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THE VICOMTE DE FALLOUX IN 1837

Abstract

M.A. thesis

The Perils of *Facilité*: A Study of the Career and Published Works of Alfred de Falloux (1811-1886)

Christopher M. Guyver, November 1999

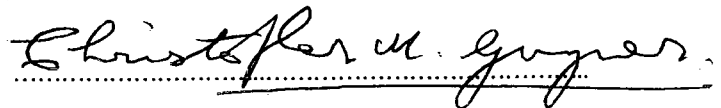
Alfred de Falloux (1811-1886) is an important figure in the political and religious history of France in the nineteenth century. His work both on the Committee for Public Works in May-June 1848 and the law of 15 March 1850 that bears his name are testimony to his important role in the history of the Second Republic (1848-52). He was also a prolific author for the cause of liberal Catholicism and for a constitutional monarchy under the auspices of the Pretender of the Senior House of Bourbon: his *Mémoires d'un Royaliste* is a major source for this thesis. He is thus a representative of a generation of politicians that has suffered from relative neglect over the past half century. But his role in parliamentary politics demonstrates the weaknesses of parliamentary politics and constitutional monarchism at this important period in French history, as does his liberalism in the face of the reactionary politics that displayed impatience towards constitutionalism. A member of the Académie française, and a deeply devout Catholic genuinely concerned for the plight of the working classes, as well as a benevolent landlord, Alfred de Falloux was also an accomplished and ambitious politician, forever willing to allow the end to justify the means. These contradictions that lay within his complex nature are indicative of the paradoxes that beset France at a time of political, social and religious crisis, a period to which the bulk of this thesis is devoted. His espousal of royalism that was moderate and conservative arrived at a time when moderate conservatism was discredited by its involvement in the Rue de Poitiers group, and was in the late nineteenth century eclipsed by laic conservative republicanism, and the extreme ideas of the counterrevolutionary right. The failure of the moderate right, and of Alfred de Falloux, is pertinent to the history of Church and of royalism in France.

The Perils of *Facilité*: A Study of the Career and Published Works of Alfred de Falloux (1811-1886)

SUBMITTED BY CHRISTOPHER MAURICE GUYVER, B.A., TO THE UNIVERSITY OF
DURHAM AS A THESIS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS BY RESEARCH IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY

NOVEMBER 1999

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material is included for which a degree has been previously been conferred upon me.



(CHRISTOPHER M. GUYVER.)

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17 JAN 2001

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Introduction

*La facilité a toujours été une de mes qualités et un de mes défauts.*¹

FRÉDÉRIC-ALFRED-PIERRE DE FALLOUX DU COUDRAY (1811-1886) is a significant figure in French political history. To study his *Mémoires d'un Royaliste* is to gain an insight into one of the classic examples of political autobiography, and in one of the classic exercises in self-justification. This is not to say, however, that this study will be devoted to debunking Falloux: the picture that will emerge will be to some degree sympathetic, although not uncritical. The causes he espoused are not likely to arouse much sympathy over a century later: clerical education, restriction of universal suffrage, the restoration of King and Pope. His subtlety and acceptance of the need of compromise has given him a bad name among intransigent Catholics and monarchists in France even into the twentieth century.

The question of whether Falloux was a 'liberal' is to some extent a moot point, even according to the very different criteria of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century definitions of the word. This aristocrat despised *laissez-faire* capitalism, advocated the extension of clerical control over education, defended the continuation of the Papal States and feared democracy. But he was no hide-bound reactionary: he advocated constitutional and parliamentary form of government, argued for organized charity for the poor, and was on friendly terms with men who by no means shared his political opinions. He was a leading critic of the Second Empire, frequently condemning Napoleon III's opportunist despotism.²

Falloux's career as a polemicist covers forty years—nearly twenty times longer than his foray into politics—and encompassed all areas that were relevant to the study of nineteenth-century French Legitimism. Those areas where his views were more circumscribed also make study of his writings rewarding. His long controversy with Veuillot demonstrated that liberal Catholicism's battle against the excesses of intransigence continued as long as either lived. He feared also the drift that the Right was taking towards the end of his life, and his work 'De la Contre-Révolution' written in 1878 showed the concerns of a moderate conservative, brought up towards the beginning of the century. He did not, however, give the intellectual works of the Left the same attention: they were habitually and casually

¹ The Comte de Falloux, *Mémoires d'un Royaliste* (Paris, 1925), i, 212.

² Falloux, 'Question italienne' (1859), *Discours et Mélanges politiques* (2 vols, Paris, 1882), ii, 137-58; 'Question Romaine: du devoir des catholiques' (1860), *op. cit.*, ii, 159-72; *Antecedents and Consequences of the present state of things in France and Italy. Translated from the French* (London, Derby, 1861); *Dix Ans d'Agriculture* (Paris, [1863]), *Librairie Agricole de la Maison Rustique*.



dismissed. He almost certainly would not have known of Marx, and if he had, one is tempted to speculate that he would have dismissed his writings as the demented ravings of a demagogue.

But it is not just his intellectual output that makes him an important figure for study. He was not only a respected and feared politician and minister during one of France's most active and crisis-ridden epochs, but his intellectual prestige, rather than perhaps his intellectual quality, was confirmed by his election to the Académie française in 1856 (the Académie at that time preferred to elect those who were influential public figures as much as great thinkers). He frequented the salon of one of the most remarkable mystic influences of the period, Madame Swetchine, and mixed on equal terms with the foremost liberal Catholics of the period, Lacordaire, Montalembert and Dupanloup, and he was an experimental, and successful farmer on his estates in the West of France.

For his reputation among contemporaries, Alexis de Tocqueville's nuanced description of Falloux's political abilities deserves to be heard first:

In my whole political career I don't think I have met another man so unusual. He had both the qualities most necessary for leading a party: an ardent conviction, which continually drove him towards his objective undeterred by disappointments or dangers, and an intelligence not too severe but firm and subtle as well, which knew how to make many and various means serve a single end. He was honest in the sense that his concern was, as he alleged, for his cause and not for his private interest, but in other respects he was a great knave, practising a rare and very effective type of knavery, for he could succeed for a moment in mixing up true and false in his own mind before he served the mixture to others, and this is the sole secret of how to win the advantages of sincerity when lying, and how to lead one's associates or subordinates into an error that one believes beneficial.³

The argument of this thesis which concentrates on Falloux as the political strategist, to a large degree supports Tocqueville's analysis of Falloux: yet his religious faith gave him the strength for optimism, and enabled him to cope with setbacks. His Legitimism might lead one to think that he was an isolated figure within French political history, but the breadth of his political allies belies this assumption. Among his friends and allies were Charles de Persigny, a fervent Bonapartist (indeed, according to Napoleon III himself, the *only* Bonapartist⁴), Alexis de Tocqueville, the aristocratic liberal who had served under the July Monarchy. He was trusted and liked by Louis-Napoleon himself (although as we shall see, the feelings were not wholly reciprocated), and he was on good terms with both Thiers and Guizot. If a man is judged by his enemies in the secular world, then he was honoured to be hated by those formidable

³ A. de Tocqueville, *Recollections: the French revolution of 1848* (trans. G. Lawrence, eds J. P. Mayer and A. P. Kerr, New Brunswick, 1987), pp. 217-18.

geniuses Victor Hugo and Daniel Stern. It was his *facilité* that made him so respected and hated in the French political world of the mid-nineteenth century.

Of all his personal characteristics, it was his effortless charm and the graceful ease of his language that most struck his contemporaries. Tocqueville remarked on 'that gracious aristocratic manner he used so naturally to cover all his feelings, even the bitterest ones'⁵, and on one occasion 'I could taste the bitterest gall trickling through the honey of his words.'⁶ In the realm of fiction, Huysmans' character Des Esseintes in the novel *A rebours* meditated on Falloux's abilities: 'Beneath his moderate exterior this Academician positively exuded venom...A dangerous polemicist by virtue of his skill at ensnaring adversaries, a wily logician who preferred the devious approach and the surprise attack.'⁷ But such *facilité* was as Falloux himself admitted 'one of my qualities and one of my faults'⁸ and it aroused even more suspicion from his enemies than necessary. Louis Veillot, probably Falloux's bitterest foe, gloried in his pun 'Falloux *fallax*'. Karl Marx referred to Falloux briefly but contemptuously as a 'Jesuit', and Daniel Stern's judgement was fuller, if no less harsh.

⁴ Napoleon III once famously said 'What a government is mine! The Empress is a Legitimist; Napoléon-Jérôme a republican; Morny Orleanist, I myself am a socialist. The only Bonapartist is Persigny and he is mad.' (J. F. McMillan, *Napoleon III* (London, 1991), p. 55.)

⁵ Tocqueville, *Recollections*, p. 197.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

⁷ J.-K. Huysmans, *Against Nature (A rebours)* (trans. M. Mauldon, Oxford, 1998), p. 123.

⁸ Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 212.

*Early Years 1811-1842**A Childhood in the West - The Early years of the July Monarchy - Travels in Europe***A Childhood in the West**

ALFRED DE FALLOUX was born at Angers on 7 May 1811 into an area in France that had shown in the previous quarter century a deep devotion to the royalist cause. From birth Alfred was steeped in royalist lore:

I cannot recall these early years without returning to the source of the inspirations of my whole life: honour before interest, patriotism personified in noble and touching figures, the heart in accord with the intelligence and strengthening it, the soil speaking to itself an intelligible and cherished language, and the native province faithfully and distinctly loved the same time as the entire country.¹

His father Guillaume de Falloux du Coudray (1774-1850),² an émigré at fourteen, had fought at the siege of Maastricht in 1794 and had taken part in the expedition to Quiberon Bay.³ After some years in exile in England,⁴ he returned impoverished to France during the Consulate. Guillaume's mother had died of typhoid in prison after being arrested for harbouring the Vendean General de La Rochejaquelein. Guillaume was also an admirer of the parliamentary system of government: hearing Mirabeau speak in the Constituent Assembly in Paris and Pitt speaking in Westminster Palace made a great impression on him.

Falloux's mother, Loyde de Fitte de Soucy (1784-1850) owed her allegiance to the Bourbons through more ancestral allegiances. She and her mother, the Marquise de Soucy, had both been born at Versailles and the Marquise rose to become the undergoverness of the future Louis XVII. Her mother Madame de Mackau had refused to emigrate and remained at the side of the royal family until 10 August

¹ Falloux, *Mémoires d'un Royaliste* (3 vols, Paris, 1925), i, 18: 'Je ne puis me reporter à ces premières années sans y retrouver la source des inspirations de toute ma vie: l'honneur avant l'intérêt, le patriotisme personnifié dans de nobles et touchantes figures, le cœur d'accord avec l'intelligence et la fortifiant, le sol parlant lui-même un langage intelligible et chéri, la province natale fidèlement, distinctement aimée de même temps que la patrie tout entière.'

² Much of the information for this chapter is taken from R. Rancœur's paper 'Falloux de 1835 à 1848', in J. Gadille (ed.) *Les Catholiques libéraux au XIX^e siècle: Actes du Colloque international d'histoire religieuse de Grenoble des 30 septembre - 3 octobre 1971* (Grenoble, 1974). Although many of the sources that Rancœur quotes are from private papers, and thus beyond the ambit for this thesis, an interesting, and sympathetic light is cast upon the character of the young Falloux.

³ Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 16.

⁴ *Ibid.*, i, 20.

1792, and spent the remainder of the revolutionary period in hiding in France.⁵ Loyde married Guillaume in 1806, and a year later their first son, Frédéric-Louis was born.

Falloux commented: 'The inner circle of my family thus presented a singular anomaly of the most passionate monarchical opinions and a private cult for the success and glory of parliaments.'⁶ Falloux inherited from his father a deep love for the countryside, and that of his native Anjou in particular, and from his mother he inherited an instinctive courtesy, as well as, one suspects, a good nose for intrigue.

As a boy Alfred entertained hopes of joining the Church: his mother on one occasion dressed him up in ecclesiastical garb so that he could preach to her and her friends.⁷ He was educated first at Angers, and then in Paris: he loved most to go to the Théâtre-Français to watch the great tragedian Talma, whose greatness of diction was matched by only that of Berryer.⁸ A taste for the stage had superseded his earlier taste for preaching,⁹ and he expressed a love for tragedy, in its literary form at least, that lasted throughout his life.¹⁰

Falloux's youth 'was spent during the Restoration, indulging in dreams of politics'.¹¹ The Restoration, rather than the *ancien régime*, was the source of his qualified nostalgia for a period when France allowed herself to blossom, especially through religious liberty and constitutional politics. He records in the *Mémoires* that what he discovered in the salon of the Marquis de Castellane 'showed well that during the Restoration there was no overwhelming incompatibility in France between old and new'.¹² It was also the precocious Marquis de Castellane, slightly Falloux's junior, who introduced his friend to de Maistre's *Soirées de Saint-Petersbourg*.¹³ But in the realm of literature he continued to prefer the classics of the seventeenth century to the more recent output of the romantics, and he was cool towards Victor

⁵ Ibid., i, 17.

⁶ Ibid., i, 20: 'L'intérieur de ma famille présentait donc cette singulière anomalie des opinions les plus passionnément monarchiques et d'un culte intime pour le succès et la gloire parlementaires.'

⁷ Ibid.: his older brother Frédéric-Louis (1807-1884) entered the Church, and in 1877 became a Cardinal.

⁸ Ibid., i, 23.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Falloux, 'Dix Ans d'Agriculture', p. 7: 'Mon enfance s'était bercé sous la Restauration de rêves politiques.'

¹² Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 33, the French original perhaps makes the point more forcefully: 'Son salon démontrait bien que, sous la Restauration, il n'existait point d'incompatibilité invincible entre la France ancienne et la France moderne.'

¹³ Ibid., i, 34.

Hugo's *Hernani* which took Paris by storm in 1830.¹⁴ By now, Falloux hoped to enter the French diplomatic service, and accordingly studied English, German and Italian.¹⁵

A legacy from a cousin, M. de la Crossonière, in 1823 considerably improved the family's situation, and one of the lands that was inherited by Guillaume de Falloux carried with it the right to the title of Comte: this was confirmed by royal ordinance on 2 May 1830, and letters patent on 30 October of the same year, albeit after the July Revolution.¹⁶

The Early years of the July Monarchy

In late July 1830, the nineteen-year-old Alfred de Falloux was with his family staying in Savoy, where his father had gone in order to have his gout treated.¹⁷ It was there that the family heard about the events in Paris. His father dissuaded him from going to the Vendée to join an uprising.¹⁸ Falloux's opposition to the new regime was confined to the *guerre de salon*, in which the King of the French would continue to be referred to as the Duc d'Orléans,¹⁹ and the relatively few Orléanist salons would be boycotted, although he, like many others, did frequent the no-man's-land of the Austrian Embassy.²⁰ As an act of someone would be obliged to abandon a legal career because of his family's loyalty to the Senior Branch, this was subversion at its most gracious.

After the failure of the rising in the Vendée in 1832 and the captivity of the Duchesse de Berry at Blaye, a gloom descended upon the Legitimist Faubourg Saint-Germain: balls were proscribed although evening parties, *raourts*, were permitted. Here gathered in the winter of 1833 Honoré de Balzac, Eugène Sue and Sainte-Beuve: but their attendance on aristocratic society was fleeting. However, it was soon discovered that the Duchesse de Berry was pregnant, and much of the ferocity that had hitherto been poured into the support of her in her travails was transformed into bitterness and disillusion. But it was at the trial of Chateaubriand, who was arrested in Paris while the revolt was being defeated in the Vendée that Falloux first met someone of consequence: as the acquitted Chateaubriand left the court, he was mobbed by a crowd, and leant on the arm of Falloux in order to steady himself while struggling to get inside a carriage.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, i, 32.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, i, 41.

¹⁶ Ranceur, p. 309.

¹⁷ Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 43.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, i, 46.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, i, 47.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, i, 48.

As Chateaubriand was taken away, Falloux was left holding the great man's portfolio, and arrived at the Hospice Marie-Thérèse that evening to return it, where he was cordially received. In the late 1830s he frequented the salon of his friend Albert's father, the poet Jules de Rességuier. Here discussions were mainly on the subject of literature: Lamartine and Hugo both paid fleeting visits to this salon where '[their hosts] offered affection and admiration', but Falloux added acidly, 'even then they demanded idolatry.'²¹

Travels in Europe

The education of the Vicomte de Falloux, as he was to be called until the death of his father in 1850, was completed by three extensive tours around Europe in the 1830s. His first journey was to the Austrian Empire, to Prague where he paid his respects to the exiled Charles X. He noted that the exiled king maintained a 'serene affability'²² but seemed curiously indifferent to his plight. After visiting Vienna, he headed south for Italy, where he journeyed through Venice, where he met Chateaubriand once more, and Rome,²³ and Naples. He then visited England and Scotland in 1835. He was to remain an anglophile, albeit a critical one and an uncritical admirer of the novels of Sir Walter Scott: he made a pilgrimage to Abbotsford, and in the *Mémoires d'un Royaliste*, written half a century later, he recalled with excusable inaccuracy how Scott's housekeeper described her late master: 'He was so good at every body!'²⁴ However, he forsook a voyage to Ireland, Montalembert's recent place of pilgrimage, as he had suffered enough already from seasickness between Boulogne and Dover.²⁵ In London he met a man with whom he was to enjoy an extraordinary friendship for forty years, Charles de Persigny, who was at that time in exile with his master, an unknown member of the Bonaparte family, Prince Louis. Falloux then made an expedition to Russia in 1836: his return route was through Poland. Once back in France he renewed his acquaintance with Persigny, who asked him if he could be counted on for the *coup d'état* at Strasbourg...²⁶

In 1839-40, Falloux visited Italy once again.

²¹ Ibid., i, 153: 'M. de Lamartine et M. Victor Hugo n'apparaissaient que de temps en temps dans ce salon où leur offrait affection et admiration; mais ils exigeaient déjà l'idolâtrie.'

²² Ibid., i, 70.

²³ His visit to Rome is described elsewhere in this thesis.

²⁴ Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 112: 'elle s'interrompt pour contenir ses larmes, et je ne puis oublier avec quelle accent elle reprit après quelques instants de silence: « *He was so good at every body!* — Il était si bon pour tout le monde.» — Qui n'envierait cette courte oraison funèbre?' C. B. Pitman, Falloux's translator of the first edition of the *Mémoires d'un Royaliste* in 1888, needless to say, unobtrusively corrected the grammar of the original.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., i, 147.

On returning from his journey to Austria and Italy in 1835, Falloux began to visit the salon of the remarkable Madame Swetchine: her influence on the young man's life cannot be exaggerated. Soon 'the friends of Madame Swetchine also did me the honour of becoming mine.'²⁷ Falloux had found his niche in Paris, and indeed those friendships lasted him a lifetime: to a large extent, Falloux's *Mémoires d'un Royaliste* are a homage to this group,²⁸ Charles de Montalembert (1810-70), Père Lacordaire (1802-61), Armand de Melun (1807-77) and the Abbé F. A. P. Dupanloup (1802-78). Of the other friendships that he made later, only those with his political mentor Antoine Berryer (1790-1868) whom he met during the trial of Prince Louis Bonaparte in 1840, and his own protégé Augustin Cochin (1823-72) whom he met during the Second Republic,²⁹ went as deep. As each of them died, Falloux felt increasingly isolated in the France of the 1870s and 1880s. 'The greatest trial of old age,' he wrote at the start of his biography of his friend Cochin in 1878, who had died six years before, 'is not even to lose the companions of our youth and pleasures, but to see the witnesses of our graver years vanish from the scene, and to become almost strangers to those more youthful friends who, not having shared our struggles, can never distinctly realise our efforts, or fully appreciate our vices.'³⁰

In 1841 Falloux married: 'the most decisive act of my life.'³¹ His fiancée, Marie de Caradeuc de la Chalotais, had two prerequisites that were, Falloux argued, essential for him: 'an ardent royalism and a predilection for Anjou.'³² A daughter, Loyde, was born a year later. Sadly, Falloux outlived both his wife and daughter: Marie died in 1877, aged fifty-six, and Loyde followed her to the grave in 1881.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, i, 116: 'Les amis de madame Swetchine me firent aussi l'honneur de devenir les miens.'

²⁸ The final paragraph of the *Mémoires* makes this clear: 'Quoi qu'il en soit, j'aurai, avant de retourner à Dieu, rendu témoignage à ceux de mes contemporains que j'ai rencontrés [*sic*] de plus près dans la mêlée des événements et qui ont le mieux mérité de l'Église et de la Patrie...les contradictions et les ingratitude n'ont ni ébranlé leur foi ni lassé leur patriotisme. L'insuccès de leurs efforts ne les découragera pas davantage, et si, contre mon espérance, ils ne réussissent pas enfin à sauver notre pays, ils auront, du moins, sauvé leur conscience devant Dieu et leur honneur devant les hommes, quand les hommes seront arrivés à l'heure de la justice et de l'impartialité.' *Ibid.*, iii, 338.

²⁹ Falloux remarks on the suitability of the youthful Cochin for the Committee for Public Instruction 1849-50—and not without some false modesty—'...all his colleagues were struck by the mixture of natural timidity and precocious authority with which he pronounced them [his propositions], and complimented me on the "discovery" I had made.' *Augustin Cochin*, p. 47.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

³¹ Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 206: 'l'acte le plus décisif de ma vie.'

³² *Ibid.*: 'un ardent royalisme et une prédilection pour l'Anjou.'

A View of History: the Ancien Régime to the July Monarchy*Louis XVI - 1830: 'A terrible misunderstanding' - La Patrie*

LIKE MANY OTHER literate men of his age, Falloux was greatly interested in history: as a politician in the mid-nineteenth century, interpreting the recent past was a prerequisite of understanding the present. Central to this programme was debate about the extent, or the existence, of the legitimate inheritance of the Revolution of 1789. As a Legitimist of parliamentary leanings, it was more important than ever to discern to what degree this heritage was acceptable. As time went on, the pertinence of the Legitimist interpretation remained important and controversial. In 1872, for example, Falloux expressed his concern for the intellectually simplistic ideas that developed from the so-called Counter-Revolution. The interpretation of the Revolution taken by Falloux was not simplistic: among historians in the nineteenth century there had always been much debate about at which stage the Revolution relinquished legality or indeed at which stage order was reimposed. For Falloux, whose interpretation followed the lead of his Orléanist contemporaries, the period 1789-91 was the period in which the most progress had been made: after that time, demagoguery and Terror filled the breach. Not for nothing did Falloux compare his mentor Berryer with Mirabeau, the orator in the Assembly in the early years of the Revolution.¹

Louis XVI

Falloux did not idolize the *ancien régime*: as a Catholic he found the rationalist eighteenth century highly distasteful. In his biography of Louis XVI, much of the story is of a good king trying to combat the immorality of his court, as well as of the martyr immolated by the Revolution. Falloux was under no illusions about the dissolute character of the court of Louis XV. But the feebleness with which Louis XVI had been accredited was to a large degree the fault of his upbringing and education in the poisonous atmosphere of the Versailles. The more minor characters in Falloux's cast are used to demonstrate the debauchery of the age: the aged Voltaire being crowned to rapturous applause at the Comédie-Française, the subversive playwright Beaumarchais, the dissolute Duc de Richelieu, the ruthless and flawed enlightened despot Joseph II. Falloux would have been hard put to find Talleyrand's *douceur de vivre* in

such an atmosphere. At the centre was Louis, for whom cartography, maritime technology and locksmithery had a greater hold than the licence of the court that surrounded him, and his beloved wife Marie-Antoinette, who spent every possible moment at the pastoral simplicity of the Petit Trianon, feeling nostalgic for the more homely atmosphere of the court at Vienna.² With such good men as Turgot and Malesherbes, who 'had the fleurs-de-lis engraved deeply on to his heart',³ he tried to reform the whole mess, but vested interests from the court or the *parlement* managed to stop any preventative measures, and so the cataclysm of the Revolution was made inevitable. But when their turn came, the revolutionaries hurried reform, and rendered it godless: this, according to Falloux, was their major mistake.

