Church History (2023), **92**, 845–864
doi:10.1017/S0009640723002792

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Community and People in Catholic Thought, 1830–1870

Roberto Romani

Department of Political Sciences, University of Teramo, Italy
Email: rromani@unite.it

Abstract

Far from being limited to denunciations of modernity, nineteenth-century Catholic thought had a programmatic and visionary side. This article deals with the models of community put forward by Lamennais in *L'Avenir*, Antonio Rosmini, Luigi Taparelli d'Azeglio, and Wilhelm Ketteler. These writers reimagined the foundations of public life against the claims of self-interested individualism and state omnipotence. Three theses in particular capture their vision of the future polity: 1) societies, which were not "mechanisms," needed Catholicism as animating spirit; 2) political representation should be "organic"; and 3) whereas the liberal elites imposed their vested interests on the common people, the Catholic polity reflected their needs and beliefs. The four writers envisaged a community of the gentle and caring, which, like the family, was hierarchical, self-governed, local, and supportive. In contrast, it was argued that the people had no voice under liberalism because the elite's values were not the people's and because the political system was a mere arena for the clash of special interests. This was a communitarian and populist Catholicism, prizing self-government, denouncing parliamentary politics, and siding with "the people."

Keywords: Catholic community; Catholic populism; *L'Avenir*; Antonio Rosmini; Luigi Taparelli d'Azeglio; Wilhelm Ketteler; Joseph Görres

I. Varieties of Ultramontanism

The trauma of the French Revolution shaped nineteenth-century Catholicism. Since the 1790s, the "ultramontane" current advocated a return to a society imbued with religion and governed by rulers by divine right.[1] Authors such as Louis de Bonald, Joseph de Maistre, Monaldo Leopardi, or Gioacchino Ventura depicted a kind of spiritual civil war, going on between the "natural order" and its corruption in the form of a liberalism amounting to "revolutionary spirit." Those "throne and altar" ultramontanes looked backward for inspiration, in the belief that civilization had degenerated since the

[1]On the appropriateness of the term "ultramontanism," which was current in nineteenth-century Europe, see the different opinions of Philippe Boutry, "Papauté et culture au XIX[e] siècle: Magistère, orthodoxie, tradition," *Revue d'histoire du XIXe siècle* 28 (2004), 5–7, and Catherine L. Maire, "Quelques mots piégés en histoire religieuse moderne: Jansénisme, jésuitisme, gallicanisme, ultramontanisme," *Annales de l'Est* 1 (2007), 13–43.

Protestant schism, growing wealth notwithstanding. Leopardi went as far as suspecting that steam-powered machinery was ordained by God to cause mass unemployment and eventually the downfall of a sinful society.[2] Theirs was a world facing apocalypse because no truce was possible.

But ultramontanism evolved as the Restoration proceeded. Once it was universally recognized that a Catholic renaissance—a miraculous "rejuvenation" of the Church, fulfilling a prophecy of Maistre's—was occurring, Catholics' attitude altered.[3] The anger and frustration predominating until, say, the mid-1820s gradually gave way to feelings of hope and expectation. It was possible to look forward now, since God clearly intended soon to defeat atheism and revolution. Catholics could again shape European history, rather than deploring its course, and should do so from below, armed only with the faith. Correspondingly, the Roman religion's association with absolutism was shaken in many countries. Catholicism became a vehicle for reform, buttressing disparate political programs. In Risorgimento Italy, moderate liberalism was inspired by Catholicism; in Belgium, Ireland, and Poland, it underpinned nationalism; in Germany, it conveyed a polemic against Prussian authoritarianism as well as a concern with the "social question"; and in France, most astonishing of all, various strands of evangelical socialism cropped up after 1825.[4] The trajectory of Félicité de Lamennais reflected the plasticity of the Catholic message. He started out in public life as a philosophical blade in the spirit of Maistre and Bonald, but, in 1830–1831, he masterminded *L'Avenir*, a newspaper demanding the separation between Church and state; and then he turned to radical politics with the inflammatory *Paroles d'un croyant* (1834), preaching the Gospels to the lower classes. Although he had rejected papal authority circa 1834, only in the 1840s did he renege on other core tenets of Catholicism.[5]

This article does not pretend to do full justice to the complexity and richness of the revised ultramontanism developing between the 1830s and the 1860s. The contention of the article is that the standpoints of community and people lead to identify a specific brand of political Catholicism, which was idiosyncratic and defied easy classification although it shared some common ground with other contemporary schools of thought. The focus is on the Lamennais of *L'Avenir*, on the Italians Antonio Rosmini Serbati (1797–1855, beatified in 2007) and Luigi Taparelli d'Azeglio (1793–1862), and on the German Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler (1811–1877). Passing attention is paid to another German, Joseph von Görres (1776–1848), and a few other Frenchmen. The

[2]Monaldo Leopardi, "Le strade di ferro e le carrozze a vapore," *La voce della ragione* 12, no. 67 (Jan. 1835), 357.

[3]Joseph de Maistre, *Du pape* (Paris: Albanel, 1819/1867), 358–60. See Francisco J. Ramón Solans, "Le triomphe du Saint-Siège (1799–1823): Une transition de l'Ancien Régime à l'ultramontanisme?," *Siècles* 43 (2016), 1–12.

[4]For surveys, see Nicholas Atkin and Frank Tallett, *Priests, Prelates, and People: A History of European Catholicism since 1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 85–128; Rudolf Schlögl, *Religion and Society at the Dawn of Modern Europe: Christianity Transformed, 1750–1850* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020). On Pius IX's attempt at political liberalization, see Ignazio Veca, *Il mito di Pio IX: Storia di un papa liberale e nazionale* (Rome: Viella, 2018).

[5]On Lamennais's 1840s theology, see Bernard Reardon, *Liberalism and Tradition: Aspects of Catholic Thought in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 99–107; Frédéric Lambert, *Théologie de la république: Lamennais, prophète et lègislateur* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2001), 203–40; Sylvain Milbach, *Lamennais 1782–1854* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2021), 289–314.

decades under consideration were indeed a phase of creativity and eclecticism. The date ad quem, 1870, corresponds to the adjournment of the first Vatican Council, which reasserted the primacy and infallibility of the papacy; Thomism would be officially adopted nine years later.[6]

All four writers were ordained priests born from aristocratic families. They have been picked out for their transnational impact, but any choice of writers is arbitrary to an extent once Lamennais, by far the most influential Catholic of the time, is included. Rosmini, who was active in northern Italy, "must be classed among the most original of nineteenth-century philosophers," according to Bernard Reardon.[7] Rosmini had welcomed the election of the "liberal" Pope Pius IX, whom he became close to when he went to Rome in 1848 as an envoy of the Piedmontese government. He subsequently fell into disfavor with the Curia. In June 1849, the Congregation of the Index placed two of his works on the list of forbidden books, a sanction that he duly accepted. He had endorsed constitutionalism during the revolutionary biennium 1848–1849 as the climax of a long intellectual evolution.[8] The Piedmontese Jesuit Taparelli is probably the lesser known of the group. He engaged with utilitarianism and free trade economics before 1848, when he too identified with Pius IX's progressivism. But in the 1850s he became the chief writer of *Civiltà cattolica*, the semi-official review charged with liberalism-bashing (besides reformulating Thomism as the new doctrinal orthodoxy).[9] Rosmini's and Taparelli's trajectories signal a retreat of the Holy See in the wake of the revolutions.[10] Ketteler, who drew decisive inspiration from the Munich *Görreskreis*, is famed as a chief architect of social Catholicism. Ketteler's first writing of importance appeared in 1848, the year he was elected deputy at the Frankfurt National Assembly; in 1850, he was made bishop of Mainz. He helped create a defiant Catholic party, the *Zentrum* (1870–1871), fighting the *Kulturkampf*.[11]

Lamennais, Rosmini, Taparelli, and Ketteler did not renounce the defining trait of ultramontanism, namely, the subordination of the state to the Church in all things moral. The latter dictated the principles that the former should apply; God, who

[6]John W. O'Malley, *Vatican I: The Council and the Making of the Ultramontane Church* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2018).

[7]Bernard Reardon, *Religion in the Age of Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 156. Rosmini entered the priesthood in 1821, and founded the Institute of Charity in 1828. For biographical accounts, see Fulvio De Giorgi, *Rosmini e il suo tempo: L'educazione dell'uomo moderno tra riforma della filosofia e rinnovamento della Chiesa (1797–1833)* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2003); Markus Krienke, *Wahrheit und Liebe bei Antonio Rosmini* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2004). Many of Rosmini's works have been translated into English by the Rosmini House in Durham, UK, between 1988 and 2007.

