

# The Thomistic Revival and the Relationship between the Jesuits and the Papacy, 1878–1914

Theological Studies  
2014, Vol. 75(4) 746–773  
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DOI: 10.1177/0040563914548652  
tsj.sagepub.com  


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## Abstract

The revival of Scholasticism by Pope Leo XIII with his encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879) had been in preparation for at least half a century. He hoped that Thomism would not only give the Church a complete program for revival of the sacred sciences but also enable the Church to effectively confront modernity. Leo's chosen instrument to forward this scenario was the Society of Jesus. This hope continued under his successor, Pope Pius X, but the Vatican's struggles against Modernism surfaced growing tensions both among Jesuits themselves and in their relationship with the papacy.

## Keywords

Leo XIII, modernity, Modernism, Pius X, Society of Jesus, Thomistic revival

In contrast to its reputation since Vatican II, the Jesuit order in the decades after its restoration in 1814 until well into the 20th century was in some circles a byword for all that was reactionary and “antimodern.” To its critics it engaged, albeit intelligently,<sup>1</sup> in polemical anti-Semitic ultraconservatism, and it ensured a discipline

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1. Owen Chadwick, *A History of the Popes, 1830–1914* (New York: Oxford University, 1998) 329.

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among its members that was based on a “system of moral espionage.”<sup>2</sup> So distrusted was the order in the European context that even in the pontificate of Pope Pius IX the pope had suggested to the general of the order, Jan Roothaan, that the Jesuits should temporarily withdraw from Rome in 1848.<sup>3</sup> This was part of a pattern that would see Jesuits expelled from various European and Latin American countries during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

In much of the educated 19th-century popular imagination, the Jesuits represented all that was worst in Catholicism. In a speech in the Reichstag in the lead up to the expulsion of the Jesuits from Germany in 1872, Chlodwig Karl Viktor, prince of Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst, had remarked, “The Society of Jesus has taken upon itself to make war on the modern state, and its members declare with perfect openness that their purpose is to maintain the unity of ecclesiastical doctrine and ecclesiastical life in rigid connection with the Church as the center of their system.”<sup>4</sup> Even that great Liberal British Prime Minister, William Ewart Gladstone, had denounced the Jesuits as the “deadliest foes that mental and moral liberty have ever known,” and had by contrast praised Clement XIV, the pope who had suppressed them in 1773.<sup>5</sup> And yet when Leo XIII set about, as a new and “liberal” pope, to reform the church in a dynamic and (at least superficially) more open spirit,<sup>6</sup> it was to the Jesuits that paradoxically he turned to implement his program for reform. This centered on the encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879) in which Leo sought to restore the philosophical theology of Thomas Aquinas to the very center of Catholic intellectual discourse. However, his motives in doing so may not have been entirely consistent with a more liberal approach to the issues that Catholicism faced in the aftermath of the pontificate of Pius IX.

The recruitment of the Jesuits by Leo XIII to assist in his programmatic assault on the intellectual currents of his day was perhaps a natural course. He had been educated by the Society at both secondary level and in his seminary days; his brother Giuseppe had been a Jesuit but left the order and became a cardinal only to return to the Society later in life; and the Jesuits had eventually become prominent in the pontificate of Pius IX. Such was Leo XIII’s appreciation of the Society that at a meeting of Jesuits in Rome in October 1896 he lauded them in terms “of such high praise that Father General [Luis Martín] forbade them to be repeated . . . for fear of awaking jealousy in other Religious Orders.”<sup>7</sup>

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2. At least according to the Spanish ex-Jesuit Julio Cejador in his novel, *Mirando á Loyola: El alma de la Compañía de Jesús* (Madrid: Renacimiento, 1913) 56.
  3. William V. Bangert, *A History of the Society of Jesus* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970) 433.
  4. Quoted in J. B. Bury, *History of the Papacy in the 19th Century: Liberty and Authority in the Roman Catholic Church* (New York: Schocken, 1964) 161.
  5. W. E. Gladstone, *The Vatican Decrees and Their Bearing on Civil Allegiance: A Political Expostulation* (London: John Murray) 58.
  6. According to Owen Chadwick, Leo’s opening of the Vatican archives was “one of the most liberal acts [of the papacy] in an illiberal century” (*Catholicism and History: The Opening of the Vatican Archives* [New York: Cambridge University, 1978] 137).
  7. *Letters and Notices* (London: Manresa) 176 (1909) 366. *Letters and Notices* is the internal house journal of the English (now British) province of the Society of Jesus.

The feeling of alienation from, and the fact of the oppression of the Jesuit order at the hands of, the civil powers in the 19th century was a reflection of much of the reality of the Catholic Church's dealings with an emergent ideology of Liberalism, which churchmen rightly saw as antipathetical to Catholicism's outlook and message.<sup>8</sup> If the relationship with the world around it was problematic for the Society of Jesus, there were also internal difficulties. Despite efforts to the contrary there was not a complete uniformity of ideology in the order, as it struggled to reintegrate itself into the ecclesiastical world, given the circumstance of its 18th-century suppression. Thus Roothaan in 1850 reprimanded the provincial superior of the Lyon province, because he believed that the philosophy taught to young Jesuits in France was entirely Cartesian in content.<sup>9</sup> Roothaan would subsequently be credited with trying to restore Thomistic Aristotelianism to its rightful place in the order's philosophy and theology.<sup>10</sup> Later in the century Martín roundly rebuked the Belgian Jesuit Bollandists because they had begun to use critical techniques in their approach to the lives of the saints, in a manner that the general believed undermined the faith of the Church and the pieties of the faithful.<sup>11</sup> He also censured the English Province for not being robust enough in the defense of Catholicism in the context of Protestant Britain. He even went so far as to express his fear that the pope might request him to suppress the English Jesuit publication, the *Month*. This was to "serve as a warning."<sup>12</sup>

David Schultenover has argued that Martín's hostility to English and Northern American mores was predicated on the differing intellectual mind-sets of the Mediterranean and Anglo-Saxon worlds.<sup>13</sup> Be that as it may, the Jesuits in the United States were strongly opposed to the attempts of greater Catholic integration into North American life as represented by the activities of Archbishop John Ireland of Saint Paul, Cardinal James Gibbons of Baltimore, and Mgr. John O'Connell of the North American College, Rome. European Jesuits also led the way in vigorously denouncing "Americanism."<sup>14</sup> Ultimately Pope Leo condemned the movement in the encyclical *Testem benevolentiae* of January 1899, a document prepared by the Jesuit Cardinal

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8. See Jonathan Wright, *The Jesuits: Missions, Myths, and Histories* (London: HarperCollins, 2004) 243.
  9. Gerard McCool, *The Neo-Thomists* (Milwaukee: Marquette University, 1994) 25.
  10. "On the Doctrine of St Thomas," D in *Selected Writings of Father Ledóchowski* (Chicago: American Assistancy, 1945) 499. Włodzimierz Ledóchowski (1866–1942) was the 26th superior general of the Jesuits, 1915–1942.
  11. David G. Schultenover, S.J., "Luis Martín García, the Jesuit General of the Modernist Crisis (1892–1906): On Historical Criticism," *Catholic Historical Review* 89 (2003) 434–63, at 444–45.
  12. James Hayes to Provincial Reginald Colley, September 28, 1902, Hayes Papers V/8, Archives of the British Province of the Society of Jesus (hereafter ABPSJ). Hayes was in Rome as the elected procurator of the English province for a meeting of such representatives from the whole order.
  13. David G. Schultenover, S.J., *A View From Rome: On the Eve of the Modernist Crisis* (New York, Fordham University, 1993) 193.
  14. The story is classically told in Thomas T. McAvoy, *The American Heresy in Roman Catholicism, 1895–1900* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1957) *passim*.

Camillo Mazzella. The pope rejected the idea that the Church should shape her teachings in accordance with the “spirit of the age” and repudiated the suggestion that the Church should make some concessions to new opinions.

The order that Leo came to rely on so heavily was, despite the presence of some brilliant individuals, in many respects both backward looking and moribund. As one recent historian has observed somewhat harshly, “Life in the Jesuit houses of Europe in the 1820s through to the 1920s and beyond was often oppressively stilted and stunting. A kind of fanatical mediocrity was the cardinal virtue, flair and flamboyance anathema.”<sup>15</sup> These are a reflection of some of the criticisms that George Tyrrell leveled against the Society in his own day in which he contrasted its restricted and restricting spirit with the openness and vivacity displayed by Ignatius in the early years of the order’s existence.<sup>16</sup> There is, however, a certain sense in which the Jesuits, in taking up Leo’s challenge to embrace Thomism, used the opportunity not only to reinvent themselves but also to impose on the order an ideological unity of purpose that had been to some extent lacking since the Society had been reconstituted by Pope Pius VII in 1814.

For Leo XIII, Thomism presented a system that would answer the moral, political, and intellectual debasement of a post-Kantian culture. That culture seemed determined to eliminate not simply Catholicism from the European marketplace of ideas, but any understanding that religion, and therefore God, should have a place in how society would be structured and organized. Religion was to be removed from public discourse and become a matter of the sacristy and private devotion.<sup>17</sup>

In calling upon the Jesuits to be in the vanguard of the Thomistic revival, Leo XIII made clear that he expected such compliance on the basis of the historic relationship between the papacy and the Society. Moreover, he thought that the Gregorian University had a particular part to play in the enterprise. He made all this plain in an address to the professors of the Gregorian on November 27, 1878, that is, even before *Aeterni Patris* had been drawn up. The pope emphasized that it was necessary to

banish from the schools a false science which is hostile to faith and reason and to insist on its replacement by true science which was brought into a complete system by the scholastic doctors, especially by the leader of them all, the angelic St. Thomas. . . . And it is our earnest desire to restore this science to its ancient glory and the instrument for this we turn our eyes to the Gregorian University which . . . is yet so renowned and so frequented that it can contribute powerfully to the restoration and advancement of studies which we so desire.

The pope continued:

We have no doubt that you [Jesuits] will, according to your promise, devote all your energy to this object. This is a duty imposed on you by the obedience which, by your rule, you vow

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15. David Mitchell, *The Jesuits: A History* (New York: F. Watts, 1980) 232.