Indeed the immorality and unbelief of the *ancien régime* was such that France was punished by God, and Louis was the sacrificial victim. With the Revolution, new characters emerge. Lafayette was presented as an ambitious hothead, the Duc d'Orléans, the father of King Louis-Philippe, was a name that could only be mentioned with disgust, and Mirabeau was a brilliant, deeply flawed, but much maligned man who realized the errors of his ways on the eve of his death. Within this interpretation, certain elements of mainstream Legitimist historiography are apparent. Falloux emphasized the sacral nature of kingship (and thus cocked a snook at the contemporary Orléanist regime), and thus the role of Providence in the events that he described (here he borrowed from the writings of Joseph de Maistre: similar ideas were again in circulation after the defeat of the France in the Franco-Prussian War in 1871). But at the heart of his belief in the actions of Providence lay an ambiguity that was not resolved: if the *ancien régime* was godless, then why punish it with a godless revolution? Was the punishment being confounded with the crime? Was it God Who was meting out the punishment or Satan? Needless to say, Falloux did not knowingly imply any blasphemous conclusions about the providential aspect of the Revolution, but he was too swept up in his enthusiasm for de Maistre to notice the inherent contradictions in the master's

¹ Mirabeau would be demonized in republican historiography for his dealings with the royal family.

² Vicomte A. de Falloux, *Louis XVI* (Paris, 1840), p. 90: 'Le roi était gagné à ses projets par son ardent désir d'économie, la reine, par son désir de ramener la cour de Vienne, et de ne donner pour cortège [*sic*] au roi que la familiarité respectueuse dont les princes de la maison d'Autriche se plaisent à être entourés.'

³ *Ibid.*, p. 389: 'C'était un homme qui, selon l'expression de temps plus anciens, portait les fleurs de lis gravées bien avant dans le cœur.'

thought.⁴ His manner of dealing with Louis XVI, in commenting on his faults as well as his virtues, was to come in useful years later when commenting on the difficulties of the relationship with the Comte de Chambord, above all in the *Mémoires*. Falloux later claimed convincingly that the work was in no way a defence of absolutism (Louis XIV was not a popular figure from royal history for nineteenth-century Legitimists), but an apology for 'la liberté sagement réglée'.⁵ This was a motif to which Falloux would remain faithful, even though the definition of such a maxim was to prove problematic, and he was to expend much ink throughout his life, defending his own application of wisely regulated liberty.

In 1861 Falloux reminded the Comte de Chambord that Thiers and Guizot as well as Polignac and Villèle were all adherents of the Bourbon monarchy before the débâcle of 1830. The later generation of royalists, in the mould of Albert de Mun, were the poorer in his opinion for not having lived through this period. But the Restoration also sowed seeds of discord to be reaped in later years, not least in the more extreme aspects of the phenomenon of ultra-royalism. Ultra-royalism helped to provoke the July Revolution and indeed in later years, in Falloux's view, to sabotage the future restoration of the Pretender both in 1850 and in 1871-3.

1830: 'A terrible misunderstanding'

Falloux's belief that in 1830 much was lost by 'the right being too much frightened itself of liberty, the left in containing badly its impatience or its outbursts and in refusing to assure, at the price of a little patience towards an old king, the enduring and hereafter certain triumph of representative government'⁶ was borne out by a discussion in 1856 at Berryer's château, Augerville, in the Loiret, south of Paris, where Berryer discussed with Thiers the origins of the July Revolution of 1830. Thiers averred that the Duc d'Orléans had not been plotting for the throne (and historians concur here), nor did the leaders of the opposition, Guizot, Casimir Périer, want a violent overthrow of government: 'We made the July

⁴ For a thought-provoking essay on this theme, see Tallett and Allen.

⁵ Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 174.

⁶ *Ibid.*, i, 46: 'la droite, en s'effarouchant trop de la liberté; la gauche, en contenant mal ses impatiences ou ses emportements et en refusant d'assurer, au prix d'un peu de patience envers un vieux roi, le triomphe durable et désormais certain du gouvernement représentatif.'

Revolution because they let us make it.’⁷ For Berryer, Charles X, was in essence a good man: ‘I have not known a heart more engaging and more sincere than that of King Charles X. He had the faults of his generation and of his education, but he also had their qualities.’ But the old King had been misled by the visionary idealism of his last minister Polignac, who had sponsored Berryer’s entry into the Chamber of deputies in early 1830. Berryer recalled trying to warn his master, who turned to his protégé and said, ‘God aids me every day through communications the origin of which I cannot mistake.’⁸ Berryer ruefully remarked ‘In a blow, I saw before the ruin of the Monarchy and the era of revolutions indefinitely reopened.’⁹ At the end of the stay at Augerville, Thiers concluded, ‘You have shown me...that the July Revolution had been a terrible misunderstanding.’¹⁰ In the company of liberal Legitimists, Thiers felt that there was no danger of his being misunderstood when he told them, ‘I am a monarchist, in a different way from you, to certain degrees, but just a much as you. I am convinced of the superiority of the monarchical system, I am convinced above all that the French temperament and the republican system are incompatible.’¹¹ If Thiers did in fact say this, then it makes all the more intriguing his conversion to the republican form of government. In his most recent anglophone biography, by J. P. T. Bury and R. P. Tombs, written in 1986 there is no mention of the meeting at Augerville, and the assumption is that Thiers’s republicanism remained intact between the Second Republic and the Third Republic. But it was to be another fifteen years before Thiers assumed the executive powers of head of state, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that that ferocious mind entertained all ideas on the form of government. In the mid-1850s he discovered, if Falloux’s account is reliable, that monarchism divided France rather less than he had hitherto assumed.

⁷ Ibid., iii, 45: ‘Nous avons fait la révolution de Juillet, parce qu’on nous l’a laissé faire.’ This is perhaps a play on words.

⁸ Ibid., iii, 49: ‘Dieu m’assiste, chaque jour, par des communications sur l’origine desquelles je ne puis me tromper.’

⁹ Ibid.: ‘Je vis tout d’un coup devant moi la ruine de la Monarchie et l’ère des révolutions indéfiniment rouverte.’

¹⁰ Ibid., iii, 50: ‘Vous nous avez démontré...que la révolution de Juillet avait été un terrible malentendu.’

¹¹ Ibid., iii, 51: ‘Je suis monarchiste, autrement que vous, à certains égards, mais autant que vous. Je suis convaincu de la supériorité du système monarchique, je suis convaincu surtout que le tempérament français et le système républicain sont incompatibles.’

La Patrie

The years of the Restoration and the fierce local loyalty towards the region of his birth, Anjou, instilled in Falloux a strong sense of patriotic duty. An important part of this patriotism was, of course, his royalism, but this was not essential to his idea of patriotism. He could admire the love of the *patrie* in those who differed from him on the subject of the form of government France should adopt. His most telling expression of that patriotism was in a letter on 25 February 1848: 'There is no more than one word of former French unity which must be at the front of our minds: the *patrie*. Let us rally to this glorious and holy word: let us pronounce it, with constraint, and as if imposed by a sort of terror, but as men for whom neither the word nor the devotions that are implied by it are unknown or indifferent.'¹² In common with all French patriots of the nineteenth century, whether monarchist, republican or Bonapartist, Falloux's conception of the *patrie* was imbued with mysticism, needless to say of a Christian variety. France, the Eldest Daughter of the Church since the baptism of Clovis at the start of the sixth century, had a duty to guard Christian civilization, as the 'knight among nations'¹³. Falloux quoted the Savoyard Joseph de Maistre on this point: "Truth needs France." France in turn is thus beginning on the search for the truth.'¹⁴ He told the deposed Emir of Algeria, Abd-el-Kader, to study the religion and history of France, since 'God reveals Himself to us through great miracles, through admirable writings: do you want to read them and what our priests tell you of them? The God of a people also reveals Himself through the history of this people, through the great actions that He inspires in them, through the civilization that it develops. Do you not want to compare our civilization to your own?'¹⁵ For the nineteenth century it was essential

¹² Ibid., i, 267: 'Il n'y a plus, à cette heure, qu'un mot de l'ancienne unité française qui soit debout: la Patrie. Rallions-nous tous à ce glorieux et saint nom: prononçons-le, non avec contrainte, et comme imposé par une sorte de terreur, mais comme des hommes auxquels ni le mot, ni aucun des dévouements qu'il implique, ne sont inconnus ou indifférents.'

¹³ Falloux, 'Question italienne' (1859), *Discours et Mélanges Politiques* (2 vols, Paris, 1882), ii, 140: 'la France garde son rôle de chevalier parmi les nations.'

¹⁴ Comte A. Falloux, *Histoire de Saint Pie V, Pape de l'Ordre des Frères Prêcheurs* (3rd ed., Paris, 1858), p. 12: 'M. de Maistre, qui n'était pas Français, ne craignait pas de dire: « La vérité a besoin de France. »

'La France, à son tour, se mit donc à la recherche de la vérité.'

¹⁵ Ibid., i, 344: 'Vous avez, pour avancer dans cette connaissance, deux grandes voies: l'étude de notre religion et celle de notre histoire. Dieu s'est révélé à nous par de grands miracles, par d'admirables écritures: voulez-vous les lire et que nos prêtres vous les commentent? Le Dieu d'un peuple se révèle aussi par l'histoire de ce peuple, par les grands actes qu'il lui inspire, par la civilisation qu'il y développe.'

that France return to her pristine state, the example of the tenth leper (Luke xvii, 11-17).¹⁶ During the Revolution he did not believe that the *levée en masse* had saved France's honour, but that honour was saved by the rising in the Vendée: once one area had risen for its sovereign monarch, the crime of regicide was to a large extent expunged (although quite to what extent was a moot point). On the other hand, he had little time for the patriotism of the revolutionary politicians, when they criticized such controversial foreign military ventures abroad as the restoration of the Pope to Rome. (It is not hard to notice the inconsistency of Falloux's scorn on this point.). True to his age, Falloux applauded France's acquisition of foreign territory, as this too was part of her civilizing mission, and a worthy sequel to the crusades. His attitude towards the colonization of Algeria was tepid. He approved of it as a vehicle of Christianity, and thought that in the age of the railway, the conversion of this Islamic nation would be speedy.¹⁷ Falloux believed that France was 'no longer revolutionary, in the great majority she is conservative, but inclusively conservative of the revolution of 89.'¹⁸

To some extent this attitude derived from a sentimental admiration for overriding loyalty towards a master, but there was beneath this chivalric guise a cool objective attitude that narrow loyalties within politics were pernicious to the well-being of France. Needless to say, for a Catholic Legitimist like Falloux, the path was often precarious: one might be tempted to speculate whether Falloux deliberately avoided heading a ministry because he knew that he himself was linked in too many people's minds with one faction.

The tendency in France for regular revolutionary overthrows of government was no longer due to the momentary accident of stupidity or obstinacy, but was instead a consequence rendered inevitable by the lack of legitimacy that had previously safeguarded French political life. Even so, Falloux did admit that legitimate authority had in the past undermined itself through neglect of necessary reform. Nor should one be tempted into believing that the Legitimist wing represented by Falloux advocated repressive measures for their own sake), as they only provoked resentment that in turn fuelled revolution. The

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁷ Falloux, *Mémoires*, ii, 337.

¹⁸ Ibid., ii, 331: 'La France n'est plus révolutionnaire, elle est en grande majorité conservatrice, mais conservatrice de la révolution de 89, inclusivement.'

histories of the July Monarchy and the Second Empire are to a large extent witness to this trend. Nor did Falloux have much sympathy for the plans of the Duc des Cars for a pitchfork rebellion rising in the West and in the Midi. Indeed the Comte de Chambord himself rejected the expedient of a *coup d'état* for the same reason: legitimacy could only be safeguarded if the people freely desire it.¹⁹ The royalist Action Française in the later nineteenth century and twentieth century would take a different path and wholeheartedly advocate the use of force. Indeed repression, whether Orléanist or Bonapartist or indeed Republican, hindered progress rather than enhanced it.

As a young man, Falloux was greatly excited by the technological progress made in his own century, but he was equally certain that spiritual progress too could be made. In 1844 he wrote in the introduction to the *Vie de Saint Pie V*:

Let us not believe that in this century of discovered materials, the spirit devotes itself entirely to matter; let us not believe that the unprecedented development of industry brings forth only well-being in peace; that steam, sometimes enslaved as a steed, sometimes mistress of the wind and storm, will suffice for all the ambitions of man and that the rapidity so perilously gained, it consents to extract only the sterile pleasure of speed...²⁰

The cancer of nineteenth-century France was democracy, believed Falloux. He was a parliamentarian to his fingertips, but he was not a democrat. He was cynical about those who used democracy—or demagoguery—for their own political ends. Typically, Falloux ignored the huge intellectual legacy that lay behind republicanism (as the Republicans and Radicals from Karl Marx down were to ignore the intellectual legacy of Legitimism), as he did of his Legitimist opponents.²¹

¹⁹ Steven D. Kale, *Legitimism and the reconstruction of French Society 1852-1883* (Baton Rouge, 1992), p. 268.

²⁰ Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 199: 'Ne croyons pas qu'en ce siècle des matérielles découvertes, l'esprit se voue tout entier à la matière; ne croyons pas que du développement inouï de l'industrie ne naître que le bien-être dans le repos; que la vapeur, tantôt asservie comme un coursier, tantôt maîtresse du vent et de la tempête, suffira à toutes les ambitions de l'homme et que d'une rapidité si périlleusement obtenue, il consenti à ne retirer que le stérile plaisir de la vitesse...'

²¹ Kale, *Legitimism and the Reconstruction of France*, p. 310.

The Making of a Liberal Catholic 1834-1848

A visit to Rome 1834-5 - Madame Swetchine - St Pius V - Charity in Paris

WHEN FALLOUX first entered the salon world of liberal Catholicism, he had just missed the apostasy of the acknowledged leader of the liberal Catholic world, Félicité de Lamennais. But the ideas of the *Avenir* lingered on. The liberalism that the journal espoused, although tempered by Montalembert and Lacordaire, remained more or less intact: liberalism, and with it Christian civilization, is dead without the doctrines of the Catholic and the political as well as spiritual leadership of the Holy Father. Lamennais himself was ignored by Falloux, who was inspired instead by Montalembert and Lacordaire, who had remained loyal to the Holy See after submitting to papal censure: the Lamennais was almost alone in apostasizing. Political liberalism had to be subjugated to the rule of the Holy Catholic Church. Indeed it was pressure from Metternich that led Gregory XVI to condemn the movement in his encyclical *Mirari vos* in 1832.

A visit to Rome 1834-5

*'on vivait libre et heureux, sous le gouvernement paternel du pontife'*¹

In 1834 Falloux travelled to Rome, and was able to have an audience with Pope Gregory XVI. At this time, Rome was the capital of the Papal States, and there was a bucolic character about the city that would be lost within a few decades:

We arrived at Rome at the start of October, that is, at the moment when the last splendours of nature and of the countless pilgrimages presented Rome in her most favourable aspect. The sun having lost none of its lustre lit up every morning a multitude of highlanders, who had come in family groups to present their respects to the Eternal City; they filled the roads with their picturesque costumes, stopping before the Madonnas, singing in choir hymns accompanied by rustic instruments, gathered in a crowd at the Villa Borghese and there danced their *salterelli* amongst a group of foreigners and Romans which did not exclude either secular clergy or those in orders, maintaining in these joys, at the same time popular and pious, a solemn character which in this period shone throughout Rome without exception.²

¹ Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 100.

² *Ibid.*, i, 85-6: 'nous arrivâmes à Rome au commencement d'octobre, c'est-à-dire, au moment où les dernières splendeurs de la nature et d'innombrables pèlerinages présentaient Rome sous son aspect le plus favorable. Un soleil n'ayant rien perdu de son éclat éclairait chaque matin une multitude de montagnards, venus en famille présenter leurs devoirs à la Ville Éternelle; ils remplissaient les rues de leurs costumes pittoresques, s'arrêtaient devant les Madones, chantaient en chœur des hymnes accompagnées d'instruments rustiques, se rendaient en foule à la villa Borghèse et y dansaient leurs salterelles, au milieu d'un cercle d'étrangers et de Romains dont ne s'éloignaient ni le clergé ni les religieux, conservant à ces joies, en même temps populaires et pieuses, un caractère grave qui, à cette époque, brillait partout à Rome sans exception.'

Falloux believed that the city's carnival equalled the Holy Week ceremonies in popularity, and in the extent of the approval and co-operation of the ecclesiastical authorities.³ Falloux declared that 'It was one of the charms of Rome; the government was proud, for it attributed to its own indulgent protection the events of popular pastimes.'⁴ In the 1830s it had become fashionable for well-born Catholics to include Rome in the itinerary of their Grand Tour not so much as for her classical splendours, but for her early and medieval Christian sites, such as the catacombs.⁵ Lacordaire and Montalembert, following in the footsteps of their erstwhile master Lamennais, beat the trail to the Holy Father. Lacordaire wrote blissfully: 'I looked at the ancient walls of Rome, and I returned to my solitary room, happy at finding myself for a moment far from my century.'⁶

Falloux visited Rome again in 1839-40. During the same winter, the Comte de Chambord had attempted to establish his own court in Rome, until diplomatic pressure from the French government led him to abandon this idea and opt instead for the Schloss at Frohsdorf in the Austrian Empire. As Austin Gough notes, the fact that the Legitimist pretender intended to reside in the Eternal City was symptomatic and indeed partly responsible for the marriage between Legitimism and Ultramontane Catholicism, that was to endure to Leo XIII's *ralliement* to the Third Republic of the early 1890s and indeed beyond, in spite of that Pope's intentions.

In 1846, he welcomed the advent of Pius IX, as the liberal ideal of the ultramontanist school of Montalembert, and it must have been hoped that Pius would endorse the programme of the liberal ultramontanes unlike Gregory XVI, and he was encouraged by the new pontiff's promise of liberalizing the structure of the Papal States. The *Mémoires* remind the reader that the politically intransigent (although theologically innovative) 'Prisoner of the Vatican' of later years had been a source of hope and a guiding light, and then he remained a singular object of veneration even towards the end of his pontificate to those liberal ultramontanes whom men like Veuillot enjoyed scorning for their perceived disloyalty to the Holy

³ *Ibid.*, i, 97.

⁴ *Ibid.*, i, 98: 'C'était un des attrait de Rome; le gouvernement en était fier, car il attribuait à son indulgence protectrice la convenance des plaisirs populaires.'

⁵ A. Gough, *Paris and Rome: the Gallican Church and the Ultramontane campaign 1848-1853* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 62-3.

⁶ Gough, *Paris and Rome*, p. 63.

See.⁷ With some glee Falloux recorded Pope Gregory XVI's saying that circulated Rome on the future pontiff in the mid-1830s, 'In the Mastaï household, even the cat is liberal!'⁸ Like many others, Falloux overestimated the liberalism of the future Pius IX, and a casual comment by a pontiff renowned for his conservatism was not, by any means, conclusive proof of the true nature of the Cardinal's politics. The later intransigence of Pius IX was blamed on the discrediting of his liberal notions by the revolutionaries: the onus of blame was on them rather than on him. The Papal States were defended by Falloux: they were a place in which there flourished a true marriage between Catholicism and liberty. He saw that they did no actual harm.

Madame Swetchine

After his return from his travels, he met a woman whose influence on his interior life cannot be exaggerated. Sophie Swetchine (1782-1857) was a Russian convert to Catholicism, and settled in France in 1816 after her husband, General Swetchine, had been banished from St Petersburg by Tsar Alexander I. A major influence in her conversion was her friend and mentor Joseph de Maistre, who was at the time the Sardinian ambassador in St Petersburg. It was the person of the Pope especially that attracted her to the Catholic Church,⁹ and it was no accident that de Maistre espoused papal supremacy, and was in 1819 to publish his thoughts in *Du Pape*. Many religious-minded aristocrats were drawn to her salon in the Rue Saint-Dominique by the humble strength of her spiritual guidance.¹⁰ 'Madame Swetchine never preached...but she awakened, strengthened and inspired better sentiments so much that she made them charming and approachable through her own example.'¹¹ In her salon Alfred de Falloux met those men 'whose indulgent friendships made them my initiators to the serious Christian life.'¹² Such men included Montalembert and Lacordaire, who were both attaining celebrity by the mid-1830s: the former in the Chamber of Peers, and the latter in the pulpit of Notre-Dame. This group became very close-knit; to some

⁷ The liberal Catholics were not always successful: at the end of his life Montalembert referred to Pius IX as the 'idol of the Vatican'.

⁸ *Ibid.*, i, 89: 'Grégoire XVI l'avait remarqué et disait de lui avec son indulgent sourire: «*In casa Mastaï, anche il gatto e liberale!*» Dans la maison Mastaï, le chat lui-même est libéral.» Mastaï-Ferretti was the surname of the future Pope Pius IX.

⁹ M. V. Woodgate, *Madame Swetchine 1782-1857* (Dublin, 1948), p. 72.

¹⁰ After a brief spell of visiting the salon, the non-believer Sainte-Beuve was repelled for the same reason. (Woodgate, *Madame Swetchine*, p. 96.)

¹¹ Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 156: 'Madame Swetchine ne prêchait jamais...mais elle éveillait, elle fortifiait, elle inspirait les meilleurs sentiment, tant elle les rendait, par son exemple, séduisants et accessibles.'

extent the coterie was marred by what Philip Spencer described (justifiably) as 'excessive mutual admiration'¹³. None the less there was dissent within their ranks, and the friction between Lacordaire and Dupanloup is good example of this. At Madame Swetchine's salons, which were justly reputed to be less frivolous than those of Madame Récamier, the application of Christianity to social issues was discussed as well as the more heady realms of mysticism (although doubtless, Madame Swetchine would have recoiled from separating the two). Through his friendship with her, Falloux's ultramontanism developed: his devotion to the papacy owed far more to her than to the recently apostate Lamennais, although he himself stated that 'Père Lacordaire, M. de Montalembert and a little study of the French Revolution had made me ultramontane.'¹⁴ (The antecedents and the events themselves of the French Revolution had helped him conclude that the Gallican Church was not strong enough to withstand the onset of revolutionary forces.) After her death in 1857, Falloux published her letters which she had entrusted to him on her deathbed,¹⁵ which was not perhaps as happy an outcome as might be hoped, as her correspondence tended to be concerned with practical matters, with only the rarest spiritual gem to reward the persevering reader.

Falloux was aware of developments beyond the Rhine. His friends Albert de Rességuier and Montalembert were both drawn to Munich by the reputation of Döllinger, the great professor of Canon Law. In the winter of 1838, Falloux went to Munich. He was most impressed by the ardent faith of the lecturers: all of whom he noted were good friends of Montalembert.

During the July Monarchy, in spite of official restraints (especially in the area of education), liberal Catholicism was to enjoy its most optimistic period, before the controversies of later years soured its appeal. Falloux counted himself lucky that, disenfranchised young noble that he was, he was able to partake of this movement: 'The religious movement went from strength to strength day by day. God in education, the Church, at the head of civilization, the Pope at the head of the Church; this was the common

¹² Ibid., i, 156-7: 'je trouvais, en outre, des hommes que leur indulgente amitié fit aussi mes introducteurs dans la vie sérieusement chrétienne.'

¹³ P. Spencer, *Politics of Belief in Nineteenth-Century France* (London, 1954), p. 151.

¹⁴ Falloux, *Mémoires*, iii, 179: 'Le P. Lacordaire, M. de Montalembert et un peu d'étude sur la Révolution française m'avaient fait ultramontain...'