[8]On Rosmini's activities in 1848, see Antonio Rosmini, *Della missione a Roma negli anni 1848–49: Commentario*, ed. Luciano Malusa (Stresa: Edizioni Rosminiane, 1881/1998); Luciano Malusa, ed., *Antonio Rosmini e la Congregazione dell'Indice: Il decreto del 30 maggio 1849, la sua genesi ed i suoi echi* (Stresa: Edizioni Rosminiane, 1999).

[9]For Taparelli's political evolution, see Gabriele De Rosa, *I gesuiti in Sicilia e la rivoluzione del '48* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1963); Daniele Menozzi, "I gesuiti, Pio IX e la nazione italiana," in *Storia d'Italia: Annali*, vol. 22, *Il Risorgimento*, ed. Alberto M. Banti and Paul Ginsborg (Turin: Einaudi, 2007), 451–478.

[10]See Christopher Clark, "From 1848 to Christian Democracy," in *Religion and the Political Imagination*, ed. Ira Katznelson and Gareth Stedman Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 190–213.

[11]Fritz Vigener, *Ketteler* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1924). On the *Görreskreis*, see Monika Fink-Lang, *Joseph Görres: Ein Leben im Zeitalter von Revolution und Restauration* (Kevelaer, Germany: Topos, 2015), chap. 10.

inscrutably reigned over the world, was the only possible source of justice. This doctrine reacted with the new positive outlook to bring about a quest for the ideal polity. Not unlike present-day communitarians, those writers reimagined the foundations of public life against the claims of self-interested individualism and state omnipotence. Their eschatology was gradualist and, allegedly, realistic. Far from being regarded as a utopia, those Catholics' "perfect society" would be established in a not too distant future—time had accelerated so remarkably after 1789 that the kingdom of God was a concrete possibility.

Devising community responded to the fateful conception of religion as an individual matter held by Protestantism. Both Augustine and Aquinas had emphasized that, "man" being a social creature, only by entering into communion with others could salvation be gained. Then came the Reformation, and then Hobbes, denying the social character of "man." Hobbes argued that in the state of nature each person decided everything for himself/herself, acting on his/her judgements as he/she thought best. By implementing individualism, to Catholics the Revolution amounted to a twofold process of dissolution: of society and religion. While the *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen* (1789) enthroned each person's individual sovereignty in all matters moral, the *Constitution civile du clergé* (1790) violated the Church's distinctiveness as an independent community.[12]

Three theses in particular denote the vision of the future community held by the four writers. 1) Societies, which were not "mechanisms," needed Catholicism as animating spirit; 2) political representation should be "organic"; and 3) whereas the liberal elites imposed their vested interests on the common people, the Catholic polity reflected their needs and beliefs. This brand of Catholicism was communitarian and populist, for it prized self-government, denounced centralization and parliamentary politics, and sided with "the people." This article deals with the four authors' elaborations of those theses. The following section reformulates and contextualizes the argument.

II. A Progressive View of History

The project of an ideal community responded to a Europe that was different from that confronting the early ultramontanes. The shock of the Revolution and its aftermath had led them to focus on the sources of sovereignty. The Constituent Assembly had in fact repudiated the confessional identity of the French state, allegedly turned "atheistic," while Napoleon had challenged the popes' right to temporal rule. Two sentences from Paul, *Romans*, 13.1, were frequently quoted by the "old" ultramontanes: *non est potestas nisi a Deo* and *qui resistit potestati, Dei ordinationi resistit*.[13] But when a measure of religious freedom was established in France and Belgium, the "throne and altar" solution looked doomed to many Catholics, inspired by *L'Avenir*. There arose a novel agenda. First, the new spaces of discussion and participation were welcomed as an opportunity to transform the religion from a matter of compulsion into a matter of choice. Second, the involvement of the state in realms previously reserved to the clergy,

[12]Bernt T. Oftestad, *The Catholic Church and Liberal Democracy* (London: Routledge, 2019), 31–4.

[13]See Darrin M. McMahon, *Enemies of the Enlightenment: The French Counter-Enlightenment and the Making of Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); John E. Toews, "Church and State: The Problem of Authority," in *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Political Thought*, ed. Gareth Stedman Jones and Gregory Claeys (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 603–648.

chiefly education and assistance, was deeply resented. The centralizing state—some spoke of "liberal statism"—became the chief enemy of the Catholic community.[14]

All four authors imagined a polity that was alternative to the liberal one. Yet, there were differences in their depictions—often in accordance with national contexts—as regards shades of meaning, type of texts, and practical ambitions. Generally speaking, if the Italians and Lamennais aimed for a renewed Catholic hegemony, Ketteler's goal was the defence of the Catholic minority. Not by chance, Rosmini and Taparelli "Catholicized" jurisprudence, political economy, and political philosophy in the treatises they wrote in the 1840s, while Ketteler's books were more limited in scope—looking like extended pamphlets—and less suspicious of secular knowledge. Another difference had to do with the extent of reform. Since the two Italians were writing (in the 1840s) to influence a nationalist movement threatening insurrection against the established governments, including the pope's, they emphasized the necessity of order over the allure of liberty. Instead, *L'Avenir* espoused the cause of *le peuple*, and Ketteler too was unafraid of substantial reform.

It is also necessary to specify that the distinction between "old" and "new" ultramontanism was not clear-cut. First, to give an example of old ultramontanism's complexity, Maistre's vision of history cannot be reduced to a theophany; second, not only Lamennais but also Rosmini went through a phase of old ultramontanism in the 1810s and 1820s; and, third, the issue of legitimate sovereignty did not disappear from the new ultramontanes' texts.[15] Yet, they held a progressive view of history, in the sense that God was leading His peoples toward unprecedented social forms, approaching the divine realm on earth. Writing in the early 1840s, Taparelli went as far as an ultramontane could go. Material and intellectual improvement was potentially "boundless"; pursuing it was a dictate of God's, for it favored the growth of "moral sense"; in particular, a system of universal elementary education should be set up; representative government should rest on the Catholic principle of "association" and not on the Protestant "individualism," which had prompted revolution; and yet, individualism had also acted as a spur to progress, which now promised to be common to the whole Christianity.[16]

There is no lack of literature on the four writers, but they are little known outside their respective countries, with the exception of Lamennais of course. A monument of scholarship like the *Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Political Thought* never mentions Rosmini and Taparelli, while Görres and Ketteler have one reference each. The literature, moreover, has privileged two themes: the critique of modernity and the relationship between Church and state. This article addresses the Catholic philosophers' constructive side instead, their "visionary desire" to reshape the world.[17] Nineteenth-century Catholicism did include repulsive elements—an implacable furtherance of traditional family roles and a varying dose of anti-Semitism, basically—while political pluralism was a means at best, precluding speaking meaningfully of any "Catholic liberalism." However, the four authors had something to contribute to

[14]Emiel Lamberts, *The Struggle with Leviathan: Social Responses to the Omnipotence of the State, 1815–1965* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2016), 13.

[15]For Maistre, see Carolina Armenteros, *The French Idea of History: Joseph de Maistre and His Heirs, 1794–1854* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011).

[16]Luigi Taparelli, *Saggio teoretico di dritto naturale appoggiato sul fatto* (Leghorn: Mansi, 1840–1843/1845), 299, 315, 337, 560–565.

[17]McMahon, *Enemies of the Enlightenment*, 156, 198.

the world created by the Revolution. They were neither timid liberals, nor gentle authoritarians; they neither anticipated Vatican II, nor masked an unchanging hostility to modernity. Against opposite teleologies, this article depicts the four writers as ultramontanes (even Lamennais's advocacy of religious liberty did not entail moral pluralism) who originally updated the Catholic message along communitarian and populist lines, as an alternative to both liberalism and despotism.

The historiographical standpoint of this article is "lay" rather than "religious." The identification of a Catholic communitarianism enriches the picture of nineteenth-century political thought; the very categories used to analyze the liberalisms and socialisms of the age—such as liberty, representation, or democracy—can be applied to it, albeit with some caution. On the other hand, the issues the four philosophers raised recurred in the transformational process by which the Church came to endorse human rights and democracy at Vatican II.[18] Émile Perreau-Saussine has argued most authoritatively for an evolution of ultramontanism. In his view, Vatican I did not condemn the modern state as atheistic, but rather acknowledged that it had become secular. The religion turned apolitical after the politicization of the revolutionary period, according to Perreau-Saussine, so much so that Vatican I "ensured the ultimate triumph of the ideology of *L'Avenir*," the separation of religion and state. Later on, Vatican II developed that approach.[19] Although Perreau-Saussine's assessment of Vatican I conflicts with evidence, there is something in his interpretation. As will be shown, the new ultramontanes' communitarian project included an anti-political thread.