16. M. D. Petre, *The Autobiography and Life of George Tyrrell*, 2 vols. (London: Edward Arnold, 1912) 2:463, 481.

17. See John Courtney Murray, S.J., “Leo XIII on Church and State: The General Structure of the Controversy,” *Theological Studies* 14 (1953) 1–30.

to the Holy See; and by the Constitutions of your Society, which decree that philosophy and theology shall be taught according to the doctrine and method of St Thomas.<sup>18</sup>

At its heart Thomism was concerned to stress the compatibility between “unaided” human reason and supernatural faith. This emphasis on the relationship between faith and reason was not only at the core of Scholasticism; it was also central to the work of Vatican I. In its first constitution on faith, *Dei Filius* (April 24, 1870), the council had asserted, in contrast to much of the prevailing received philosophical speculation on the matter, that God could be known on the basis of reason alone. The acknowledgment of God’s purposes in the world had direct implication for the way societies related to the Church. The principal drafters of the document were two Jesuits, Johannes Franzelin and Josef Kleutgen.

The return to Scholastic method manifested at Vatican I and in the dispositions of Leo XIII was part and parcel of a development that had been taking place in the Society of Jesus for quite some time. There is a certain sense in which both Leo and the Jesuits had been evolving a strategy for the revival of Thomism over a 50-year period prior to *Aeterni Patris*.

## Jesuit Scholasticism before 1879

When the old Roman College (founded by Ignatius) was restored to the Jesuits in 1824, there was a division between those favorable to Thomism and those indifferent to it, or who were simply eclectic in their approach to issues of philosophy and theology. The new rector, Luigi Taparelli D’Azeglio, only 31 years old, teamed up with his former fellow novice Serafino Sordi (1798–1865) in an attempt to bring about a unified approach in the teaching of philosophy and theology. Both were committed Thomists, as was Serafino’s brother Domenico (1790–1880). The Sordi brothers had been taught as young men in the Vincentian-run Collegio Alberoni near Piacenza, one of the most important centers of Thomism in Italy. The Sordis both joined the Jesuits and propagated the ideas of Aquinas. Domenico would teach Matteo Liberatore (1810–1892) and Carlo Maria Curci (1810–1891) who, together with the German Josef Kleutgen (1811–1883),<sup>19</sup> were probably “the most influential Jesuit Neo-Scholastics” of the 19th century.<sup>20</sup>

For his part Taparelli taught philosophy to the 15-year-old Vincenzo Gioacchino Pecci at the Roman College, and although he was taught theology by the more

18. ET in *The Life and Acts of Pope Leo XIII: Preceded by a Sketch of the Last Days of Pius IX. and the Origin and Laws of the Conclave . . .*, ed. Joseph E. Keller, S.J. (New York: Benziger, 1889) 339–40.

19. Of whom it was said that his life’s work was to purge German Catholic philosophy of Hegelianism. See Joseph Louis Perrier, *The Revival of Scholastic Philosophy in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University, 1909) 197.

20. Ralph Del Colle, “Neo-Scholasticism,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Nineteenth-Century Theology*, ed. David Ferguson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2010) 381.

heterogeneous Giovanni Perrone (1794–1876), Taparelli's influence had an abiding impact on Pecci.<sup>21</sup> Giuseppe Pecci (1807–1890), Vincenzo's brother, had also been taught by Serafino Sordi between 1843 and 1846, and he in turn became a convinced Thomist. When Giuseppe left the Jesuits, he became an influential professor in his brother's seminary in Perugia, a center of Thomistic revival in the late 1850s and 1860s.

As suggested above, the Roman College was by no means uniform in its approach. Perrone and Franzelin were not especially interested in Thomism. Others such as Carlo Passaglia (1812–1887) had somewhat exotic tastes—he would be dismissed from the Society and excommunicated for his views on the Papal States.<sup>22</sup> Among the philosophy professors of a later generation, Salvatore Tongiorgi (1820–1865) and Domenico Palmieri (1829–1909), who joined the Society as a priest in 1852, were convinced that Aristotelian ideas about matter and form could simply not be reconciled with modern science.<sup>23</sup> Others, such as Alessandro Caretti, were even more eccentric and taught an essentially Cartesian metaphysics.<sup>24</sup> When Taparelli became provincial superior of the Naples Province of the Jesuits, he tried to impose Thomism as the mandatory approach to philosophy and theology. To that end he summoned Serafino Sordi to teach in the Jesuit scholasticate at Naples. However, such was the unpopularity of the policy that both Taparelli and Sordi were removed from office.

Pius IX, although disposed to Aquinas and sensitive to the usefulness of Thomism as an intellectually unified system, was unwilling to cause dissension among professors in Rome and so allowed a degree of flexibility in the teaching of philosophy and theology, of which he was incapable in other areas of policy.<sup>25</sup> Two events during Pius IX's pontificate, however, boosted the restoration of neo-Scholasticism. The first was the papally approved foundation in 1850 of the Jesuit periodical *La Civiltà Cattolica*—against, it must be said, the wishes of Father General Roothaan. Those appointed to the editorial board included all the main Italian Jesuit neo-Scholastics: Curci; Taparelli, who became especially influential with Pius IX; and Liberatore, whose “conversion” to Thomism dates from around this time, and whose articles on Thomism in *Civiltà*, when reproduced in book form as *Institutiones philosophicae*,<sup>26</sup> were “ranked among the major works of 19th-century Scholasticism.”<sup>27</sup> Not only were the pages of *Civiltà*

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21. Philip Caraman, *University of the Nations: The Story of the Gregorian University with Its Associated Institutes, the Biblical and Oriental, 1551–1962* (New York: Paulist, 1981) 96.
  22. His *Pro Causa Italica: Ad Episcopos Catholicos* (Florence, s.n., 1861) was initially published anonymously.
  23. McCool, *Neo-Thomists* 26.
  24. He did manage to produce a somewhat more orthodox book, *Filosofia medievale e scolastica* (Rome, s.n., 1870).
  25. Perrier, *Revival of Scholastic Philosophy* 160.
  26. The first collection of that title was published by the press at Propaganda Fide in Rome in 1855.
  27. Gerald A. McCool, *From Unity to Pluralism: The Internal Evolution of Thomism* (New York: Fordham University, 1992) 12.

ruthlessly used for the promotion of Scholasticism, they were also used, in time, to promote the extreme elements of Ultramontanism. As the century wore on, in contrast to the early years of its existence, *Civiltà* would also become politically reactionary, with its “intransigent politics . . . increasingly phrased in Thomistic language.”<sup>28</sup> Curiously, its first editor, Curci, despite his closeness to Pius IX, would in time be dismissed from the Jesuits because he expressed his views that the Papal States could not and should not be restored.<sup>29</sup>

The second encouragement to neo-Scholasticism was with the election of Belgian Pieter Jan Beckx as superior general of the Society at General Congregation 22 in 1853. The next year Beckx issued a revised *Ratio studiorum* for Jesuit seminarians; it was a “sort of prelude to the encyclical *Aeterni Patris*.”<sup>30</sup> At the congregation Taparelli had sponsored a document encouraging a return to Scholasticism. It was carefully worded so as to take into consideration Jesuit interpretations of Scholasticism as seen through the writings of Francesco Suárez, S.J. (1548–1617). Thus Decree 37 of the congregation stipulates that while Aquinas is to be followed, he is not to be slavishly adhered to, especially on disputed points where other approved authors (i.e., Suárez) may be used<sup>31</sup>—between 1856 and 1878 many of Suárez’s works were collected and published. The 27 volumes thus far produced have not exhausted his oeuvre.<sup>32</sup>

As much as anything, at least so far as the Jesuits are concerned, what we witness at this period is a revival of Suárezianism rather than Thomism per se. This probably continued to be the case at Rome until the arrival in 1885 of the French Jesuit Louis Billot, by far the most important Thomistic speculative theologian of the late 19th century. He departed the following year precisely because of disagreements over Suárezian and Molinist interpretations of Aquinas.<sup>33</sup> He was, however, recalled to the Gregorian at the specific request of Leo XIII. Billot was perhaps the closest the Jesuits came to having a “pure” Thomist, although opinion is divided on this point. At the

28. James Hennessy, “Leo XIII’s Thomistic Revival: A Political and Philosophical Event,” *Journal of Religion, Supplement* 58 (1978) S185–97, at S191.

29. C. M. Curci, *La nuova Italia ed I vecchi Zelanti: Studii utili ancora all’ordinamento dei partiti parlamentari* (Florence: Fratelli Bencini, 1881), a work that was widely read and attracted attention even outside Italy. Curci was readmitted to the Society ten days before his death. See Bangert, *History of the Society of Jesus* 444; and Chadwick, *A History of the Popes* 246.

30. Thomas J. A. Hartley, *Thomistic Revival and the Modernist Era* (Toronto: University of St. Michael’s College, 1971) 32.

31. John W. Padberg et al., *For Matters of Greater Moment: The First Thirty Jesuit General Congregations* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1994) 455.

32. Francisco Suárez, *Opera omni (sic)*, ed. M. André and C. Berton (Paris: Vivès, 1856–1878). See also Daniel Schwartz, “Introduction,” *Interpreting Suárez: Critical Essays* (New York: Cambridge University, 2012) 1–18, at 13.

33. The Spanish Jesuit Luis de Molina’s (1535–1600) views on God’s “middle knowledge,” which he claimed to have derived from Thomist principles, were an irritation to the Dominicans. Among recent studies of Molina are Thomas Flint, *Divine Providence: The Molinist Account* (London: Cornell University, 1998); and James Beilby and Paul Eddy, *Divine Foreknowledge: Four Views* (Downers Grove, IL, InterVarsity, 2001).

very least he caused “the entire philosophical doctrine and the great part of the theological theses of Suárez and Molina to disappear from the Gregorian University.”<sup>34</sup> In fact, by the time of the Modernist controversy Billot would claim that the Modernists “only have to open Suárez [and] they will find there all their teaching.”<sup>35</sup>

These particular disputes were well into the future, but by the 1860s there were clear differences of approach to Scholasticism emerging into the public domain among the Jesuits at Rome. Even within the Gregorian University, although the theologians were by and large Thomists, their devotion to the more speculative aspects of Scholastic theology was “moderate.” The philosophers tended to be hostile, seeing Scholasticism as largely irrelevant to the problems facing the world in the mid-to-late 19th century.<sup>36</sup> By contrast the fathers at *La Civiltà Cattolica* were ardent Thomists. This led to disputes about Aquinas’s metaphysics between the university and the journal, which necessitated the intervention of Beckx in 1861, who ordered that while each side could maintain their position, there was to be no more public disputation.<sup>37</sup> The revival of Thomism by means of the restored Jesuit order in the early to mid-19th century produced, therefore, but mixed results.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless the ground had been prepared, and when Cardinal Pecci ascended the papal throne, the scene was set for an aggressive return of Thomism to be spearheaded by, among others, the Society of Jesus.