¹⁵ Woodgate, *Madame Swetchine*, p. 190.

aim of all those, who through patriotism as much through faith, wanted to make liberty Christian in order to keep it fertile and durable.’¹⁶

St Pius V

In 1844 Falloux made his own impact on the ultramontane Catholic world when his *Histoire de Saint Pie V* was published. He had colluded with Lacordaire with the idea of writing a life of a Dominican saint, in the wake of Lacordaire’s own *Mémoire pour le rétablissement des Frères prêcheurs*. Falloux was keener on writing a life that was more of a history than a mystical treatise.¹⁷ The result, in the words of the late twentieth-century scholar of ultramontanism Austin Gough, was ‘more ardent than critical’.¹⁸ This tendency was exacerbated by the ultramontanes’ ‘supreme contempt for the “pedantry” of protestant scholarship.’¹⁹ The attraction of St Pius V (1566-72) was that he had ‘occupied the chair of St Peter during one of the decisive episodes of modern history’,²⁰ namely when the *Catechism of the Council of Trent* had been formulated, and when Islam had been defeated at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571. ‘The popes did not hope only for the conquest of the Holy Places from the crusades. They prosecuted the triumph of civilization over barbarism and after reverses, the only too just fruit of discords, the preoccupation of the Holy See remained the same.’²¹ The parallels with the time in which Falloux was writing were clear. He feared a ‘new barbarism’,²² especially from the revolutionary Left, not only in France but also in Italy, under the auspices of Mazzini and Garibaldi. After a series of worldly and dissolute popes, the likes of Julius II and Leo X, St Pius V was a breath of fresh air: he stood squarely in the tradition of the great popes of the Middle Ages, such as Gregory VII and Innocent III, whose supremacy over Christendom had promised true liberty from despotism both in the West and in the Orient. That Christendom existed at all

¹⁶ Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 195-6: ‘Le mouvement religieux se développait et se fortifiait de jour en jour. Dieu dans l’éducation, l’Église à la tête de la civilisation, le pape à la tête de l’Église, tel était le programme commun de tous ceux qui, par le patriotisme autant que par la foi, voulaient rendre la liberté chrétienne, pour la maintenir féconde et durable.’

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, i, 197.

¹⁸ Gough, *Paris and Rome*, p. 65.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 197: ‘Ce grand pape avait occupé la chaire de saint Pierre à l’une des époques décisives de l’histoire moderne.’

²¹ *Ibid.*, i, 198: ‘Les papes n’avaient point envisagé dans les croisades la seule conquête des Lieux saints; ils poursuivaient le triomphe de la civilisation sur la barbarie et après les revers, trop juste fruit des discordes, la préoccupation du Saint-Siège demeura la même.’

²² *Ibid.*, i, 200.

was thanks mainly to the scholastic tradition and the missionary activity of the Roman Church in the Dark Ages, when the barbarian hordes from the North were conquered and converted by her: this was the 'definitive victory of civilization over barbarism.'²³

Falloux did not deny that 'Tolerance was not known during the centuries of faith and the sentiment that this new word represented was only perhaps placed among the virtues in a century of doubt.' But he did admit that, 'Today intolerance is meaningless; formerly, it had a legitimate aim, an aim that it often achieved.' Such comments did not impress his detractors on the Left. His treatment of the Inquisition, which he had praised for its 'zeal of charity that it used to cover the chasm into which entire populations were prone blindly to throw themselves'²⁴, did not persuade writers like Daniel Stern that Falloux was a moderate, but rather that he was a fanatical theocrat who had to be treated with utmost caution and distrust,²⁵ a wolf in sheep's clothing.

To the modern student, the concept of liberal Catholicism of this period can be frustratingly nebulous if not hypocritical. It is necessary, however, to note first that such aspirations were political rather than theological, and that the predominant tone of their polemic was liberty *for* the Church. Falloux laid out the priorities in the *Histoire de Saint Pie V*: 'liberty, the daughter of the Church, the mother of civilization.'²⁶ Falloux's advocacy of liberty of conscience derived from the conviction that little would be gained for the Church if other religions were outlawed or legally restricted. After all, he noted, it was in one of the countries where censorship was most restricted, France, that the works of the *encyclopédistes* were most widely diffused. In 1787, that is, during the reign of his hero Louis XVI, that freedom of religion was granted to Protestants. 'Liberté' was a word that occurred in the rhetoric of Falloux almost as often as it did in that of Montalembert, and although they never meant any liberty that was not subordinated completely to the interests of the Church (liberty that was contrary to the Church's interests was usually either 'despotism' or 'anarchy'), it was a very tempting conclusion for adversaries to reach that the so-called liberal Catholics were little more than sanctimonious, Jesuitical hypocrites.

²³Vicomte A. de Falloux, *Histoire de Saint Pie V, Pape de l'Ordre des Frères Prêcheurs* (3rd ed., Paris, 1858), p. 20: 'la victoire définitive de la civilisation sur la barbarie.'

²⁴Falloux, *Histoire de Saint Pie V*, p. 38: 'c'était le zèle de charité qu'elle employait à combler l'abîme dans lequel des populations en masse pouvaient se précipiter aveuglement.'

²⁵D. Stern, *Histoire de la Révolution de 1848* (Poitiers, 1985), p. 601: 'Il s'agit, avant toute chose, pour les croyants, de restaurer la foi, la théocratie; cela ne se peut faire qu'en renversant les pouvoirs athées.'

²⁶Falloux, *Histoire de Saint Pie V*, p. 19: 'la liberté, fille de l'Église et mère de la civilisation.'

An early dose of fame came after Falloux's carefully argued piece on the political, as opposed to the religious, causes of the massacre of St Bartholomew's Day 1572 in the presence of the Congrès scientifiques, which was meeting in Segré in 1843. Although his speech met with applause, he was named by some the 'apologiste de la Saint-Barthélemy'.²⁷ The speech was later to be used by Stern as a stick with which to beat Falloux in her portrait of him as the ruthless politician bent on establishing a theocracy whatever the human cost.

For the hopes of Falloux for future, his account in the *Mémoires* of his conversation with the Algerian resistance leader Abd-el-Kader in 1848 gives an insight into his hopes for the future relations between Christianity and the other great monotheistic religions. He was moved by the sympathy felt by the Muslim chieftain for Christianity. Falloux told him that 'we are the children of different mothers, but of the same father'.²⁸ Falloux was proud of the fact that the French respected Islam in Algeria. The Abd-el-Kader recognized the Pope's good feelings towards his people, and he said that he hoped that he would visit Rome on his voyage to Mecca. He hoped, rather improbably that he might be able to take part in a Council between the two great religions.²⁹ Even if the conversation was embellished over the years,³⁰ the testimony left by Falloux is more important perhaps for the student of liberal Catholicism than it would be for the student of the Algerian chieftain.

Charity in Paris

'...la meilleure manière de calmer et de régler une société instinctivement révolutionnaire, c'est de reconstituer une société franchement et solidement chrétien.'

*Falloux.*³¹

'Entre ces deux classes d'homme, une lutte se prépare: et cette lutte menace d'être terrible: d'un côté la puissance de l'or, de l'autre la puissance du désespoir. Entre ces armées ennemies, il faudrait nous précipiter, sinon pour empêcher, ou moins pour amortir le choc.'

*Frédéric Ozanam, 13 November 1836.*³²

The July Monarchy presented a novel challenge to the Legitimist nobility of Falloux's generation, for although the regime's attitude towards the Church was of passive hostility, this was a period in which the

²⁷ Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 214.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, i, 339: 'Nous sommes les enfants de deux mères différentes, mais du même père.'

²⁹ *Ibid.*, i, 345.

³⁰ For example, Falloux makes him state 'Je ne souhaite qu'une chose: le pèlerinage de la Mecque.' (*Ibid.*, i, 341.) Abd-el-Kader made his pilgrimage to Mecca in 1832.

³¹ *Ibid.*, i, 294.

Church faced up to new problems. The unprecedented problem of urban expansion and the challenge posed by the doctrines of utopian Socialists (although some were more 'utopian' than others) as well as by *laissez-faire* economics, concerned Falloux especially. In this period the initiative was most often taken by Catholic laymen, such as Frédéric Ozanam who founded the Society of St Vincent de Paul in 1833 and Armand de Melun who founded the *Œuvre de Saint-François Xavier* in 1840, rather than by the clergy³³ following the concern of the radical ultramontane journal the *Avenir*. Falloux indeed acknowledged his debt to Montalembert and Lacordaire and proudly referred to himself as their lieutenant: 'Father Lacordaire and M. de Montalembert were too fervent Christians not to be equally fervent in their interest in charity, but their lives were devoured by never-ending labours, and, without sparing either their persons or their devotion, they endeavoured to find assistants for such charitable works who could express their ardent faith and rousing speech, in daily acts.'³⁴ In these his charitable labours, Falloux did his apprenticeship as a liberal Catholic. He did not abandon his concern for the poor, although his circumscribed attitude towards the working class and his limited experience of social affairs went with a confidence in dealing with problems of poverty and unemployment that he was not strictly entitled to.

His attitude towards the poor was not of the poor-are-always-with-us variety. He recognized that even though the 'false poor' were the true enemies of the 'true poor',³⁵ as they were 'odiously blameworthy and one can never be too severe on them',³⁶ they none the less were deserving of charity: 'if the poor were irreproachable, they would become almost rich, but does not the solidarity of faults and of suffering lie everywhere, and is not this the same solidarity that must arouse our pity?'³⁷ If they were ungrateful, then the obligation of the benefactor was compounded: after all, Christ had died on the Cross for an ungrateful mankind: 'Did he [God] think, in sacrificing himself for us, that humanity would become invariably

³² Mgr l'Évêque d'Orléans, *Les Sociétés de Charité, Les Francs-Maçons et la Circulaire du 16 Octobre* (Paris, 1861), p. 25.

³³ There were, of course, exceptions to this general rule, such as the Abbé Bervenger, the founder of the *Œuvre de Saint-Nicholas*, with which Falloux had dealings. (Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 160.)

³⁴ *Ibid.*, i, 158, 'Le P. Lacordaire et M. de Montalembert étaient de trop fervents chrétiens pour n'être pas au même degré des chrétiens charitables, mais leur existence était dévorée par d'incessants travaux, et sans ménager ni leur personne, ni leur dévouement, ils s'appliquèrent à chercher des auxiliaires pour les œuvres qui devaient traduire, en actes quotidiens, leur foi ardente et leur parole enflammée.'

³⁵ *Ibid.*, iii, 16.

³⁶ *Ibid.*: 'Les faux pauvres sont odieusement coupables et l'on ne sera jamais trop sévère pour eux, car ils sont les pires ennemis des vrais pauvres.'

adoring and grateful? Even so, he gave it to humanity.³⁸ To complain of ingratitude was, of course, to ignore the beam that was in one's eye: 'Besides, how can we complain of ingratitude when on some occasions we have aided and abetted it?'³⁹ None the less Falloux's spiritual mentor Madame Swetchine was not willing to lose sight of theological orthodoxy when she wrote to Melun in 1849 that poverty was indeed of divine origin, although 'misery is partly the result of vice, or at least from stubbornness of heart.'⁴⁰

The focus of many of these charitable efforts was the city of Paris. Under the Restoration the city was still as insalubrious as it had been during the *ancien régime*, even if its population was starting to increase:

We did not realize the political wisdom of rendering impossible, by means of concerted efforts, a sudden increase in the working class of Paris. We were struck by the apathy of public works and the gloomy appearance of Paris. The Place Louis XV remained a huge sewer, the Champs-Élysées a deserted meadow, the Place de Carrousel from where one could scarcely see one or two windows of the Louvre, was filled with small roads, hovels, miserable houses...⁴¹

Under the July Monarchy conditions worsened. The population of Paris increased from about 785,000 in 1831 to over a million on the eve of the February Revolution of 1848.⁴² Overcrowding in the slums led to a higher death rate as a result of poor hygiene (especially in the wake of the first cholera epidemic of 1832, although this clearly did not deter further immigration from the provinces as the figures above demonstrate), as well as crime and prostitution. In such a setting, 'a huge sewer', Christianity had little chance to flourish, but was withering away. The normal rituals of the Christian life cycle were either

³⁷ Ibid., iii, 17: 'Assurément, si les pauvres étaient irréprochables, ils deviendraient presque des riches, mais la solidarité des défauts et des souffrances n'existe-t-elle pas partout et n'est-ce pas cette solidarité même qui doit éveiller notre pitié?'

³⁸ Ibid.: 'A-t-il pensé, en s'immolant pour nous, que l'humanité deviendrait invariablement adoratrice et reconnaissante? Et cependant il s'est donné à elle.'

³⁹ Ibid.: 'Comment, d'ailleurs, se plaindre de l'ingratitude, en quelque occasion que nous ayons affaire à elle?'

⁴⁰ Falloux, *Lettres de Madame Swetchine*, ii, 225: Mme Swetchine to Armand de Melun, 12 July 1849, 'La pauvreté, comme toutes les inégalités, me paraît d'institution divine, tandis que la misère est d'une part le produit du vice, ou bien de l'autre l'effet de la dureté.'

⁴¹ Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 30: 'Nous ne nous rendions pas compte de la prudence politique qui interdisait de provoquer à Paris, par des entreprises multipliées, un subit accroissement de la population ouvrière, mais nous étions frappés de la langueur des travaux publics et de l'aspect attristé qu'offrait Paris. La place Louis XV restait un vaste cloaque, les Champs-Élysées une promenade déserte; la place du Carrousel, d'où l'on apercevait à peine une ou deux fenêtres du Louvre, était obstruée de petites rues, de baraques, de misérables maisons...' The Place de la Concorde (as the Place Louis XV was renamed after the 1830 Revolution) was made more salubrious during the July Monarchy: the statues of the towns and rivers were added, and in 1836 the obelisk was erected.

too expensive or irrelevant, or most probably both for many of the dwellers of Paris's slums: one third of all births were illegitimate, leading all too often to infanticide or abandonment.⁴³

The cradle where Falloux's interest in social charity was nurtured was the salon of Madame Swetchine, 'my school of charity'.⁴⁴ Here he met Armand, Vicomte de Melun (1807-77). A 'social Catholic', radical for the time, Melun's central concern was to make a Catholic education available to as many as possible: this was the surest way of saving Christian civilization from revolution and the souls of the poor from despair. To this end, he founded the *Œuvre de Saint-François-Xavier* in 1840. The *œuvre's* first years were marked by an astonishing growth throughout Paris: 10,000 members in 1844, 15,000 two years later in 1846.⁴⁵ (As the population of Paris had risen to about one million on the eve of the February Revolution, therefore about 1.5 per cent of the population belonged to the *œuvre*.)

The terrible, Dantesque, conditions within the poorest areas of Paris did not arouse just pity among the social and religious élites; it inspired fear. Paris was famously regarded as a new Babylon, which bred revolt and revolution. For Legitimists it was a place to be despised as it had destroyed the reigns of two legitimate monarchs, for the Orléanists it was a place to be feared as there were too many warnings of the political dissatisfaction of the proletariat, throughout the 1830s. The misery of the working classes was to a very large extent the responsibility if not the fault of the ruling classes: 'when suffering and immorality are rife among the lower classes, the responsibility is with the class above'⁴⁶—elsewhere Falloux was even more explicit: 'Kings and even Popes, as temporal sovereigns have too often delayed necessary reforms; they have paid for this delay by revolution.'⁴⁷ The economic doctrine of *laissez-faire*, sponsored under the Orléanist regime was to a large extent to blame. His comments on this ethos of the July Monarchy are as trenchant and as pithy as anything Marx ever wrote on the same subject, even if Falloux's prose was more

⁴² H. A. C. Collingham, *The July Monarchy: A Political History of France 1830-1848* (London, 1988), p. 332.

⁴³ Collingham, *The July Monarchy*, p. 332.

⁴⁴ Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 156: 'Mon école de charité fut la maison de madame Swetchine.'

⁴⁵ D'Andigné, *Un Apôtre de la Charité*, p. 150, and pp. 178-9.

⁴⁶ Falloux, *Dix Ans d'Agriculture* (Paris, [1863]), *Librairie Agricole de la Maison Rustique*, p. 41: 'Telle class supérieure, telle classe inférieure quand le souffrance et l'immoralité sont en bas la responsabilité est en haut.'

⁴⁷ Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 159, 'Les rois et les papes même, en tant que souverains temporels, ont trop ajourné des réformes nécessaires; ils ont payé cet ajournement par des révolutions.'

elegant.⁴⁸ But it is important to remember Collingham's comment on this sort of Legitimist criticism of the July Monarchy: 'It was easier to attack a society whose pinnacle was not sacred.'⁴⁹ In any case Falloux was very keen to emphasize the contribution made by fellow Legitimists. 'The Legitimist party—and one cannot at any rate deny it this merit—brought the largest group into the *œuvres* which were then being established. Excluded from politics, and excluding itself, it wanted to belie the reproach of the *émigration à l'intérieur* that it was not spared.'⁵⁰

Material benefit was only one fruit of the charitable efforts of the social Catholics: 'Religion appears to have but one mission: to secure happiness to our souls in the other world; but, at the same time, it is the only force capable of consolidating the happiness of society in this.'⁵¹ In the spirit of the great seventeenth-century saint, St Vincent de Paul, Falloux admitted that charity conferred a greater spiritual grace on the benefactor than on the recipient: 'in this reciprocal trade, it is perhaps the rich who learn and gain the most.'⁵² This attitude towards the poor did not entail that the *œuvres* were anything other than paternalist. One thing that Falloux gained was a deepened sympathy, if not a deepened knowledge, of the conditions in which the majority of the urban population lived:

When one has always had shelter, a hearth, and some bread, one is no position to judge the poor. One has to witness the misery from nearby to be able properly to take stock of, to be able properly to understand the pretexts for irritation, or the heroism of resigned meekness. Once the spirit has turned towards such issues, once the eyes have set upon such sufferings, once the mind has cogitated upon the loop-holes in the laws, one no longer wants, one is no longer able, to pause half-way on the path.⁵³

But if Falloux refused 'to pause half-way on the path', he did not go as far as Melun in advocating state intervention to remedy the worst effects of poverty. As the social consequences of the complete disappearance of Christianity from the working-class *faubourgs* were feared to be dire, it was believed

⁴⁸ Cf. Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 158-9: 'Le gouvernement de Juillet...s'appuyait exclusivement sur qu'on nommait les classes moyennes' with Marx, *The Class Struggles in France* (ed. D. Fernbach, Harmondsworth, 1973), p. 38: 'The July Monarchy was nothing more than a joint-stock company for the exploitation of France's national wealth.'

⁴⁹ Collingham, *The July Monarchy*, p. 307.

⁵⁰ Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 158: 'Le parti légitimiste, on ne peut lui contester ce mérite, apporta le plus nombreux contingent aux œuvres qui se fondèrent alors. Exclu des emplois politiques et s'en excluant lui-même, il voulut faire mentir le reproche d'émigration à l'intérieur qu'on ne lui épargnait pas.'

⁵¹ Falloux, *Augustin Cochin* (trans. A. Craven, London, 1877), p. 40.

⁵² Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 160: 'Dans ce commerce réciproque, ce sont peut-être les riches qui apprennent et qui gagnent le plus.'

⁵³ *Ibid.*: 'Quand on a toujours eu un abri, un foyer et du pain, on ne peut pas juger les pauvres. Il faut voir de près la misère pour s'en bien rendre compte, pour bien comprendre toutes les excuses de l'irritation ou tout l'héroïsme de la douceur résignée. L'esprit une fois tourné vers de telles questions, les yeux une fois

charity had to transform itself if it was to have any lasting effect.⁵⁴ The old-fashioned method of individual charity, in which a worker (or more often a farm-hand intending to set off to the city to make his fortune) was sponsored by a paternalist benefactor was perceived by Falloux as laudatory but inadequate to the needs of the day. To patronize a single needy person would not guarantee his safety within the city, nor would it prevent him from feeling resentful towards the status quo.⁵⁵ Furthermore, the effect on the benefactor was minimal 'Yes, you dry your tears in secret, you have not courted the vain pleasure of ostentation, and you have little taste for seeing your name in a newspaper. This is all well and good, but is it enough?'⁵⁶

But social Catholics were also aware that alternative solutions to the problem of urban misery were being mooted. The growth of Socialist and Utopian doctrines had been acknowledged in the salon of Mme Swetchine, and was discussed extensively. So too Lacordaire had refuted Fourier, Proudhon and other Socialist and Utopian thinkers from the pulpit of Notre Dame in one of his fashionable course of Lenten sermons.⁵⁷ But when Falloux said that the 'charitable apostolate' was not a 'political apostolate', he meant that the *œuvres* avoided giving offence to the Orléanist government: he did not dignify the ideas of the left with the adjective 'politique'.⁵⁸

Participation in an *œuvre* involved 'meeting on a fixed day, leaving behind one's private concerns, be it business or pleasure, to recite a communal prayer, to listen to those who speak of evils of which you had hitherto been ignorant, to reveal those that are known to you, to search for the most useful remedy for the greatest number of ills.'⁵⁹ So his inspections of the *Cœuvre de Saint-Nicholas*, a 'huge technical boarding

fixés sur de telles souffrances, l'examen une fois entamé sur de tels vides dans les lois, on ne veut plus, on ne peut plus s'arrêter à moitié chemin.'

⁵⁴ Kale, *Legitimism and the Reconstruction of France*, p. 152.

⁵⁵ Falloux, *Souvenirs de Charité* (Tours, 1858), p. 14.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 6: 'oui, vous séchez des larmes en secret, vous n'avez point recherché le vain plaisir de l'ostentation, et vous n'en goûtez point à voir votre nom figurer dans un journal. Tout cela est vrai, tout cela est beau, mais cela est-il suffisant?'

⁵⁷ Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 310; S. D. Kale, *Legitimism and the Reconstruction of France, 1852-1883* (Baton Rouge, 1992) p. 139; see also the discussion on these ideas in Mme Swetchine's letters to Melun, in Falloux's edition of *Lettres de Madame Swetchine* 2 vols (Paris, 1862), vol. ii, 157-227.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, i, 163: 'sans mêler aucun apostolat politique à l'apostolat charitable.'

⁵⁹ Falloux, *Souvenirs de Charité*, pp. 11-12: 'Qu'est-ce qu'entrer dans une œuvre? C'est se réunir à jour fixe, affaire ou plaisir cessant, réciter une courte prière en commun, écouter ceux qui parlent des maux que vous ignorez, révéler ceux qui vous sont connus, rechercher le remède applicable au plus grand nombre des blessures...'

school for working-class children',⁶⁰ founded by the Abbé Bervenger, gave him some experience of guiding education before he had the chance to implement his *magnum opus* of 1850. The declared aims of the *œuvre* soon bore fruit: 'to force the children to pay greater attention to their work, and to instil into them more goodwill towards the wealthy classes; to familiarize the rich with the contact, the needs, the courage and often the virtue of the poorer classes.'⁶¹

Falloux recalled his apprenticeship with the *Œuvre*:

It was there that I made my oratorical début. I had never frequented any public meeting; I had never offered a word in public and I began my apprenticeship, on a Sunday evening from the bench of the *œuvre* of the parishes of Paris, by telling the story of St John of God, of Blessed Jean Baptiste de La Salle, of St Zita and the main servants of mankind⁶² in the Name of Christ and for the love of Him to five or six hundred workers, who were very attentive and very easily touched.⁶³

His interest in Jean-Baptiste de La Salle (1651-1719), the founder of the Brothers of Christian Schools, was great. De La Salle, as his surname suggests, was of high birth, but his apostolate was among the poor.⁶⁴ The Brothers of Christian Schools was the first Catholic congregation of male teachers and it was founded specifically for the education of working class children, and within the classroom strict equality was observed among pupils. The Schools had a special place in Falloux's heart, and he placed especial trust in their activity for reinvigorating France: '...if a century, if a country, particularly needs the Christian Schools, it is our century and our country.'⁶⁵

His experiences were to come in useful in later years when he was Minister of Public Instruction, as like Melun he had perceived that there was a need not only for a Christian, Catholic, education for the majority of the population, but also there was his fear of what Socialist doctrine might do in encouraging

⁶⁰ Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 160: 'un vaste pensionnat professionnel pour les enfants de la classe ouvrière.'

⁶¹ Ibid.: 'imposer aux enfants plus d'attention au travail, leur inspirer plus de bienveillance envers les classes riches; familiariser les riches avec le contact, les besoins, le courage et souvent la vertu des classes indigentes.'