In what follows, Lamennais and Taparelli are allotted a bit more space than the other two philosophers. The former was particularly important, and the latter is particularly unfamiliar. The terms "Catholicism" and "religion" are used interchangeably, as are Catholic "society," "polity," and "community," all referring to an earthly commonwealth imbued with religion. Each of the three theses above is substantiated in a specific section; the gist of the article is formulated in the concluding remarks.

III. A Society of Love

The idea that society was a machine, a human device that could be shaped and reshaped at will by rulers and administrators applying a "cold" instrumental rationality, was one of Catholics' *bêtes noires*. Conversely, they argued for an organic society, in which tradition played a part but which ultimately drew cohesion from a unifying spirit. The Catholic stance on poor relief in France before 1848 amounted to an application of that contrast. Catholics juxtaposed religious charity with the mandatory, bureaucratic, soulless, tax-financed, and, in a word, "mechanic" assistance provided by the state. Needless to say, the English Poor Laws were the best example of this "legal charity,"

[18]See e.g. Francesco Traniello, "Cattolicesimo e società moderna (dal 1848 alla 'Rerum novarum')," in *Storia delle idee politiche economiche e sociali*, 6 vols., ed. L. Firpo (Turin: Utet, 1972), vol. 5, 551–641; Etienne Fouilloux, *Une église en quête de liberté: La pensée catholique française entre modernisme et Vatican II, 1914–1962* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1998); Daniele Menozzi, *Chiesa e diritti umani* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2012); James Chappel, *Catholic Modern: The Challenge of Totalitarianism and the Remaking of the Church* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), esp. 40–58; Daniele Lorenzini, *Jacques Maritain and Human Rights: Totalitarianism, Anti-Semitism and Democracy (1936–1951)* (South Bend, IN: Saint Augustine's Press, 2023); Milbach, *Lamennais*, 395–410.

[19]Emile Perreau-Saussine, *Catholicism and Democracy: An Essay in the History of Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 61.

prompting only "jealousy and suspicion" between rich and poor.[20] Religious relief, in contrast, was hailed as a local affair requiring social intercourse, springing from the "heart" rather than from reason. When society is imbued with religion, it was claimed, the relationships between ranks are *doux*, namely benevolent and humane. Spontaneous, face-to-face charity turns society into a harmonious "family" ruled by love, generosity, and gratitude, notwithstanding a reduction in the liberality of the rich due to the ongoing secularization and rationalization.[21] The Catholic approach did not remain on paper. Hundreds of orders, congregations, and confraternites devoted to health care and poor relief were created all over Europe from 1815 to World War I. In France, priests and nuns were depicted as an army of professional altruists, which society was badly in need of.[22]

A recurring piece of Catholics' rhetoric was to contrast "death"—the destruction of the natural and traditional by the state—with "life"—the faith, devotion, and love animating the family, the parish, and the locality.[23] But should one word encapsulate the communitarian spirit Catholics advocated, it would certainly be "love." All the writers considered made a plea for it, specifying that it should be a humble, practical, and everyday kind of love. Chateaubriand had already insisted on the abstractedness of the virtues inspired by philosophy in comparison with the heroic devotion prompted by religion, and the early Lamennais took up the point.[24] Neither the Stoics nor the eighteenth-century philosophers ever shed a single tear for the poor, he averred. Compassion is alien to all those who rationalize their egoism with grand doctrines—philosophy amounts to "a conspiracy against the sufferers"—while humble priests and nuns feed, console, cure, and instruct the needy. Lamennais illustrated traditional arguments on the impotence of reason unassisted by faith with new images, like that of the utilitarian who refused to give alms and recommended confining the poor not to see them anymore.[25] In *L'Avenir*, Lamennais had a remarkable page generalizing charity as

[20]See, for example, Alban de Villeneuve Bargemont, *Économie politique chrétienne*, 3 vols. (Paris: Paulin, 1834), vol. 2, 422–457. Actually, conservatives and leftists alike abhorred the English Poor Laws; see Timothy B. Smith, "The Ideology of Charity, the Image of the English Poor Law, and Debates over the Right to Assistance in France, 1830–1905," *Historical Journal* 40, no. 4 (Dec. 1997), 997–1032.

[21]Joseph-Marie De Gérando, *Le visiteur du pauvre* (Bruxelles: Société Typographique, 1820/1828), esp. 7–11. See also Louis Bautain, *Philosophie du Christianisme*, 2 vols. (Paris: Dérivaux, 1835), vol. 1, 18; Charles de Coux, *Discours prononcé à l'ouverture d'un cours d'économie politique* (Paris: Bureau de l'Agence générale pour la défense de la liberté religieuse, 1832), 35; Ralph Gibson, *A Social History of French Catholicism 1789–1914* (London: Routledge, 1989); and Philippe Sassier, *Du bon usage des pauvres: Histoire d'un théme politique XVI^{e}–XX^{e} siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 1990), esp. 201–263. Now that the destitute were whole categories of workers, rather than beggars and vagrants as previously, the issue of assistance involved the very cohesion of society.

[22]See, for example, De Gérando, *Le visiteur du pauvre*, 421–425; François-Emmanuel Fodéré, *Essai historique et moral sur la pauvreté des nations* (Paris: Huzard, 1825), 100–121; Villeneuve Bargemont, *Économie politique chrétienne*, vol. 1, 238–247.

[23]See, for example, Joseph Görres, *Athanasius* (Regensburg: Manz, 1838), 143; Wilhelm Ketteler, *Die großen socialen Fragen der Gegenwart* (Mainz: Kirchheim und Schott, 1849), 78–79.

[24]François-René de Chateaubriand, *Génie du Christianisme*, 4 vols. (Paris: Pourrat, 1802/1836), vol. 1, 80–81; vol. 4, 12–13. He defined charity as "grace and joy."

[25]Félicité de Lamennais, *Essai sur l'indifférence en matière de religion*, vol. 4 (Paris: Daubrée et Cailleux, 1817–1823/1836–1837), vol. 1, 375–403. Similar views were expressed in Joseph Görres, *Staat, Kirche und Cholera* (s.l.: Speyer, 1831), 31–5; Ketteler, *Die großen socialen Fragen*, 31–34, 55–56; Luigi Taparelli, *Esame critico degli ordini rappresentativi nella società moderna*, 2 vols. (Rome: Civiltà cattolica, 1854), vol. 2, 269–276 (this work incorporated and developed articles first appearing in *Civiltà cattolica*).

"pure love." Charity expressed not only "tenderness for the poor" but also "horror of violence," such as "persecution," torture, the death penalty, and even "exclusive patriotism" with the wars it led to. He depicted *amour* as the "primitive fire," the source of "heat" that produced social unity by prompting everybody to renounce individualism. The root of the community was the sharing of ideas and moral sentiments: "souls fecundate one another, as a flame ignites another flame."[26]

Catholics believed that there was a need for practical truth, such as that contained in the Gospels, and that religion had the ability to make people better. The Frenchman Louis Bautain rejected rationalistic abstractions in favor of "love" as chief condition of knowledge: "by love is man's intellectual perfection consummated."[27] Henri Lacordaire, a journalist of *L'Avenir* who reestablished the Dominican order in France (1839), described the Catholic orders as perfect communities, as "religious families" based on love and voluntary obedience; their structure was democratic and egalitarian, as members had taken a vow of poverty.[28] Rosmini, who founded a still-existent Institute of Charity in 1828, held that the essence of Christianity lay in the sentiments of the "heart," prompting good deeds as the proper form of love for God and neighbors.[29] To Ketteler, the labor question amounted to "a question of Christian love," the highest of social links. He disparaged lay philanthropy, which was ineffective for lack of principles inducing unconditional devotion.[30]

Taparelli often employed the term "gentle" (*soave*) to encapsulate the very essence of the Catholic polity. To him, religion had a unique ability to convince by appealing to sentiments, whereas the liberal state resorted to force to make its self-determining, independent subjects obey. Catholics were "docile" because religion acknowledged "legitimate hierarchies" on earth; instead, the "modernized" state ruled over intemperate and rebellious individuals, all craving for wealth and power regardless of morality, station, and abilities.[31] It ensued that the rich were generous and the penal law mild under Catholicism. A dichotomy Taparelli exploited to the same effect was that between the state and the fatherland (*patria*). If the former was "a machine led by interest," the latter was "gentle," "natural," and resting on "tender affections," for it evoked the memories and feelings linked to one's place of birth. Catholicism had managed, by its

[26]References to the articles of *L'Avenir* are from two collections: *Mélanges catholiques: Extraits de l'Avenir* (Paris: L'Agence générale pour la défense de la liberté religieuse, 1831), henceforward cited as EXT; and *L'Avenir 1830–1831*, ed. Guido Verucci (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1967), henceforward cited as VER. All articles are by Lamennais unless otherwise indicated. The passage referred to here is in VER, 569–573. See also Félicité de Lamennais, "De la société" (ms., 1827), in Lamennais, *Œuvres inédites*, ed. A. Blaize, 2 vols. (Paris: Dentu, 1866), vol. 2, 308; Félicité de Lamennais, *Essai d'un système de philosophie catholique (1830–1831)*, ed. Christian Maréchal (Paris: Blond, 1906), 153–155, 187, 199–200, 213–214. On a communal life based on interactions of love, see Toews, "Church and State"; on affections and emotions in French "Romantic" Catholicism, see Carole Harrison, *Romantic Catholics: France's Postrevolutionary Generation in Search of a Modern Faith* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014); Roberto Romani, "Lamennais's sensibility," *History of European Ideas* 47, no. 5 (2021), 713–731.