## The Struggle for Ideological Unity

The Church’s tussle with modernity in the 19th century occurred at different levels and in different spheres. Although some attempted to take into consideration the inexorability of democracy, many churchmen at an ideological level preferred a monarchical form of government. After all, in their view this was the divine order in the universe. Some historians have argued that Leo XIII’s views on authority were informed by absolutist theories of the 16th and 17th centuries,<sup>39</sup> but Aquinas was quite clear that the best form of government was monarchical,<sup>40</sup> and that rule by group led only to confusion and disorganization.<sup>41</sup> Although Leo

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34. D. Besançon, O.P., “Le R. P. L. Billot, S.J. (1846–1931),” *Bulletin thomiste* 8 (1931) 457–59, at 458. Translations throughout are mine, unless otherwise indicated.
  35. See Peter J. Bernardi, *Maurice Blondel, Social Catholicism, and Action Française: The Clash over the Church’s Role in Society during the Modernist Era* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 2009) 93 n. 6.
  36. Gerald A. McCool, S.J., *Nineteenth-Century Scholasticism: The Search for a Unitary Method* (New York: Fordham University, 1996) 84.
  37. *Ibid.* 237.
  38. Romanus Cessario, *A Short History of Thomism* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 2003) 85.
  39. Maurice Larkin, *Gathering Peace: Continental Europe, 1870–1945* (New York: Humanities, 1970) 56.
  40. Paul E. Sigmund, ed., *St. Thomas Aquinas on Politics and Ethics* (New York: Norton, 1988) 23–25.
  41. *Ibid.* 18.



would later advocate the policy of *Ralliement* for the French Church in its relationship with the Republic,<sup>42</sup> this was purely a question of pragmatism rather than principle. Despite Leo's declaration that the Church was indifferent to forms of government, he himself clearly preferred monarchy.<sup>43</sup> The hierarchal model had consequences not only for how the Church itself operated and functioned *ad intra* but also for the relationship between church and state, and for the Church's role in the world. The search for truth both in religion and in social and political life was a search to discover God's purpose for the world.

The Church's position had been attacked and undermined not simply by the Protestant Reformation and the Enlightenment but by a whole string of philosophers beginning with Descartes and culminating with Kant and their heirs and successors. The ethos of the 19th century both ideologically and socially was, as far as Catholicism was concerned, diametrically opposed to all that the Church valued. Catholicism did produce stout defenders such as Joseph de Maistre, whose two-volume *Du pape* laid the basis not only for neo-Ultramontanism but also for European neo-conservatism.<sup>44</sup> The problem lay, however, in the fragmentation of ideas within the Church that gave rise to individuals such as Hugues-Félicité Robert de Lamennais, Lord Acton, Ignaz von Döllinger, Félix Dupanloup, and John Henry Newman, to name but a few, who seemed willing to engage with ideas and theories that in effect would lead to a weakening of the principles of church government and thought that had been laid down in the Middle Ages. Indeed it was to the Middle Ages that Leo turned to correct the abuses of modernity. As has been well observed, he viewed the Middle Ages "as having attended a height of Christian thought, life and organization that was in contrast with what he regarded as the deterioration wrought by the revolution [in ideas] in which Christendom now found itself."<sup>45</sup>

Catholic apologists have insisted that because Leo XIII "loved and lived for ideas,"<sup>46</sup> he therefore had "a mental outlook that took new realities into account."<sup>47</sup> While we can point to the fact that Leo maintained that "my eyes are not blind to the spirit of the age," and "do not reject the progress of our age," nevertheless he added the qualification, "where it is certainly useful."<sup>48</sup> Furthermore he adhered to the teaching of Pius IX's

42. Alexander Sedgwick, *The Ralliement in French Politics 1890–1898* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1965) has held its place in English treatments of the topic.

43. John F. Pollard, "Leo XIII and the United States of America, 1898–1903," in *The Papacy and the New World Order*, ed. Vincent Viaene (Brussels: Belgium Historical Institute, 2005) 465–77, at 468.

44. Joseph de Maistre, *Du pape*, 2 vols. (Paris: Beaucé-Rusand, 1819).

45. Kenneth Scott Latourette, *Christianity in a Revolutionary Age*, vol. 1, *The Nineteenth Century in Europe* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1959) 311.

46. Michael P. Richards, *Vicars of Christ: Popes, Power, and Politics in the Modern World* (New York: Crossroad, 1998) 33.

47. René Fülöp-Miller [Conrad M. R. Bonacina], *Leo XIII and Our Times* (London: Longmans, 1937) 46.

48. Quoted in Frank J. Coppa, *Politics and the Papacy in the Modern World* (Westport: Praeger, 2008) 56.

Syllabus of Errors (1864), which maintained that one of the errors of the day was that “philosophy is to be treated without taking any account of supernatural revelation.” In reviving Thomism<sup>49</sup> the pope wanted to return to a system that would serve as a basis for an essentially conservative approach to the problems that confronted the Church and his papacy. Thomism was to provide the means by which ecclesiastical opinion could be united and the Church’s forces arranged for a confrontation with what was new and threatening. This was a manipulation of an idea system conceived in other circumstances, but under Jesuit direction it would become both fossilized and oppressive. As Lacordaire had pointed out, Thomas was a beacon not a landmark.<sup>50</sup> One near contemporary critic had penetrated to the heart of the matter:

If that system [Scholastic philosophy] is at the present experiencing a kind of revival in the school of Catholicism, this is due not so much to its own inner vitality as to its supposed fitness to serve an ecclesiastical political system which through the favor of circumstance . . . has attained again in our time to unexpected power.<sup>51</sup>

An equally hostile, but this time Catholic, observer has claimed that the triumph of Neo-Thomism “over its rivals in the 19th century was an unscrupulously brutal use of its authority by a clerical establishment.”<sup>52</sup>

By placing the Jesuits in the forefront of his neo-Scholastic enterprise, Leo was aligning himself with a group that, whatever its reputation outside Catholicism, was within the Church growing in power, prestige, and numbers. In 1850 there were 4,600 Jesuits; by 1875, 9,385; in 1900, 15,073; and a decade later, 16,293.<sup>53</sup> Under Jesuit direction a system of philosophical theology emerged that was both narrow and polemical, with all creativity removed.<sup>54</sup> It was taught, as Frederick Copleston remarked, “in a dogmatic manner analogous to that which Marxism-Leninism is taught in Communist-dominated education.”<sup>55</sup>

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49. It has been cogently argued that what Leo called for in *Aeterni Patris* was not precisely the restoration of Thomism but “the wisdom of St. Thomas” (James Collins, “Leo XIII and the Philosophical Approach to Modernity,” in *Leo XIII and the Modern World*, ed. Edward T. Gargan [New York: Sheed & Ward, 1961] 179–209, at 191–92).
  50. See Emmanuel-Célestin Suhard, *Growth or Decline? The Church Today*, trans. James A. Corbett, foreword John Courtney Murray (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1948) 64.
  51. Friedrich Paulsen, *Immanuel Kant: His Life and Doctrine*, rev. ed., trans. J. E. Creighton and Albert Lefevre (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1902) 11.
  52. Pierre Thibault, *Savoir et pouvoir: Philosophie thomiste et politique cléricale au XIX. siècle* (Québec: Université Laval, 1972) 95.
  53. Chadwick, *A History of the Popes* 518.
  54. Jürgen Mettepenningen, *Nouvelle Théologie—New Theology: Inheritor of Modernism, Precursor of Vatican II* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2010) 20.
  55. Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 9, *Maine de Biran to Sartre* (London: Search, 1975) 251.

## The Imposition of Thomism

The conquest of Scholasticism in the Jesuit order and in the Church, especially at Rome, came about with some cost in personnel. One student characterized the transformation of the faculty at the Gregorian University as follows:

Every generation has its great professors that have their day and are forgotten. However, I think ours belong to the immortals: Franzelin, Ballerini and Palmieri. [We] older men were brought up on the philosophy of Tongiorgi,<sup>56</sup> scouting matter and form and the real distinction between essence and existence. [With Leo's changes] Palmieri and Carretti had to go, orthodox Thomists taking their place.

Such students had difficulties from their younger confreres "who threw the arguments of De Maria and Urráburu in our faces for our confusion."<sup>57</sup>

Juan José Urráburu (1844–1904) was one of a number of Jesuits summoned to Rome to implement the Scholastic program as outlined by *Aeterni Patris*. He had lectured in philosophy at the Spanish Jesuit Scholasticate in Poyanne, in the Aquitaine region of France, one of a number of centers of exiled Spanish Jesuits. Now he was made dean of philosophy at the Gregorian University, where he was to remain for eleven years. Between 1890 and 1900 he published at Vallisoletti the multivolume work *Institutiones philosophiae*. Although he demonstrated some concern for issues of modern science, here was Thomism of the most conservative hue. Not only did he suffuse his work with syllogistic reasoning, but he was not beyond invoking church authority and divine revelation to prove a point.

Palmieri<sup>58</sup> was replaced by Camillo Mazzella (1833–1900), later a cardinal and prefect of the Vatican's Congregation of Studies, who had once taught at the Jesuit faculty of Woodstock in Maryland. It is recorded that he knew nothing of modern philosophy or culture.<sup>59</sup> Among Mazzella's colleagues was Michael de Maria (1841–1906) whose work *Philosophia peripatetico-scholastica* (1892) was highly regarded for its treatment of Aquinas's views on the nature of individuals and the issue of essence and existence. Others, such as Théodore de Régnon (1832–1893), were

56. Salvatore Tongiorgi, S.J. (1819–1865) was not a Thomist. The author is referring to Tongiorgi's immensely influential *Institutiones philosophicae*, 3 vols. (Rome: Tipografia aureliana, 1861), which went through nine editions in 18 years, although modified somewhat by Claude Ramière, S.J.

