay down their arms, and declare their intention to “forebears all further Acts of Hostility, mutiny, or sedition.”¹⁴

The rebels ignored this demand as well. In response, the Council dispatched Major Henry Jowles (a future Associator leader) with a militia company. The rebels met them “with their Gunns cocked and presented.” After a brief skirmish, Jowles and his troops dispersed the rebels. Davies and another leader sought sanctuary in Delaware with the militia in hot pursuit; it seized them “out of his royal Hignes Government by force,” and returned them to Maryland. Davies was later “convicted, attainted & executed for feloniously raising warr insurreccon & rebellion against his Lordship his Governor & Government of this Province, whereby the said Goods & Chattells are become forfeited unto his Lordship.” Afterwards, several of the erstwhile rebels came into St. Mary’s City and begged pardon for their participation.¹⁵

Why did these men rebel? Unfortunately, the declaration Davies read to his troops—which the Council dismissed as a “certaine Seditious paper”—has not survived.¹⁶ Later that same year, however, a long letter addressed to the King of England surfaced: “A Complaint from Heaven with a Huy and Crye and a petition out of Virginia and Maryland.” Given its laudatory references to Davies, this letter probably reflects the points Davies had made that September.¹⁷ It indicted Lord Baltimore on count after count: he abused his charter rights and corrupted the political life of the colony; he enriched himself and ruined the people through burdensome taxation; he failed to provide for the spiritual well-being of Maryland’s Protestant majority, advancing instead the cause of popery; and he conspired with hostile Indian tribes and the French to slaughter the province’s Protestants.

The fears reflected in the “Complaint from heaven” were nothing if not broad and far-reaching. According to it, scarcely any element of life had escaped corruption at the proprietor’s hand. Political life had become a cruel mockery of English liberties through Baltimore’s personal desire to make a monarch out of himself; he put “himselve in equall computation with his Court of Armes, next to the Kings Majesty”; he issued writs and warrants in his own name, not the King’s; and he demanded “that all men shall swear Alleagiance and supremacy under the Tittle of Fidelity to the

¹⁴*Md. Archives*, XV, 128, 129.

¹⁵*Md. Archives*, XV, 131, 344, V, 143, LXVII, 96, 97, 248, LXVIII, 71–72.

¹⁶*Md. Archives*, XV, 127.

¹⁷Text of the letter is at *Md. Archives*, V, 134–154 (reference to Davies is on p. 143).

Lord proprietary," an honor due to the King alone. His council, the letter said, was little better, but what could be expected of a cabal of relatives and fellow papists? He had appointed

Young child Charles Baltemore about 9. or 10 years of age Governor . . . a son in law Deputy Governor in Maryland Philip Calvert, Pukly Chancellor, William Calvert nephew, secretary, Brooks surveyor generall, kindsman . . . with perhaps a son in law or kindred more.

He corrupted the Assembly by issuing writs of election for four delegates from each county and then "pikt out [only two of these four] for his purpos, viz. either papists, owne creatures and familiars or ignoramuses." With the Lower House emasculated, "the upper house . . . prescribes what the lower house is to consent to," and the wishes and needs of the people went ignored. Baltimore's laws served himself and "his selfe interest irrevocable and perpetuall" alone. He bought off local officials, such as the county sheriffs, "which my Lord puts in and out, when, whome, and howe long him pleased, contrary to the custom of England" as well as "provincial and privat councellors and Collonells and Cheef Officers . . . [who] judge, advise and maintaine the Lord Proprietary's devises in his privat enterprises." His wholesale crucifixion of responsive political institutions, one tell-tale sign of a Catholic despot, had, in the words of the "Complaint," brought about "the oppression and ruyn of many of the Kinge's poor subjects."¹⁸