[27]Bautain, *Philosophie*, vol. 1, 18–19; vol. 2, 305–378; see Reardon, *Liberalism*, 132.

[28]Henri-Dominique Lacordaire, "Mémoire pour le rétablissement en France de l'ordre des Frères Prêcheurs" (1839), in Lacordaire, *Mélanges* (Paris: Poussielgue, 1911), 59–200.

[29]See Fulvio De Giorgi, *La scienza del cuore: Spiritualità e cultura religiosa in Antonio Rosmini* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1995).

[30]Wilhelm Ketteler, *Freiheit, Autorität, und Kirche* (Mainz: Kirchheim, 1862), 187–191; Wilhelm Ketteler, *Die Arbeiterfrage und das Christenthum* (Mainz: Kirchheim, 1864/1890), 1, 10–13, 86–88, 96–98.

[31]Taparelli, *Esame*, vol. 2, 209–213, 447–451; Luigi Taparelli, "La proprietà nel Cattolicismo," *Civiltà cattolica* (henceforward cited as CC), s. 3, no. 8 (1857), 17–40.

supernatural influences, to extend the solidarity stemming from shared locality first to the nation, and then to the community of faithful everywhere.[32] Charity was another reason for the gentleness of Catholicism, in contrast with the "coldness" displayed by economists and philosophers. Taparelli followed Aquinas in recommending that relief should be provided according to the recipient's degree of proximity to the donor: hence, first to family and then to friends and community dwellers. Taparelli also extolled Catholicism for keeping the growth of population under control without recourse to inhumane legislation.[33]

In tune with Romantics such as Novalis and Adam Müller (another Catholic), Görres insisted on the "fanaticism of reason" permeating post-revolutionary governance. The ultimate reason for Prussia's attack on the Church, Görres maintained in *Athanasius*, was the levelling logic of its bureaucracy, de facto admitting only one religion in the state. The pursuit of uniformity was armed with statistics but was energized by an abstract rationalism, declaring war on anything spiritual, and eventually resorting to coercion. As if possessed by an "evil ghost," restless bureaucrats had turned the state into a "steam engine" manufacturing laws incessantly.[34] Ketteler and Taparelli too complained about overproduction by a state that was a "soulless machine," vainly attempting to deliver happiness to the people.[35]

IV. Organic Representation

The *Doctrinaires*' view that the revolutionaries' destruction of intermediate bodies had led to an "atomization" of society shaped the political mind in Restoration France. Reimagining community in the face of a social *tabula rasa* seemed like the task of the times.[36] In the 1820s, Lamennais also complained about the "pulverization" of society: hierarchies, classes, and privileges had been wiped out, leaving only individuals scrambling for wealth in their place. France was therefore a "democracy," displaying both a state of flux in government and perpetual discontent in the people, growing disinclined to acknowledge any authority, including that of the Church.[37] The difference between Lamennais the intransigent and Lamennais the journalist of *L'Avenir* did

[32]Taparelli, *Esame*, vol. 2, 222–236.

[33]See by Taparelli: "L'economia eterodossa alle prese col pauperismo," CC, s. 3, no. 11 (1858), 144–160; "Limiti della libertà economica," CC, s. 4, no. 11 (1861), 275–277.

[34]Görres, *Athanasius*, 91–95; see also Joseph Görres, *Teutschland und die Revolution*, ed. Arno Duch (Munich: Drei Masken Verlag, 1819/1921), 39–41; Joseph Görres, *Der Kurfürst Maximilian der Erste und den König Ludwig von Bayern* (Regensburg: Manz, 1825/1880), 42–44, 48–49. For context, see Frederick C. Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism: The Genesis of Modern German Political Thought, 1790–1800* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 236–239. Görres's profile as a Catholic is *sui generis*, for he endorsed the Revolution as a young man and later on justified the assassination of Kotzebue. Görres, who was born and raised Catholic, gradually returned to the Church in the early 1820s; see Kurt Nowak, *Geschichte des Christentums in Deutschland* (Munich: Beck, 1995), 114–115. In *Europa und die Revolution* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1821), 276–279, Görres envisaged a "rejuvenated Rome" becoming the center of future Christianity.

[35]Ketteler, *Freiheit*, 44–45; Taparelli, *Esame*, vol. 2, 51–53, 235–238.

[36]See Larry Siedentop, "Two Liberal Traditions" (1979), in *French Liberalism from Montesquieu to the Present Day*, ed. Raf Geenens and Helena Rosenblatt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 15–35; Michael C. Behrent, "The Mystical Body of Society: Religion and Association in Nineteenth-Century French Political Thought," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 69, no. 2 (2008), 219–243.

[37]Félicité de Lamennais, *De la religion considérée dans ses rapports avec l'ordre politique et civil* (Paris: Daubrée et Cailleux, 1825–1826/1836–1837), 9–12, 17–23.

not lie in the end—reestablishing the authority of religion, overcoming atomization in the process—but in the means. As soon as he realized that the best way to achieve that goal was to separate the Church from the state, the issue of a "perfect society" independent of the latter arose.

The authors of *L'Avenir* (October 1830–November 1831) believed that the July days had changed the course of history. Now it was imperative for Catholics "to unite and fight," for the new regime made it possible to envisage a community based on truth.[38] *L'Avenir* demanded four liberties concerning religion, association, education, and the press. The advocacy of religious freedom is remarkable, since few Catholics allowed for "dissemination of error" in those years—probably the example of Belgium, where religious liberty was implemented in the very months of publication of *L'Avenir*, was influential.[39] But Lamennais's pluralism was only procedural. He posited that, over time, the peoples practicing the four liberties would unintentionally enthrone Catholicism, which alone could uphold an ordered liberty. Namely, society would turn fully Catholic by the force of conviction of truth. There would be only one religion in the kingdom of Christ, and, in particular, Christianity would be reunited.[40] To Lamennais, any society rested on religious beliefs, shaping minds and hearts and keeping people together—interests were always transitory. His evolutionary interpretation of Christianity led him to believe that religious progress brought about a corresponding progress in society. Hence, he viewed the perfect society not only as "the age of the plenitude of Christ," but also as "the age of the perfect man," unifying faith and science.[41]

The newspaper put forward the sketch of a representative monarchy. This lacked both a senate and a balance-of-power mechanism: the former was deemed redundant since France was a society of equals, while the latter was useless for government's activities would be made tightly dependent on the will of citizens.[42] The separation between Church and state would be complete, and based on a division of labor, with religion taking care of mores and beliefs and the state attending to "the administration of material things" affecting the whole country. But the national government would be significantly disempowered in favor of local self-rule. In the belief that ruling from above an "atomized" and diverse society like France was tyrannical, *L'Avenir* envisaged a nation turned into *une grande commune*: a collection of families, structured through municipalities and provinces, which no external power could intrude into. The newspaper recommended universal male suffrage at municipal level, combined with a system of indirect voting to elect both the provincial councils and the national parliament. The monarch would be only the executor of the popular will. Freedom of association

[38]EXT, 6, 149, 152, 318.

[39]EXT, 9–17; VER, 221–222 (an.), 395–396 (an.). Milbach, *Lamennais*, 146–148, speaks of six liberties, for, following the letter of Lamennais's article, he adds the right to vote and decentralization. On Belgium, see Vincent Viaene, *Belgium and the Holy See from Gregory XVI to Pius IX (1831–1859)* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2001); Stefaan Marteel, *The Intellectual Origins of the Belgian Revolution: Political Thought and Disunity in the Kingdom of the Netherlands, 1815–1830* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave, 2018), esp. 160–198.

[40]EXT, 69, 72–74, 145–146, 254 (Lacordaire), 347 (Lacordaire); VER, 44 (an.), 285–286 (Rohrbacher), 612–616 (an.). See Milbach, *Lamennais*, 169–175.

[41]EXT 55, 144–145; Philippe Gerbet, *Introduction a la philosophie de l'histoire* (Louvain: Vanlinthout et Vandenzande, 1832), 29–31, 54–55. Lamennais's philosophy of *sens commun* supported his view of historical evolution.