57. John Ritchie, "Memories of College Days," in *The Scots College Rome: A Tribute of the Scots College Society* (London: Sands, 1930) 96. Ritchie was in Rome from 1874 until 1881 (*ibid.* 91, 100).

58. Such were Palmieri's talents that after a period in exile in the Netherlands he was brought back to Rome where he held a number of influential posts. He was appointed confessor to the 1903 conclave that elected Pius X. Given the shenanigans at that election, one can but speculate that he had plenty of work. See Hartley, *Thomistic Revival* 35.

59. See McCool, *From Unity to Pluralism* 33.

dyed-in-the-wool Suárezians. However, he was commended by Maurice d’Hulst, the French Oratorian and founder of the Institut Catholique, in his *Conférences de Notre-Dame*, as a “metaphysician of the first order.”<sup>60</sup> Equally important was Vincenzo Remer, whose philosophical manuals were used in seminaries all over the world and of whom it has been said that he became “one of the most effective channels for the transmission of Thomism in the closing years of the 19th century.”<sup>61</sup> Another philosopher was Santo Schiffini (1841–1906), whose views of ontology were praised by the influential French philosophical theologian E. Domet de Vorges in 1888 as the most powerful then available from the pen of any modern writer.<sup>62</sup> More recently he has been described as “an Italian intransigent.”<sup>63</sup> Perhaps one of the few philosophers engaged at the Gregorian to really take up Leo’s challenge to use Scholasticism in a confrontation with modernity was Francis Salis Seewis (1835–1898). The year before his death he published *La vera dottrina di S. Agostino, di S. Tommaso, e del P. Suarez contro la generazione spontanea primitiva* (Rome: Befani), which at least has the merit of trying to engage with modern scientific and philosophical insights.

No such openness was exhibited in the work of the man summoned by Leo XIII from Bologna in 1879 to head the revived Academy of St. Thomas at Rome, Giovanni Cornoldi (1822–1892), who was also closely associated with *La Civiltà Cattolica*. His importance to the Roman revival of Thomism should not be underestimated.<sup>64</sup> His two major works, *Institutiones philosophiae* (1872) and *La filosofia scolastica di San Tommaso e di Dante* (1889), tried to demonstrate the harmony between Scholasticism and science, and also to give a scientific basis to Thomism. He was convinced, however, that modern philosophy was “nothing but the history of intellectual aberrations of man abandoned to the caprices of his pride; so much so that this history can be called the pathology of human reason.”<sup>65</sup>

Mention has already been made of Kleutgen who had been secretary of the Society of Jesus 1856–1862, and who had returned to his province. Now recalled to Rome by the pope himself at his election, Leo XIII described him as “*princeps philosophorum*.”<sup>66</sup> Kleutgen was appointed prefect of studies at the Gregorian University. He was, almost certainly, the principal author of *Aeterni Patris*.<sup>67</sup> When Billot finally came back to Rome as professor of dogmatic theology at the Gregorian from 1885 until made a cardinal in 1911, he pursued a rigorous form of Thomism. Among his

60. Maurice d’Hulst, *Conférences de Notre-Dame* (Paris: Pousielgue, 1891) 370.

61. McCool, *Nineteenth-Century Scholasticism* 238.

62. E. Donet de Vorges, “Bibliographie de la philosophie thomiste de 1877 à 1887,” *Annales de philosophie chrétienne* 18 (1887) 577–602, at 581. Earlier he had praised both Liberatore and Kleutgen; some of the latter’s work he said was “profound” (De Vorges, *Essai de métaphysique positive* [Paris: Didier, 1883] 199, 201, 210).

63. James T. Burtchaell, *Catholic Theories of Biblical Inspiration since 1810* (New York: Cambridge University, 1969) 148.

64. Paolo Dezza, S.J., *Alle origini del Neotomismo* (Milan: Bocca, 1940) 108–10.

65. Quoted in Hennessey, *Leo XIII’s Thomistic Revival* 195.

66. Hartley, *Thomistic Revival* 14.

67. McCool, *Nineteenth-Century Scholasticism* 82.

most important collaborators and, something of a protégé, was the Italian Jesuit Guido Mattiussi (1852–1925). His works included *Il veleno kantiano* (1914), whose very title suggests its contents. Like his patron, Mattiussi would also immerse himself in support of right-wing political movements.

Billot had no interest in history or its methods, but this was offset by the labors of Franz Ehrle (1845–1934), a German Jesuit at the Gregorian, who set about to uncover the medieval sources for Scholasticism.<sup>68</sup> Nevertheless his views on the utility of the ancients were decidedly conservative, and he described Aristotelianism as “the most exalted achievement and the most complete compendium of all that has been achieved by unaided human reason.” Ehrle’s accomplishments were not confined to Scholasticism. Not only did he reorganize the Vatican Library, but at the direction of Father General Luis Martín, he was also a leading figure in establishing the Jesuit Historical Institute to collect and publish in a scientific manner the documents and history of the Society.

The Gregorian University, which was to grow from 300 students in 1879 to more than a 1,000 by the end of the century, and *La Civiltà Cattolica* were the main Jesuit implements in Rome for the revival of Scholasticism during Leo XIII’s pontificate. Although, as argued above, the Thomistic revival had been prepared for in the decades prior to *Aeterni Patris*, and the pope was at times vigorous in appointing and dismissing professors, there is some suggestion that Leo was not entirely pleased with the Jesuits’ response to his call to rally to the standard of Aquinas. At least that is one explanation for the brief *Gravissime nos* issued December 30, 1892, in which Leo explicitly ordered the Jesuits to give themselves to the revitalizing of Scholasticism and Thomism in particular. Martín wrote to the whole Society in May 1893 exhorting obedience to the pope’s letter, to which Leo XIII responded that “the fullest justice had been done to his commands.”<sup>69</sup>

As a result of Martín’s letter the revival of Scholasticism was taken up with renewed vigor by the whole Jesuit order. From the German-speaking Jesuit world, Christian Pesch (1853–1935) published nine volumes of *Praelectiones dogmaticae* (1894–1899), a widely used conservative treatise of Thomistic theology. His subsequent *De inspiratione sacrae Scripturae* (1906) displayed a greater openness on the question of what inspiration actually meant than was then common in the schools. Pesch’s Swiss confederate Viktor Cathrein (1845–1931) would, in his *Moralphilosophie* (1890–1891), attempt what for some was the impossible task: “the total employment of Aquinas joined to the conscientious addressing of contemporary problems.”<sup>70</sup> He became increasingly interested in social questions and argued the need for a return to natural law principles even as a basis for industrial relations. He regarded socialism as

68. Among other works is the nine-volume *Bibliotheca theologiae et scholasticae selecta atque composita a Francisco Ehrle, S.J.* (1885–1894). Ehrle was made a cardinal in 1922.

69. Padberg et al., *For Matters of Greater Moment* 494.

70. Thomas Franklin O’Meara, O.P., *Church and Culture: German Catholic Theology, 1860–1914* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1991) 43.

the greatest hazard facing the Church and society, as is clear from his *Socialism Exposed and Refuted*.<sup>71</sup>

The French Jesuit provinces both at home and in exile also produced a group of noteworthy Scholastic philosophers and theologians. Among the most engaging was Pierre Rousselot, born in 1878 and died in action at Eparges near Verdun in 1915. A gifted Thomist, he was appointed professor of dogmatic theology at the Institut Catholique in 1910. He published several important works including *L'Intellectualisme de St. Thomas* (1908) and, more controversially, *Les yeux de la foi* (1910). These along with other works have more recently been translated into English.<sup>72</sup> His most important disciple was Henri de Lubac. Rousselot, however, because of his friendship with Blondel and Laberthonnière, was never trusted in Rome, and as a consequence many of his writings were never published. De Lubac was of the opinion that Rousselot's life indicated the impossibility, "all during the first half of the 20th century, of any adaptation or in-depth updating of doctrine and classical teaching in the Church."<sup>73</sup> Léonce de Grandmaison (1868–1927) published numerous articles in the French Jesuit journal *Études* from the late 19th century onward, but only in later years did his work appear posthumously in book form.<sup>74</sup> His main influence was in teaching theology to French Jesuits in exile in England between 1899 and 1908 as professor of fundamental theology. His directorship of *Études* from 1912 to his death introduced a moderating influence on the obsessive anti-Modernist craze.

Even among the English Jesuits Aquinas had his champions. One of most important was Thomas Harper (1821–1893). Of Harper's *The Metaphysics of the Schools*<sup>75</sup> Domet de Varges wrote in 1888 that it was "certainly the greatest work thus far produced by the Thomistic movement. It is also the most profound."<sup>76</sup> However, the approach to the Thomistic revival of the English province was not always welcome in Jesuit or papal Rome, partly because the likes of Joseph Rickaby argued that it was not enough simply to revive Thomism; the system itself had to be revised.<sup>77</sup> He also contended that neo-Scholasticism, if it was ever to have an effect, could do so only in alliance with the physical sciences. There is also a note of skepticism in his

71. Victor Cathrein, *Socialism Exposed and Refuted*, trans. James Conway, S.J. (New York: Benziger, 1892).

72. See, e.g., Pierre Rousselot, *The Eyes of Faith: With Rousselot's Answer to Two Attacks* (New York: Fordham University, 1990); *The Problem of Love in the Middle Ages: A Historical Contribution*, trans., intro. Alan Vincelette with Pol Vandeveld (Milwaukee: Marquette University, 2001); *Intelligence, Sense of Being, Faculty of God*, trans., foreword, notes Andrew Tallon (Milwaukee: Marquette University, 1999).

73. Henri de Lubac, *At the Service of the Church*, trans. Anne Elizabeth Englund (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1993) 20.

74. See, e.g., *Jésus-Christ: Sa personne, son message, ses preuves* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1928); and *La religion personnelle* (Paris: Gabalda, 1930).

75. Thomas Harper, S.J., *The Metaphysics of the Schools*, 3 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1879).

76. Quoted in Perrier, *Revival of Scholastic Philosophy* 229.

77. Joseph Rickaby, *Scholasticism* (London: Archibald Constable, 1908) 91.

observation that “upon Scholasticism, to all appearances, so at least Popes have thought, depends in great measure the hopes of the Roman Catholic Church of ever recovering the ascendancy which she has lost over the intellect of mankind.”<sup>78</sup> At the same time he wondered whether Scholasticism would ever taint popular thought, as Kant and Hegel did.