The letter further lamented the economic difficulties of Maryland's common people: "Have wee not given him gratitud and doth his quitt rent not amount to a vast sum of mony, besides port dutys, fines, escheats, entring, clearing and takeing of ships and vessels, item licenses, fees, merchandizing, and a great many other immunities besides?" Specifically, the "Complaint" charged that Baltimore pocketed taxes designed to provide for the provincial defense, having thereby "overcharged the Country . . . 290000 pounds of tobacco and perswaded afterwards the Assembly men not to call him to an account for it, but give it [to] him." At other times he "defrauded the Country of severall thousands of pounds of tobacco which was leavied and Hee intrusted to provide a magazyn for the country's defense." Thus, he

¹⁸Quotations taken from *Md. Archives*, 137–141. On the political aspects and implications of anti-Catholicism in Tudor-Stuart England, see Michael G. Finlayson, *Historians, Puritanism and the English Revolution: The Religious Factor in English Politics before and after the Interregnum* (Toronto, 1983), especially chapters 4 and 5; J. R. Jones, *County and Court: England, 1658–1714* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1978), pp. 40ff.; Roger Lockyer, *Tudor and Stuart Britain, 1471–1714* (London, 1964), pp. 186–187, 231; and John Miller, *Popery and Politics in England, 1660–1688* (Cambridge, 1973).

not only stole money rightly belonging to the province, but left the colony vulnerable to Indian attack as well, undoubtedly the larger goal of his cavalier mismanagement of the province's defense funds. His act for establishing towns—supposedly to improve the market for Maryland tobacco by decreasing the tobacco ships' turnaround time—was portrayed as an elaborate scheme for grabbing lands and fees. His clever ways of draining off the money within the province through excessive taxation had settled upon the colonists' shoulders the "burthens of Oppression and Taxation," another mark of Catholic misrule.¹⁹

Not only did Lord Baltimore achieve the economic ruin of the colonists and corrupt the provincial government to make of himself "an absolute prince over the King's freeborn Subjects of England"; the letter likewise charged that he had encouraged the growth of "papacy (whereby our posterity will bee brought either to becom pageans or papists) for protestant Ministry is rather depressed then advanced, sometimes not beeing above 2. or 3. orthodox Ministers in the whole province and sometimes none at all." The "Complaint" interpreted the Act of Religion of 1649 as a ruse "to turne the Province to the Pope's devotion." The Council was a "popish chamber" hatching anti-Protestant plots at the behest of "the secret Councell of priests." Papists dominated the Assembly, and Jesuit priests "appare in their plus ultra in their chapples," and "dispers themselves all over the Country in America." It was rumored that the priests had "5. pounds sterling for every turnecoate they convert, good reason they make all the haste they can to set the protestants at odds, to propagate the Pope's interest and supremacy in America." "But will not this in time overturne the Protestants," the anonymous writer went on to warn, "for it is decreed to bring them first into a confusion and ruynated nothing, and then cutt off the ashes, the Pope shall spring aloft and my Lord Baltemore will be canonised at Rome."²⁰

¹⁹*Md. Archives*, V, 144, 136, 136, 142. It was a commonplace of the English anti-Catholic tradition that Catholics would seize the monastery lands taken from them by Henry VIII and that this tremendous reconfiscation of property would reshape social order in many localities, where countless gentry and minor nobility had used these lands for upward mobility. Further, others (like Anthony Ashley Cooper, the Earl of Shaftesbury, and those in his circle) held that Catholic princes attack property rights as a way of eliminating opposing sources of political power. See, for example, J. R. Jones, *The Revolution of 1688 in England* (New York, 1972), pp. 75ff.; Christopher Hill, *The Collected Essays of Christopher Hill*, Volume Two: *Religion and Politics in 17th Century England*, pp. 26ff.; and Lockyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 349–351.