[42]VER, 726–730 (Coux); EXT, 413–420. See Milbach, *Lamennais*, 151–153.

would compensate for the helplessness of isolated individuals in a democracy.[43] Lamennais envisaged the need for the French to learn the habits of liberty; Lacordaire argued for the creation of local newspapers denouncing the abuses of state officials and rousing public spirit.[44]

Rights were the core of Rosmini's political project as developed in *Filosofia del diritto* (1841–1845), an overlong and convoluted treatise, highly abstract and normative. Rosmini's goal was to identify "the natural and rational rights of man" while, at the same time, taming their potential for subversion. He argued that rights were of divine origin and therefore inviolable, so that ruling over them amounted to despotism, although it was possible to rule over their practical application (their *modalità*).[45] Rosmini focused on the right to free expression in order to safeguard public opinion, although in the religious domain he allowed more for tolerance than for liberty. Significant attention was also paid to the rights to association, property, and free trade. As regards the electoral process, Rosmini's representative monarchy featured a franchise based on property ownership. He dealt at length with how to give due weight to the most important interests in assemblies, regardless of the numerical majority principle.[46]

Political struggle was only temporary to Rosmini, however. Once government renounced encroaching on rights, "the annihilation of parties," hence a "political uniformity," would follow. Opinions would spontaneously become uniform as a result of free discussion—a Mennaisian perspective indeed. Each citizen would be an end rather than a means in the resulting "Christian society," which would be free because truth made people free.[47] Overall, Rosmini maintained that the European nations had recently progressed toward the implementation of individual rights, civil equality, and free competition. Conflicts had been moderated and prosperity promoted. The perfect society had already materialized to a significant extent, in other words, and it looked a bit like the July regime.[48] To comment, *Filosofia del diritto* combined a plea for the reshaping of minds and institutions by religion with an individualist and economic-utilitarian approach. This entailed, for instance, that society was organized around property, imbued with moral and political significance; that "needs" pushed people to action; and that the common good consisted in the parity of the utility enjoyed by each individual relative to his/her contribution to society.[49]

Turned into a close adviser to the pope, Rosmini published a short treatise detailing a constitutional project in May 1848. It amounted to an idiosyncratic form of *Stände* monarchy. He envisaged two chambers, one elected by the small- and the other by the large-property owners. Both houses would be monitored by a constitutional court to be elected by universal male suffrage and would apply the principles of "natural

[43]EXT, 15–16, 83, 257–258 (Lacordaire), 260–271 (Tancrel), 416–417.

[44]EXT, 257–258 (Lacordaire), 417.

[45]Antonio Rosmini, *Filosofia del diritto*, ed. Rinaldo Orecchia, 6 vols. (Padua: Cedam, 1841–1845/1967–1969), vol. 5, 1223, 1283–1285, 1289, 1349–1355.

[46]Rosmini, *Filosofia del diritto*, vol. 3, 773–801, 827–833. On religious liberty, see vol. 1, 219–238.

[47]Antonio Rosmini, *Filosofia della politica* (Milan: Boniardi-Pogliani, 1839/1858), 97–98; Rosmini, *Filosofia del diritto*, vol. 5, 1391–1395, 1406; vi, 1481–1483.

[48]Rosmini, *Filosofia del diritto*, vol. 5, 1416–1432; vol. 6, 1439, 1579–1604, 1615–1616. The Papal States were given the most erudite of accolades in vol. 4, 847–988.

[49]Rosmini, *Filosofia del diritto*, vol. 5, 1223–1236, 1320. He even put forward the gist of what would be known as "Pareto optimality": a state in which no individual can be better off without making at least one individual worse off.

and rational justice." Rosmini's chief concern was to avoid that parliamentary majorities soaked the rich, a practice which led to socialism, as allegedly the French experience of 1848 indicated. He rejected non-Catholics' right to run for office.[50]

Ketteler, who traced the labor question back to "anti-Christian liberalism," took issue with self-help as an expression of individualist "pulverization" and advocated "organic" associations instead.[51] Accordingly, Ketteler's constitution was a *ständisch* monarchy, meant to be "organic" and peculiarly German. He possibly drew inspiration from Görres's scheme—as put forward in *Teutschland und die Revolution* (1819)—intended to be the antithesis of French-like parliamentarism. Although the bishop of Mainz ultimately targeted Prussia rather than France, he subscribed to the contrast between a German political tradition, traceable chiefly in the Middle Ages, and a "Roman" one—a contrast that Friedrich Schlegel's celebrated Vienna lectures (1810) had already expressed in Catholic garb.[52] Thus, relying on Tocqueville's *Ancien Régime*, Ketteler maintained that the French constitutional type led necessarily to the domination of the state over individuals, and eventually to a "liberal absolutism." Conversely, true liberty could result only from the German tradition of self-government and popular participation. Some "moral bodies" epitomized it: the Church, the family, the *Gemeinde*, the *Stände*, and the *Volk*. The trade unions were approved of on condition that the link connecting their members was not purely egoistic and material. To Ketteler, the working class was a proper estate, suitable for parliamentary representation like the traders or the landowners.[53] Ketteler believed (like Görres) that the German version of the state was an organic institution established by God, and that Catholicism was the chief source of public spirit, which was essential to the good workings of the polity. The public sphere was imbued with morality to him, with civic engagement building on private virtues such as honesty, balance, fairness, respect, and so on.[54] Ketteler did not fear universal suffrage, in the belief that people outside cities were still moral Christians who obeyed conscience and defied power if necessary.[55]

Taparelli made several concessions to the post-revolutionary *Zeitgeist* in an ambitious treatise published in 1840–1843. Like Rosmini, he made plenty of room for both political economy and utilitarianism and, as already indicated, regarded the contemporary civilization as progressive not only materially but also spiritually.[56] An obedient soldier of the Church, Taparelli shifted to fighting mode as soon as the pope reneged on the liberalizing measures of 1846–1848. The program of *Civiltà cattolica* in general, and of Taparelli in particular, was to counter secularizing policies (especially

[50]Antonio Rosmini, *La costituzione secondo la giustizia sociale* (1848), in Rosmini, *Progetti di costituzione*, ed. Carlo Gray (Milan: Bocca, 1952), 215–216; see Francesco Traniello, *Società religiosa e società civile in Rosmini* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1966), 299–304.

[51]Ketteler, *Die Arbeiterfrage*, 4, 29, 45–47, 108–109. On the evolution of his ideas, see Franz-Josef Stegmann and Peter Langhorst, "Geschichte der sozialen Ideen im deutschen Katholizismus," in *Geschichte der sozialen Ideen in Deutschland*, ed. Helga Grebing (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2005), 613–712.

[52]Friedrich Schlegel, *Über die neuere Geschichte* (Vienna: Klang, 1846).

[53]Ketteler, *Freiheit*, 72–4; Wilhelm Ketteler, *Deutschland nach dem Kriege von 1866* (Mainz: Kirchheim, 1867), 93–112.

[54]On the state, see Ketteler, *Freiheit*, 198–200, and Görres, *Der Kurfürst*, 31–32; on civic virtues, see Ketteler, *Freiheit*, 91–97; Ketteler, *Deutschland*, 217–219; for Görres, see *Teutschland*, 73–74, 80–81.

[55]Ketteler, *Die Arbeiterfrage*, 77–78.

[56]Taparelli, *Saggio*. This work was translated into many languages; see Robert Jacquin, *Taparelli* (Paris: Lethielleux, 1943), chap. 8.

those pursued in the kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia) by systematically contrasting liberalism with Thomism, which allegedly contained all that was needed to interpret the contemporary world. Taparelli developed his model community in tens of long articles, devoted especially to formulate the main lines of a Catholic economy. His political thought was reactionary—he denounced the separation between Church and state, freedom of the press, religious liberty, and so on—but he still did more than grieving over the end of the Middle Ages.