⁶² St John of God (1495-1550) was a peddler. In 1886, the year of Falloux's death, Pope Leo XIII declared him heavenly patron of hospitals and the sick. St Jean Baptiste de La Salle (1651-1719) was the founder of the Christian Brothers of Education - he was canonized in 1900. St Zita (c. 1215-72) is the patroness of domestic servants. Falloux later compiled his talks given under the auspices of the *Œuvre de Saint-François-Xavier* in the 1840s in his *Souvenirs de Charité* (Tours, 1858). Another of these 'main servants of mankind' included in the *Souvenirs de Charité* is the Marquise de Pastoret (1765-1843).

⁶³ Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 161-2, 'C'est là que je fis mes débuts oratoires. Je n'avais jamais hanté aucune parlotte; je n'avais jamais proféré un mot en public et je commençai mon apprentissage en racontant, le dimanche soir, du banc d'œuvre des paroisses de Paris à cinq ou six ouvriers très attentifs, très facilement émus, l'histoire de saint Jean de Dieu, du bienheureux la Salle, de sainte Zite et des principaux serviteurs de l'humanité, au nom du Christ et pour l'amour de lui.'

⁶⁴ See W. J. Battersby, *St John Baptist de La Salle* (London, 1957).

revolt. His acquaintance with the working class, however superficial, led him to believe that most of its members were well intentioned, if easily led. It does not seem to have occurred to him that those to whom he spoke at such meetings described above were either already involved in Church matters, or had just arrived from the provinces, as the naïveté of his listeners seems to suggest. But their behaviour can only have reinforced his conviction that the great majority of Frenchmen were conservative and deferential towards the upper classes. If his benevolence towards the poor can be shown to have been flawed in its perceptions, it was nonetheless preferable to the rebarbative attitudes towards the 'the vile multitude' that were prevalent in some circles of 'liberal' freethinkers of the time, such as Thiers.

It is necessary also to bear in mind a serious allegation against Falloux. This allegation, first levelled by Eugène Veuillot, the brother of Falloux's arch-enemy Louis Veuillot, in his critique of the *Mémoires*, that Falloux exaggerated his role in order to enhance his reputation as a good Catholic, is easily refuted, as there is documentary evidence, amid Falloux's private correspondence of the 1840s,⁶⁶ but it is necessary to remember that until his election to the Chamber of Deputies 1846, Falloux did not spend most of his time in Paris. In any case, the internal evidence of the *Mémoires* suggests that Falloux did not in fact exaggerate his involvement in urban charity, as he only states in one place what explicitly he undertook for charity.⁶⁷ But its seriousness can be understood by the extent to which twentieth-century historians have accepted this allegation, most notably McKay in the early 1930s.⁶⁸

In later years, Falloux was disdainful towards the *Œuvre des Cercles des Ouvriers Catholiques* organized by Albert de Mun in the 1870s. In the *Mémoires*, his criticism was implicit rather than explicit, but it is obvious about whom he was writing:

At the time in which I am writing, Catholics are pursuing the same aim, but some with a different method. From 1830 to 1848, neither devotion nor energy was lacking, but less faith was put in the efficacy of noisy demonstrations, or of ostentation, however well intentioned. The standard of charity was not hid away, but those who enlisted under it were more anxious to avoid compromising it rather than themselves.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Comte A. de Falloux, 'Discours prononcé à la distribution des prix des Écoles Chrétiennes d'Angers, 20 août' (1851), *Discours et Mélanges Politiques* (2 vols, Paris, 1882), i, 375.

⁶⁶ As has been shown by R. Rancœur ('Falloux de 1835 à 1848', J Gadrille (ed.) *Les Catholiques libéraux au XIX^e siècle: Actes du Colloque international d'histoire religieuse de Grenoble des 30 septembre – 3 octobre 1971* (Grenoble, 1974), 319.

⁶⁷ See Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 161-2: his involvement with the *Œuvre de Saint-François Xavier*.

⁶⁸ D. C. McKay, *The National Workshops: A Study of the French Revolution of 1848* (Harvard, 1961 ed.), p. 107: '[Falloux's] long interest in charitable works, the exact character of which remains obscure.'

⁶⁹ Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 162: 'A l'heure où j'écris, les catholiques poursuivent le même but, mais quelques-uns avec une méthode différente. De 1830 à 1848, on ne manquait ni de dévouement ni d'énergie, seulement on croyait moins qu'aujourd'hui à l'efficacité des démonstrations bruyantes et de l'ostentation

Falloux believed that 'among the good fruit that they harvest more today, more resulted from the seeds and the methods of the old days.'⁷⁰ His impatience towards de Mun was coloured by the younger man's over-reverential and irresponsible attitude towards the Comte de Chambord who was thought to be the living embodiment of the Counter-Revolution,⁷¹ as he was by the *Cercle*.

Falloux's interest in relieving spiritual, and material, misery by the agency of the *œuvres* does demonstrate a sincere attachment to the plight of the poor, at a time when no standards or expectations applied to a man of his background in dealing with the poor. It thus shows a more attractive side to his character than one would expect from the nimble schemer who frequented the corridors of power during the Second Republic and became the *éminence grise* of the early 1870s. In the realm of social affairs, Falloux could be both pragmatic and idealistic without moral or political compromise.

bien intentionnée; on ne cachait pas le drapeau de la charité, mais on craignait de le compromettre sans de se compromettre soi-même.'

⁷⁰ Ibid., i, 163: 'parmi les bons fruits que l'on récolte encore aujourd'hui, beaucoup proviennent des semences et des procédés d'autrefois.'

⁷¹ M. L. Brown, *The Comte de Chambord: the Third Republic's Uncompromising King* (Durham, N.C., 1967), p. 165. For Falloux's attitudes towards the 'Counter-Revolution', see his 'De la Contre-Révolution' (1878), *Discours et Mélanges Politiques* (Paris, 1882), ii, 363-98. For Mun, see P. Levillain, *Albert de Mun: Catholicisme français et Catholicisme romaine, du syllabus au ralliement* (Rome, 1983).

The Second Republic (1) 1848-1849

First involvement in political life 1842-1848 - The February Revolution and the Early Days of the Second Republic - The Church under the Second Republic - The National Workshops, April-June 1848 - The June Days - The Government under Cavaignac - The Presidency of Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte - The Peril of the Holy See - The Ney Letter - The loi Falloux

First involvement in political life 1842-1848

IN 1842 FALLOUX decided to renege on his abstention from active political participation in the July Monarchy and stand for a seat in the Chamber of Deputies: he stood as a candidate for Segré in the general election of 10 July 1842. The seat was won by a small town doctor, M. Journeaux. But in 1846, Falloux was elected to the same seat with a majority of four votes. This was the period of François Guizot's supremacy, and his criticisms of Guizot, that he was a man of great private integrity, but in public too indulgent towards venality, were customary enough. With Guizot, he was struck by the 'singular contrast that existed between the usual abundance of his language and the narrow radius of his politics.'¹ The chief hallmark of the narrow politics of Guizot was his 'too systematic'² rejection of innovation, even if it was something as trivial and harmless as postal reform.

The February Revolution and the early days of the Second Republic

Falloux believed that the narrow social bias favoured during the July Monarchy did contribute to social tensions within France.³ But the regime's breakdown was perceived in terms that were political rather than social. The corollary of this was that the February Revolution did not fit into any preconceived scheme of history, as it did with Marx, for example: 'an effect out of proportion to its cause',⁴ it was the result of the weakness of King Louis-Philippe at the crucial moment,⁵ who had never foreseen the desertion and 'ingratitude'⁶ of the National Guard, who had helped him to power in 1830,⁷ even though throughout his

¹ Comte A. de Falloux, *Mémoires d'un Royaliste* (3 vols, Paris, 1925), i, 229: 'le singulier contraste qui existait entre l'habituelle ampleur de son langage et l'étroit rayon de sa politique.'

² *Ibid.*, i, 225.

³ *Ibid.*, i, 293-4: 'M. Guizot et M. Thiers, inconciliables sur tant de questions, avaient un point commun, c'était la préoccupation, à peu près exclusive, des intérêts de la classe moyenne et de son avancement politique.'

⁴ *Ibid.*, i, 235: 'La Révolution de Février a été un effet hors de proportion avec sa cause.'

⁵ *Ibid.*, i, 236.

⁶ *Ibid.*, i, 238.

⁷ *Ibid.*, i, 237.

life he had faced other dangers with calm courage.⁸ The regime was also undermined by the shortsighted personal rivalry between Guizot and Thiers, who were both too proud to join forces in a coalition that might have preserved the regime.⁹ The Revolution of February thus interrupted the rule of law, and the peaceful path of progress 'which could have accomplished itself, not without effort, but without turmoil. Effort is the duty and honour of the country as it is of the individual; brusque and violent shocks, in other words, revolutions, are a formidable lottery, a lottery that is often fatal to those who gamble with it, and often just as fatal to those who do not.'¹⁰ Although he was critical of the July Monarchy, and paid homage to the Comte de Chambord, Falloux recognized at least the importance of peaceful longevity in legitimizing a regime: what he did not admit was the role of prominent Legitimists in undermining the stability of the regime.

The February Revolution took Falloux by surprise—'un clin d'œil'¹¹—although he maintained that the breakdown of the July Monarchy was not as much a shock to him as it had been to others: in the *Mémoires* he emphasized Thiers's complacency on 23 February:

I said to M. Thiers, 'Are you not frightened by all we have just seen and heard?'

'No, not at all!'

'But this much resembles the eve of a revolution!'

He shrugged his shoulders cheerfully and answered me with the sincerest possible security:

'A revolution! A revolution! I see clearly that you are a stranger to government and that you do not know the forces at its disposal. I know them myself: they are ten times superior to any possible disturbance. With some thousands of men, under the hand of my friend Marshal Bugeaud, I can answer for everything. Please pardon it, my dear Monsieur de Falloux, if I speak to you with a frankness that will not wound you, but remember that the Restoration only died from foolishness, and I guarantee that we will not die as she did. The National Guard is going to teach Guizot a fine lesson. The king has a quick ear, he will hear reason, and will yield before it is too late.'¹²

⁸ *Ibid.*, i, 236: for example the many attempts on his life.

⁹ *Ibid.*, i, 239.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, i, 235: '...qui se seraient accomplis, non sans efforts, mais sans secousse. L'effort, c'est le devoir, c'est l'honneur du pays comme de l'individu; les secousses brusques et violentes, c'est-à-dire les révolutions, sont une loterie redoutable, loterie souvent funeste à ceux qui y mettent leur enjeu, souvent aussi ruineuse pour ceux mêmes qui n'y mettent rien.'

¹¹ *Ibid.*, i, 234.

¹² *Ibid.*, i, 246: '...je dis à M. Thiers: « N'êtes-vous pas effrayé de tout ce que nous venons de voir et d'entendre? — Non, pas du tout! — Cependant, ceci ressemble bien à la veille d'une révolution! » Il haussa gaiement les épaules et me répondit avec l'accent de la plus franche sécurité: « Une révolution! Une révolution! On voit bien que vous êtes étranger au gouvernement et que vous ne connaissez pas ses forces. Moi je les connais; elles sont dix fois supérieures à toute émeute possible. Avec quelques milliers d'hommes, sous la main de mon ami le maréchal Bugeaud, je répondrais de tout. Tenez, mon cher Monsieur de Falloux, pardonnez-moi de vous le dire avec une franchise qui ne peut vous blesser, la Restauration n'est morte que de niaiserie, et je vous garantis que nous ne mourrons pas comme elle. La garde nationale va donner une bonne leçon à Guizot. Le roi a l'oreille fine, il entendra raison et cédera à temps. »'

That evening shots were fired—no one ever discovered by whom—in the Boulevard des Capucines, and Paris was once again at the mercy of the revolutionary crowd. But the following day, the 24 February, Marshal Bugeaud, having received no orders to the contrary, kept his troops waiting on the Place de la Concorde, and the attempted regency of the Duchesse d'Orléans was aborted by the invasion of the Assembly. The end of the monarchy's desperate hope for survival was helped along, so Falloux thought,¹³ by Lamartine's sudden advocacy of a Republic. That night Falloux stayed with his family at his house on the Rue du Bac: '...the tumult did not stop spreading throughout Paris. That evening was very disturbed. The *Marseillaise* made its habitual appearance, as it always does in such situations; songs and sinister cries mingled together. Rifle shots and petards resounded joyfully throughout almost the whole night. It was clear that the life of the Provisional Government would not be easy and that it would be outflanked if it was not restrained [in governing].'¹⁴

Falloux, not untypically, recognized that the Republic was the only viable political reality at least for the short term; and so it was possible at least to begin anew. He did yield, albeit briefly, to the optimism of the time, but in his own fashion: 'Everybody at last was gaining from the defence and rescue of the common fundamental principles of social order, and in that period, this was indeed considered something.'¹⁵ Such common fundamental principles of social order did not, needless to say, include the right to work or any threat upon the existing social order, but rather implied the maintenance of religion and property. But in spite of the mutual feelings of goodwill exchanged especially between the Republicans and the Church, this did not prevent Falloux from feeling some anxiety about the future. He opined to the Comte de Quatrebarbes and the Comte de Caqueray¹⁶ that 'we would find ourselves in the presence of the beginning of terror which we should resist from the very first day; if, by a retreat more or less disguised, the menace would win the first success and violence win civil legitimacy, electoral freedom would be the

¹³ Ibid., i, 248.

¹⁴ Ibid., i, 251: '...l'agitation ne tarda point à se répandre dans Paris. La soirée fut très tumultueuse. La *Marseillaise* fit son apparition habituelle en pareil cas; des chants et des cris sinistres s'y mêlèrent. Des coups de fusil, des pétards retentirent presque toute la nuit en signe de joie. Il était évident que la vie du gouvernement provisoire ne serait pas douce et qu'il serait débordé s'il n'était pas contenu.'

¹⁵ Ibid., i, 260: 'Tout le monde enfin y a gagné de défendre et de sauver en commun les principes fondamentaux de l'ordre social, et, à cette époque, cela passait pour quelque chose.'

¹⁶ Théodore, Comte de Quatrebarbes, like Falloux, was from the West of France. Falloux memorably summed up his character: 'M. de Quatrebarbes était un chevalier du treizième siècle, complété par un

first to be doomed, and many other liberties would follow in its wake.’¹⁷ It was thus vital that a ‘sensible and serious Republic’¹⁸ be established, and preferably therefore one that was not in the hands of republicans. In a revealing passage, Falloux gave an apologia for both the actions of the monarchists and for any attack that he was to give the republicans:

If the Republic had been conservative and Christian, we would have had kept our feelings of sadness deep within our hearts, but we remained, under the Republic, the most devoted servants of liberty. I can understand the need of republicans to exonerate themselves by distorting our intentions and acts. I understand rather less the need for monarchists to deny or to slander their conduct of that period. In every case, I am writing more for them than for myself, and the pattern of these *Mémoires* will only be the day-by-day display of our communal loyalty.¹⁹

This passage is revealing indeed: Falloux did not intend to exculpate himself before the republicans, and as he was writing for monarchists of a later generation, he could relax, as it were, in recalling the behaviour of his left-wing adversaries: indeed it was a necessity to portray the republicans in the blackest possible terms, as crypto-anarchists and ‘demagogues’ if he was to be believed that his role and that of others in the Second Republic had been honourable and necessary. There is little evidence in the *Mémoires* that his contact with republicans had any effect in corrupting his Legitimism: from his account, it seems that his involvement in parliamentary affairs reinforced prejudices rather than demolished them. (Some liberals, Montalembert among them, regretted the passing of the July Monarchy, and found it harder to rally speedily to the Republic.) In Falloux’s view, the ‘monarchists’ (that is, presumably, both the Legitimists and the Orléanists) were the only politicians who had the interests of the country at heart; indeed for him, the majority of France was monarchist, and the republicans were a small, power hungry minority: ‘The monarchists had entered loyally in the endeavour of the Republic, because in the immediate aftermath of 24

homme d’esprit du dix-neuvième.’ (Ibid., i, 262.) Anatole, Comte de Caqueray was the eldest son of the Comte de Caqueray who had been the deputy for Maine-et-Loire (Ibid., i, 271).

¹⁷ Ibid., i, 272: ‘je soutins que nous nous trouvions en face d’un commencement de terreur auquel il fallait résister dès le premier jour, que si, par une retraite plus ou moins déguisée, la menace obtenait un premier succès et la violence droit de cité, c’en était fait de la liberté électorale d’abord et de beaucoup d’autres libertés ensuite.’

¹⁸ Ibid., i, 291: ‘une république sensée et sérieuse.’

¹⁹ Ibid., i, 269: ‘Si la République eût été conservatrice et chrétienne, nous eussions gardé au fond de nos coeurs des affections contrisées, mais nous fussions demeurés, sous la République, les plus dévoués serviteurs de la liberté. Je comprends l’intérêt des républicains à s’exonérer eux-mêmes en dénaturant nos intentions ou nos actes. Je comprends moins l’intérêt des hommes monarchiques à renier ou à calomnier leur conduite de cette époque. En tout cas, j’écris pour eux plus que pour moi, et la suite de ces mémoires, ne sera que l’exposé, jour par jour, de notre commune loyauté.’

February, nothing else was possible; furthermore, if the monarchists had behaved any differently, they would have, from their own hands, reduced the value of the experience.²⁰

There was some urgency in establishing a regime that espoused both Christianity and Liberty: the overtures towards the Legitimist party in the *Moniteur* by the Red Ledru-Rollin and Louis Blanc were further encouragement that an equitable arrangement could be found.²¹

The *républicains de lendemain* have gained a bad reputation from many historians of the Second Republic, eager to point out their cynical desire for power. Falloux, on the other hand, preferred to define the *républicains du lendemain* as 'sincerely resigned monarchists'.²² Such sincere resignation was conditional on the maintenance of order. In any case, Falloux believed that the conservative result of the elections to the Constituent Assembly by universal suffrage on 23 April 1848, was a faithful representation of France's true political complexion: 'resignation to the Republic, worry without panic, a well-considered desire to struggle against every excess.'²³ France would have to be protected from such excesses that the republicans might have up their sleeves. Falloux would not have to wait long before he saw what he considered to be irrefutable evidence of this.

On returning to the Constituent Assembly for its first sitting on 4 May 1848, Falloux was astonished by the crass sentimentality of the republican deputies. The attempt by extreme republicans to recreate the atmosphere of 1793 did not impress him any more than it did Tocqueville.²⁴ The memory of Robespierre did not find an admirer in him, especially in the attempts to create a 'republican' form of dress: 'Only the members of the Provisional Government donned this odious and ridiculous costume. Upon their first appearance before the Assembly the impression was so strong that this sinister revival was never

²⁰ Ibid., ii, 172: 'Les hommes monarchiques étaient entrés loyalement dans l'essai de la République, d'abord, parce qu'au lendemain du Vingt-Quatre Février, rien d'autre n'était possible, et ensuite, parce que si les hommes monarchiques avaient eu une conduite, ils auraient, de leurs propres mains, diminué la valeur de l'expérience.'

²¹ Ibid., i, 252.

²² Ibid., i, 301: 'les monarchistes sincèrement résignés'.

²³ Ibid., i, 284: 'résignation à la république; inquiétude sans panique; volonté réfléchie de lutter avec patience contre tous les excès.'

²⁴ A. de Tocqueville, *Recollections: The French revolution of 1848* (trans. G. Lawrence, eds J. P. Mayer and A. P. Kerr, New Brunswick, 1987), p. 100.

enforced.²⁵ These republicans, according to Falloux, had no intuitive feeling for the dignity of the Assembly. But their lack of dignity was to result in more than an embarrassing sartorial faux pas: the implication was that those political animals that does not belong in an Assembly must be partisan to other political methods. The rawness of the members meant that true parliamentary dignity was being debased by mere demagoguery, whose real leaders were, in Falloux's view, no friends of the Assembly: '...the demagogic party was thinking less of a pacific and regular organization than of preparing, as soon as possible, for an assault against the Assembly and against every civilized Republic.'²⁶ Falloux's phrase 'every civilized republic' is interesting: it can only mean that he considered a republic could only be civilized without 'demagogues' or even moderate republicans, whom he unfailingly believed to be stooges, at best well-intentioned dupes of the more dangerous elements of the revolutionary left.

One man whom Falloux held responsible for many of the vicissitudes of the early days of the Republic was Lamartine. Falloux did not doubt his brilliance; indeed, it was the very brilliance that was at the heart of Lamartine's instability. He was sceptical about Lamartine's claim that he was a politician first and a poet second: to him the opposite was the case—Lamartine's taste for poetic gestures led him to take the initiative at decisive moments, such as the petition of the Duchesse d'Orléans at the Assembly on 24 February, and also the retention of the tricolour over the red flag. Indeed Lamartine did not even have the benefit of desiring to emulate revolutionary figures, as the 'demagogues' of the Left did; he preferred, according to Falloux's caustic words, 'Amphion or Apollo, who created cities at the song of his lyre'.²⁷ Further evidence of Lamartine's vanity came on the evening of 15 May: Falloux, exhausted by the events of that day, was woken up by a messenger from Lamartine, who had come to ask Falloux whether he could

²⁵ Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 287: 'Le décret qui nous prescrivait, à la veille de notre convocation, de prendre, pour costume officiel, l'habit et le gilet à la Robespierre, suscita la réprobation universelle. Les membres du gouvernement provisoire prirent seuls ce costume odieux et ridicule, à leur première apparition devant l'Assemblée. L'impression fut telle que cette exhumation sinistre, renonçant à s'imposer, n'osa même plus reparaitre.'

²⁶ *Ibid.*, i, 294: '...je m'aperçus promptement que le parti démagogique se préoccupait moins d'une organisation pacifique et régulière, que de préparer, à bref délai, un assaut contre l'Assemblée et contre toute république civilisée.'

²⁷ *Ibid.*, i, 289-90: 'M. de Lamartine aimait à répéter de lui-même: «Je suis un politique qui s'est égaré quelques jours dans la poésie!» La vérité était absolument le contraire: le vrai Lamartine était un poète égaré dans la politique. C'était par le côté poétique qu'il prenait les émotions de la place publique ou l'exercice du pouvoir, et, se voyant salué, porté sur le pavois par la France entière, il ne songeait ni à Mirabeau ni à Sieyès, mais il rêvait d'Amphion ou d'Apollon, créant des cités au son de la lyre.' As

remember verbatim Lamartine's speech delivered on horseback in the court of the Hôtel de Ville, as Lamartine desired to deliver this speech to the nation. Although Falloux conceded that the speech ('The most beautiful tribune in the world is the saddle of my horse while I speak to a people armed for the defence of the law'²⁸) was 'justly famous', he was saddened that the poet was not a genuine statesman, as in his opinion 'it is above all a statesman who must save France!'²⁹ Such a statesman in the mould desired by Falloux was not to appear in his lifetime.

The Church under the Second Republic

The relationship between the Church and the Republic began under good auspices. When the Tuileries was sacked after Louis-Philippe's flight, the cross was removed from the Palace chapel and taken in solemn procession to the church of Saint-Roch. The following Sunday, Lacordaire proclaimed from his pulpit in Notre-Dame: 'O just and holy God! By this thy Son's cross that their hands have carried from the profaned Palace of kings to the undefiled palace of thy spouse, watch over us, protect us, enlighten us, show to the world one more time that a people who respect thee is a people that is saved!'³⁰ Falloux believed that the behaviour of the crowd towards priests and Church property helped 'expiate the excess of 1830.'³¹ Although most churchmen did not regret the passing of the Voltairean July Monarchy, their response was more one of relief at the lack of harm done to the Church during the revolutionary changeover of regime than of jubilation at the foundation of the Republic, even though they blessed the liberty trees that were placed before them.³² Lacordaire was an exception to this general rule, and swept up in the tide of republican enthusiasm he founded the journal the *Ère Nouvelle* on 15 April 1848; on 19 April he wrote 'We accept the Republic as a progress that we must defend... To our eyes the duty is in a sincere and complete

Amphion played his lyre, stones leapt up and arranged themselves into the fortified walls of lower Thebes. (Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths* (Harmondsworth, 1955), i, 257.)

²⁸ Ibid., i, 301: 'La plus belle tribune du monde, c'est la selle de mon cheval lorsque je parle à un peuple en armes pour la défense de la loi...'

²⁹ Ibid.: 'c'est pourtant un homme d'État qu'il faudrait pour sauver la France!'