²⁰Quotations taken from *Md. Archives*, V, 137–147. On Catholic hostility to English Protestantism, see Hugh Trevor-Roper, *Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans: Seventeenth Century Essays* (Chicago, 1988), Christopher Hill, *Anti-Christ in Seventeenth-Century England* (London, 1971), Miller, *op. cit.*, and Finlayson, *op. cit.*

The pattern of the themes of the "Complaint" are clear. Dissatisfaction over Lord Baltimore's leadership was first among them. The letter castigated Baltimore as not behaving toward the colonists as a responsible governor ought, but, rather, as using politics to his own advantage and taxation and fees to enhance his own economic position. He was, in short, a tyrant. Additional dissatisfaction arose over Baltimore's neglect of Protestantism. This was in some ways a species of the previous concern—Baltimore did not care about their religion any more than he cared about their political rights or their economic well-being—but this religious complaint also went deeper. The rebels believed that his goal was to smash Protestantism in the colony, and that he moved in many ways to do this, but accomplished it chiefly by subverting the Protestants already in Maryland. In other words, he was not just a tyrant in general but a specifically Catholic tyrant.²¹

Five years later, in 1681, a widespread incident of civil unrest in Charles County demonstrated that these varied concerns could again combine and explode in social disorder. The principal actors were three—John Coode, Josias Fendall, and George Godfrey—but the issues reflected in the conflict were many. In different ways, the affair illuminated the conflict between the Lower House of the Assembly and the proprietor, fear of Indian attacks, the Protestant suspicion of Catholic plans for the destruction of the colony, the increasing troubles of the poor in Maryland, concern over the amount and use of taxes, distrust of the great men of the province whom Baltimore had used to build his web of control within the government, and the corresponding lack of faith in the central government that inevitably grew. Fendall's and Coode's seditions and Godfrey's abortive rebellion underline how all of these concerns formed one image of threat for many small planters, an image organized around the central theme of Catholic subversion.

Rumors of impending troubles had circulated around the colony for several years before events came to a head in June, 1681. A Council inquiry in 1680, for example, revealed that Dr. James Barry, a Catholic, got drunk and shot his mouth off at the home of John Coode. Barry excoriated one of the guests for keeping Christmas with "heretics" and boasted that Colonel Darnall was prepared to lead a troop of over one hundred Catholics in three days time to begin the destruction of the Protestants. He illustrated what he and his fellow Catholics would shortly be doing by drawing his penknife, whetting it on his boots, and gazing longingly at the throat of one

²¹See, for example, Robin Clifton, "The Popular Fear of Catholics during the English Revolution," *Past and Present*, No. 52 (August, 1971), 24–55.

of the other guests. Barry's drunken threats deeply concerned the Council, doubtless because they could be potent propaganda in the hands of Coode and other Protestants disaffected with the government.²² At about the same time, several people overheard former governor and proprietary foe Josias Fendall call Baltimore a traitor and urge them not to pay their taxes. He also vaguely hinted that he would soon return to power. These rumors and threats were shortly augmented by ill news of a different, though related, sort: several people reported that they had heard that some Irish were being invited to settle in Maryland, and that these projected settlers were really the vanguard of an Irish army out to "cutt the Protestant throats," and, further, that this plot had been hatched by Baltimore and one of his most trusted aides, Council President and fellow Roman Catholic, George Talbot.²³

By the middle of June, 1681, additional rumors of northern Indians infiltrating Maryland also concerned the Council. Reports alleged that a boy in Charles County out pasturing a horse chanced to run across an Indian who told him that the Seneca were advancing in large numbers at the invitation of "those English called the Romans" to join in a slaughter of the Protestants. Within days, these fears of an Indian invasion received an apparent confirmation with the murder of several people at Point Lookout in St. Mary's County by Indians. The outraged and terrified colonists soon discovered yet another reason for fear: some people whispered that "it was not Indians" who had committed the crime, "but People of their own Physiognomy or complexion dressed up in Indian habitt."²⁴ The rumors added up. Catholics, Irish, and Indians pointed in one direction: Maryland's Roman Catholics had at last swung into action.

Well aware of the rumors circulating and the need for keeping the population as calm as possible during the Indian crisis, the Council apprehended two well-known leaders of anti-proprietary discontent, John Coode and Josias Fendall. Both had been associated with the rumor that a Catholic conspiracy had at last been activated, and the Council hoped to scotch these rumors by isolating the two men it regarded as their source. Witnesses against Fendall alleged at his arraignment that he had said on numerous occasions after the mid-June murders that a conspiracy of papists and Indians was the real problem, and that Lord Baltimore countenanced the murders. Other witnesses testified that Fendall had said to at least one

²²*Md. Archives*, XV, 269–273.