Taparelli's view of governance rested on Aquinas's conception of natural society. The former writer underlined that a system of "minor societies" (*consorzi*), like the family and the local governments, fulfilled most of people's needs by natural prescription. There ensued, first, that a natural hierarchy of institutions structured the community; and, second, that a collapse of the supreme authority did not dissolve society, turning people into "free and rootless individuals" as demagogues supposed.[57] The main features of Taparelli's polity reflected such a perspective. The family was the model for government, which for this reason was mild, benevolent, and pacific. The people enjoyed "municipal liberty," consisting of security of property, low taxation, the inviolability of the family, and a measure of participation in local affairs. All that counted to the people, supposedly, was good administration at the municipal and provincial levels coupled with respect for local peculiarities, whereas the demand for political rights was not heartfelt, but originated from the ambitions of a few middle-class scoundrels. Most people lacked either the education or the interest to participate in political life.[58]

Taparelli elaborated on these views. He detested centralization, the tyranny of capital cities, and bureaucracy—the state's omnipotence, in a word. The antidote lay in a "natural hierarchy of responsibilities and interests," beginning with the family, and proceeding with the municipality, the province, and the state. The natural leaders at each of these levels were entitled to exert some kind of "influence" at the level coming next in the sequence. Taparelli failed to clarify what "influence" meant; at a minimum, it amounted to a customary right to be consulted by central government's officials. Craft and profession guilds would have a say in the rule of municipalities. A polity thus organized—along "organic" and "natural" lines—would thwart governmental encroachments "by its inertia alone."[59] At the center, Taparelli opted for a corporatist monarchy. The national representation would consist of three assemblies, each of which holding the rights of initiative and veto. There would be a "popular" assembly—the "representation of need"—in which the poor would be over-represented through parsons and craft guilds; then, there would be an assembly of administrators and literati; and finally one composed of bishops, meant to be guardians of the justice of laws. The method for choosing estate members was unspecified. Such a form of government was "naturally" coming into being in Catholic Europe before 1789, Taparelli argued, but the "Protestant principle"—subjectivism and rebelliousness—had managed to block its development.[60] He did not lose faith in the impending advent of religious society,

[57]See Taparelli, *Saggio*, 248–257—the point featured in the book's revised (1855) edition as well. It has been argued that Taparelli's analysis of *consorzi* amounted to the detection of the principle of subsidiarity: Thomas C. Behr, *Social Justice and Subsidiarity: Luigi Taparelli and the Origins of Modern Catholic Social Thought* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2019), chap. 3.

[58]Luigi Taparelli, "Gli Stati della Chiesa e il loro civil reggimento," CC, s. 1, no. 4 (1851), 153–175; Luigi Taparelli, "Le province collo Statuto e sotto l'assolutismo," CC, s. 1, no. 9 (1852), 337–351.

[59]Taparelli, *Esame*, vol. 1, 206–218; vol. 2, 130–131.

[60]Taparelli, *Esame*, vol. 2, 86–112, 122–126.

however, for Catholicism was on the rise all over Europe, while both the specter of socialism and the liberal state's rapacity and proneness to debt were quickly disabusing peoples.[61]

V. Anti-Liberal Populism

Historians agree that the Catholic revival of the nineteenth century was "populist," for it mobilized the masses through devotions addressed to the heart rather than to the mind.[62] In the Italian context, for instance, the "enlightened" religiosity of a Muratori was successfully challenged by a model of devotion (dating back to Liguori) resting on mysticism, a fervent Mariology, and the cult of the Sacred Heart.[63] Intriguingly, both Lamennais and Görres have been described as political populists.[64] The meaning of the term, however, is regularly left unexplained—a "populist" attitude seems equivalent to one of sympathy for the people. The problem is that political scientists are themselves hesitant about supplying a definition, since "populism" has had different implications according to time and place. The common ground is pretty minimal, amounting to populism as a thin ideology contrasting ordinary people, regardless of class cleavages, with a self-serving elite. The people are usually viewed as noble and principled.[65] This characterization provides some conceptual background to what follows.

The early ultramontanes had been war populists, so to speak, impressed as they were by the popular revolts against revolutionary and Napoleonic rule in the Vendée, Spain, Tyrol, southern Italy, and elsewhere. Some historians have spoken of a veritable *Kulturkampf*.[66] The four writers' setting of choice was parliamentary politics instead. In praising the common people, they stigmatized the middle-class elites in their incarnations as MPs and party leaders. A clarification is necessary, however. Their distrust of the political process has a present-day flavor, for it looks as if they aimed to take power

[61]Taparelli, *Esame*, vol. 2, 559–560; Luigi Taparelli, "Gli ammodernatori dello Stato Pontificio," CC, s. 2, no. 12 (1855), 166–167; Luigi Taparelli, "Le due economie" (1856), in *Civiltà cattolica 1850–1945*, ed. Gabriele De Rosa, 3 vols. (Florence: Landi, 1971), vol. 2, 617–619.

[62]See, for example, Sheridan Gilley, "The Papacy," in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, ed. Sheridan Gilley and others, 9 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006–2009), vol. 8, 13–30; Vincent Viaene, "Nineteenth-Century Catholic Internationalism and Its Predecessors," in *Religious Internationals in the Modern World: Globalization and Faith Communities since 1750*, ed. Abigail Green and Vincent Viaene (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave, 2012), 82–110.

[63]See, for example, Raymond Jonas, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Daniele Menozzi, *Sacro Cuore: Un culto tra devozione interiore e restaurazione cristiana della società* (Rome: Viella, 2001).

[64]For Görres, see Jon Vanden Heuvel, *A German Life in the Age of Revolution: Joseph Görres, 1776–1848* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 2001); for Lamennais, see Toews, "Church and State," 626–627; Milbach, *Lamennais*, 155–156, 380.

[65]See Karin Priester, "Definitionen und Typologien des Populismus," *Soziale Welt* 62, no. 2 (2011), 185–198; Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, "Populism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies*, ed. Michael Freeden, Lyman Tower Sargent, and Marc Stears (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 397–412; Takis S. Pappas, "Modern Populism: Research Advances, Conceptual and Methodological Pitfalls, and the Minimal Definition," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[66]See, for example, Michael Broers, *The Politics of Religion in Napoleonic Italy* (London: Routledge, 2002); and Michael Broers, Peter Hicks, and Agustin Guimerá, eds., *The Napoleonic Empire and the New European Political Culture* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave, 2012).

away from the parties and bring it back to the people in order to fulfil the promise of democracy. Yet, the suggestion is inappropriate, and not only because scholars are divided about the relationship of populism to democracy—to some the former is a more inclusive form of the latter, whereas to others populism is inherently Caesarist.[67] The crux of the matter is that popular sovereignty, the inescapable foundation of modern democracy, was alien to all four. Their analyses were always transcendent: if and when the people were called on to play a part in politics, it was on God's command, aiming at goals set by God. The opposition between people and rulers the four authors depicted served to disassociate representation from liberalism, basically, in the belief that only Catholic institutions could effectively bridge that gap. This is therefore a case of populism without democracy.

Yet, the four writers' meaning of people (*peuple*, *popolo*, *Volk*) did not exclude any social layer, including the very poor and the sick. They also tended to equate the people with the Catholic faithful, who were morally healthy by definition. Hence, the people had some sort of right to rule. It is hardly necessary to add that the Catholic tradition included a series of arguments—put forward by Aquinas, Suárez, or Bellarmino—ascribing important political functions to the people.[68] All this provided even a Taparelli—a haughty aristocrat as a man and a philosopher—with a whiff of democratic spirit. This section addresses first the authors' views of the relationship between people and elites, and then their assessments of parties.

Lamennais's shift in judgement regarding *le peuple* was momentous indeed. Before the July days he deemed the French lower classes corrupted by passions, as testified to by the Revolution, whereas *L'Avenir* envisaged a Catholic society inhabited by a virtuous and free people. To Lamennais, the masses were "the instrument chosen by God to re-establish His kingdom on earth." Gradually educated and always protected by the Church, peoples had matured from infancy into adulthood, making a clerical state unnecessary. They were now ready to rule, albeit to varying degrees. The French would establish the religious society "more or less shortly [*prochainement*]," and the rest of Europe would follow suit. The Poles, the Belgians, and the Irish had already exhibited a divine inspiration.[69] The historical cycle which began in 1789 has continued with the revolutions of 1830, Lamennais argued, testifying to a long-established bond between Catholicism and liberty. All citizens are now called to prepare for regeneration by propagating the faith and practicing public spirit.[70]

To Philippe Gerbet of *L'Avenir*, the social goal was "all the equality compatible with human nature."[71] The newspaper fully espoused Catholicism's partiality for the humble, although the radical populism of *Paroles d'un croyant*—the non-amendable contrast between a sinful elite and a suffering people—was just adumbrated. The elite portrayed in *L'Avenir* was a new "aristocracy of money," namely a class of financiers and manufacturers with no moral scruples, responsible for turning the French workers into actual "slaves." As a "democratic" force fighting "monopoly," *L'Avenir* sided with the people

[67]See, for example, Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason* (London: Verso, 2007); Nadia Urbinati, *Democracy Disfigured: Opinion, Truth, and the People* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014).

[68]For an introduction, see Paul E. Sigmund, "The Catholic Tradition and Modern Democracy," *Review of Politics* 49, no. 4 (Autumn 1987), 530–548.