³⁰ Ibid., i, 259: 'O Dieu juste et saint! Par cette croix de votre fils que leurs mains ont portée du palais profané des rois au palais sans tache de votre épouse, veillez sur nous, protégez-nous, éclairez-nous, prouvez au monde une fois de plus qu'un peuple qui vous respecte est peuple sauvé!'

³¹ Falloux, *Le Parti Catholique: ce qu'il a été, ce qu'il est devenue* (2nd ed., Paris, 1856), p. 35: 'La popularité, en 1848, seule se donner pour mission d'expié les excès de 1830.'

³² Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 259.

adhesion to the Republic, in the adoption of modern democracy.³³ He was soon to be disabused. Mgr Affre, the Archbishop of Paris wrote to Dupont de l'Eure, the Head of the Provisional Government, 'I have seen in all parts of my diocese, ecclesiastics show the most ardent desire to co-operate with public order.'³⁴ On 16 March, Pius IX wrote to Montalembert that 'We delight in the thought that this moderation is due in part to your eloquence and that of other Catholic orators who have made our name dear to this generous people.'³⁵ Louis Veuillot was swept aside by republican ardour when he wrote in the *Univers* on 27 February 1848: 'Who in France today cares to defend the monarchy? Who cares?...The monarchy fell under the weight of its own faults: nobody else contributed to its fate...We do not believe in the inadmissible right of crowns. Only Gallican theology has consecrated the divine right of kings.'³⁶

Among the skilled Parisian artisans there was widespread sympathy for Christianity; not the established Christianity of the Catholic Church, but of Jesus the Worker, whose Gospels were a plea for social justice.³⁷ There is no reason, however, to suppose that Falloux would have encountered such beliefs during his forays into the working class quarters when he was doing charitable works for the Catholic *œuvres*.

However, by the time of the elections to the Assembly by universal suffrage, Falloux protested against the choice of the day for the ballot, Easter Sunday, 23 April 1848:

The clear intention of keeping Catholics at arm's length from the ballot; but the choice of such a day revolted rather than paralysed opinion. The Provisional Government had decreed that the vote would take place in the chief town in the canton. The bishops gave full rein to changing the time of Masses. The priests firmly marched at the head of their parishioners, and in many areas, which were not considered to be religious, the electors deemed it a point of honour to call the clergy to their ranks.³⁸

³³ R. P. Lecanuet, *Montalembert* (7th ed., 3 vols, Paris, 1919-25), ii, 380-1: 'Nous acceptons la République comme un progrès qu'il faut défendre...Le devoir est à nos yeux dans une adhésion sincère et complète à la République, dans l'adoption de la démocratie moderne.'

³⁴ Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 254: 'J'ai vu, sur tous les points de mon diocèse, les ecclésiastiques manifester le désir le plus ardent de concourir à l'ordre public...'

³⁵ *Ibid.*, i, 256: 'Nous nous complaisons dans la pensée que cette modération est due en partie à votre éloquence et à celle des autres orateurs catholiques qui ont rendu notre nom cher à ce peuple généreux...'

³⁶ *Ibid.*, i, 256-7: 'Qui songe aujourd'hui en France à défendre la Monarchie? Qui peut y songer?...La Monarchie succombe sous le poids de ses fautes: personne n'a autant qu'elle travaillé à sa ruine...Nous ne croyons pas au droit inadmissible des couronnes. La théologie gallicane a consacré exclusivement le droit divin des rois.'

³⁷ R. Gibson, *A Social History of French Catholicism 1789-1914* (London, 1989), p. 213.

³⁸ Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 283: 'La date des élections fut fixé au jour de Pâques, dans l'évident intention de l'écarter autant que possible les catholiques du scrutin; mais le choix d'un tel jour révolta l'opinion au lieu de la paralyser. Le gouvernement provisoire avait décrété le vote au chef-lieu de canton. Les évêques donnèrent pleine latitude pour changer l'heure des offices. Les curés marchèrent résolument en tête de

Indeed the obvious symbolism of having the elections to the Assembly on the very same day as the celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is very likely not to have been accidental: at this stage the leaders of the Provisional Government were still keen to stay on good relations with the Church.

In the Constituent Assembly itself there were clerical deputies, from all political hues: Lacordaire sat on the extreme left, whereas Mgr Parisi, bishop of Langres was nearer the centre, and with the bishop of Quimper, Mgr Graverand and the bishop of Orléans, Mgr Fayet, as well as the Abbé Cazalès, the former page of Charles X, sat on the right.³⁹ Tocqueville, who 'counted three bishops, several vicars general and one Dominican'⁴⁰ remembered that 'under Louis XVIII and Charles X only one Abbé had ever succeeded in getting elected',⁴¹ and he complained of the clerical deputies 'they could never learn the language of politics; they had forgotten it too long ago; all their speeches imperceptibly turned into sermons.'⁴²

The National Workshops, April-June 1848

In April 1848, much to the surprise of Montalembert and other friends and contemporaries, Falloux chose to sit on the *comité du travail*—the Commission of Public Works—rather than on the *comité de l'instruction publique*—the Commission for Public Instruction.⁴³ Falloux defended his decision to a sceptical Montalembert by stating that Louis Blanc should not be permitted to dominate the field, and added, 'Allow me to plead real solicitude for the working classes in opposition to a quackery [*charlatanisme*] which is much more anxious to work upon the wounds of society than to relieve or cure them!'⁴⁴

The Commission for Public Works was nominated on 13 May. But before the Commission could properly devote itself to its business, on 15 May a demonstration protesting against governmental indifference towards Poland turned into an abortive revolution: the Palais-Bourbon was invaded while the Constituent Assembly was still in session, and after three hours of chaos, the crowd moved to the Hôtel de

leurs paroisses, et dans beaucoup de contrées, qui ne passaient pas pour fort religieuses, les électeurs tinrent à l'honneur d'appeler le clergé dans leurs rangs.'

³⁹ Ibid., i, 285.

⁴⁰ A. de Tocqueville, *Recollections: The French Revolution of 1848* (trans. G. Lawrence, eds A. P. Mayer and J. P. Kerr, New Brunswick, 1987), p. 102.

⁴¹ Tocqueville, *Recollections*, p. 103.

⁴² Ibid., p. 104.

⁴³ Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 293.

Ville to proclaim a revolutionary government. The violation of the Assembly's legitimacy was a nasty shock for Falloux. For him, the events of that day were no mere accident: within the crowd, which he conceded was largely made up of curious onlookers, he believed that he had seen a minority of 'fanatics who wore, under a borrowed blouse arms which they fully intended to use',⁴⁵ and who were clearly under orders from Blanqui, Barbès and Sobrier,⁴⁶ whom he observed amid the confusion of the day. Falloux thought that the sloth of the deputies of the Left was all too typical: 'if the government had not been made up of accomplices and fools, the demonstration would have met its end and chastisement much more swiftly.'⁴⁷ Not least to blame was the president of the Constituent Assembly, Buchez, who showed himself that day to be an 'absolute imbecile',⁴⁸ by doing nothing to prevent the demonstration, either during the invasion of the Palais-Bourbon, or once the crowd had moved to the Hôtel de Ville. In the aftermath, Falloux, and other monarchists who were 'sincerely resigned' to the Republic asked themselves 'what Republic is possible in a country where the Assembly, born of the freest and most universal suffrage that one can possibly conceive, is brutally attacked without a shadow of a motive.'⁴⁹ The shock expressed here was disingenuous, as Falloux and his fellow moderates had little respect themselves for universal suffrage, however free it might be. The disillusionment of Lacordaire, however, was even greater than that of the more worldly Falloux: 'my good faith in the republican future of France is destroyed'.⁵⁰ Very soon

⁴⁴ Ibid.: 'Laissez-moi mettre une sollicitude vraie à l'égard de la classe ouvrière, en regard d'un charlatanisme qui veut exploiter les plaies de la société beaucoup plus que les soulager ou guérir.'

⁴⁵ Ibid., i, 295: 'des fanatiques qui portaient, sous une blouse d'emprunt, des armes dont ils comptaient bien se servir.'

⁴⁶ Ibid., i, 300.

⁴⁷ Ibid., i, 296-7: 'Si le gouvernement n'eût pas été composé de complices et de dupes, la manifestation eût rencontré beaucoup plus vite son terme et son châtement...'

⁴⁸ Ibid., i, 297.

⁴⁹ Ibid., i, 301: 'Les républicains du lendemain, c'est-à-dire les monarchistes sincèrement résignés, montrèrent beaucoup plus de sollicitude. Ils demandaient à leurs collègues quelle république était possible dans un pays où l'Assemblée issue du suffrage universel qu'on pût concevoir était brutalement attaquée sans l'ombre d'un motif...'

⁵⁰ Ibid., i, 302: 'Ma bonne foi dans l'avenir républicain de la France est détruite...' Could Lacordaire's disillusionment with the Republic in the aftermath of the invasion of the Assembly be linked in any way to the event recorded by Tocqueville in his *Recollections*? 'A man in a blouse beside me was saying to his companion: "Look at that vulture there. I should love to twist his neck." Following the movement of his hand and eyes I saw that he meant Lacordaire sitting in his Dominican habit high up on the benches of the left. The suggestion struck me as very wicked, but the comparison admirable...' (A. de Tocqueville, *Recollections: The French Revolution of 1848* (trans. G. Lawrence, eds J. P. Mayer and A. P. Kerr, New Brunswick, 1987), pp. 117-18)

afterwards he resigned his seat in the Constituent Assembly,⁵¹ and a few weeks later he quit his post at the *Ère Nouvelle*.⁵²

It is a commonplace of the historiography of 1848 to state that 15 May set the stage for the dissolution of the National Workshops. The task that faced the Commission of Public Works was more pressing than ever: unfortunately for its members, events swamped the ability of the Commission to control them. It should be noted that Falloux joined the Commission of Public Works before the *journée* of 15 May, which reinforces the argument that his role in the Commission's decision to close the National Workshops was not a mere reaction to the event of the invasion of the Assembly.

It has been noted above that Falloux himself believed that delay in implementing 'necessary reforms' was a cause of unrest and revolution. At this stage, the 'necessary reform' in this situation was not the closure of the National Workshops but the suppression of abuses within them. Such abuses as absenteeism, and over-crowding, thought Falloux, were, thanks to the corruption of the *maires*, contributing to a revolutionary situation too soon after the cataclysm of February.

But where Falloux failed, it was as a politician. Either he failed to force through the closure early enough or he failed to prevent the closure, and to ameliorate the situation by other means. In any case, the events of May and June seem to have weighed heavily on his conscience,⁵³ although there is not any direct evidence for this.⁵⁴ (It is tempting, however, to speculate whether this was the source of his nervous illness in 1849.) On 24 May 1849, when questioned in the Assembly on his role, he panicked and stated: 'When you isolate me in the question of the National Workshops, you seem to forget that I was never anything but the reporter of the committees of the Assembly, and that all the proposals that I made had been sanctioned by it...Not for a moment did I have my own way, not once did I use my own initiative...'⁵⁵

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, i, 302-3.

⁵² Lecanuet, *Montalembert*, ii, 400.

⁵³ D. C. McKay, *The National Workshops: A Study in the French Revolution of 1848* (Harvard, 1961), p. 179. McKay is unsympathetic to Falloux and relies on Stern's judgement of Falloux's character even to the point of plagiarism. (Cf. McKay, pp. 106-7 with D. Stern, *Histoire de la Révolution de 1848* (Poitiers, 1984), pp. 600-1.)

⁵⁴ Given his Catholicism, it is only natural to assume that he would have resorted to the confessional, and thus there would be no independent evidence.

⁵⁵ Quoted in McKay, p. 109. This speech, *Discours de M. de Falloux, ministre de l'instruction publique, sur la situation du pays et les Ateliers nationaux, à la séance de l'Assemblée nationale du 24 mai 1849* (Paris, 1849), was published almost immediately after it was delivered; McKay notes drily 'The reprint of this speech witnesses Falloux's anxiety to get his case before the public.' (McKay, p. 179.)

It cannot be doubted that this last sentence is misleading, even from the evidence of works published by Falloux himself, which give a wholly different impression of his role in the days before the fighting in June, both in those speeches before the Assembly published at the time and in his account in the *Mémoires d'un Royaliste* written towards the end of his life, in the 1880s. Thus, contrary to his pleas, his role was an active one, in the face of the passivity of the other members of the Commission. But he had placed himself on a committee that was manned by moderate republicans, and Falloux's disdain for men of such political views and his hypersensitivity in detecting plots or anything that was deemed to be typical of the shameful predicament of the Left was seized upon. But this situation also served him: when he came to defend his actions of this period, he could blame their insouciance on those conservatives who believed that he had not done enough to clamp down on the abuses within the National Workshops, and he could dissociate himself from any leading role on the committee to critics on the left, by answering that he was just the reporter of the committee, and was only visually associated with the committee's decisions because he was the one who read them to the Assembly. In Falloux's accounts of the Committee of Public Works there are interesting omissions, such as the dubious circumstances of the 'dismissal' of Émile Thomas, the director of the National Workshops, a drama in which Trélat was the antagonist, rather than Falloux⁵⁶.

Of the charges that have been levelled against Falloux, and which he felt most confident in refuting, was that he, among others, had sought deliberately to provoke a civil war in order to purge the Republic of 'undesirables' by closing the National Workshops. Most historians argue that Falloux's actions on the committees were a powerful contributing factor.⁵⁷ Falloux's defence for his actions was the rather pedantic expedient of stating blandly that the National Workshops themselves were not in fact closed until Cavaignac's dictatorial decree of 3 July 1848, and that his accomplices in the Ministry were indeed *républicains de la veille* such as Bethmont, Carnot, Senard and Goudchaux. To say that he did provoke civil war is to overstate the case against him: given his other pronouncements on the behaviour of the

⁵⁶ McKay, pp. 93 ff.

⁵⁷ McKay comes the closest to placing the blame almost entirely at Falloux's feet: 'It can be said with assurance that, in so far as the campaign for the dissolution of the Workshops was a cause of the insurrection, Falloux's responsibility for the decisions taken was a heavy one.' (Ibid., p. 155) See also M. Traugott, *Armies of the Poor* (Princeton, 1985), pp. 143-4: 'Conservative legislators like Falloux, a member of the special subcommittee on the National Workshops, exploited the continuing agitation among the rank and file to manoeuvre the Assembly into an intransigent stand for early dissolution.' However, the

working-class crowd, it was always the inner cell of plotters that worried him the most and that required the most ruthless handling.

None of these propositions had yet been enacted by 14 June,⁵⁸ when Ulysse Trélat, the Minister for Public Works, 'médecin très charitable' of the hospital at La Salpêtrière,⁵⁹ and 'a sincere but chimerical philanthropist...[who] believed too much that social illnesses be treated like human illnesses',⁶⁰ asked the Assembly for three million francs for the National Workshops. He, furthermore, advocated that earthworks and canalization schemes were the answers to the problem of the idleness of the members of the National Workshops; Falloux preferred that they be set to work in demolishing the houses in the unhealthy Quartier des Halles, and in rebuilding more solid habitations.⁶¹ Although there was an undoubted difference of opinion here, it rested on a problem of practicality rather than of provocation.

On 19 June, Falloux was nominated reporter (*rapporteur*) for a commission of fifteen members. Four days later, as the insurrection was beginning, Falloux read the report to the Assembly:

We had wanted to see activity and abundance reborn in private works, before putting this measure before you; but the more we have studied the interests of the worker, the more we have become convinced that what he would consider one of the principal refuges was, in fact, one of the main sources of his distress, and that the first condition for the return of his well-being was the disappearance, root and branch, of this active and concentrated cell of sterile agitation.⁶²

conservative republican historian of the Cavaignac regime, F. de Luna, allows Falloux the benefit of the doubt (*The French Republic under Cavaignac 1848* (Princeton, 1969), pp. 135-6.)

⁵⁸ Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 306.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*: in spite of Falloux's damning him by faint praise, Trélat was visited by his former colleague during the cholera outbreak in Paris 1849: Falloux told the President that Trélat would not appreciate being recommended for the Légion d'honneur. Falloux ascribed the refusal to 'le mérite du désintéressement et l'ardeur des ressentiments politiques.' (*Ibid.*, ii, 62) Does he mean resentment towards himself or towards the President? McKay's assessment of Trélat's character tallies with that of Falloux: 'His policies constantly reflected irresolution and an unhappy inability to see and accept the realities in a situation.' None the less, McKay says that Falloux's judgements are 'prejudiced but interesting', which would be an equally fair assessment of McKay's attitude towards Falloux. (McKay, p. 83.)

⁶⁰ Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 306: 'M. Trélat, était un philanthrope sincère, mais chimérique...il croyait trop que les maladies sociales se traitent comme les maladies privées...'

⁶¹ Falloux, 'Ateliers Nationaux—Séance du 14 Juin', p. 95.

⁶² Falloux, 'Ateliers Nationaux—Séance du 23 Juin', p. 118: 'Nous aurions vu renaître l'activité et l'abondance dans les travaux privés, avant de vous proposer cette mesure; mais plus nous avons étudié les besoins et les intérêts de l'ouvrier, plus nous nous sommes convaincus que ce qu'il considérait comme son refuge était l'un des motifs principaux de sa détresse, et que la première des conditions pour le retour de son bien-être était la disparition radicale de ce foyer actif, concentré, d'agitation stérile.'

The proposals this time were, 'to disperse the Workshops three days after the promulgation of this decree',⁶³ but this was not to apply to the women's Workshops;⁶⁴ for the Ministry of the Interior to set aside three million francs as indemnity in order to help unemployed workers find housing; and for those who will be unable to find employment to receive three months' pay (one is tempted to ask how were the members of the Commission to tell who would not get work for this period?).⁶⁵ Anyone, however, who broke the *loi sur les attroupements*, the Riot Act, would forfeit any help. Finally, the Minister of Finance would give a pledge for builders for five million.⁶⁶ Thus, even if the National Workshops were to be 'dispersed' or 'cells' within them were to be abolished, they were not to be shut down. What Falloux failed to mention was that such dispersion entailed conscription into the army or forced removal to the unhealthy area of Sologne, near Orléans, in the Loire valley.

The June Days

After continued agitation in the city, armed rebellion broke out in the Place de la Bastille, and spread throughout the eastern *faubourgs* of Paris on 23 June 1848. Ferocious fighting continued for three days: on 24 June it seemed that even the Assembly was under threat as the insurgents neared the Invalides. The blame for the disaster was placed, inevitably, at the feet of the republicans within and without the Assembly. This was the event at which the death knell of the Second Republic was rung:

The Provisional Government had suffered assaults in March and in April; the Assembly, in May and in June. As an experiment, was this not sufficient—was this not decisive? How many misfortunes must be endured, how much blood spilt must there be to prove that a Republic was not the magic cure [*talisman*] for France's peace and prosperity? How often must we conduct, or allow to be conducted, these dangerous experiments on our country, like on a corpse in the mortuary?⁶⁷

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 124: 'ARTICLE PREMIER: Les ateliers nationaux seront dissous trois jours après la promulgation du présent décret.'

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*: 'ART. 2: Ne sont pas compris dans cette mesure les ateliers de femmes.'

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 124-5: 'ART. 4: Les brigadiers et employés de tout grade aux ateliers nationaux qui n'auront pas été pourvus d'autre emploi recevront pendant trois mois la moitié de leur allocation actuelle.'

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 125: 'ART 6: Le ministre de Finances est autorisé prêter la garantie de l'État au Sous-Comptoir d'escompte des entrepreneurs en bâtiment, jusqu'à concurrence de 5 millions.'

⁶⁷ Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 320: 'Le gouvernement provisoire avait eu ses assauts en mars et en avril; l'Assemblée, en mai et en juin: l'épreuve n'était-elle pas suffisante, n'était-elle décisive? Combien de malheurs, combien de sang versé faudrait-il encore pour prouver que la république n'est pas pour la France le talisman du repos et de la prospérité? Combien de temps devons-nous encore faire ou laisser faire ces dangereuses expérimentations sur notre pays, comme sur un cadavre d'amphithéâtre?'

The Assembly was kept in permanent session.⁶⁸ It was declared that it was the duty of the representatives of the people to remain at the Assembly while it remained in session. Nonetheless some, who knew that a violent end was certain if the Assembly were to be captured, had little to fear in venturing out into the areas of the thickest fighting in the vain hope of conciliating the insurgents. The physically slight Falloux followed their example.

Furthermore, the cultivated aristocrat, who had won his spurs at the tribune of the Assembly and in the printed word, was shocked to discover the ferocity to be found away from the barricades. When visiting the wounded in the hospital of Hôtel-Dieu, Falloux witnessed the fight continue between the wounded: an insurgent would drag himself to the adjacent bed, where an invalid still wearing the uniform of the National Guard would be lying, and attack him.⁶⁹ Nonetheless this savagery did not weaken Falloux's conviction that the conflict of June, like the invasion of the Assembly on 15 May, had been caused by a dangerous minority of revolutionary agitators within the National Workshops. 'You have to see this distressing sight, or at least you must hear an account of it from a witness who is greatly shaken, to get an idea of the passion that the deceit that has been cold-bloodedly and diligently trickled down to the masses can rouse, in order to appreciate the crime of those artisans in such a rage, and to measure all the evil that a few men can do to a huge multitude.'⁷⁰ For the deceived masses themselves, Falloux felt pity rather than vindictive contempt: 'During these mournful hours, no power could tear away from the heart of these poor souls the conviction that the Assembly was the enemy of the people, that it was thirsty for their blood, and that the barricades were built only to protect the worker, his wife and children against pitiless barbarism.'⁷¹

Once he had ascribed the immediate political causes of the June Days, Falloux paused to look deeper into the workings of Providence. To the reader of Falloux's life of Louis XVI, there can be found

⁶⁸ Ibid., i, 315: 'Après un court débat, l'Assemblée, de plus en plus avertie par les bruits de la sédition croissante, se déclara en permanence et ne s'occupa plus que de pouvoir à la défense sociale ou même à sa propre défense, car elle se savait directement menacée.'

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.: 'Il faut avoir vu ce lamentable spectacle ou l'avoir entendu raconter par des témoins encore tout émus, pour se faire une idée de la passion que peut surexiter dans les masses le mensonge froidement et persévérément distillé, pour apprécier le crime des artisans d'une telle rage, et pour mesurer tout le mal que peuvent faire quelques hommes à l'innombrable multitude.'

⁷¹ Ibid., i, 318: 'Durant ces heures douloureuses, aucune puissance n'aurait arraché au cœur de ces malheureux égarés la conviction que l'Assemblée était l'ennemie du peuple, qu'elle avait soif de son sang,

the usual parallels. This is no more apparent than in Falloux's account of the death of the Archbishop of Paris, Mgr Affre, who was felled by a stray bullet while trying to conciliate the insurgents on behalf of General Cavaignac at the barricade in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine on Sunday 25 June. Falloux voiced the commonplace idea that Affre had been a martyr;⁷² Falloux furthermore ascribed miraculous properties to Affre's pectoral cross which saved the life of the priest to whom it had been entrusted, the Abbé Jacquemet, who had recently been nominated Bishop of Nantes. (Although Falloux attributed the Abbé's subsequent survival in the fighting to his diminutive stature, he nonetheless referred to the cross as a 'sainte relique' and added that Jacquemet kept possession of it until his dying day.⁷³) Falloux saw his friend Charbonnel fall mortally wounded, and helped to carry him into a house near the barricade. Charbonnel's last words, which echoed those of Mgr Affre, were that he had become 'an expiatory victim and [he explained] that this loss of blood would at last end the turmoil and misfortunes of our country.'⁷⁴

The providential aspect through which Falloux saw the disaster of the June Days can only have helped him draw strength for the future: the fighting was proof that France did indeed need God, and that previous regimes had failed the masses in overlooking their spiritual and material welfare. He did not at least consciously acknowledge that he had played a part in exploiting the uprising. Indeed, although Falloux did not shy away from intrigue, his plan, Machiavellian in itself, but not murderous, was to disband the National Workshops as soon as possible. If this had gone according to plan, his extraordinary presence on the Committee of Public Works would still have been blamed for a treacherous trick played on the aspirations of the workers. If the events of June 1848 had confirmed in Falloux's mind the desperate need to bring France back within the Christian fold, they also increased his pessimism over the future of the republican form of government for France. The deadlock of revolution and repression, the formidable lottery, was not to end until the even bloodier repression of the Commune in the infamous *semaine sanglante* of May 1871.

et que les barricades n'avaient été dressées que pour protéger l'ouvrier, sa femme et ses enfants contre une impitoyable barbarie.'