²³*Md. Archives*, XV, 31, 348.

²⁴*Md. Archives*, XV, 419–420, XVII, 51.

family headed out of the colony in the hopes of finding land to buy (they reported not being able to “gett a piece of land here in Maryland”), that soon land in Maryland would be plentiful enough after Fendall led a rebellion against the papists and dispossessed them of land they monopolized. Still other testimony suggested that Fendall was preparing to move his wife and family south into Virginia until the bloodletting he planned in Maryland had ended. Coode was likewise charged with “mutinous and Seditious speeches Practises and Attempts tending to the Breach of the Peace,” and both men were scheduled to stand trial late in the summer.²⁵

If the Council hoped that jailing Coode and Fendall would stop the rumors and give it a free hand to deal with the actual problem of the Indian raids, they were very much mistaken. Discontent over the imprisonments spread throughout Charles County. Letters arrived at the Council describing the general unrest there. Some claimed that Fendall and Coode were both about to be executed as part of the continuing plot of the Catholics to subdue the Protestants by murdering their leaders. Others wondered and worried over the comings and goings of northern Indians throughout the countryside who (it was said) carried with them large packets of letters from the Seneca in Canada to their allies in Virginia, with Maryland’s Jesuit clergy acting as go-betweens. Finally, George Godfrey, a Justice of the Peace and commander of a troop of horse in the county militia decided to act. He organized unhappy planters into a militia company to march to St. Mary’s City to rescue Fendall and Coode from the proprietary government.²⁶

Godfrey hoped to lead his men on their rescue mission by mid-July, 1681, but some of his men held him off, saying that it was their understanding that Fendall was out on bail. Godfrey disagreed but promised, nevertheless, to wait, though not for very long. He announced that on the following Sunday he would go to the church and “gett what men he could there to joyne with those men he had already for to meete him in armes at Church that soe they might meete the troope at the head of Portobacco Creek on Monday,” and head to St. Mary’s City to secure Fendall’s and Coode’s release. Word spread quickly, and the men who came to church that Sunday came expecting to march with Godfrey. After tying up several of the Catholic members of the county militia to prevent them from warning the Council and making sure that the local “chyrurgion” came along with his “plaisters and Medicines,” Godfrey headed off with his thirty or forty men, some described as “poor” or “housekeepers” only.²⁷

²⁵*Md. Archives*, XV, 388–391, 399, VII, 112; quotations at XV, 309, VII, 112.

²⁶*Md. Archives*, XV, 407–408, 410–411.

²⁷*Md. Archives*, XV, 400–404, VII, 140, XVII, 50–51.

The Council had been forewarned, however, and immediately crushed the incipient rebellion, dispersed Godfrey's men, and captured Godfrey. His trial, and those of Fendall and Coode, occurred at the end of October and in early November. While transcripts are not extant for Coode's or Godfrey's, Fendall's transcript has survived and provides an interesting look at the political consequences of Catholic government and the widespread dissatisfaction over it. The trial of Fendall reiterated the charges brought against him when he was accused of spreading rumors earlier in the summer, but added to them additional testimony which alleged that Fendall had described Baltimore's calling in of the local militia's arms immediately before the Indian attack, ostensibly for repair, as a clever way of disarming the people and leaving them vulnerable to the Indians. Other witnesses depicted Fendall as hoping that the tobacco cutters from Virginia—a movement of mostly poor ex-servants there who destroyed tobacco crops in the hopes of bouying up prices in subsequent years—"would come over . . . and levell us all alike." The trial itself points to the fears a Protestant had of papist justice. After pleading not guilty and demanding a jury trial, Fendall objected to every Catholic juror on the basis of his religion alone and demanded that each be replaced by a Protestant juror. Each was. Although Fendall insisted on his innocence throughout the trial, he was convicted of "speaking seditious words without force or Practice." Godfrey was likewise convicted though Coode was acquitted. The court banished Fendall from the colony, freed Coode with a stern warning to keep a closer watch on what he said, and sentenced Godfrey to be hanged. Godfrey's sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment, and then commuted again to banishment.²⁸