[69]EXT, 15, 38, 50–52, 56–57, 63–67, 254 (Lacordaire); VER, 571; Gerbet, *Introduction*, 68–72. For examples of Lamennais's previous censure of the people, see *Essai sur l'indifférence*, vol. 1, 406–407; *De la religion*, 22, 59–60, 72.

[70]EXT, 55, 63–69; VER, 182–184, 286–287.

[71]Gerbet, *Introduction*, 168–182, 195.

against the exploiters. Charles de Coux, who was the economic expert of the newspaper, prophesied a ferocious class war in Europe, for "the poor have lost confidence in the rich."[72] And only Catholicism, according to Coux and Lamennais, would succeed in pacifying spirits eventually, religion being the "true and only principle of modern sociability." The priesthood were the evangelists of the very antidote to greed—love and charity—and thus were the "natural defenders of the people." More than that, the priest was the advocate, the moderator, the confident, the friend, and even the father of the common man.[73] It appears that *L'Avenir* accomplished the transition within Catholicism from a passive plebs to a self-conscious people; this emancipation (which Pierre-Simon Ballanche called *plébéianisme*) was seen as the clearest sign of the Providential plan.[74] The people were *petites gens* lacking *esprit*, certainly, but were rich in *la folie de la foi*.[75]

That history was being shaped by peoples after 1789 was clear to Görres. He claimed that the Germans were the most righteous of them, despite occasional lapses into irreligiosity and pleasure-seeking.[76] He initially contrasted the people—especially "the simple" [*die Einfältigen*], whom Catholicism made wise—with an aristocratic elite imbued with French culture. Later on, a cosmopolitan aristocracy of money featured as antagonist.[77] In rejoicing in the Catholic renaissance, he specified against liberal critics that "the whole people," and not riotous plebs, had marched to Trier on the famous pilgrimage of 1844. Inspired by God, the pilgrims were disciplined and joyous.[78] Ketteler confirmed Görres's approach. To the bishop, the Germans were still those of the Middle Ages at bottom—free, independent, moral, and eager to spread the word of God—and if they were not, the reinstatement of religion would refresh those virtues. Ketteler denounced the "so-called 'educated' and irreligious classes"—journalists and professors in particular—who knew nothing of the people, whereas the greatest joy in his life had been to live with them and work "under them."[79] (It was a fact that the *menu peuple* was over-represented in the Catholic population in Germany.)[80]

The two Italians did not ascribe any political mission to the people. Bent on taming the Risorgimento in the 1840s, both viewed a mobilized multitude as a threat to an ordered political evolution. Like Lamennais, in the 1820s Rosmini had been suspicious of the "masses" for they all too often favored sensual pleasures over "fulfilment" through

[72]VER, 572–573, 721–725 (Coux); Gerbet, *Introduction*, 177–178. On Coux see Gilbert Faccarello, "A Dance Teacher for Paralysed People? Charles de Coux and the Dream of a Christian Political Economy," *European Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 24, no. 4 (2017), 828–875.

[73]VER, 570–573; Gerbet, *Introduction*, 178–179.

[74]Pierre-Simon Ballanche, *Essais de palingénésie sociale: Prolégomènes* (Paris: Didot, 1827), esp. 114–120, 160, 244–245; Pierre-Simon Ballanche, *Vision d'Hebal* (Paris: Didot, 1831), 99–104. See Arthur McCalla, *A Romantic Historiosophy: The Philosophy of History of Pierre-Simon Ballanche* (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

[75]Henri-Dominique Lacordaire, *Conférences de Notre-Dame de Paris* (Paris: Poussielgue, 1907), 304–311. For context, see Frank Paul Bowman, *Le Christ des barricades 1789–1848* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1987/2016).

[76]Joseph Görres, "Über den Fall der Religion und ihre Wiedergeburt" (1810), in Görres, *Politische Schriften*, 6 vols. (Munich: Himmer, 1854–1860), vol. 1, 139–148, 172, 177–184.

[77]Görres, *Teutschland*, 137–138, 162–163; Görres, *Der Kurfürst*, 51; Görres, *Athanasius*, 123, 160.

[78]Joseph Görres, *Die Wallfahrt nach Trier* (Regensburg: Manz, 1845), 3–25. See Vanden Heuvel, *A German Life*, and, more generally, Jonathan Sperber, *Popular Catholicism in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

[79]Ketteler, *Freiheit*; Wilhelm Ketteler, *Was hat Herr Professor Nippold in Heidelberg bewiesen?* (Mainz: Kirchheim, 1870), 17, 41–42.

[80]Nowak, *Geschichte*, 149–152.

the absolute good.[81] But Rosmini eventually accepted universal suffrage in political elections (as indicated above), and, in the religious field, he proposed that "the whole body of the faithful" elected the bishops. The people's present corruption is due to the princes' usurpation of that function, Rosmini in fact contended, inducing a lack of credible and dedicated religious guides.[82] To Taparelli, writing in the 1840s, the "multitude" as such held no legitimate power even in democracies, even in the American republic.[83] In the 1850s, as shown, he maintained that the common man was content with civil rights, politics lying outside his grasp. Yet, this elitist through and through regularly chastised Italian liberals for being disconnected from the views and feelings of a still devout population. He contrasted the common people, who all over Europe were returning to Catholicism, with a corrupt middle class.[84] He was on firm ground when claiming the mass of Italians for Catholicism, obviously, as he was when confining liberalism to a minority, however substantial.

To come to parties, the four Catholics' harsh censure should be contextualized. Parties had been viewed as equivalent to self-interested factions, and condemned accordingly by political thinkers of all epochs and persuasions. On the Continent in particular, parties were fully acknowledged only as late as the end of the nineteenth century.[85] It is also relevant that "party" meant different things to the four authors. If Lamennais, Rosmini, and Taparelli denounced camarillas and parliamentary groupings, Ketteler already faced structured organizations, even helping found one of them, the *Zentrumsfraktion*. Yet, their hostility rested on common ground. First, all but Lamennais argued for a *ständisch* constitution, denying a role for parties somewhat in principle; and, second, parties were regarded as correlative to liberalism, postulating the value of diversity and dissent. Even the journalists of *L'Avenir*, so keen on liberties, were antipathetic to parties for implicitly contradicting the singularity of truth. To the newspaper, the real distinction was moral rather than political and lay between the party of sincere, and that of hypocritical, freedom-lovers. Taparelli put it simply: only two parties exist, that of Catholics and that of "liberals."[86]

Basically, the four writers viewed the parties as the embodiments of politics under liberalism. Self-interested and all-powerful, they turned parliament into an arena for the clash of special interests, making number predominant over justice. Politics was for insiders, indifferent to the well-being of the people—the independence of reason had led to a universal Hobbesian war, bereft of vision, fair play, and morality. By dominating the political process under French-type constitutions, parties had brought about a "liberal absolutism," to use Ketteler's expression. Sometimes even liberalism as a

[81]See, for example, Antonio Rosmini, "Esame delle opinioni di Melchiorre Gioja in favor della moda" (1824), in Rosmini, *Opuscoli filosofici*, 2 vols. (Milan: Pogliani, 1827–1828), vol. 2, 105–168.

[82]Antonio Rosmini, *Delle cinque piaghe della Santa Chiesa*, ed. Clemente Riva (written 1832–1833, published 1848; Brescia: Morcelliana, 1971), chap. 4.

[83]Taparelli, *Saggio*, 319–320, 357–358.

[84]Taparelli, *Esame*, vol. 2, 562.

[85]See Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis* (Colchester, UK: ECPR, 1976/2005), 1–49; Jonathan White and Lea Ypi, *The Meaning of Partisanship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); and, on a particularly important episode, Dieter Langewiesche, "Die Anfänge der deutschen Parteien: Partei, Fraktion und Verein in der Revolution von 1848/49," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 4, no. 3 (1978), 324–361. On the necessity of conservative parties for a stable democracy, see Daniel Ziblatt, *Conservative Parties and the Birth of Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

[86]VER, 748 (editorial board); Taparelli, *Esame*, vol. 2, 193–200.

philosophy was termed a party, to suggest the existence of an alternative to the status quo.