⁷² Ibid., i, 318-9.

⁷³ For the ultimate fate of the pectoral cross see O. Chadwick, *A History of the Popes, 1830-1914* (Oxford, 1998), p. 224: Mgr Darboy wore it at his execution in May 1871, and it was, presumably, taken by one of his communal executioners as a trophy.

⁷⁴ Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 319: 'Avec la plus douce sérénité, il nous exprima le vœu qui se retrouvait presque au même instant sur les lèvres de Mgr Affre, de devenir une victime expiatoire et que cette effusion de sang terminât enfin les discordes et les malheurs de notre pays.'

The Government of Cavaignac

It was during this period that the Party of Order first met in the Rue de Poitiers. Falloux believed that the group of the Rue de Poitiers, made up of conservatives from all the mainstream political allegiances, Legitimist, Orléanist and Republican, was disinterested as far as personal political ambition went, and thus devoid of all cynicism. As events were to show, if the former judgement was correct, the latter certainly was not, at least as far as methods were concerned. Falloux claimed that the fact that these met together was spontaneous rather than planned, and that the men of the Rue de Poitiers quaked at their fearsome responsibility of restoring order to France.⁷⁵

General Eugène Cavaignac, the military leader in charge of suppressing the insurgents, was granted executive powers by a decree of the Assembly on 24 June and four days later was appointed President of the Council of Ministers. There was unanimity at this point, as there was in Falloux's opinion no chance that a royalist restoration could occur at this time. Cavaignac, who was of impeccable republican vintage, reminded Falloux of a character from the pages of Plutarch.⁷⁶ Cavaignac described himself as 'a soldier from Africa, transported unexpectedly to a new terrain.'⁷⁷ Falloux regretted Cavaignac's lack of education, as it could have remedied the General's narrow republican prejudices.⁷⁸ His knowledge and understanding of internal affairs were furthermore neither deep nor extensive. It was therefore a matter of attaining the correct influence over the General. This was especially pertinent if Carnot,⁷⁹ the Minister of Public Instruction who was an enthusiast for secular state education, was to be relieved of his post. He was indeed the only member of the cabinet proposed by Cavaignac that the men of the Rue de Poitiers would not accept. On this occasion, Cavaignac had his way, the cabinet yielding to the sentiment of the memory of Carnot's father, the great revolutionary general.⁸⁰ Carnot's continuation in the Ministry of Public Instruction was only made known after the men of the Rue de Poitiers had pre-empted Cavaignac's decision, 'according to probabilities equivalent to certainty' as Falloux casuistically described

⁷⁵ Ibid., i, 335.

⁷⁶ Ibid., i, 332.

⁷⁷ Ibid., i, 326: 'je suis un soldat d'Afrique, transporté inopinément sur un terrain nouveau.'

⁷⁸ Ibid., i, 332-3.

⁷⁹ Lazare Hippolyte Carnot (1801-88), the son of the revolutionary general, Minister of War and regicide Lazare Carnot (1753-1823). A Saint-simonian, he was Minister of Public Instruction after February 1848. His son Sadi Carnot (1837-94) was first President of the Third Republic to be assassinated.

it,⁸¹ and informed all and sundry within the Assembly that Carnot was to be fired.⁸² Bonjean, who was later shot by the communards in 1871, read to the Assembly selections from Carnot's republican catechism for primary school pupils, *Manuel républicain de l'homme et du citoyen*, which he considered espoused doctrines perilously close to socialism. Bonjean proposed a vote of confidence in Carnot which was rejected, and Carnot duly resigned. He was replaced by de Vaulabelle, whom Falloux said 'was no more distinguished than M. Carnot by special aptitudes or by talent at the tribune. He belonged to the *républicains de la veille*; but he was inoffensive and quite independent of the yoke of his dangerous friends.'⁸³ Falloux expressed his regret that a coolness had developed so early between the *parti conservateur* and the General.⁸⁴

On 15 September it was discovered that Cavaignac planned to send commissioners to the provinces to stir up republican sentiment. Falloux, who of course believed that France was not republican by nature, regarded this as a clumsy attempt to bring the provinces ever more under the central government in Paris. Falloux's performance in the Assembly was, by his own admission, brilliant, and drew applause from both sides, especially after Cavaignac's petulant interruption.⁸⁵ Jules Favre told Falloux, 'They say that I am the most perfidious man in the Assembly, but you have the prize!'⁸⁶

Indeed Falloux believed that the men of the Rue de Poitiers were the majority within the Assembly during this period, representing therefore the true interests of France, which were conservative interests. De Luna points out, however, that Falloux in his *Mémoires* confounded the views of the men of the Rue de Poitiers with the moderate republicans when it suited him to demonstrate which was the majority view.⁸⁷

In the meantime, the election of the President of the Republic was looming. Much time was spent in discussing the mode of election, whether it should be confined to the Assembly or offered to universal

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, i, 331.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, i, 330: 'selon des probabilités équivalent à une certitude.'

⁸² F. de Luna, *The French Republic under Cavaignac 1848* (Princeton, 1969), pp. 177-8.

⁸³ Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 331: '...M. de Vaulabelle qui n'était, pas plus que M. Carnot, indiqué par des aptitudes spéciales ou par un talent de tribune. Il appartenait d'ailleurs, tout autant que lui, aux républicains de la veille; mais il était inoffensif et assez indépendant du joug de ses dangereux amis.'

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, i, 333.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, i, 335.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, i, 336: 'On dit que je sui le plus perfide de l'Assemblée, mais à vous le pompon!'

suffrage. Falloux supported the former course, even if it was advantageous to Cavaignac. But it was Lamartine's speech in favour of vote by universal suffrage that carried the day: 'You can poison a glass of water, but you cannot poison the ocean'. Falloux's caustic response was that 'the ocean has its tempests and rocks.'⁸⁸

Before a president could be elected, there was still a need for a Constitution of the Republic. Falloux sat on the committee for formulating the Constitution. Montalembert argued for an article in the Constitution granting freedom of education. The most significant debate concerned the election of the President. A vote by universal male suffrage was supported by both the Extreme Left and the Bonapartists (following their own tradition).⁸⁹ This was not just the most significant debate on the committee but perhaps the most significant debate in the history of the Second Republic, for the dice were stacked against Prince Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte being elected by the Assembly that had so mocked him.

The Presidency of Prince Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte

As the election for the President of the Republic drew near, there was confusion among conservatives about which candidate to support: Thiers tried to make Falloux and Berryer adopt 'his' candidate Prince Louis Bonaparte, but they both abstained, caring to support neither Changarnier nor Lamartine.⁹⁰ But Falloux realized that for many conservatives the name Bonaparte at least stood for everything that was 'antipathetic, fatal and mortal for the Republic.'⁹¹ On 10 December 1848 Prince Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte was elected President by an overwhelming majority, thanks to universal male suffrage: from that day, Falloux wrote eight years later, 'the Republic was nothing more than a word.'⁹²

In December 1848, Odilon Barrot arrived at Falloux's house with a message from the newly elected President offering him the Ministry of Cults and Public Instruction. Falloux initially refused. Later

⁸⁷ F. De Luna, *The French Republic under Cavaignac*, p. 198n.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, i, 353: '«On empoisonne un verre d'eau, on n'empoisonne pas l'Océan; » mais l'Océan a ses tempêtes et ses écueils.'

⁸⁹ Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 351.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, i, 359.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, ii, 2: 'tout ce que ce nom renferme d'antipathique, de fatal, de mortel pour la République.'

⁹² Falloux, *Le Parti Catholique*, pp. 73-4: 'Depuis l'élection du Dix décembre, la République n'était plus qu'un mot.'

the same day, in the vast, cold, empty room of the former Chamber of Deputies,⁹³ the President himself asked Falloux if he would reconsider: Falloux pleaded that his health was not up to the task.⁹⁴ Montalembert soon got wind of what had passed, and told Falloux in no uncertain terms that he was shirking his duty as a Catholic. Falloux replied that the background of the Prince, who had fought in Italy in the early 1830s against the government of Gregory XVI, was no indicator of hope for the interests of the Church.⁹⁵ Ultimately, 'to give more authority to our speech, let us keep for it the first of our sanctions, that of disinterest.'⁹⁶ Molé soon also started applying pressure on the recalcitrant Falloux to relent. Falloux resolved to avoid the Assembly for the time being, and his political acquaintances also.

One evening he dined with Madame Swetchine at the Rue Saint-Dominique, having told his valet, Marquet, under no circumstances to tell anyone his whereabouts. Marquet had to reckon with the Abbé Dupanloup, who took the cab that was going to pick up Falloux from the Rue Saint-Dominique, where he arrived at half-past eight. Falloux finally gave in after being told by Dupanloup that if he did not accept the Ministry, 'you are going to abandon Italy to her convulsions, leave the Pope without help, at the mercy of his worst enemies, throw France back into anarchy, when all she aspires to is to liberate herself from it, and to cover in confusion before her from the most eminent representatives of the party of the conservatives.'⁹⁷ Falloux's condition, he told the assembled company, which included Montalembert, Thiers and Molé in the salon of Madame Thayer in the Place Saint-Georges, was that he be permitted to prepare a bill for liberty of education.⁹⁸ But the journey ahead was to be rough one, and Falloux admitted in the *Mémoires* that he felt it was a task 'for which I was so little prepared.'⁹⁹ In the light of his subsequent criticisms of Chambord's political apathy, Falloux's behaviour in December 1848 does appear to be bizarre. It is just possible that

⁹³ The former room for the Chamber of Deputies was too small for the new Assembly of 900 representatives elected by universal suffrage, for which a new chamber had been hastily erected in the courtyard of the Palais-Bourbon. (See Tocqueville's description of the new chamber, *Recollections*, p. 105.)

⁹⁴ Falloux, *Mémoires*, ii, 4.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, ii, 5.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, ii, 6: 'Et pour donner plus d'autorité à notre parole, gardons-lui toujours la première des sanctions, celle du désintéressement.'

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, ii, 8-9: 'Vous allez abandonner l'Italie à ses convulsions, laisser le Pape sans secours, à la merci de ses pires ennemis, rejeter dans l'anarchie la France qui n'aspire qu'à s'en affranchir et couvrir de confusion, devant elle, les plus éminents représentants du parti conservateur.'

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, ii, 10.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*: 'à laquelle j'étais si peu préparé.'

his retreat to Madame Swetchine's salon was part of an elaborately planned ego-trip, as the Rue Saint-Dominique was scarcely the last place where he could be found; it is more likely, however, that the strain of the June Days had taught him a lesson that, among other things, political activity and sound health do not always go hand in hand. Within nine months he was proven right.

In the spring of 1849 cholera broke out once more in Paris. Falloux believed, like Franklin D. Roosevelt eighty years later, that Fear was the greatest foe of the human spirit. In particular the lycées were threatened, which Falloux duly visited to keep up morale. The President wanted himself to see the sick, and he also expressed a desire for Falloux to accompany him. Their first port of call was the hospital of La Salpêtrière, where elderly Bonapartists mobbed the President. These tours lasted for two hours, and gave Falloux an insight into a side of Louis-Napoleon's character that did not show itself to members of the Council of Ministers, but was 'benevolent and sweet'.¹⁰⁰

But such a well-disposed attitude was not to last long. Louis-Napoleon admired and even trusted Falloux,¹⁰¹ as an extremely intelligent and skilful politician, but with an Achilles' heel as far as clerical affairs were concerned. The President therefore exploited this tendency to the full: Falloux could be given free rein to appease clerical opinion to the regime in good faith, for as Tocqueville wrote, the only long-term ambitions that Falloux harboured were for the Church. In turn the President's motives were recognized by Falloux, who acknowledged that the President's guarded language on clerical matters was calculated to appeal to him. Falloux had the advantage of moving in Catholic social circles, and episcopal nominations were made easier by the fact that several candidates were known to him personally. Even after Falloux's resignation on grounds of bad health, the President continued to ask his advice on episcopal nominations. But Falloux was parsimonious in recommending clergy for official decorations. In his *Mémoires* he even boasts that during his nine months' tenure in the ministry not a single priest received a Légion d'honneur,¹⁰² on the grounds that to be made a chevalier of the Légion d'honneur (the lowest grade of the decoration) for a citizen was a rise in rank, whereas for a priest his rank would be lowered.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., ii, 61: 'sa nature était bienveillante et douce.'

¹⁰¹ This at least was the opinion of Alexis de Tocqueville: 'Falloux, who was at the time the only man in the Cabinet the President trusted.' (*Recollections: The French Revolution of 1848* (trans. G. Lawrence, eds A. P. Mayer and J. P. Kerr, New Brunswick, 1987), p. 216.)

¹⁰² Falloux, *Mémoires*, ii, 177.

¹⁰³ Ibid., ii, 178.

Falloux believed that too many honorific ranks within the Church hierarchy, such as the title of Monsignor, also had a cheapening effect.¹⁰⁴ Perhaps the hurt feelings among worthy clergy were fertile ground for Veillot's invective against Falloux. (Perhaps also Napoleon III was especially prodigal with the Légion d'honneur to the clergy and thus ensured their support.)

The Peril of the Holy See

In the meantime, momentous events had taken place in Rome. On becoming Pope in June 1846, Pius IX ordered a general amnesty for prisoners, even political ones, and in the following two years, censorship on political, but not religious works was lifted, the chains of the Jewish ghetto were removed and most significantly in March 1848 a two-chamber parliamentary system was established. As Falloux said, 'Pius IX attained, from as early as his accession, a popularity for which one can only find a parallel far back into history.'¹⁰⁵ However, after the Austrian forces entered Papal territory in Northern Italy, the state in Rome was threatened with crisis, and in November the Prime Minister Peregrino Rossi was assassinated; a week later Pius IX fled to Gaeta—'the object of the love and respect of all humanity',¹⁰⁶—horrified and disillusioned by the forces that had been unleashed by his moderate reforms. In Rome a Republic was declared and in the following spring Mazzini arrived to take the reins of government.

On 23 April 1849, General Oudinot's force disembarked at Civitavecchia. It took Rome after a vigorous fight put up by its revolutionary defenders on 3 July 1849. The attack of French forces on a sister republic, which contravened the Constitution of the French Republic, was violently opposed by the Left, leading to the débâcle of 13 June 1849. Falloux remarked cruelly that 'the men who feigned the greatest exaltation as patriots, lost the sentiment itself of patriotism, as soon as it upset the course of their dominant passion.'¹⁰⁷ Falloux was proud of the exploits of the French army and did not, it seems,¹⁰⁸ take into account the city's heroic defence. Falloux believed that the people of Rome and the Papal States sincerely desired the return of the Pope from exile, but were fed lies by the revolutionaries, many of whom were not even Roman, but German, Polish and even French: Mazzini himself, realizing finally that he could not rely

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., i, 270: 'Pie IX parvint, dès le premier jour de son avènement, à une popularité dont on ne pouvait retrouver l'analogie que dans l'histoire d'un passé bien lointain.'

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.: 'l'objet du respect et de l'amour de l'humanité.'

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., ii, 113: 'les hommes qui affectent le plus d'exaltation comme patriotes, perdent le sentiment même du patriotisme, dès qu'il contrarie le courant de leur passion dominante.'

on the hardy folk of Rome, fled shortly before the city fell in order to save his own skin.¹⁰⁹ Pius IX had changed since he had fled Rome: the shock of experiencing revolution first hand had been a political awakening, and the ascendancy of the Under-Secretary of State, Giacomo Cardinal Antonelli, had reinforced his nascent conservatism. Antonelli, a venal if brilliant ecclesiastical diplomat, was

in many respects the exact opposite of Pius IX. He was as prone to cold calculation as the Sovereign Pontiff was to spontaneous movement. His haughty inflexibility allowed the smiling mobility of Pius IX free scope and he would wait for disenchantment. It is in yielding to him on details that he dominated him in great matters, and history can only say incompletely what prejudice he brought to a reign born under other auspices and for grander results.¹¹⁰

The first major act of Antonelli was to delay the return of the Pope from Gaeta, and to send instead three cardinals who were friendlier to Austria than to France to take up the reins of papal government in Rome.

Falloux felt that his presence in the ministry was becoming increasingly difficult, as he explained to Mgr Fornari, the Papal nuncio to France, as his actions were being attacked from all sides, and that his only weapon was his resignation.¹¹¹ But a greater shock lay in waiting.

The Ney Letter

In mid-August, Falloux was exhausted and feeling the strain of the pressures that were being applied to him from all sides. He decided to leave Paris for a rest. Shortly before his departure, at a meeting of the Cabinet he noticed the President hand a letter over to Tocqueville, from the President to Colonel Edgar Ney, in which he criticized the reactionary stance adopted by the provisional Papal government.

The French Republic did not send an army to Rome in order to stifle Italian liberty, but, on the contrary, to guide it by preserving it from its own excess, and to give it a solid base by placing back on the pontifical throne the prince who from the first had put himself boldly at the head of all the useful reforms.

I learn with pain that the benevolent intentions of the Holy Father, like our own action, stay sterile, in the presence of hostile passions and influences. They would want to give proscription and tyranny as a foundation for the return of the Pope.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ At least there is no mention of this in the *Mémoires*, or any of his other writings on the Roman Question.

¹⁰⁹ Falloux, *Mémoires*, ii, 114.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, ii, 116: 'Le cardinal Antonelli était à beaucoup d'égards, l'antipode de Pie IX. Il avait autant de froids calculs que le Souverain-Pontife de mouvements spontanés. Son immobilité hautaine laissait la mobilité souriante de Pie IX se donner libre carrière et l'attendait aux désenchantements. C'est en lui cédant sur les détails qu'il le domina dans les grandes affaires, et l'histoire ne dira qu'incomplètement quel préjudice il a porté à un règne né sous d'autres auspices et pour de plus hauts résultats.'

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, ii, 124.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, ii, 126: 'La République française n'a pas envoyé une armée à Rome pour y étouffer la liberté italienne, mais, au contraire, pour la régler en la préservant contre ses propres excès, et pour lui donner une base solide, en remettant sur le trône pontifical le prince qui, le premier, s'était placé hardiment à la tête de toutes les réformes utiles.'

Louis-Napoleon envisaged 'a general amnesty, secularization of the administration, the Code Napoleon and liberal government.'¹¹³

Falloux, however, realized that the letter was not without its uses, and that if its contents had been revealed to the three cardinals ruling in Rome, it could be used to bargain with them for a few concessions, such as the adoption of the Napoleonic Code, the virtues of which had been recently extolled by Pius IX himself. Falloux was, of course, deeply shocked by this, but managed to extract an assurance from the President that the letter would remain private. He left the meeting 'if not satisfied, then at least reassured by the unanimous promise, made very clearly by the President and my colleagues, to keep silent.'¹¹⁴ Falloux left for his rest, which was curtailed by a summons from one of these colleagues, M. Lacrosse in September. On returning to Paris, Falloux learnt that the letter to Colonel Ney had been leaked to the press. He hastened to the Élysée, and was told by Louis-Napoleon that his reaction was exaggerated, and that the letter had been made public for good reasons, especially as a response to English jibes. Nonetheless, the President wrote a denial of the contents of the letter for Falloux. This served only to add salt to the wound, for Falloux thought that the President was now betraying those members of the Cabinet who had supported the letter's publication, Dufaure, Barrot and Tocqueville.¹¹⁵ A denial printed in the *Moniteur* of Falloux's support for the publication of the letter was followed by much carping from the press. For Falloux the lesson was that for the President, 'duplicity cost him little and he did not have the strong repulsion for it that honest men experience in the face of this moral improbity.'¹¹⁶

The letter did not meet with sympathy at Gaeta: rumours were even spreading that Pius was considering residing in America. On 12 September Pius signed his *Motu Proprio*, which vouchsafed some timid reforms, but not by any means all those put forward in Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte's letter to Colonel Ney.

'J'apprends avec peine que les intentions bienveillantes du Saint-Père, comme notre propre action, restent stériles, en présence de passions et d'influences hostiles. On voudrait donner comme base à la rentrée du pape la proscription et la tyrannie.'

¹¹³ Ibid.: 'Je résume ainsi le rétablissement du pouvoir temporel du pape: amnistie général, sécularisation de l'administration, code Napoléon et gouvernement libéral.'

¹¹⁴ Ibid., ii, 129: 'je partis, sinon satisfait, du moins rassuré par l'unanime engagement, très nettement articulé par le Président et par mes collègues, de garder le silence.'

¹¹⁵ Ibid., ii, 134. The letter does not survive: Falloux said that he regretted not keeping it. (Ibid.)

¹¹⁶ Ibid., ii, 137: 'il faudrait admettre que la duplicité lui coûtait peu et qu'il n'avait pas pour elle la forte répulsion qu'éprouvent les honnêtes gens en face de cette improbité morale.'

The *Loi Falloux*

The *loi Falloux* has come to represent the repressive turn of mind that predominated during the long decline of the Second Republic. The (grudging) support given to Louis-Napoleon's presidency by Catholic politicians such as Falloux also represents the cynicism and fear typical of the period, of which the *loi Falloux* was payment in return.

The *loi Falloux* was also the culmination of a debate on freedom of education that had raged since the Revolution of 1830. Figures who were in 1849-50 wholeheartedly to endorse the *loi Falloux*, such as Thiers and Cousin, had previously opposed the extension of clerical influence on education. Cousin, as head of the *Université* had proclaimed his adherence to state-sponsored 'eclecticism', which had its roots in the Napoleonic reforms, by which schools would teach their pupils the virtue of good citizenship. In the Chamber of Deputies during the July Monarchy, Thiers himself had frequently condemned the 'pernicious' influence of the Jesuits in France. But the Orléanist balancing-act of applauding 1789 while eschewing 1793 was a delicate task, and when the spectre of 1793 seemed to appear once more in 1848, 1789 had to be protected at all costs, even if certain compromises had to be made in the name of order. There was no hypocrisy in this position: *universitaires* such as Cousin and politicians such as Thiers feared and loathed Socialism, and if preventing the spread of socialism within France in the long-term future meant giving the Church, including the dreaded Society of Jesus, a freer rein in education, it was a price worth paying. Furthermore, neither Thiers nor Cousin denied that religion had a useful function in maintaining the state, an attitude that derived from Thiers's great hero, the Emperor Napoleon. With the fall of the July Monarchy, Catholics, many of whom were Legitimist in sympathy, no longer posed a specifically political threat to the regime. Nonetheless, the vehemence with which Thiers—albeit a naturally pugnacious speaker—uttered his opinions both on Church control and on the masses in general amply shows how deep went his fear of the spread of Socialism among the working classes; to a large extent, his fear of Socialism was based on a contempt for the working classes which was not shared by Falloux, whose attachment to charity and to the poor has already been seen. Thus in the alliance between Catholics and freethinking Orléanists, it was the latter who took the lead.

The threat of the Left in the realm of education had manifested itself soon after the February Revolution, when Carnot hoped to use the *instituteurs* as political agents for the elections to the Assembly on 23 April 1848. This was in part the cause of Thiers's rabid fear of the *instituteurs*.

It is fair to add, however, that Falloux met his match in terms at least of influence in the journalist Louis Veillot. Having converted back to the faith of his childhood in 1838 following a visit to Rome, Veillot became editor-in-chief of the *Univers* in 1842, which had been founded nine years earlier in 1833 by Melchior du Lac. He transformed this struggling newspaper into the main organ for the Church in France: it was hugely popular with the parish clergy, who were reassured by its ultramontane pugnacity towards a Gallican hierarchy,¹¹⁷ and Veillot did not shirk from slinging mud at those whom he deemed responsible for any dealings with the principles of Revolution, industrialism, and the Voltairean bourgeoisie. The antipathy towards liberal ultramontanism derived most probably from Montalembert's unsuccessful attempt to buy the *Univers* in 1844.¹¹⁸ Above all, Veillot's position was characterized by a feverish devotion to the Papacy, and harsh condemnation for those who besmirched themselves with compromise. Needless to say, the aristocratic and liberal Catholic Falloux was soon to discover that the plebeian Veillot was certainly no gentleman.