Three years later, an unfortunate incident involving George Talbot, one of Baltimore's Catholic Councilmen and his cousin besides, raised all these fears of Catholic conspiracy and misgovernment again and provided the incipient Protestant Associators with an important symbol of popish hostility to free, English government. Shortly after Baltimore left the province for England in 1684 to defend his charter boundaries against William Penn, Talbot involved the Council in a catastrophe that only emphasized to many

²⁸*Md. Archives*, XVII, 121–122. For the trial records of Fendall, see *Md. Archives*, V, 312–334 (quotation from p. 327). For Godfrey's eventual banishment, see XVII, 66–67. Rumors seem to have persisted for a few months after the convictions of Fendall and Godfrey, and these rumors indicated strong discontent over the verdicts they received. Thomas Marshall, for example, was a mill owner in Charles County who bragged that he would shortly get an army together and march on St. Mary's City and kill several prominent men in the colony, including Lord Baltimore. Marshall was arrested and ordered held in irons, though whether he came to trial or not is unclear (XVII, 69, 81). See also VII, 112–113, 115–116, 135–139.

of the colonists the inevitable conflict between a Catholic governor and a Protestant kingdom. On October 31, 1684, Talbot boarded the ketch *The Quaker*, then anchored in the Patuxent River. The collector of the King's customs, Christopher Rousby, was on board talking with the ship's captain, Thomas Allen. Rousby and Talbot quarreled; Talbot's temper flared, and "in the height of passion," he stabbed Rousby, who died.²⁹ Allen clapped Talbot in irons immediately and refused repeated attempts of the Council to gain custody of Talbot for trial in Maryland.

Allen sneered at their arguments. He refused to recognize any authority on board his ship but that of the King, and indicated that he would carry Talbot to Virginia to stand trial under the banner of the King's justice. He fully realized how news of the murder of the King's customs officer by the Maryland Council president would be received, boasting over a bowl of punch that the proprietary charter was no longer "worth a pinn, and that there were a greate many of hungry Courtiers that would jump at the news of Rousby's death, being killed by the hands of Coll Talbot, being a man Intrusted by my Lord." Allen seems, in fact, to have relished the thought.³⁰

The Maryland Council desperately sought to undo the damage Talbot had done. They fired off several letters to Lord Effingham, Virginia's Governor, hoping to arrange for Talbot's extradition to Maryland for trial. Effingham refused, arguing in a curt, formal letter that Talbot's crime had been committed on a royal officer aboard a royal ship, and Talbot would consequently sit in a royal jail until the royal pleasure was known. The Maryland Council countered with a renewed request, pointing out their own abhorrence of the crime and emphasizing their great "affection to his Majestie," as well as their fond hope of affording "the best of our aid and assistance to any of his Officers." Effingham issued a perfunctory denial, and the Council dispatched a letter to Baltimore in England, apprising him of the problems and the danger of the murder being used as a weapon against him.³¹

The case became still more complicated on February 10, 1685, when Talbot escaped from his Virginia prison. Talbot's wife and servants apparently bribed his jailer to engineer the escape. Within weeks, rumors in both Virginia and Maryland had it that Talbot had been spotted several times in Maryland in and around his home in Cecil County. Yet, despite the general alert issued throughout the province for Talbot's capture, he was free for a

²⁹*Md. Archives, XVII*, 299, 480; quotation at p. 480.

³⁰*Md. Archives, XVII*, 334, 341-343; see also pp. 299, 300, 302-303, 305.