Opinion in the English province, as elsewhere in the order, differed about the approach to Aquinas. George Tyrrell, despite his subsequent intellectual odyssey, thought that Leo XIII’s outlook vindicated his own approach to teaching philosophy. He became disillusioned when other members of the province stuck to Suárezianism. He was not slow in writing to Father General Martín<sup>79</sup> and others in Rome, including Cardinal Mazzella, S.J., about his convictions. The latter encouraged Tyrrell to take a rigorist, non-Suárezian approach to teaching Aquinas, assuring Tyrrell that his views had the personal approval of the Holy Father.<sup>80</sup> Indeed, when Tyrrell’s evangelical Thomism began to cause real problems at the philosophate of St. Mary’s Hall, Stonyhurst, it was decided initially not to remove him from his post, given that he had “the protection of Cardinal Mazzella.” Any action against him would be misrepresented to the “Holy Father that a Professor was being persecuted because he wished to carry out loyally the orders of the Pope.”<sup>81</sup>

Other voices would subsequently be raised in England to suggest that Aquinas’s writings as a defense of Catholicism were not being properly deployed. John O’Fallon Pope, “Master” of the Jesuit House of Studies at Oxford, argued that in the Middle Ages the schoolmen, “like the builders of the Holy City with one hand . . . did the work and with the other they held the sword,” whereas contemporary philosophers and theologians were too occupied with “hacking to pieces what is already dead, whilst the live enemy unopposed makes his inroads upon the defenseless portions of the realm of truth.”<sup>82</sup> This was precisely the sort of fighting spirit Leo had hoped would ensue from the Thomistic revival.

Clearly the Jesuits and especially the Jesuits in Rome were a formidable instrument in the revival of Thomism and Scholasticism. Other centers also contributed, of which the most important was Louvain. Indeed, with the permission of Leo XIII Louvain began to teach Thomism in French, whereas Latin was insisted on in Rome.<sup>83</sup> Mazzella was horrified by this concession and thought that lectures in French jeopardized not

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78. *Ibid.* 102.

79. Martín complained of Tyrrell that he had written to him asking for a stricter direction from Rome on Thomism, and then “he was swept off in the opposite direction” (quoted in James Hayes to Provincial Reginald Colley, October 3, 1903, ABPSJ, Hayes Papers V/8).

80. Petre, *Autobiography and Life of George Tyrrell* 2:42

81. Consult Minutes 1894–1909, ABPSJ, at September 20, 1895. Tyrrell was dismissed from his professorship the following year.

82. J. O’Fallon Pope, “Scholastic Theology,” *Month* 102 (April 1903) 367–71, at 371.

83. M. de Wulf, *Scholasticism Old and New: An Introduction to Scholastic Philosophy Medieval and Modern*, trans. P. Coffey (Dublin: Michael Gill, 1907) 296.

just Scholastic terminology but even theological correctness.<sup>84</sup> One might accuse some of the Roman Jesuits of being among those “few individuals gifted with more zeal than insight and more heat than light,” who adopted a position “dangerously near to [an] unhistorical and unphilosophical one” in the propagation of revised Scholasticism.<sup>85</sup> In a sense, however, this “fanatical” approach suited the papacy. If it is the case, as I have suggested here, that the papacy’s intention was to create a philosophical and theological mind-set in which dissension was frowned upon and counteracted, this could be achieved only in an atmosphere where there was no doubt about the utility and benevolence of the Scholastic enterprise for the Church’s agenda.

If the forces of Ultramontanism could wield Thomism through Jesuit instrumentality to ensure conformism to an intellectual mind-set within the Church, this could not necessarily be replicated in the Church’s dealings with a skeptical and antagonistic European political culture. Here, when it suited the papacy, the Jesuits, despite their usefulness in other areas, could be jettisoned. In the aftermath of the French elections of May 1879, Prime Minister William Waddington told the papal nuncio in Paris, Mgr. Włodzimierz Czacki, that he did not understand why the pope did not abandon the Jesuits for the sake of the Church in France. In the face of which the pope is reported to have told Archbishop Charles Lavignerie of Algiers, “The Jesuits are finished. Try to save the others.”<sup>86</sup> Only when it became clear that the other religious orders would also suffer expulsion did Secretary of State Cardinal Luigi Jacobini inform the French Ambassador to the Holy See that in relation to the Jesuits, the pope could in no way “accept what has been done against those excellent religious.”<sup>87</sup>

Here then was the problem for the papacy. If the Jesuits were useful in propagating an overarching ideology that ensured conformity of outlook within the Church, they were less useful in furthering the papacy’s other aims of trying to reestablish the Church’s influence on European society as a whole. Quite simply the Jesuits were disliked and distrusted by a huge swathe of European intellectual opinion that was largely responsible for their suppression in 1773. This antipathy reduced and at times negated the Jesuits’ effectiveness as instruments of papal political and ideological policy.

## Political Thomism and Anti-Jesuit Phobia

Despite a somewhat more matter-of-fact approach to the political difficulties faced by the papacy than that of his predecessor, Leo XIII encountered formidable problems in

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84. Oskar Köhler, “Teaching and Theology,” in *History of the Church*, vol. 9, *The Church in the Industrial Age*, ed. Hubert Jedin and John Dolan (New York: Crossroad, 1981) 307–77, at 316.
  85. John S. Zybura, “Scholasticism and the Period of Transition: Status and Viewpoint of the New Scholasticism,” in *Present-Day Thinkers and the New Scholasticism: An International Symposium*, ed. Zybura, intro. John Cavanaugh (St. Louis: Herder, 1926) 369–532, at 503.
  86. Adrien Dansette, *Religious History of Modern France*, 2 vols., vol. 2, *Under the Third Republic*, trans. John Dingle (London: Nelson, 1961) 2:44.
  87. Eduardo Soderini, *Leo XIII, Italy, and France* (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1935) 160 n. 1.



trying to demonstrate the continuing relevance of Catholicism for the culture of Europe. His intransigence over the issue of the Papal States ensured continuing estrangement from Italy, and complications for the functioning of the Church in Germany remained. They at least were resolved in a manner in which church–state issues in France were not. Even Austria-Hungary continued to manifest vestiges of 18th-century Josephism.<sup>88</sup> In relying on the Jesuits to further an ideological system upon which a holistic foundation for the Church’s role in the world could be constructed, Leo in some respects had miscalculated.

Anti-Jesuit paranoia was a pan-European phenomenon in the 19th century.<sup>89</sup> The hostility was based partly on the perception that the Jesuits were “dedicated to the unequivocal presentation of the ferociously antimodern and antidemocratic religion of Pius IX and Pius X . . . [and to] the temporal power of the Papacy.”<sup>90</sup> Even Eduard Windhorst, the leader of the Catholic Center Party in Germany, could speak of the “universally polluting and suffocating spirit of Jesuitism, that has unfortunately affected far too many in our Fatherland.”<sup>91</sup> Of course Bismarck had already acted to counteract Jesuit influence by expelling the Society from the country in 1872. The *Kulturkampf* was successfully brought to an end by a rapprochement between Leo and Bismarck in the 1880s, when most of the anti-Catholic laws were abrogated by what the *Month* would subsequently describe as the pope’s “triumph of . . . skilful diplomacy.”<sup>92</sup> Nevertheless, the Jesuits were not formally and legally readmitted to the country until 1917. This was testimony to a deep and residual antipathy to the order in Germany.

Italian anti-Jesuitism could be taken to extreme lengths. The Italian government seized many ecclesiastical buildings in Rome in 1873, including the house of the professed fathers of the Society, the traditional headquarters of the Jesuit general and his staff. The Jesuits were forced to vacate Rome, finding refuge in Fiesole, outside Florence, where the general headquarters would remain for the next 22 years. Eventually in 1899 the government offered to sell the Roman property back to the Jesuits at a cost of four million lire.<sup>93</sup>

Two General Congregations of the Society for electing superiors general were held during this period. The first, Congregation 23 in 1883, took place in Rome during a brief interlude in anticlericalism, in the course Swiss Jesuit Anton Maria Anderledy was elected, rather unusually, as vicar of the order with right of succession to the elderly and infirm Beckx. This congregation is significant for two reasons. The Jesuits

88. Jean-Marie Mayeur and Madeleine Reberieux, *The Third Republic from Its Origins to the Great War, 1871–1914*, trans. J. R. Foster (New York: Cambridge University, 1984) 151.

89. For an extraordinary study of the depth of this antipathy so far as France was concerned, see Geoffrey Cubitt, *The Jesuit Myth: Conspiracy Theory and Politics in 19th-Century France* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993).

90. Jean Lacouture, *Jesuits: A Multibiography*, trans. Jeremy Leggatt (Washington: Counterpoint, 1996) 488.

91. Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser, *Culture Wars: Secular–Catholic Conflict in 19th-Century Europe* (New York: Cambridge University, 2003) 63.

92. *Month* 102 (August, 1903) 115.

93. *Letters and Notices* 176 (1909) 366.

seemed to be preoccupied with a “welter of errors” in the Church and with the fear that some Jesuits “might be touched by this pestilence.” Consequently it was asserted that the Society “fully adheres to the doctrine explained in the encyclical *Quanta cura* [of Pius IX] . . . and repudiates . . . all the errors proscribed in the Syllabus [of Errors] of the same pontiff.”<sup>94</sup> If Jesuits were in danger of being infected by errors, a remedy was immediately to hand: adherence to *Aeterni Patris*. Accordingly the congregation passed a decree on Thomism, asserting that the Society at the first opportunity will demonstrate “by solemn and public testimony the fullest extent of its filial obedience and assent” to *Aeterni Patris*. This decree was conveyed to the pope, who “approved it most heartily and strongly encouraged it to be most carefully observed.”<sup>95</sup>

The second General Congregation, 24, was held in 1892. This time the pope did not want a prolonged meeting, given the state of relations between the Holy See and Italy, and he feared that the presence of the Jesuits in Rome would provoke further confrontation. While he was prepared to allow the election of the general to take place in Rome, he wanted the rest of the meeting held elsewhere. In the end it was decided, for the only time in the history of the order, that the General Congregation would be held outside Rome, at Loyola in Spain, Ignatius’s birthplace. Here Martín was elected general, and a specific decree was passed requesting the general to move the Jesuit headquarters back to Rome. Leo XIII was opposed to this, fearing it would provoke further tensions with the Italian state, but relented under pressure from Cardinal Mazzella.<sup>96</sup>

Although restored to Rome, the Jesuits remained extremely unpopular there and in Italy as a whole. Martín was under police surveillance, was regularly insulted by people in public, and was spat at and had stones thrown at him from time to time as he walked around the Eternal City.<sup>97</sup> Francesco Crispi, Italian premier 1887–1891, was convinced that Pope Leo would have moved to resolve the Roman Question, but did not do so because of Jesuit interference.<sup>98</sup> He went so far as to allege that both the pope and his secretary of state, Cardinal Mariano Rampolla, were “slaves to the Jesuits.”<sup>99</sup> But the fact remains that Leo himself was immensely hardline in dealing with the Italian state—for example, in 1881 he replaced Pius IX’s *non expedit* with *non licet*, explicitly forbidding Italian Catholics from participating in national politics.