Veillot was incensed by what he saw as the betrayal of the liberty for the Church to open schools and of an alteration of the unequal relationship between the *Université* and the Church that was too slight. For Veillot, the Church and the *Université* were opposites that quite simply could not be reconciled—the one representing truth, the other error: 'We have fought for liberty, not for a false and dangerous lightening of servitude.'¹¹⁹ The *Université* was the opposite and, therefore, the enemy of the Church: 'one knows that the revolutionary spirit is not its enemy and that its own movement develops within itself towards the *bonnet rouge* rather than towards the cross.'¹²⁰

Veillot did over-simplify, doubtless because of the demands of journalism. The nature of the *universitaires'* commitment to the Revolution of 1789 was as anathema to him as the threat of socialism;

¹¹⁷ A. Gough, *Paris and Rome: the Gallican Church and the Ultramontane Campaign 1848-1853* (Oxford, 1986), p. 95-6.

¹¹⁸ A. Gough, *Paris and Rome*, p. 90.

¹¹⁹ Louis Veillot, *Mélanges, Religieux, Historiques, Politiques et Littéraires 1849-51* (Paris, 1857), v, 442: 'Nous avons combattu pour la liberté non pour un faux et dangereux allègement [*sic*] de servitude.'

furthermore, it was beyond his comprehension that such men could even entertain thoughts of co-operating with the Church, and he paid no attention in this respect to the widely-perceived threat to the *spectre rouge*. Indeed, to read his polemic on the *loi Falloux* is to get the impression that the February Revolution had not occurred, and the battleground of the July Monarchy remained.

Veillot was above all incensed at the betrayal of the campaign for liberty of education that had been waged since 1844 by Montalembert and other prominent and accomplished Catholics: 'What have we always and unanimously demanded? Liberty! What does the project offer us? A feeble part of the monopoly!'¹²¹ But a large measure of Veillot's anger derived from his exclusion by Falloux from the Commission on Education, although it is unlikely that he would have been any more pliable had he sat on it.

Veillot was keen to point out the hypocrisy of liberal Catholics of Montalembert's kind by showing how the liberty that they had espoused had been compromised utterly. He ignored, however, the subtleties that were inherent in Montalembert's view of liberty. The marriage of liberty with order, or in this case, of Catholic liberty and the Party of Order, was integral to the liberal Catholic ethic. Lacordaire expressed such a view on 11 April 1848, that is, before the general climate of reaction had been imposed in the aftermath of the June days: 'I look upon order and liberty as two essential elements of human life, and who ever is convicted of having been the enemy of order, he is the enemy of liberty.'¹²² Indeed if Falloux acknowledged Lacordaire and Montalembert as the best chances for liberty in France, religion was the best guarantee of liberty as well as of order. The Left could lay claim to no such an attitude: 'the Left is jealous of domination more than it is of liberty.'¹²³ Such a 'domination' had at its heart the 'hatred for Catholicism'.¹²⁴ And, by implication, the willingness of freethinkers in the *Université* to support the growth of religion in France, could only be to the benefit of the freethinkers themselves. As the Faith was an integral part of France's strength, even it had to be supported from the outside, it was a question of patriotism to support it.

¹²⁰ Louis Veillot, *Mélanges*, v, 398: 'On sait que l'esprit révolutionnaire ne lui est point ennemi, et que le mouvement actuel développe en elle plus de tendance vers le bonnet rouge que vers la croix.'

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, v, 395: 'Qu'avons-nous demandé, toujours et unanimement? La liberté! Que nous offre le projet? Une faible part du monopole!'

¹²² The Count de Montalembert, *Memoir of the Abbé Lacordaire* (London, 1863), p. 230.

¹²³ Falloux, *Mémoires*, ii, 153: 'la Gauche est jalouse de domination plus que de liberté.'

Before the February Revolution, on 12 April 1847, Falloux spoke in the Assembly on Salvandy's proposal for an Education Law on secondary education, following the lead of Guizot's law on primary education in June 1833. At the advent of the Second Republic, Falloux had made his commitment to freedom of education clear, even if he was willing to postpone pursuing the issue in favour of that of Public Works in April 1848—much to the annoyance of Montalembert who told Falloux that his first responsibility lay in the field of securing liberty of education.¹²⁵

By the advent of the presidency of Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte in December 1848, the political landscape had changed. Falloux's condition for sitting on Louis-Napoleon's cabinet was that he be able to introduce a bill for liberty of education as Minister for Public Instruction. For this, Falloux naturally cooperated closely with Montalembert, who was placed on the Commission for Education: 'We immediately fell into agreement, he and I, on the principal points of the conduct to take...'¹²⁶ That such men as Thiers and Cousin, as well as other *universitaires* such as Saint-Marc Girardin, and one Protestant pastor, Cuvier, were chosen displays a canny mixture of pragmatism and the sort of tolerance that had been preached by Lacordaire, who had belatedly welcomed the *loi Falloux* in the following terms: 'Just as the Edict of Nantes was for a century the honour of France and the fruitful principle of the intellectual and moral ascendancy of the Church, so the law on the freedom of teaching will be the sacred boundary post where our disagreements, instead of resolving into hate and oppression, will develop only into legitimate competition whence will issue the natural progress of society.'¹²⁷ Falloux records that the choice of men to sit on the Commission was self-evident enough; indeed 'their names imposed themselves.'¹²⁸ By this stage—the names of those who were to sit on the Commission were published in the *Moniteur* on 4 January 1849—the fear of the *spectre rouge* was deeply enough entrenched for the broad range of beliefs on the Commission not to pose much of a risk. (Indeed, it was a name that was *not* included that caused for Falloux the most trouble: Louis Veillot.) It also coincided with Falloux's great hope for a France that could be politically united within itself at this time of crisis and beyond.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*: 'sa haine du catholicisme.'

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, i, 293.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, ii, 31: 'Nous tombâmes donc immédiatement d'accord, lui et moi, sur les principaux points de la conduite à tenir.'

¹²⁷ L. C. Sheppard, *Lacordaire: A Biographical Essay* (London, 1964), p. 124.

¹²⁸ Falloux, *Mémoires*, ii, 31: 'les noms propres s'imposaient d'eux-mêmes.'

Like the liberal freethinkers on the Commission, both Montalembert and Falloux had no time for the 'utopian' doctrines of the Left. Montalembert's liberalism extended as far as sympathizing with oppressed (and Catholic) peoples, especially in Poland and his beloved Ireland, and in the realm of private charity, but not as far as the numerous forms of Socialism. He admitted that the situation demanded decisive action in the Assembly on 4 January 1850: 'There is no middle way, and here I agree with M. Pierre Leroux,¹²⁹ between Socialism and the Catechism. Here are the two poles between which, in the opinion of your friends, as among your enemies, you, the majority, are obliged to choose!'¹³⁰

Montalembert believed that the situation was desperate enough to bury some hatchets:

we have met some men, our former adversaries, who have held out a hand to us on the eve of what we all see to be an unprecedented catastrophe. Must we reject that hand? No. This will be the greatest reproach that I would deserve in my life, if I were to reject it.... We have accepted the invitation as those hearts devoted to the country and to society must accept it.¹³¹

He added, doubtless with Veillot in mind as well as the *universitaires*, 'The Church, unbending in the struggle against pride, always overtakes her adversaries, her rivals, in a spirit of conciliation, when the moment for peace has arrived.'¹³²

As the chairman of the Commission on Education, Thiers played an enthusiastic role. According to Falloux: 'He multiplied his efforts, refuted the arguments of our opponents, presented his own always in an enlightened way and, by dint of his frankness, good sense, and eloquence at the service of liberty of conscience and of the great interests of society, he finally won a decisive majority.'¹³³ Thiers did not pull any punches in his analysis of the situation in France. He especially feared the 'thirty-seven thousand socialists and communists', the 'veritable anti-priests' who were the *instituteurs* who were employed in

¹²⁹ Pierre Leroux (1797-1871) was a writer whose thought was influenced by Christianity and Socialism as well as Saint-Simonianism.

¹³⁰ Falloux, *Mémoires*, ii, 158: 'Il n'y a pas de milieu, je le dis avec M. Pierre Leroux, entre le Socialisme et le Catéchisme. Voilà les deux pôles entre lesquels, de l'aveu de vos amis, comme de vos adversaires, vous, majorité, vous êtes obligés de choisir!'

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, ii, 159: 'Nous avons rencontré des hommes, nos adversaires de la veille, qui nous ont tendu la main, au lendemain de ce que nous regardions tous comme une catastrophe imprévue. Devions-nous repousser cette main? Non. Ce serait la plus grande reproche que je me ferais de ma vie, si je l'avais repoussée... Nous avons accepté l'invitation comme devaient l'accepter des cœurs dévoués à la patrie et à la société.'

¹³² *Ibid.*: 'L'Église, inflexible dans la lutte contre l'orgueil, dépasse toujours ses adversaires, ses rivaux, dans l'esprit de conciliation, quand le moment de la paix est arrivé.'

¹³³ *Ibid.*, ii, 160: 'il multiplia ses efforts, repoussa les arguments de nos contradicteurs, présenta les siens, sous une forme toujours lumineuse, et à la force de franchise, de bon sens, d'éloquence au service de la liberté de conscience et des grands intérêts sociaux, il conquiert enfin une majorité décisive.'

France at the time.¹³⁴ He even demanded they all be fired from their posts, or that at least 'draconian legislation' be imposed upon them. For the peasant masses he was solicitous that they did receive only the most elementary form of education, as 'the child who has been to school too often does not want afterwards to follow the plough.'¹³⁵ Nonetheless, although he espoused wholeheartedly the need for universal clerical control of elementary education, Thiers still preferred a bourgeois education to be more conducive to 'free philosophical discussion'.¹³⁶

Falloux did not allow himself to play a decisive part in framing the law, assured that the other members of the Commission would be able to do the work for him. He stated that he was too preoccupied with other affairs, such as the Assembly and the *Conseil des Ministres*.¹³⁷ Nevertheless, he would sit in on meetings of the Commission, on one occasion telling Thiers that 'The Commission does not engage the minister, who is sat in this chair; he is there to listen to you and to study you, but he must not take part in the discussion.'¹³⁸ Falloux himself disavowed a central role in forming the law that was to bear his name: 'I have been made responsible for the law of 1850, both as a crime and as an honour. In reality, I have the right neither to reproach nor to praise, except only in a very small measure. My only merit was to know how to put myself into the background in good time and in good faith.'¹³⁹ Modern historians would concur with this analysis. J. P. T. Bury and R. P. Tombs in their biography of Thiers comment: 'Although known as the Loi Falloux, it could well have been called the Loi Thiers.'¹⁴⁰ One should not, however, dismiss Falloux's influence quite so easily. The very fact that Falloux felt that he could play such a passive role in the discussions of the Commission is significant. Whereas his influence in the Commission for Public Works has been exaggerated, his role in the formulation of his eponymous law has been overlooked: his political skill, along with that of Montalembert, in constituting the Commission itself was at first sight a gamble, but from almost the first moment after the Commission met a guarantee of its success.

¹³⁴ J. P. T. Bury and R. P. Tombs, *Thiers 1797-1877: A Political Life* (London, 1986), p. 121.

¹³⁵ Bury and Tombs, *Thiers*, p. 120.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

¹³⁷ Falloux, *Mémoires*, ii, 33.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, ii, 34: '...la Commission ne s'occupe pas du ministre qui est assis dans ce fauteuil; il est là pour vous écouter et s'instruire, il ne doit pas prendre part au débat.'

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, ii, 30: 'On me fait tantôt un crime, tantôt un honneur de la loi de 1850. En réalité, je n'ai droit ni au reproche ni à l'éloge au delà d'une très modeste mesure. Mon seul mérite a été d'avoir su m'effacer à propos et de bonne foi.'

The participation of such conservative freethinkers as Thiers, who had opposed freedom of Catholic education when in government during the July Monarchy, highlights the degree to which a consensus among former rivals had been reached on the *spectre rouge* as a general threat to social order. Thiers even overcame his previous phobia towards the Jesuits, albeit after being harangued by the Abbé Dupanloup, who was to become a lifelong friend.¹⁴¹

The enthusiasm of Thiers was tempered by the moderation of certain Liberal Catholics in the groups, wary of putting themselves into a fortress. They were fearful of a return to the methods of the governments of the Restoration monarchy, whose particular brand of clerico-royalism, especially in the sphere of education, had pushed too many Frenchmen towards anti-clericalism and opposition towards both the regime and the Church.

Louis Veillot, on the other hand, was up to great mischief. He tried to obtain from Rome official disapproval for the law, and to whip up opposition within the French episcopate. However, the Papal Nuncio, Mgr Fornari, disavowed Veillot's efforts.¹⁴² But opposition to the law was not confined to Veillot: many French prelates wrote to express their concern about the law, and especially its compromises with the *Université*. The law endured well beyond the ephemeral ascendancy of the Rue de Poitiers group. But its failure to gain popular support, both within and without the Church, demonstrates the conflicts that afflicted liberal Catholicism in the mid-nineteenth century, and allowed the forces of the Extreme Right to gain the upper hand, if not in power then at least within the popular imagination. Even its association with Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte need not have led to its unpopularity, especially as the Second Empire found its most fervent support among the Ultramontane clergy of the Veillot school.

The reception of the law by the French episcopate was mixed, and the scale of opposition was greater than Falloux allows in the *Mémoires*. J. K. Huckaby, in his article in 1965, described wide-ranging disquiet about the law's implications among clergy in general and the bishops in particular,¹⁴³ most of whom followed Veillot's line.¹⁴⁴ Although Falloux quoted extensively from the letters of those prelates

¹⁴⁰ Bury and Tombs, *Thiers*, p. 120.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

¹⁴² Falloux, *Mémoires*, ii, 164.

¹⁴³ J. K. Huckaby, 'Roman Catholic reaction to the Falloux law', *French Historical Studies* (Fall, 1965), 203-213.

¹⁴⁴ Huckaby, 'Roman Catholic reaction to the Falloux law', p. 207.

who supported the law, such as Cardinal de Bonald, Mgr Donnet, the Archbishop of Bordeaux, and Mgr Fabre des Essarts, Bishop of Blois,¹⁴⁵ the majority expressed their disquiet: the Bishop of Luçon lamented to Pius IX on 16 August 1849 that a Protestant and a Jew had been placed on the central committee along with four members of the Church hierarchy.¹⁴⁶ The Bishop of Chartres was disappointed by the continuing influence of the *Université*.¹⁴⁷ The right of the state to inspect the *petits séminaires* caused the Bishop of Châlons on 10 March 1850 to expostulate against the invasion of his 'sacred asylum' by state inspectors, as the school was in any case 'the house of God'.¹⁴⁸ Mgr Pie of Poitiers was also found among the opposition, and Dom Prosper Guéranger of Solesmes became hostile to the law after a spell of supporting it.¹⁴⁹

The passage of the *loi Falloux* through the Assembly in the spring of 1850 was stormy. Again, Thiers proved himself to be its staunchest defender, skilfully brushing aside accusations of betraying himself to the Jesuits. He stated: 'In the presence of these dangers which menace society, I have held out my hand to those who have fought against me, and against whom I have fought; my hand is in theirs, and I hope that it will stay there for the common defence of this society to which you can well be indifferent, but which touches us deeply.'¹⁵⁰

The most robust opposition to the law came from Victor Hugo who spoke on 15 January 1850. He applauded the concept of liberty of education, but abhorred the Church's monopoly of that freedom (which was not quite the case). He stated that he desired 'religious education of the Church, and not the religious education of a party.'¹⁵¹ He described the *parti catholique* as 'the parasites of the Church' and added that 'Ignatius was the enemy of Jesus.'¹⁵² He envisaged a future of the 'sacristy sovereign, intelligence conquered and bound, books torn up, the sermon replacing the press, the night of the spirit made by the

¹⁴⁵ Falloux, *Mémoires*, ii, 164-6.

¹⁴⁶ Huckaby, 208.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 207.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 209.

¹⁴⁹ R. P. Lecanuet, *Montalembert* (3 vols, Paris, 1919-1926), ii, 469.

¹⁵⁰ Falloux, *Mémoires*, ii, 162: 'en présence des dangers qui menacent la société, j'ai tendu la main à ceux qui m'avaient combattu, que j'avais combattus; ma main est dans la leur, elle y restera, j'espère, pour la défense commune de cette société qui peut bien vous être indifférente, mais qui nous touche profondément.'

¹⁵¹ V. Hugo, 'La Liberté de l'Enseignement', *Actes et Paroles*, i, *Avant l'Exil 1841-1851*, *Œuvres Complètes de Victor Hugo* (Paris, 1937), pp. 180-1.

shadow of soutanes, and geniuses subdued by beadles!’¹⁵³ Unlike Veuillot, Hugo did not think that the combination of the *Université* and the clericals would be impotent. He railed presciently against the combination of ‘social hypocrisies with material resistance’ to the Republic. He believed that the Party of Order would ‘put a Jesuit everywhere where there is not a gendarme!’ as the defence against threats to order.¹⁵⁴

The price of the *loi Falloux* was an enduring distrust of the Left towards the Church, which was all the more cruel after the rapport tentatively established following the February Revolution in 1848. For the generation of republicans who reached maturity in the next thirty years, Gambetta, Ferry and Clemenceau, the *loi Falloux* symbolized the insidious power of clericalism, that had to be stamped out if the country was to revive its full potential as a great nation under the auspices of the one, indivisible and secular Third Republic. The *loi Falloux*’s importance in French ecclesiastical history is significant, as it was passed when Veuillot’s journalism was first able to dominate the scene: the *Univers*’s influence stretched to the journal of Maurras in 1898, *Action Française*.

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 182: ‘Vous êtes les parasites de l’église...Ignace est l’ennemie de Jésus.’

¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 185: ‘la sacristie souveraine, la liberté trahie, l’intelligence vaincue et liée, les livres déchirés, le prône remplaçant la presse, la nuit faite dans les esprits par l’ombre des soutanes, et les génies matés par les bedeaux!’

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 186: ‘et il imaginé que la société sera sauvée parce qu’il aura combiné, pour la défendre, les hypocrisies sociales avec les résistances matérielles, et qu’il aura mis un jésuite partout où il n’y a pas un gendarme!’

The Second Republic (2): the Failure of Fusion and the Failure of the Assembly 1850-1852

The hopes for fusion - The Comte de Chambord - The Wiesbaden Circular - The Peak of Influence? - The revision of the Constitution - The coup d'état of 2 December 1851

IN 1850 THE PRESIDENT had a portentous conversation with Falloux's friend de Rességuier:

I arrive for my promenade in the Bois de Boulogne; nearly all the men whom I encounter, be it on horseback, or in a carriage, hardly bother to salute me. On the other hand, when I dismount, at the opening of the Avenue de Marigny, some workers, busy on a nearby building site, have left their work, as soon as they see me, surround me and cry, 'Vive le prince Napoléon, vive l'Empereur!' This, M. de Rességuier, is France. The elevated classes do not understand the people. Nor are they understood by them, and from that spring all our sorrows.¹⁵⁵

Falloux predicted that France was on the verge of a sort of Lower Empire, partly praetorian and partly popular, and 'the moment of the attempt was doubtful, the decision itself was not.'¹⁵⁶ The portents were ominous: troops were encouraged to shout 'Vive l'Empereur!' at military reviews, in spite of military regulations that forbade shouting on parade (Generals Changarnier and Neumayer protested to their cost). Falloux was not the only person in France to predict that Louis-Napoleon would resort to a *coup d'état*.¹⁵⁷ For him the choice was between false monarchy and true monarchy: the menace of Bonapartism was by definition despotic.

But the popularity of Bonapartism did at least signify the general disenchantment in many quarters (as far as could be perceived) with the Republic. Falloux's belief that France, conservative after the fashion of 1789, would be ripe for a Legitimist monarch on the condition that the advances of 1789 would be safeguarded, meant that the Pretender, whose political views were in an unknown quantity in spring 1850, would be obliged to adopt the representative form of government. For such a government to be possible it was necessary to woo the supporters of the Orléans dynasty.

¹⁵⁵ Falloux, *Mémoires*, ii, 176: 'J'arrive d'une promenade au bois de Boulogne; presque aucun des hommes que j'ai rencontrés, soit à cheval, soit dans de brillants équipages, n'a pris la peine de me saluer. Au contraire, lorsque je suis descendu de cheval, à la porte de l'avenue de Marigny, de nombreux ouvriers, occupés à une construction voisine, ont quitté leur ouvrage, dès qu'ils m'ont reconnu, m'ont entouré et ont crié: « Vive le prince Napoléon, vive l'Empereur! » Voilà la France, monsieur de Rességuier. Les classes élevées ne comprennent pas le peuple. Aussi ne sont-elles pas comprises par lui, et de là tous nos malheurs.'

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, ii, 177: 'si l'heure de la tentative restait douteuse, l'idée fixe ne l'était pas.'

¹⁵⁷ See J. Ridley, *Napoleon III and Eugénie* (London, 1979), p. 293; J. P. T. Bury and R. P. Tombs, *Thiers 1797-1877: A Political Life* (London, 1986), pp. 134-5.

The hopes for fusion

The death of Louis-Philippe in August 1850 was the first occasion in which the process of fusion received public attention. There had been already overtures towards the House of Orléans, before the death of the former King of the French. He himself had been detached from the idea of restoration.

In exile in England, the dying former King of the French, Louis-Philippe, in an interview with the Prince de Broglie, spoke on the principle of legitimacy: 'Ah! those abstract political theories, what are they worth? Believe me, there is no legitimacy, there is no sovereignty of the people: these are mere words. *There is the custom of the kingdom that is always observed within it* [italics in the original]; in England, it is *King, Lords and Commons* [in English in the original]. In France, it was the King, but now there is no custom, what remains?'¹⁵⁸ From this despair grew pragmatism, or so Falloux liked to claim:

Willingly, he repeated how he had hardly allowed the crown to be placed on his head, that he had only consented to this because a regency, which is always difficult in France seemed to be impossible, and that royalty had presented itself to him as the only way of preserving monarchical government. As he defined the nature of his actions in 1830, King Louis-Philippe pleased himself by concluding that nonetheless no precedent existed, that the crown of France had never stopped belonging by *right* to the head of the House of Bourbon, that in *fact* the Comte de Chambord was the only one who could claim it and wear it.¹⁵⁹

The Duchesse d'Orléans had other ideas: she recognized only the right of her young son, the Comte de Paris to occupy the throne of France, and she dismissed the senile musings of Louis-Philippe; after all, the King had abdicated in his grandson's favour in February 1848.¹⁶⁰ Her 'ambition maternelle'¹⁶¹ was resolute indeed; until her son came of age, she would rule as regent.

The Comte de Chambord

One of the greatest obstacles to the restoration of the monarchy was the Comte de Chambord: this was a truth that dared not speak its name. But Falloux's instinctive devotion to the person of royalty remained.

¹⁵⁸ C. N. Desjoyeaux, *La Fusion Monarchique 1848-1873: d'après des sources inédites* (Paris, 1913), p. 8: 'Ah! me dit-il, des principes abstraites en politique, qu'est-ce que ça vaut? Croyez-moi, il n'y a pas de légitimité, il n'y a pas de souveraineté du peuple; ce sont des mots. Il y a *la coutume du royaume toujours observée en icelui* [sic]; en Angleterre, c'est *King, Lords and Commons*. En France, c'était le Roi, mais maintenant qu'il n'y a plus de coutume, qu'est-ce qui reste?'