³¹Text of Lord Effingham's letter to the Maryland Council is at *Md. Archives, XVII*, 324; text of the Maryland Council's letter to Lord Baltimore is at pp. 341-343; see also p. 329.

full three months before he finally turned himself in to the sheriff of Anne Arundel County. The conclusion was inescapable: Talbot had been free for so long because the Maryland Council had had no real wish to apprehend him. In Virginia, Effingham was furious. He sent the Maryland Council a caustic letter highly critical of their efforts to retake Talbot, wondering at “their slow proceedings in the service wherein his Majestie is soe concerned,” and hoping that they would “take of all occasions of future trouble both unto me and you of this nature, by manifesting your selves zealous for his Majesties service.” Effingham became angrier still when he discovered that the Maryland Council had no intention of returning Talbot to Virginia. He demanded Talbot’s return “forthwith,” but the Council responded that Talbot would remain in Maryland until “his Majesties commands concerning him” became known.³²

By early July, the King ordered that Talbot be brought to England to stand trial and informed Lord Baltimore of this wish. Baltimore accordingly directed the Council to send Talbot back to Virginia to await a ship to take him to England. The Council did so when it received his instructions in October. Within the next several months, however, new orders arrived ordering Talbot’s trial to be held in Virginia, and the trial was accordingly held on April 20, 1686, at James City. Talbot was found guilty of “feloniously” killing Christopher Rousby, contrary to “the peace of our said Sovereign Lord the King his Crown and Dignity.” Although Talbot pleaded that he had not planned his action, the court sentenced him to death. However, a year later, Talbot had not yet been executed, and the case took an interesting turn: the King pardoned Talbot on the condition that he be banished from Maryland. The Virginia General Court did not like pardoning a murderer, but had no choice. The Court read Talbot’s pardon and released him after first delivering a “grave and serious admonition” urging Talbot to a “heartly and thorough Repentence of the great offence against God Almighty.”³³

The complaints against the proprietary government that these three disturbances elicited are strikingly similar to the arguments the Protestant Associators must have urged as they broadened their support. Throughout his reign, Charles Calvert, the third Lord Baltimore, was perceived as a closet tyrant by some, his actions often occasioning speculation regarding their real but hidden purpose. But the general themes to which these criticisms from 1676 to 1689 can be reduced—Baltimore’s undermining of

³²*Md. Archives, XVII*, 343–345, 355–357, 369–371, 378.

³³*Md. Archives, XVII*, 477, 479–481; quotations at pp. 479, 481.

representative government and his autocratic pretensions, his subversion of Maryland's Protestants in his hostility to their faith, and his enriching himself at the expense of the province—are not criticisms leveled only at him, or even criticisms leveled only in Maryland. They are the important elements of contemporary English anti-Catholicism. For English Protestants during the Restoration, England's particular national genius, its very way of life, was symbolized by the trinity of Parliament, Protestantism, and property. Hence, England's national foe—which was always Rome, no matter what particular national intermediary (Spain, France) it happened to be working through at a given time—must, logically, oppose this trinity. Hence, the Catholic enemy could be predicted to strike at these three in its attempt to destroy the obstacle that England was to Rome's goal of re-Catholicizing Europe and thereby ruling the world. English Protestants who emigrated to Maryland in large numbers during the Restoration in search of land and opportunity brought this national ideology with them. And what did they discover when they got there? A frontier skirmish of England's wider war. At one and the same instant, this similarity reveals two levels to the deep cultural currents which bound together Englishmen on both sides of the Atlantic: their hopes for an Imperial future and their fear that that future might not come to pass. Salient enough in Restoration England with all of its various instabilities, how much more keenly must English Protestants have experienced this fear in the rude, hard-scrabble, and alien world of seventeenth-century Maryland.³⁴

The supposed Catholic-French-Indian plots to overrun Maryland, for example, illustrate how the continued immigration into the Chesapeake supplied the mechanism by which traditional English anti-Catholic stereotypes were imported into Maryland, and, once there, formed a prism