The European-wide unpopularity of the Jesuits resulted in their expulsion from the Iberian Peninsula, with exclusion from Portugal occurring as late as 1910.<sup>100</sup> Such

94. *For Matters of Greater Moment* 465.

95. *Ibid.* 467.

96. *Letters and Notices* 176 (1909) 226. He even went so far as to tease a senior Jesuit in Rome asking if Martín was glad that “I have withdrawn my dissent to his coming to Rome” (*ibid.* 229).

97. *Ibid.* 298, 301.

98. Francesco Crispi, “Italy, France, and the Papacy,” *Contemporary Review* 60 (August 1891) 161–82, at 168.

99. Eduardo Soderini, *Leo XIII, Italy, and France*, trans. Barbara Barclay Carter (London: Burns, Oates, & Washbourne, 1935) 97.

100. On the history of Jesuit expulsions from various countries see B. M. Roehner, “Jesuits and the State: A Comparative Study of Their Expulsions (1590–1990),” *Religion* 27 (1997) 165–82.

moves against the order were both spiritualized and seen as part of a ceaseless conflict between the forces of good and the forces of evil. Upon receiving a group of expelled Portuguese Jesuits in December 1910, Pope Pius X remarked that the Society was the “living wall against which the enemies of the Church have invariably gone to pieces.”<sup>101</sup>

The most important battleground, however, in the struggle for the hegemony of ideas between conservative and liberal ideologies in the late 19th century occurred in France during the Third Republic. French statesman and Prime Minister Léon Gambetta complemented his infamous assertion, “le cléricalisme, voilà l’ennemi,”<sup>102</sup> with a speech in 1878 in which he observed that the history of the Jesuits in France made one thing clear, “namely that bad times for our country are always good times for the Jesuits.”<sup>103</sup> Leo XIII attempted to force French Catholics to rally to the fortunes of the Republic, and despite setbacks in the shape of anticlerical and anti-Jesuit laws, he persisted in his policy of reconciliation of French Catholicism with the realpolitik of French life. In a sense, this was a test case for whether the Church could accept and accommodate itself to aspects of modernity that in other circumstances it believed were inimical to its mission. In some respects the policy was a failure by 1898, and by 1901 the religious orders were yet again expelled.<sup>104</sup> The Dreyfus Affair had to some extent provoked this result, and once again suspicion fell on the Jesuits partly because of the activities of Stanislaus du Lac,<sup>105</sup> amid accusations of widespread Jesuit influence within the army, and the allegation that it was the Society that fomented the anti-Semitic craze in popular French culture.

Albert de Mun,<sup>106</sup> in a careful analysis published in the London *Times* January 11, 1899, demonstrated that, contrary to popular opinion, the Jesuits did not have spectacular sway in the army. He pointed out that only nine or ten out of 140 officers in the army general staff had been to a Jesuit school, and that only the chief of staff, Raoul de Boisdeffre, was given spiritual direction by du Lac. More recently Ruth Harris has argued that it is a myth to think that French Jesuits played a major role in the Dreyfus Affair.<sup>107</sup> This is not to deny that the Jesuit journal *Études* did occasionally display an appalling, if restrained, anti-Semitism. However, a further problem arose when

101. *Woodstock Letters* 40 (1911) 262.

102. Quoted in E. E. Y. Hales, *The Catholic Church in the Modern World: A Survey from the French Revolution to the Present* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1958) 249.

103. Clark and Kaiser, *Culture Wars* 62.

104. John McManners, *Church and State in France, 1870–1914* (London: SPCK, 1972) 78.

105. Stanislaus du Lac, S.J. (1835–1909), renowned educator and social worker, was sometime rector of the Jesuit College in the Rue de Postes in Paris. The college was very successful in having its students admitted in large numbers to some of the best universities in Paris, including the military academy of St. Cyr.

106. A politician greatly influenced by French Jesuits. See Benjamin F. Martin, *Count Albert de Mun: Paladin of the Third Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1978) 10.

107. Ruth Harris, *The Man on Devil’s Island: Alfred Dreyfus and the Affair That Divided France* (London: Allen Lane, 2010) 263, 333.

Dreyfus was finally acquitted. *La Civiltà Cattolica* commented in January 1898 that if a judicial error had been made in the Dreyfus case, the real judicial error had occurred with the emancipation of Jews in 1791. This outraged opinion all over Europe and reinforced the belief that the Jesuits simply could not operate except from the most deeply held prejudices.

Another complicating factor was that the Holy See, in Leo XIII's pontificate, was concerned to maintain at all cost the diplomatic links with France that not only lent the Vatican prestige but also helped maintain its authority over the French church. In Jesuit circles this policy attracted opprobrium. Some Jesuits began to think that, so far as the papacy was concerned, diplomatic relations were more important than the operations of the Church in France.<sup>108</sup> For his part Leo began to doubt the loyalty of the Society and wondered if in fact the French Jesuits were attempting to fund a right-wing coup against the Republic.<sup>109</sup> The main issue, however, was the fact that the Jesuits, by maintaining papal policy in so many areas, brought opprobrium upon themselves, thereby deflecting it from the papacy. Leo's attitude to issues of church–state relations in France was in some marked degree at odds with his general outlook. Other issues, however, were on the horizon for the papacy, the Society, and the Thomistic revival that would become acute in the years following Leo's death in 1903.

## The Modernist Challenge: Theological and Social

The crisis produced in Catholicism as a result of Modernism had been brewing even in the final years of Pope Leo XIII's papacy.<sup>110</sup> There was, quite simply, a clash of ideology and temperament about the nature and scope of the Church's mission and its relationship with modern society. Pius X was concerned that the Church was under attack from without but more seriously from within. He was convinced, as he made clear from his first encyclical, that the cure was to reassert the received teaching of the Church, and he therefore urged a return to Catholic teaching not only in doctrine but also in economic and social life, in the family, in school, in the use of private property, and in government.<sup>111</sup> Thomism provided such a complete agenda.

The emphasis in Pius X's encyclical *E supremi* (1903) on the social dimension of the difficulties for Catholicism is of crucial importance for understanding the outlook of Pius X and his immediate and most trusted advisers.<sup>112</sup> As his pontificate wore on,

108. Maurice Larkin, "The Vatican, France and the Roman Question, 1898–1903: New Archival Evidence," *Historical Journal* 27 (1984) 185.

109. Maurice Larkin, *Church and State After the Dreyfus Affair: The Separation Issue in France* (London, Macmillan, 1974) 85.

110. Thomas Michael Loome, *Liberal Catholicism, Reform Catholicism, Modernism: A Contribution to a New Orientation in Modernist Research* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald) 105, 195.

111. See Pius X, *E supremi* (1903), in *The Papal Encyclicals*, vol. 3, 1903–1939, ed. Claudia Carlen, I.H.M. (Wilmington, NC: McGrath, 1981) 7–8.

112. See *ibid.* 5–18.

the idea of “social modernism” as the greatest menace to the Church became increasingly central.<sup>113</sup> It was in this crucial area of what one might loosely describe as the “Church in the world” where differences between the papacy and the Jesuit order began to become apparent. This also coincided with the election in 1906 of a new Jesuit general, Franz Xavier Wernz, a canon lawyer and rector of the Gregorian University. Wernz was less deferential in his dealings with the papacy than his predecessor Martín,<sup>114</sup> and he was frequently at odds with the pope.<sup>115</sup>

Émile Poulat has argued that in the pontificate of Pius X many Jesuits believed that change in the Church was necessary both theologically and socially, and that the Jesuits prepared for such modification “without the possibility of saying it.”<sup>116</sup> That might be to overstate a tendency within certain quarters of the Jesuit order. After all Edmund Bishop, an English Modernist sympathizer, believed that, far from experimentation and change, the Jesuits were “by nature outrageous people, disliking excellence shewn by any others than themselves; and flattering themselves, as indeed is the fact, that they are . . . all powerful in Rome.”<sup>117</sup>

At a public and official level Thomism remained the order of the day. Time and again Pius X stressed this to bishops and religious of all stripes, urging the Dominican general to combat the “arrogant criticisms of the moderns” with “a robust Thomism.”<sup>118</sup> Despite maintaining the fiction that the Church “easily bends and accommodates herself to all the unessential and accidental circumstances belonging to various stages of civilization and to the new requirements of civil society,”<sup>119</sup> Pius fought a strenuous battle against all attempts to do just that. In this he had considerable help from certain Jesuits. Thus Billot and Giuseppe Barbieri, “both men of special talent and unblemished doctrine,” helped draw up *Lamentabili sane exitu* (July 3, 1907),<sup>120</sup> and Billot assisted in the official condemnation of Modernism as represented by *Pascendi dominici gregis* (September

113. See Lester R. Kurtz, *The Politics of Heresy: The Modernist Crisis in Roman Catholicism* (Berkeley: University of California, 1986) 163.

114. Schultenover, “Luis Martín García, on Historical Criticism” 461.

115. Caraman, *University of the Nations* 112.

116. Émile Poulat, “Intégrisme,” in *Encyclopedia universalis*, 10 vols. (Paris: E.U., 1984) 9:1284.

