

LATE on the evening of the defeat of the divorce amendment, strolling down through the sunlight of the town, I bumped into a leading member of the anti divorce campaign. Was he euphoric, I asked. Oh indeed he was, he smiled.

How did they intend to mark the occasion; a knees-up, surely not, concelebrated mass perhaps? No, no knees-up he agreed, sure he'd just been down at HQ and there they'd opened up six whole cans of beer and strung them out along the length of the table and nobody had touched them, drinking lemonade instead they were, the whole happy lot of them.



Emily O'Reilly

And no, it wouldn't be concelebrated mass, but a prayer service. There'd already been one, at seven. Packed it was too, 1,000 devout and euphoric souls sardined into the relieved and cosy gloom of the pro Cathedral.

A truly virtuous lot. No boozers, no carousers, simple people with simple values, off out to the church to bow their heads and thank God for having delivered them from the anti-Christ. Again.

So what's next on the cards I asked, knowing now from the experience of two referenda, that this awesomely efficient and committed lot had no intention of packing their rosary beads and marching off into the sunset leaving the 'liberals' to lick their wounds.

Well, he mused, grinning, if the government ever tried to liberalise the homosexuality laws... Ah look at your man he said, indicating a prominent pro divorce campaigner, sure he'd love the government to get

And if they try to liberalise the laws of homosexuality we'll nobble the government again

rid of Sections 60 and 61 of the Offences Against the Person Act, you know, homosexuals, ah you know (the words now accompanied by a nudge in the ribs and a leer), homos, queers.

Your man over there can't you see him, sitting on the minister's knee! And the guy nearly split himself from the laughter like a seven-year-old caught practising his latest dirty word in the school toilets.

The exchange was like a kick in the stomach; a gut churning revelation. Nothing these people had ever said or written had evoked with the nauseating clarity that those few words did the nature of the beast. Narrow, bigoted, anti-woman, anti-gay, anti everything that does not conform to their own straightjacketed, rigid, 'God given' version of how life should be lived.

'Compassion' a word they hijacked during the divorce campaign, was just that, a

word, an election tool, another stick to beat the opposition with. It meant nothing.

Three years ago, after their last victory, I asked Bernadette Bonar, of the anti-divorce movement, what issues she intended getting involved in, now that that battle was over. Oh well, she said, unmarried mothers, I'd like to help them and of course travellers, I'm very concerned about the travellers. That was three years ago. If Bernadette would like to tell me how far she's got, how many unmarried mothers and travellers she's helped, she knows how to contact me.

The entire divorce campaign, slick, sophisticated and very well funded, was based on the manipulation of quite different emotions, a cynical exploitation of people's greatest and most base fears, prejudices and snobberies. If to win meant scaring the living daylights out of impoverished, uneducated

women in the seedy half slums of Dublin's inner city flats, well so be it.

If to win meant whispering to the women in Foxrock that their husband's fat executive pensions might find their way into another woman's deposit account, well so be it.

• Great giggle

If to win meant leering at other women and asking them how they'd like to be called, horrors, a divorcee, well, that was all in the game plan too.

And at the end of every evening's canvassing, back they'd strut to HQ in South William Street for a lemonade and perhaps a chat with the Vatican and a great giggle over the terror they'd inflicted on the



• THEY inflicted terror on working class Dublin over the divorce referendum — now it's the homosexuals

working class of Dublin.

And now it's the homosexuals...

HOMOSEXUALS, you see, don't fit in. They don't conform. Homosexuals don't wear white dresses and morning suits and stride up blossom-heavy aisles with a man with a video recording it all and a priest there to bless their wedding bands. Homosexuals don't reproduce. They don't form de Valera type families. Homosexuals knock all the order out of 'normal', 'natural' life. They are uncontrollable. They threaten a social order that ordains a neat arrangement of property and pensions and inheritance and women. And especially women.

So what would happen if the government did decide to liberalise the laws relating to homosexuality? Well, no need for a referendum. Appealing to

the wisdom of the people would be out. (Imagine the poster:— HOMOSEXUALITY KILLS! — HOMOSEXUALITY = AIDS, VOTE NO!) Appeal instead to the dozens and dozens of TDs who that lot claim to have marked already as being 'sound' on this type of issue. Use again the politics of fear. Talk about sexual assault, talk about rape, talk about exploitation, talk about all the things that happen anyway to women (But ah sure that's only natural).

But above all, never once think of homosexuals as real people, as individuals with personalities and hang ups and talents and virtues and vices with people who love them and cherish them and care about them.

Never think about their hurt or their isolation or their confusion or even just their great, great sense of happiness and naturalness with their own sexuality.

• Real people

Never think of them as somebody's brother or somebody's sister or somebody's son or somebody's daughter. Never think that God, whatever God, loves every lesbian and every gay man just as much as he loves the heteros. Because God really is good. Think of them instead as unnatural, perverted monsters to be kept down. That'll help.

So Bernadette, and Des and John, just before you gather together once again in your neat little private homes in the lovely leafy, executive fat suburbs of Dublin South, patting yourselves on your christian backs for your great victory, and sit around a coffee table to plot the submission of the homosexuals, read first just one book, published last month, called *Out for Ourselves*. This is a book written by gays for gays. Read about real people just like you and me. Read about their lives.

Read about their pain, folks. And if after that you still, should the need arise, go ahead and seek to compound their pain, just ask yourselves one thing: This Frankenstein stalking the land, who is he really?