³⁴The work of Richard Hofstadter and others on the "paranoid style" is relevant here. See his *The Paranoid Style in American Politics, and Other Essays* (New York, 1965). Also see Gordon Wood, "Conspiracy and the Paranoid Style: Causality and Deceit in the Eighteenth Century," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d. ser., XXXIX (1982), 401–441. Useful discussions of the ideological value of negative stereotypes are found in the works of David Brion Davis. See especially his two works, "Some Themes of Counter-Subversion: An Analysis of Anti-Masonic, Anti-Catholic, and Anti-Mormon Literature," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XLVII (1960), 205–224, and "Some Ideological Functions of Prejudice in Ante-Bellum America," *American Quarterly*, XV (1963), 115–125. On similar social-psychological interpretations of Tudor-Stuart anti-Catholicism, see B. S. Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men: A Study in Seventeenth Century English Millenarianism* (Totowa, New Jersey, 1972), pp. 32–35; William Haller, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation* (London, 1963), pp. 244–245; and Carol Z. Wiener, "The Beleaguered Isle: A Study of Elizabethan and Early Jacobean Anti-Catholicism," *Past and Present*, No. 51 (May, 1971), 27–62.

through which local events could be viewed.³⁵ Generations of Protestant pamphleteers and preachers had insisted that Catholics were not to be trusted because they were, in some very fundamental sense, un-English, even foreigners, owing to their allegiance to the pope. This connection—first made by Henry VIII, and then forged with the help of Pius V through his excommunication of Elizabeth and the simultaneous enunciation of the papal deposing power—continued to grow throughout the seventeenth century, nurtured by ill-conceived alliances between English Catholics and the Spanish, the Irish, and, finally, the French. By the late Restoration, with the emergence of France as the Catholic power obviously aiming at continental conquest, the French had been identified as the chief agents of the papal will in the covert program to refound Catholic Christendom, and Louis XIV as the primary engineer of this papal desire and the primary example as well of the inevitable tyranny of Catholic rule.³⁶

As international events became increasingly threatening throughout the 1680's and, after William's invasion of England when England and France were actually at war, the response in Maryland was the proliferation of rumors suggesting an alliance of Maryland's Catholics with the French and their Indian troops to encircle Maryland and deliver the colony to the French army. In one sense, those Marylanders who regarded their colony as singled out by the French and their Catholic and Indian allies for attack probably demonstrated by that fear their own deep desire to see Maryland considered an intimate part of England. These rumors suggest that, wherever they were—in England or in Maryland—English Catholics were held to be a fifth column taking orders from their Frenchified priests.

Thus, in an environment where Catholic and Quaker dissenters enjoyed notable success and prominence, and where Catholics especially were numbered among the great men of the colony, the various English anti-Catholic themes found a likely place to grow. To some degree, Baltimore's government was guilty of the charges against it, but the breadth and pervasiveness of the accusations suggest that much more was involved. By the 1680's in Maryland, an anti-Catholic ideology was in place which built upon the English anti-Catholic tradition, fused the fears and concerns of many main-

³⁵See Carr and Jordan, *Maryland's Revolution*, pp. 226–227.

³⁶During the Restoration, a French-Catholic bogey replaced the earlier Spanish-Catholic one for English Protestants, and the “French connection” is a steady theme of Restoration anti-Catholicism, as various aspects of Louis XIV's absolutist, personal rule were depicted both as the inevitable end of Catholic rule and as the inevitable trajectory of Charles II's and James II's initiatives. See John Miller, *op. cit.*, and *County and Court* and *The Revolution of 1688*, both by J. R. Jones.

stream Protestant Maryland planters, and located the source of those fears in the proprietor and his Catholic governors.

It was the cruel, though perhaps innocent, genius of the Protestant Associator leaders that they were able effectively to unite these many sources of discontent—from the contraction of social and political opportunity, to the political innovations and ambitions of Charles Calvert, to dissatisfaction over high taxes and fees, to the threat hostile Indians posed, to the perennial concerns over the moribund state of the Anglican Church in the colony—within the general framework of English anti-Catholicism to create an ideology for small Maryland planters which enabled them to understand the world around them and act decisively upon that understanding. But, after all, that is what an ideology does. If that ideology was rudely oversimplified—and certainly Baltimore's supporters during the crisis perceived it as such, charging throughout that the Associator leadership manipulated these issues, especially the issue of the proprietor's religion, for their own manifestly political goals—it was nonetheless powerfully effective in raising an army, immobilizing the province militia, and bringing Lord Baltimore's government to an abrupt, if temporary, end.