117. Bishop to von Hügel, May 31, 1912, Archives of the University of St. Andrews, Von Hügel Papers, MS 2232. Others voiced similar complaints. Late in Leo’s reign the well-known German diocesan priest and historian living in Rome, Franz Xaver Kraus, recorded in his diary, “Leo XIII is more and more entirely in the hands of the Jesuits. . . . Mazzella the Jesuit Cardinal and [the splendidly named] Fr Brandi rule now” (quoted in Barry Brundell, “Catholic Church Politics and Evolutionary Theory 1894–1902,” *British Journal for the History of Science* 34 [2001] 81–95, at 94). In the 1890s Salvatore Brandi was the editor of *La Civiltà Cattolica*.

118. René Fülöp-Miller, *Leo XIII and Our Times* (London: Longmans, 1937) 154.

119. See Pius X’s encyclical *Il fermo proposito* (June 11, 1905) to the Italian bishops, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/pius\\_x/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-x\\_enc\\_11061905\\_il-fermo-proposito\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_x/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-x_enc_11061905_il-fermo-proposito_en.html).

120. P. L. Ocellis, *Saint Pius X*, 3rd ed. (New York: St. Paul’s, 1963) 181.

8, 1907), although that document came mostly from the pen of Joseph Lemius, O.M.I. (1860–1923).<sup>121</sup>

The pope also urged individual Jesuits to a more robust defense of the faith and condemned those who because they had “read a page or two of some German rationalist think they can overturn the teachings of all the Fathers of the Church.”<sup>122</sup> He told the editor of *La Civiltà Cattolica* in the face of the Modernist crisis, but more particularly in regard to “social Modernism,” to keep on fighting for Catholic truth and not to weaken. “They are screaming because you have touched the wound.”<sup>123</sup> For Pius the struggle against Modernist ideology tied in with the view that Thomism would not only be an intellectual rallying point but also that a renewal of Aquinas would lead to social and political renewal. Many Neo-Thomists saw the system as a “single-minded opposition to the worldly forces of modernism.”<sup>124</sup>

With the December 1905 laws on separation of church and state in France, Pius was convinced, as he made clear in *Une fois encore* (January 6 1907),<sup>125</sup> that the point of the separation was to destroy the Catholic Church and to de-Christianize France. He reiterated this idea later the same year in *Pascendi*, accusing the Modernists of treasuring as one of their precepts the separation of church and state.<sup>126</sup> Indeed the integralism that emerged in Pius’s reign had at its center the overarching conviction that “all areas of human behavior are subject to judgment by church authority and therefore to papal authority.”<sup>127</sup>

Corporately the Jesuits seemed to rally to Pius X’s lead. The congregation that elected Wernz general passed a decree condemning “rash novelties,” and anything that “smacks of dangerous craving for unbridled freedom.” The order needed to have the “mind of the Church and the Apostolic See,” nothing was to be taught that was not consistent with the faith, and professors were warned that they would be removed from their positions if they did not conform to the thinking of the Society in these matters. Everything was to be arranged to ensure that all members of the order were “more effectively forearmed against all recent errors and deceptions.”<sup>128</sup>

This, however, did not represent the whole picture. Even the most conservative scholars among the Jesuits would at times object to specific pronouncements of the

121. Gabriel Daly, O.S.A, *Transcendence and Immanence: A Study in Catholic Modernism and Integralism* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980) 179–87.

122. Quoted in *Woodstock Letters* 37 (1908) 161.

123. Quoted in Émile Poulat, *Intégrisme et catholicisme intégral* (Tournai: Casterman, 1969) 490.

124. Eugen Weber, *Action Française: Royalism and Reaction in Twentieth-Century France* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University, 1962) 220.

125. *Papal Encyclicals*, vol. 3, 1903–1939 67–70.

126. *Ibid.* 81.

127. Paul Misner, “Catholic Anti-Modernism: The Ecclesial Setting,” in *Catholicism Contending with Modernity* 56–87, at 82.

128. General Congregation 25, Decree 16, in *For Matters of Greater Moment* 499–501, at 501.

Roman magisterium. Franz von Hummelauer insisted that some parts of the Pentateuch could not have been written by Moses, despite the Biblical Commission's declaration that he had written all of it.<sup>129</sup> The English province carried out two extensive surveys (in 1903 and 1909) on the content of Jesuit philosophical and theological education. Some fathers were convinced that the Scholastic theology taught to English Jesuits had not changed in 300 years, and there was no attempt at progress or development. Others recommended that those being trained as professors should not take their higher degrees at the Jesuit faculties in Innsbruck or the Gregorian University since both centers were "inadequate in dealing with modern problems." The rector of the philosophate was convinced that Jesuits, besides earning a degree in theology, should also earn one in science so as to meet "the attacks on religion" in contemporary culture. By 1911 Wernz had given permission for Jesuit seminarians in England to write their essays in English rather than Latin.<sup>130</sup> In May 1912 he issued a new *Ordinatio studiorum* for the English-speaking Jesuit world. He stipulated that in the new program of studies Jesuit scholastics were to study, among other things, biblical archeology, Greek and Hebrew, and the history of dogma.<sup>131</sup> Against the background of the Modernist crisis all this was quasi-revolutionary.

Further difficulties arose in France both among Jesuits and in their dealings with the Holy See, centering on social problems and issues of democracy and the rights of workers. The question of democracy touched on the refusal of some Catholics to abandon monarchical and autocratic views of the nature of society. Reactionary opinion coalesced around the views of the atheist (but paradoxically Catholic) ecclesiastical loyalist and leader of *Action française*, Charles Maurras. His politically motivated appeals to the ancient glory of the French Church<sup>132</sup> struck a chord with some in the Jesuit order.

Maurras was supported by, among other Jesuits, Billot, Yves de La Brière, Julien Fontaine, and Pedro Decoqs. Billot in particular made clear his approbation of Maurras's rejection of "liberal democracy."<sup>133</sup> Fontaine published two books along Maurrasian lines. In *Le modernisme sociologique* (1909) he argued that the ideas of "social Catholicism," such as egalitarianism, were incompatible with the concepts of hierarchy, authority, and subordination upon which Catholicism was built. Two years later in *Le modernisme social* (1911) he declared that "social Modernism" was aligning itself with the atheist state and thus helping eliminate religious freedom. La Brière's effusions had appeared in *Études* on several occasions, but his article to mark the centenary of the birth of Ultramontane and anti-Republican journalist Louis Veuillot was a high-water mark in the rejection of democracy.<sup>134</sup> Long before this Decoqs had written a series of

129. Charles A. Briggs and Friedrich von Hügel, *The Papal Commission and the Pentateuch* (London: Longmans, 1906) 32.

130. Documents relating to all these matters can be found at ABPSJ, Y1 and Y3.

131. *Woodstock Letters* 41 (1912) 1–14.

132. Eric O. Hanson, *The Catholic Church in World Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1987) 4.6.

133. Michael Sutton, *Nationalism, Positivism, and Catholicism: The Politics of Charles Maurras and French Catholics, 1890–1914* (New York: Cambridge University, 1982) 5.

134. See Yves de La Brière, "Louis Veuillot: Sa politique religieuse," *Études* 137 (1913) 145–67.

five articles for *Études* analyzing the relationship between Maurras's political thought and Catholic theology.<sup>135</sup> He set the tone in the first piece where he observed, "Protestant and Revolutionary individualism together with liberalism are, in all their forms, the great errors or, more exactly, the unique error from which our society is suffering and dying."<sup>136</sup> He ultimately concluded that not only was Maurras correct in his outlook but also that his views were compatible with Catholic doctrine.<sup>137</sup>

It would be wrong to give the impression that *Études* espoused only conservative theology and rebarbative political opinions. On the contrary, there was considerable interest among the French Jesuits in social questions. Jesuit Gustave Desbuquois, for example, leader of the socially liberal *Action populaire*, wrote in *Études* in February 1913 criticizing two letters of Cardinal Merry de Val on "social Catholicism"; he charged that the cardinal's views were incompatible with Leo XIII's *Rerum novarum*. This provoked enormous hostility from the integrists. By now Pius X had also condemned Marc Sangnier's *Le Sillon* movement because of Modernist infiltrations, claims of moral autonomy for individuals in a manner incompatible with church teaching, and for possessing views on church–state relations at variance with Catholic doctrine.<sup>138</sup> The extreme right was deliriously happy. The newspaper *Action française* declared, "Never since the Syllabus of Pius IX have the doctrines of the Revolution been condemned with such precision and lucidity. And never have the traditional doctrines been so vigorously reaffirmed."<sup>139</sup> This would prove a warning to all such tendencies in the Church since, as the pope himself declared, social problems already had a basis on which to be resolved: "In this era of social and intellectual anarchy when everyone sets himself up as teacher and legislator—the city can only be founded as God has founded it; society cannot be built up unless the Church lays its foundation and directs its work."<sup>140</sup>

135. Pedro Decoqs, S.J., "À travers l'oeuvre de M. Ch. Maurras: Essai critique," *Études* 120–21 (July–December 1909) 153–86, 330–46, 593–641, 602–28, 773–86.

136. *Ibid.* (July 1909) 159.

137. Maurras was also defended by Pius X who described him as "a doughty defender of the Church and the Holy See" (Gerard Noel, *The Anatomy of the Catholic Church* [London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1980] 36). On January 16, 1914 the Congregation of the Index ruled that seven of Maurras's books and the newspaper *L'Action française* should be condemned. Pius X accepted the decision but did not publish the condemnation. This came only in 1926, and famously led to Cardinal Billot's being asked to resign from the College of Cardinals because of his continued support of *Action française*. See Carlo Falconi, *The Popes in the Twentieth Century*, trans. Muriel Grindrod (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1967) 214.

138. See Roger Aubert et al., eds., *The Christian Centuries*, vol. 5, *The Church in a Secularised Society* (New York: Paulist, 1978) 52.

139. *Action française*, August 30, 1910.

140. Pius X, *Notre charge apostolique*, *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, ser. 4, 28 (July–December, 1910) 514–32, at 518.