The Mennaisian circle, inspired by the Belgian example, embraced practical politics, as testified to by the *Agence générale pour la défense de la liberté religieuse*. Lamennais even contemplated the possibility of creating a Catholic party.[87] Yet, political activity was only a temporary means, for, as shown, the writers of *L'Avenir* believed that political conflicts would disappear, and the "spirit of faction" with them, once liberties were practiced, Catholicism was enthroned, and government and state were turned into mere auxiliaries to community life. *L'Avenir* seemed to contrast politics with religion, in fact, since the progress of the latter occurred at the expense of a centralized French state that monopolized political activity. Liberty itself resulted ultimately from religious advancement and not from the political process. Remarkably, Church and state would remain separate and independent even in the future perfect polity.[88] The newspaper complained that politics regularly trespassed on the religious domains of thought and conscience, as indicated by the manipulation of nationalist feelings besides poor relief and education.[89] Nationalism amounted to collective "egoism" and "hate," whereas the universality of the Catholic message would bring about a "free brotherhood of nations" resting on love.[90]

Rosmini provided an example of animosity against the parliamentary game when writing that parties were "worms that devour the fabric of society." To him, they were *the* hindrances to justice and social morality, for, by definition, they pursued their own interests, which were either material, or cultural, or mirroring the popular passions of the day. The only possible antidote was a free society, which would gradually induce the uniformity of religious and political views. If the masses had common beliefs, Rosmini wrote, justice would be enthroned, ushering in a civilization unsurpassed in history. The process was well developed in Ireland and under way in France.[91]

In the early 1840s, Taparelli censured the dominance of parliamentary majorities, indifferent to justice—the conscience of each MP, he added, is relieved by the numerosity of "accomplices."[92] In the 1850s, he criticized majority government, the "despotism of parties," universal suffrage, division of powers, politicians' dubious morality, alliance shifting, and so on—in brief, anything related to the modern form of representative constitution. Moreover, Taparelli evoked memories of the revolutionary Terror, which in his view contemporary parties were always ready to restage by unleashing plebs who behaved like "a horde of cannibals." Since the masses had no independent political will, and the middle class was rationalist and *doctrinaire*, he hailed the aristocracy and the Church as the only sources of legitimate authority.[93] There ensued a depiction of the Papal States as a concrete example of religious society with decentralized government, a relatively low taxation, a comfortable people, and plenty of welfare institutions.[94]

[87]Viaene, *Belgium*, 71.

[88]EXT, 13, 72–74, 416–417; Gerbet, *Introduction*, 140. See Milbach, *Lamennais*, 387–388, 392–393.

[89]EXT, 4, 56–60.

[90]Gerbet, *Introduction*, 179–180.

[91]Rosmini, *Filosofia della politica*, 207–214; Rosmini, *Filosofia del diritto*, vol. 5, 1391–1395, 1406–1407, 1415.

[92]Taparelli, *Saggio*, 376.

[93]Taparelli, *Esame*, vol. 2, 467–468, 558–562.

[94]See esp. Luigi Taparelli, "Le cifre in conferma dei principii," CC, s. 3, no. 6 (1857), 22–42.

Ketteler argued in 1848 that, first, the social question took precedence over political issues, and, second, that he was committed to humanity and not to a party. Parliamentary politics in a centralized state, he later claimed, is the hunting ground for a "caste" composed of MPs, party leaders, party journalists, judges, and lawyers. Systems of suffrage based on wealth result in the domination of "capital" and thus of an irreligious materialism. The clash of parties generates raging passions, elections are fixed, majorities are omnipotent, and special interests have the lion's share. Popular sovereignty is a mockery since parties, always pursuing their own interest, manipulate the people's will, often by arousing their worst passions. Any majority meant to represent the people represents only a party; and especially in the small German states, parties had the upper hand over all other powers. Placing a workers' party at the helm will only lead to a "savage" political struggle. For all these reasons, liberal representation was saturated with greed and egoism, and was bound to end up with war, either civil or conquering.[95] The lack of any influence of the Catholic masses ensued as a matter of course, the more so because Ketteler (like Taparelli) believed that freemasonry exerted a substantial sway over parliament, the press, and the educational establishment.[96] Ketteler's case studies were France and Prussia, for, again like Taparelli, he deemed Britain temporarily sheltered from the most serious evils of liberal rule due to a small government and effective personal liberties.[97]

To conclude this section, an aversion to the political sphere has emerged as an underlying feature of the communitarian vision. That sphere could be minimized, however, since the "natural communities"—the family, the locality, the *Stände*, or even the trade unions—coexisted harmoniously, sharing knowledge and love. Local self-rule worked well independently of political decisions at the center, for hierarchies were mitigated through a religious approach to life by the people and the powerful alike. The matrix of Jacques Maritain's tenet that "man in his entirety is elevated above political society" lies with these ultramontanes.[98]

VI. The Perfect Society

The relationship between democracy and Christianity is a major thread running through James Kloppenberg's magnum opus *Toward Democracy* (2016). He reaffirms the traditional thesis that Protestantism supplied both moral values and arguments for self-rule, whereas post-revolutionary Catholicism sided with privilege, ultimately due to a sensibility of deference towards hierarchy.[99] This article shows that the picture was more complex than this. A remodeled ultramontanism set out to overcome the

[95]Ketteler, *Die großen socialen Fragen*, 16–17, 38; Ketteler, *Freiheit*, 43–45, 96–97, 101–107, 117–119; Ketteler, *Deutschland*, 24–25, 72–75, 89, 93–96. On the populism of the *Zentrum* party, see David Blackbourn, *Populists and Patricians: Essays in Modern German History* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987). For Görres's denunciation of power-seeking party politics, see *Staat,* 35–36.

[96]Ketteler, *Freiheit*, 218–231; Ketteler, *Die Arbeiterfrage*, 74–77.

[97]Ketteler, *Deutschland*, 25. As regards Britain, Taparelli prized decentralization, respect for the law, the spirit of participation and compromise, and an endowed Church, all of which being legacies of the Roman religion to him; see Taparelli, *Esame*, vol. 1, 289–297; vol. 2, 64–67, 320–325; Taparelli, "Le province," 339–340.

[98]Jacques Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good*, tr. John Fitzgerald (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1947/1972), 71.

[99]James Kloppenberg, *Toward Democracy: The Struggle for Self-Rule in European and American Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), esp. 499–504, 563–564, 570–574, 597, 702–703. On the

catastrophe of 1789–1815 but without renouncing the primacy of religion. There resulted an idiosyncratic political thought, suspicious of both the state (trampling upon the Church's liberties) and the individual (whose moral independence was resented). The premises of this thought warranted a corporatist, hierarchical democracy—if the expression is not an oxymoron—in which the masses were the tool of God. The four authors' foe was the impious spirit of liberalism, not a specific form of government nor the masses' demands as such. Armed with a confrontational and anxiety-driven faith, they displayed an unflinching determination to mold the aspirations of the age in line with religion.

The thinking of Lamennais, Rosmini, Taparelli, and Ketteler was programmatic and visionary. The perfect society had a consolatory function of course—conjuring up the time when a Catholic polity did exist—but it was also a tool for thinking the future. That Catholicism is intrinsically communitarian and populist is often pointed out, but in all too vague terms.[100] This article has clarified that adopting those labels is legitimate for the period considered. The four authors devised a community of the gentle and caring, which, like the family, was hierarchical, self-governed, local, and merging private with public responsibilities. They also argued that the people had no voice under liberalism, because the political system was a mere arena for the collision of elite's interests. The authors' populism was anti-statist, public-spirited, and socially concerned.

There was a boundary, however, not to be overstepped. The recourse to individual reason to distinguish good from evil deprived justice of communal foundation, ushering in a state of never-ending conflict. The new ultramontanes, facing a world allegedly bereft of an objective basis for truth and morality, warned against the *Wille zur Macht* as outcome of a reason interested only in means—this is perhaps their most enduring legacy. Unsurprisingly, Ketteler's 1867 warning about *Borussianismus*—namely the idea that Prussia had a historical mission to fulfill, aggressive and necessary—went with a denunciation of Bismarck's *Machiavellismus* as the epitome of God-less, utilitarian politics.[101] Rosmini and Taparelli, in particular, maintained that everybody was an end in the Catholic society, and that individual welfare was its proper goal.[102] What the ultramontanes failed to acknowledge, however, was that the liberal democratic institutions too had a moral basis: tolerance and pluralism.

Acknowledgements. I would like to thank three anonymous referees for their perceptive and helpful comments on a previous version of this article. All remaining errors are my own. I am also grateful to Massimo Carlo Giannini for sharpening my view of the history of Catholicism.

Roberto Romani's most recent book is *Sensibilities of the Risorgimento: Reason and Passions in Political Thought* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

limitations of Protestants' idea of freedom, see Annelien De Dijn, *Freedom: An Unruly History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020), 168–173.

[100]For an exception, see Markus Krienke, "Personalität, Solidarität und Subsidiarität zwischen Kommunitarismus und katholischer Sozialethik: Ein Vergleich," *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 130, no. 1 (2008), 84–106.

[101]Ketteler, *Deutschland*, 29–65, 98–99.

[102]See, for example, Rosmini, *Filosofia del diritto*, vol. 3, 820–829; Taparelli, *Saggio*, 258–62.

Cite this article: Romani, Roberto. "Community and People in Catholic Thought, 1830–1870." *Church History* 92, no. 4 (December 2023): 845–864. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009640723002792.