And of course the program for the Church's foundation was to be had in neo-Scholasticism. Pius forcefully reminded the Jesuits of this in a letter of May 1914 on the centenary of the order's restoration in August that year. Although congratulating the order for withstanding unjust governmental attacks "because you have never ceased to give an example of the closest attachments to the Holy See," he warned each Jesuit to take care "not to be infected with the disease of the world, either by showing himself too ready to find excuses for its cupidity or indulgent towards its errors." The sure means to guard against this was adherence to the "teaching of philosophy and theology according to the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas."<sup>141</sup>

By this stage the Jesuits had been subjected to a campaign of vilification and calumny by Mgr. Umberto Benigni and his colleagues in the ultraintegralist *Sodalitium Pianum*. Benigni hated the Jesuits because he believed that they wanted to foist an "interdenominational and democratic polity" on the Church.<sup>142</sup> Through the pages of organs associated with Benigni such as *La vigie* and *La critique du libéralisme religieux, politique, social*, a torrent of abuse against the Society appeared, much of it directed against, surprisingly, *Études*. Jesuits responded by, for example, suing in ecclesiastical court the Austrian organ of *Sodalitium*, *Österreichs Katholische Sonntagsblatt*, which had accused the Jesuits of being "neither with the Pope nor with the Church."<sup>143</sup> *Études* answered with an editorial arguing that the journal and those who thought like it had tried to live under both Leo XIII and Pius X by following instructions from Rome with filial loyalty. It was furthermore highly critical of extreme integralism.<sup>144</sup>

The criticism, however, reached the very highest levels of the order. Father General Wernz was deeply distrusted by *La Civiltà Cattolica*, but he had little control over it because, although it was under Jesuit direction, it was also under papal protection and supervision. Quite simply Wernz was not an integralist and at least some of the staff of *Civiltà* were, and they regarded Wernz as much too liberal on social issues. Pius X came to believe that Wernz was dragging his feet with relation to Modernism.<sup>145</sup> The pope also listened to a barrage of complaints about the Jesuits and against Wernz personally, giving rise to the extraordinary suspicion that Wernz himself had Modernist tendencies.<sup>146</sup> Some of these complaints became public on Wernz's death on August 19, 1914.<sup>147</sup> The fact that the allegations appeared in the Holy See's newspapers is

141. Quoted in *Letters and Notices* 197 (October 1914) 522–23.

142. See Thomas Bokenkotter, *Church and Revolution: Catholicism in the Struggle for Democracy and Social Justice* (New York: Image, 1998) 258.

143. *Ibid.* 257.

144. "Critiques negatives et tâches nécessaires," *Études* 138 (January 1914) 5–25.

145. Paul Misner, *Social Catholicism in Europe: From the Onset of Industrialization to the First World War* (New York: Crossroad, 1991) 310.

146. Martin P. Harney, *The Jesuits in History: The Society of Jesus through Four Centuries* (Chicago: Loyola University, 1962) 373.

147. See "Il P. Francesco Saverio Wernz: Preposito Generale della Compagnia di Gesù," *L'Osservatore Romano*, August 21, 1914.

itself proof positive of a desire by some in the Vatican to discredit both Wernz and the whole Society. In addition Cardinal Pietro Gaspari testified at the process of Pius's canonization in 1928 that the pope had increasingly come to the view that he could not be absolutely certain of the orthodoxy of the Jesuits. Gaspari was also of the opinion that Pius's distrust of Wernz hastened the general's demise.<sup>148</sup> There is some suggestion that Pius had begun a process that would have led to Wernz's deposition as general of the order.<sup>149</sup> However, death overtook both men in August 1914. The year before he died, Wernz categorically asserted that since he would soon meet his maker, he could assert, with God as his witness, that "the Society had given no cause for the calumnious attacks upon it."<sup>150</sup>

General Congregation 25, called to elect Wernz's successor in 1915, was at pains to praise the dead general, who used all his powers "as our teacher," in obedience to Pope Pius X, to courageously fend off from the Society all errors. But perhaps a bit oddly it added that Wernz had kept the Society "in a true course between rocky crags on either side"<sup>151</sup>—presumably between Modernism and integralism. The congregation also asserted its complete adherence to *Pascendi* and the anti-Modernist oath imposed by the *motu proprio Sacrorum antistitum* (September 1, 1910). And further "from the depth of its heart" the congregation rejected Modernism "of any kind and the very spirit of the Modernists." Finally, given the circumstances of World War I, it did not want to prolong its deliberations unduly, so it passed a decree asking the new general to draw up a document in its name urging a more intensive study of Aquinas. In December 1916, the new general Włodzimierz Ledóchowski (1866–1942) obliged with "On Following the Doctrine of St. Thomas," a letter of some 40 pages on the importance of Thomism. He rehearsed the history of the neo-Scholastic revival from the mid-19th century and reiterated the Society's rejection of Kant and Modernism. But he also took the opportunity to promote study of Suárez. He quoted the Dominican cardinal and Thomistic scholar Zephyrinus Gonzales (1831–1889), who asserted that Suárez, after Thomas himself, was the most outstanding representative of Scholastic philosophy and that his ideas explain, weigh, and develop Aquinas's views "with extraordinary clearness."<sup>152</sup> Ledóchowski also insisted that the Society was not bound to a strict Thomistic interpretation of the 24 theses that the Congregation for Studies had issued on July 27, 1914, and that—so the Congregation asserted—had to be taught to all those studying for the priesthood.<sup>153</sup> Ledóchowski further claimed Pope Benedict

148. Poulat, *Intégrisme et Catholicisme* 391.

149. I owe this point to Peter J. Bernardi, S.J., of Loyola University, Chicago, who has archival evidence for this suggestion.

150. *For Matters of Greater Moment* 44.

151. *Ibid.* 510.

152. *Selected Writings of Fr. Ledochowski* 498.

153. "Theses quaedam, in doctorina sancti Thomae Aquinatis contentae, et a philosophiae magistris propositae, adprobantur," *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 6 (1914) 383–86. This document followed from Pius X's *motu proprio Doctoris Angelici* (June 29, 1914), *ibid.* 336–41. Here Pius X stresses that his previous letter, *Sacrorum antistitum* (September

XV's blessing for saying that Jesuits were quite entitled to hold their traditional views of disputed points in Aquinas, among which was the denial of the real distinction between essence and existence.<sup>154</sup> With "On Following the Doctrine of St. Thomas," the Society committed itself to the neo-Scholastic revival in the post-Modernist world but very much on its own terms and along its own lines.

## Conclusion

The wisdom of Thomas, according to Pope Leo XIII, deserved to be restored and widely propagated "for the defense and beauty of the Catholic faith, [and] for the good of society." But he also believed that it would prove "formidable to the enemies of truth."<sup>155</sup> Of course the enemies of truth were those outside the Catholic Church who embraced a view of the world and modernity that not only rejected the Church's spiritual and theological ideas, but that contended with Catholicism's intentions with regard to its relationship apropos of contemporary society. In advancing neo-Scholasticism, the Roman pontiffs sought to establish the truth about the world on the basis of medieval reasoning that was elaborated against the background of faith. But in an age of increasing skepticism, claims to truth predicated on religious faith rang hollow. Moreover, as Joseph Fitzer has pointed out, the Thomistic "harmless-sounding conception of truth could . . . easily be used as the point of departure for a quite conservative world view."<sup>156</sup> In the context of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, in the Church's confrontation with modernity, this undoubtedly was the case. Furthermore the Church's view of itself had become increasingly authoritarian. After Vatican I the pope and his curia developed the view that the papacy was the very touchstone of Catholicism in a way that it had not been even at the height of medieval papal power.<sup>157</sup>

That the Jesuit order should take up the challenge of neo-Scholasticism was both an opportunity and an obstacle. It enabled the Society to attempt to pursue a unified ideology blessed and mandated by the papacy, which would help orchestrate the order's strength and give it a unified purpose. This built on an increasingly indispensable role the Society was playing in relation to the papacy, a role already highly evolved by the

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1910), had been distorted for the purpose of teaching philosophy and theology other than that of Aquinas. Now he warned that any professors who deviated "so much as a step, in metaphysics especially, from St. Thomas, expose themselves to grave risk." In theology not only were instructors to use the text of the *Summa theologiae*, they were to comment on it "in the Latin tongue." Furthermore the pope adds, "This is Our order, and nothing shall be suffered to gainsay it." There is little doubt that this pronouncement was aimed at the Jesuit approach to Scholastic philosophy and theology.

154. He reproduced an exchange of letters between himself and Benedict XV on this very point (*Selected Writings of Fr. Ledochowski* 504–5).

155. Carlen, *Papal Encyclicals*, vol. 2, 1878–1903 25–26.

156. Joseph Fitzer, *Romance and the Rock: Nineteenth-Century Catholics on Faith and Reason* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989) 291–92.

157. Aubert, *Christian Centuries* 5:67.

end of Pius IX's pontificate. As Roger Aubert has observed, "It is certain that in all fields of ecclesiastical politics, organization, Catholic action, theology, and spirituality, it was the Jesuit line, especially the Roman Jesuit line, that was increasingly the one adopted."<sup>158</sup>

The problem came in trying to stipulate the contours of the Scholarly endeavor in which the Jesuits now found themselves. In an organization as large and complex as the Society of Jesus, even with the most rigorous regimentation, uniformity of approach was not always easily obtained. In a sense it could be achieved only at the cost of the repression of individual academic undertakings, as George Tyrrell found to his cost. But he was not alone. At one level in the aftermath of the Modernist struggle, as Helen James John pointed out, there arose especially, but not exclusively, in France and at the Roman universities a new intellectual current in which opposition to Modernism became the leitmotif for the interpretation of Aquinas.<sup>159</sup> In such an atmosphere, free inquiry became an impossibility. One is left with the sentiment of Karl Rahner that in the era examined here, and for the length of the shadow it cast, Catholicism intellectually became a ghetto mentality.<sup>160</sup> This perhaps did little to advance the cause of the Jesuits or the Church they tried to serve.

By the mid-20th century a new intellectual verve would ultimately flower that neither Leo XIII, nor Pius X, nor the Jesuits who served them could have conceived of or imagined. Transcendental Thomism and *la nouvelle théologie*, although the ultimate fruit of the Thomistic revival, were far from the intentions of the framers of neo-Thomism. Joseph Maréchal, Karl Rahner, and Henri de Lubac were among those who, with a great deal of struggle, weaned the Church and the Jesuits from a conservative Scholasticism.

### Author biography

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158. Roger Aubert, *Le pontificat Pie IX, 1846–1878* (Paris: Bloud & Gay, 1952) 286.

159. Helen James John, *The Thomist Spectrum* (New York: Fordham University, 1966) 4–5.

160. Karl Rahner, *I Remember: An Autobiographical Interview with Meinhold Krauss* (London: SCM, 1984) 37.