¹⁵⁹ Falloux, *Mémoires*, i, 180: 'Volontiers, il répétait combien il avait eu de peine à laisser placer la couronne sur la tête, qu'il n'y avait consenti que parce qu'une régence, toujours difficile en France, lui avait paru impossible alors, et parce que la royauté s'était présentée à lui comme le seul moyen de conserver le gouvernement monarchique. En même temps, qu'il définissait ainsi la nature de ses actes en 1830, le roi Louis-Philippe se plaisait à conclure que, désormais, rien de pareil n'existait plus; que la couronne de France n'avait jamais cessé d'appartenir *en droit* au chef de la maison de Bourbon; qu'*en fait*, le comte de Chambord était seul aujourd'hui en situation de la revendiquer et de la porter...'

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, ii, 180-1.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, ii, 187.

The year 1850-1 revealed to Falloux the tensions that made up Chambord's character. Falloux was encouraged to find him intelligent company. As has been argued by M. L. Brown, the Comte de Chambord's dominant passion was honour, and his conception of his monarchical position was based on mysticism rather than on crude feudal reaction: he had no real gift for politics, however, and dealing with politicians must have been a burden that he found difficult to bear, especially those parliamentarians such as Berryer and Falloux who were regarded as loose cannons.

The Wiesbaden Circular

Louis-Philippe, the ex-King of the French, died at Claremont on 23 August 1850. The Comte de Chambord ordered his court to mourn for the dead King for the length of time dictated by etiquette. This attitude raised the hopes of the fusionists of both camps. But they were quickly dashed. On 30 August, the Comte de Chambord issued the famed 'Circular' from Wiesbaden, where he had gone to take the waters.

The Circular was intended to signify the start of the political maturity of the twenty-nine-year-old Pretender. As he was the 'dépositaire'¹⁶² of the rights of the crown, it declared that: 'he reserves to himself the direction of politics.'¹⁶³ Because of the need of 'assuring the complete unity of views and of action that alone can make our strength, he has designated those men whom he has delegated in France, for the application of his policies.'¹⁶⁴ But the Pretender was vague about the actual direction such policies would take, and he was explicit only in his condemnation of 'this system of appeal to the people as it implies the negation of the great national principle of hereditary monarchy.'¹⁶⁵

The Circular set an unfortunate precedent, according to Falloux: 'it inaugurated this system of speaking alone, without consulting beforehand those men who were nearer to the country, a system that I have had many an opportunity to deplore, and which had on many occasions, from 1850 to 1873, has adjourned or aborted all the attempts at the restoration of the monarchy.'¹⁶⁶ Falloux found it a mystery that

¹⁶² Ibid., ii, 199: 'abandonner sincèrement, absolument tout système qui pourrait porter la moindre atteinte aux droits dont il est le dépositaire.'

¹⁶³ Falloux, *Mémoires*, ii, 198: 'M. le comte de Chambord a déclaré qu'il se réservait la direction de la politique générale.'

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.: 'pour assurer cette unité complète de vues et d'action qui seule peut faire notre force, il a désigné les hommes qu'il délèguait en France, pour l'application de sa politique.'

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.: 'Il a formellement et absolument condamné ce système de l'appel au peuple comme impliquant la négation du grand principe national de l'hérédité monarchique.'

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., ii, 197: 'il inaugura ce système de parler seul, sans concert préalable avec les hommes accrédités près du pays; système que je n'aurai que trop d'occasion de déplorer et qui, à diverses reprises, de 1850 à 1873, ajourna ou fit échouer toutes les tentatives de restauration monarchique.'

the Comte de Chambord should allow this rambling and obscure document to be made public at a time when Falloux was hoping that Berryer was in the process of making Legitimism seem more acceptable to the majority of Frenchmen, both within and without the Assembly.

In his important article of 1968,¹⁶⁷ Marvin R. Cox opines that the liberal Legitimists, and especially Falloux and Berryer, were 'hoist on their own petard' by the Wiesbaden Circular, which was the result of their own intrigues against the populist *Droit national* faction, which had been responsible in turn for numerous recent outbreaks of public disorder in the Midi and South of France, rather than of the intrigues of de Lévis and his other advisors at Frohsdorf. This is not, of course, the impression that one gets from a reading of the *Mémoires*. For his argument, Cox relied chiefly on the testimony of the Duc de Lévis rather than on that of Falloux, and indeed the cautious Lévis only apports blame implicitly, not mentioning either Berryer or Falloux by name.

The reference to 'l'appel au peuple' was clearly a condemnation of the *Droit national* movement of the Marquis de La Rochejacquelein, who reacted to the Circular as though he had sustained 'une profonde blessure';¹⁶⁸ it was a mystery why the Prince should single out this group for such a condemnation, especially since he held views about universal suffrage that were more liberal than those of Falloux, who prided himself on his liberalism. This was an inconsistency that did not escape Falloux's attention.¹⁶⁹ Later, the Marquis de La Rochejacquelein rallied to the Second Empire, as its mixture of authoritarianism and popular suffrage appealed to his political temperament. On the other hand, Falloux's views were markedly opposed to the establishment of universal suffrage (or the re-establishment, as would have been the case in August 1850 after the law of 31 May of the same year, which considerably restricted the franchise). Furthermore, there was no mention in the Circular of fusion (perhaps fortunately), or of the necessity of conducting royal policy through the means of the Assembly: indeed, some of the language smacked of Versailles, or perhaps more significantly perhaps, of the Four Ordinances of Charles X. All this served to upset Orléanist constitutional sensibilities. Furthermore, the Comte de Chambord declared that he was authorizing a committee to implement these policies, which consisted of de Lévis, Saint-Priest, Berryer, Pastoret and des Cars. According to Cox, Chambord believed at this stage that he had already

¹⁶⁷ M. R. Cox, 'The Liberal Legitimists and the Party of Order in the Second French Republic', *French Historical Studies*, v 1968, 463.

¹⁶⁸ Falloux, *Mémoires*, ii, 201.

favoured Berryer and Falloux enough by condemning the *Droit national* faction: he was now rewarding those followers of his who walked more closely to his beat.

Falloux tended to blame Chambord's advisors, and Chambord's own actions were described in terms of influence rather than direct blame.¹⁷⁰ Falloux did not want to leave the reader in any doubt about whose influence this was. The advisor to the Prince, the Duc de Lévis, for whom Falloux had a grudging respect, was often criticized for his pusillanimous policy. None of the Prince's advisors were parliamentarians, not even Saint-Priest, who had been a deputy in the Legislative Assembly for a year: 'but had hardly pushed the sympathy that easily enlivened his character beyond the lobbies of the Palais-Bourbon'.¹⁷¹ With scarcely concealed contempt, Falloux described his attitude towards the eccentric Duc des Cars who claimed he could raise an army in the Vendée and the Midi. Some authors¹⁷² have assumed that Falloux's attack on the Circular originated from a wounded *amour propre* at thwarted ambition: although this does not account for the totality of his dissatisfaction with the direction of the Legitimist political programme, it can explain at least the irritation that lay behind it. In the midst of the storm that had broken out over the contents of the Circular, Falloux and Berryer set about trying to repair the damage it had wrought. With malicious glee, Falloux noted that even de Lévis, des Cars and Saint-Priest had admitted that this time they had erred: 'they avowed sincerely that they had not foreseen the effect and declared themselves, without hesitation, desirous of seizing the next opportunity that would present under better aspect the true policy of the king.'¹⁷³

First Berryer and Falloux were able to persuade Chambord to set up a new committee that would consist of more members, 'the principal representatives of the monarchist party'¹⁷⁴ (this time including Falloux!), than the number originally posited, and it would debate the political proposals put before them by Chambord, before they were made public, as would have happened normally with a 'discours de la

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., ii, 200.

¹⁷⁰ There are many examples of phrases such as 'M. le comte de Chambord—*je ne pourrais dire avec certitude sous quelle influence*[my italics]...' (Ibid., ii, 196.)

¹⁷¹ Ibid., ii, 200: 'il n'avait, ni par un mot ni par un acte, étendu au delà des couloirs du Palais-Bourbon la sympathie qu'éveillait aisément son caractère.'

¹⁷² For example P. de Luz, author of *Henri V*.

¹⁷³ Falloux, *Mémoires*, ii, 204: 'ils avouèrent sincèrement qu'ils n'en avaient pas prévu l'effet et se déclarèrent, sans hésitation, désireux de saisir une occasion qui présenterait sous un meilleur aspect la vraie politique du roi.'

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.: 'les principaux représentants du parti monarchique.'

couronne'¹⁷⁵. Many of the new members had good parliamentary credentials: the Duc de Noailles, the Duc de Clermont-Tonnerre, the Duc de Valmy, MM. de Vatimesnil, de Menoist d'Azy, and de Rainneville. Furthermore, they 'had never been separated for an instant from M. Berryer, ever since our entry into parliamentary life.'¹⁷⁶ Falloux's role on this committee was curtailed by the death of his mother.

On 2 December 1850, just after his mother's death, Falloux received a letter from the Comte de Chambord which seemed to be a full endorsement of Falloux's recent activities, as well as an explanation for Falloux's exclusion from the formation of policy: 'For some time, I wanted to ask you to join us, but your position did not allow it [both as a minister and as an invalid]. Today as nothing prevents this any more, I am making an appeal to your devotion, happy to give you immediately this new proof of the just confidence that I have in you and a new way to serve a cause which is that of France.... I have learnt with satisfaction the salutary effect your words had had in a quite recent circumstance.'¹⁷⁷ Interestingly, Chambord omitted to be more specific about the precise nature of the 'recent circumstance', a sign perhaps of his embarrassment after having to temper the full policy outlined in the Circular.

If Cox's argument is valid, then the ramifications are indeed significant for the study of Falloux's subsequent career. Chambord was not an adventurous man in any sense, and above all in a political sense, and once he had been let down, it was unlikely that he would have desired to call on the services of Falloux, after Chambord's own services in condemning the *Droit national* faction in the Circular of Wiesbaden had been treated with so little respect. This episode could only have confirmed in his mind that parliamentarians were fundamentally untrustworthy. But, within political circles, if not without, the Circular had been a disaster, and his sense of honour dictated that Falloux was most certainly the man who could navigate the treacherous waters of the Assembly.

The Peak of Influence?

With good grace, the Comte de Chambord invited Falloux to visit him in Venice for consultations about the political future of royalism. This visit of Falloux to Venice in March 1851, ushered in Falloux's brief

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., ii, 205: 'qui ne nous étions jamais séparés un instant de M. Berryer, depuis notre entrée dans la vie parlementaire.'

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., ii, 205-6: 'Depuis longtemps, je voulais vous prier de vous joindre à eux, mais votre position ne le permettait pas. Aujourd'hui que rien ne s'y oppose plus, je viens faire appel à votre dévouement, heureux de vous donner tout à la fois cette nouvelle preuve de la juste confiance que j'ai en vous et un nouveau

ascendancy in influence.¹⁷⁸ The respect with which Chambord treated Falloux's opinion seemed to offer a glimpse of what the future might contain if the Pretender were to place his trust in the parliamentary method of restoration. Falloux argued first assiduously against *le parti militaire*, represented by his friend, Comte Théodore de Quatrebarbes and the Duc des Cars, that one military setback would be enough to check the restoration of the Bourbons irrevocably. Falloux's harangues did not, however, always meet with unqualified assent from Chambord: 'the Prince would protest with liveliness, but always with great cordiality. He would often repeat to me "You are mistaken." He never forced me to be silent. One felt that he followed certain habits of thought, affections and hopes, from which he detached himself with pain, but on which he was able and wanted to hear the truth.'¹⁷⁹

Eventually de Lévis suggested a means by which *le parti militaire* and the group that surrounded Berryer should open negotiations with the Duc des Cars. At the time Falloux was equally sanguine about the revision of the Constitution - an issue that was to envenom relations within the Party of Order: 'This subject was less intimate [i.e. than the question of co-operation between Berryer, Falloux and des Cars], and so was less delicate than the former.'¹⁸⁰ Chambord thus left no detailed instructions, but he ultimately desired the obstruction of the President's growth of power, as he, like his followers, was under no illusions but that a Second Empire was in the offing. Falloux was told that he was formally authorized to speak on the revision in Chambord's name. De Lévis was despatched to Paris to ascertain the opinion of Berryer. Falloux's parting shot was a citation from Bossuet:

The greatest disorder of the spirit is to believe that things exist because one wants them to be. It is sometimes tiresome to be contradicted, but it is dangerous never to be. The most fatal adulation for a king would be the mediocrity of the men with whom he habitually comes into contact, a mediocrity which, giving him the feeling of actual superiority, accustoms him only to count on his own judgement.¹⁸¹

moyen de servir une cause qui est celle de la France....J'ai appris avec satisfaction l'effet salutaire que votre parole a produit dans une circonstance toute récente.'

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., ii, 223: 'Tous ces points acquis, je devais considérer comme complet le succès des idées que j'étais venu plaider à Venise.' And *ibid.*, ii, 216: 'Rien ne pouvait s'ajouter à la bonne grâce de M. le comte de Chambord envers moi.'

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., ii, 221: 'le Prince protestait avec vivacité, mais toujours avec une grande cordialité. Il me répétait souvent: « Vous vous trompez. » Il ne m'imposait jamais silence. On sentait qu'il y avait en lui des habitudes d'esprit, des affections et des espérances, don't il se détacherait avec peine, mais sur lesquelles cependant il pouvait et voulait entendre la vérité.'

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., ii, 222: 'Ce sujet était moins intime, et par conséquent, moins délicat que le précédent.'

¹⁸¹ Ibid., ii, 223: 'Le plus grand dérèglement de l'esprit, c'est de croire que les choses sont parce qu'on veut qu'elles soient. Il est quelquefois fatigant d'être contredit, mais il est dangereux de ne l'être pas. La plus funeste adulation pour un roi serait la médiocrité des hommes avec lesquels il vivait habituellement en contact, médiocrité qui, lui donnant à lui-même le sentiment d'une supériorité factice, l'habituerait à ne compter qu'avec son propre jugement.'

as well as a warning from Machiavelli: 'A prince judges himself above by the men that surround him.'¹⁸² Whether Chambord took such advice to heart is indeed a moot point, but one can at least speculate that his subsequent aloofness towards the *parlementaires* was not necessarily inconsistent with the spirit of Machiavelli's advice. Perhaps the irony went even deeper than Falloux had calculated.

The confidence shown towards Falloux by Chambord in turn affected Falloux's opinion of him. Falloux had an exalted sense of kingship, enhanced by its sacral aspect in French history, in a period in which many members of French, as well as European, nobility still regarded their monarch as a representative of the divine order in society. Thus the following description of the Prince appears unctuous in the light of Falloux's more measured statements made elsewhere in the *Mémoires*: 'M. le Comte de Chambord was then at the height of his prestige. His head had all its nobility, his mien all its clarity, his voice all its resonance. His gait compensated, by its ease and liveliness, the disgrace that a cruel accident had left behind.'¹⁸³

Falloux was overwhelmed by the attention paid to him by the aunt of the Pretender, Madame la Dauphine, the daughter of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. Her awe-struck admirer described the morbid gracelessness with which countless historians have attributed her in more sympathetic terms: 'Sadness was stamped on her manner and attitude, but to the same degree it reflected an unchanging resignation and an unchanging sweetness.'¹⁸⁴ Indeed to have his opinion on the Prince sought by the daughter of Louis XVI, the same Prisoner of the Temple, must have been deeply gratifying to Falloux. In the *Mémoires* he says that 'I answered with the most sincere praise.'¹⁸⁵

Thus Falloux returned to France 'with a profound gratitude, a fortified hope and a revived ardour.'¹⁸⁶

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid., ii, 212: 'M. le comte de Chambord était alors dans la plénitude de son prestige. La tête avait toute sa noblesse, le regard toute sa limpidité, la voix tout son éclat. La démarche rachetait, par son aisance et sa vivacité, la disgrâce que lui avait laissée un cruel accident.' This is a reference to Chambord's limp, which was the result of a riding accident a decade before.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., ii, 213: 'La tristesse était empreinte sur ses traits et dans son attitude, mais au même degré s'y reflétaient aussi une inaltérable résignation et une inaltérable douceur.'

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., ii, 214: 'Je répondis par l'éloge le plus sincère.'

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., ii, 224: 'je regagnai la France avec une reconnaissance profonde, une espérance fortifiée et une ardeur rajeunie.'

During this time talks concerning fusion continued and some Orléanists would make tantalizing offers of greater interest in the future of the Comte de Chambord as king of France: 'A traditional power which naturally relies on the superior classes and morals of the nation gives all types of guarantees that in his hands, liberty will not be turned against order.'¹⁸⁷ The note continued: 'It is only in becoming frankly liberal that the Senior Branch can arouse in the Cadet Branch the instinct that keeps itself apart, in laying out a terrain that is honourable and easy for agreement.'¹⁸⁸ Falloux was to discover the Senior Branch's tardiness in embracing such liberalism led many Orléanists to search for the attainment of their liberal goals elsewhere.

The question of the flag had not been elevated to that of a question of Chambord's honour at this stage. He simply insisted that while Madame la Dauphine still lived, haunted by her memories of imprisonment in the Temple during the Revolution, it would be both unnecessary and unkind to adopt the tricolour. But Chambord stated that once he had chosen his flag, he would not relent of his decision, although at the time he seemed to be agnostic. Falloux records a curious anecdote, which is meant to illustrate the degree to which Chambord had not totally endorsed the attitudes of the Extreme Right that were ultimately to deny him the throne: Berryer, leaving the hotel where the Marquis de La Ferronnays was lodged, opened a cupboard door in error and saw Chambord's uniform complete with a tricolour cockade mounted on the hat. This story was rigorously denied by the Marquise de La Ferronnays in a letter of 26 February 1888 (presumably in response to the recently published *Mémoires d'un Royaliste*): 'The uniforms, which no one saw before their departure for Austria, were taken directly from the tailor to my father's lodgings where my husband and I were residing....No cockade was on the hat.'¹⁸⁹

A major complaint of Falloux against his royal master was that Chambord showed too much inconsistency in selecting which counsel to follow. It seems strange that a man who felt himself capable of

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., ii, 235: 'Un pouvoir traditionnel qui s'appuie naturellement sur les classes supérieures et morales de la nation donne toutes sortes de garanties que dans ses mains, la liberté ne sera pas tournée contre l'ordre.'

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., ii, 236: 'Ce n'est qu'en devenant franchement libérale que la branche aînée peut ôter à la branche cadette l'instinct que celle-ci conserve de se tenir à part, et lui fournir un terrain honorable et facile de ralliement.'

¹⁸⁹ Cited in P. de Luz, *Henri V* (Paris, 1931), p. 154n.: 'Les uniformes, que personne ne vit avant leur départ pour l'Autriche, furent apportés directement de chez le tailleur à l'hôtel de mon père, où nous demeurions, mon mari et moi...Aucune cocarde ne figurait au chapeau.'

giving a Prince advice weaned from Machiavelli and Bossuet seemed to be ignorant of that basic prerogative of kings, namely the right to listen at will to whichever advisor he might choose.

The revision of the Constitution

In July, with the connivance of the Élysée Palace, the Assembly debated revision of the Constitution of 1848. The main point at issue was the re-election of the President, who pleaded that the important work he had set out to do, had not yet been completed. Some conservatives acquiesced in this particular change, as the prospect of a Red Armageddon of 1852 alarmed them. For others, above all the republicans, the attempt to change the Constitution was an attack on the integrity of the Republic itself. Given the President's recent provocative behaviour, this conclusion was not unreasonable.

The long-term objectives of Falloux and Berryer and the other members of the Legitimist Party were self-evidently the return of the Senior branch of the Bourbons to the throne of France. They were encouraged at this stage by the verbal assurances given by Chambord to Falloux at Venice in the spring. The short-term aims, especially as concerned the revision of the Constitution, were not conducive to unity within the Legitimist faction. Falloux and Berryer litigated for the Constitution's revision, but their proposals for the restoration of the monarchy through constitutional revision were clearly so radical that they would not be voted in with the three quarter majority required. Falloux criticized the Republicans of the Cavaignac shade for their timidity, rigidity and conservatism in staying doggedly loyal to the 1848 Constitution. But he was also worried by the support given to the schemes of Louis-Napoleon by such well-meaning figures as Montalembert and Broglie—*catholiques avant tout*—who believed that an extension of the Presidency of Louis-Napoleon would be the only secure means of warding off the approaching menace of 1852.¹⁹⁰ Falloux had warned Montalembert as early as December 1848 that the religious party would be compromised by association with Louis-Napoleon,¹⁹¹ and two-and-a-half years later the *ralliement* he so deplored between Louis-Napoleon and the Church was complete: the Legitimists would henceforth have to fight their corner without the support of the Catholic Party.¹⁹² It was also a paradox for Montalembert who had lobbied for the separation of Church and State in his days with the *Avenir* that he was now a main proponent of the alliance between Sabre and Altar. But it was the activities

¹⁹⁰ Falloux, *Mémoires*, ii, 243.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, ii, 5.

¹⁹² F. A. Simpson, *Louis Napoleon and the Recovery of France 1848-1856* (London, 1923), p. 116.

of Thiers that bemused and frustrated Falloux most. Thiers, by now the self-appointed guardian of French Republican integrity in the Assembly in this trial of strength with the Élysée, defended the present Constitution so doggedly that he aroused suspicions among the republicans of the Mountain. (They did, however, vote against the Proposition of the Quaestors in order to defend themselves against the wiles of Thiers in November 1851.)

Thiers had gone to the stage of allying not only with the republicans of the Mountain but also with the intransigent Legitimists of the Assembly, and with the mysterious 'M. de X.', who set about trying to rouse Legitimist support for maintaining the 1848 Constitution. The likelihood is that the Comte de Chambord developed cold feet after initially assenting to the moderate wing's lobbying for revision, and in any case, the idea of connivance at the plan to extend the length of power of the nephew of the usurper Bonaparte must have been very distasteful to so scrupulous and otherworldly a man as Chambord. Falloux never totally trusted Thiers, but the break in their relations did not occur until after Thiers' sabotage of monarchical hopes as first President of the Third Republic. But the 1870s were not the first time that Thiers had argued that the republican form of government 'divides us least'. In 1851 Thiers was (vainly) trying to persuade the Prince de Joinville to stand as president. Falloux was under no illusions about Thiers's own presidential ambitions. Thiers's sleight-of-hand during the debate on the revision of the constitution was something that Falloux never forgave, or at least never forgot. Thiers tried to get his revenge later by voting against Falloux's election to the membership of the Immortals of the Académie française in 1856 (Thiers's refusal to vote for Falloux only encouraged Guizot, who boasted that he had never read Falloux's much lauded *Histoire de Saint Pie V*, to support his candidature¹⁹³). But only a few days after Falloux's election to the Académie française, a reconciliation occurred at Berryer's château at Augerville: this lasted until 1871.

In a manner that corresponds with the threnodic tone of much else in the *Mémoires*, Falloux believed that as so often in recent years the unity of monarchists and Catholics was within their grasp. But he tended to assume that unity was a thing possible among politicians, and that he himself represented the golden mean between betrayal of a principle and rigidity. It was thus either delusion or illusion that in his view prevented other politicians, who were normally highly able, from recognizing the moments when

¹⁹³ Falloux, *Mémoires*, iii, 32.

France could be united. Thus he had a great distrust for 'extremism' which was born as much from temperament as it was from political experience: 'The extreme parties always have the same method: to give way to exaggerated demonstrations, to seek after personal satisfactions without calculating the effect on general opinion.'¹⁹⁴ Of course general opinion was a limited franchise, following the electoral law of 31 May 1850. Falloux was not persuaded that Louis-Napoleon had the disenfranchised masses close to his heart when he issued his other great demand for the restoration of universal suffrage: 'The abrogation of the law of 31 May was only an appeal to popularity.'¹⁹⁵ Nonetheless, this appeal to popularity was to be successful, and in rejecting the revision of the Constitution the Assembly only played into Louis-Napoleon's hands and provided the pretext for the *coup d'état* of 2 December 1851. The intransigence of the deputies within the Assembly had perverted its credibility even to the extent of alienating it from a population which should, in theory, have been sympathetic to its aspirations: 'France is no longer revolutionary, the great majority of her population is conservative, but conservative of the revolution of 1789. France, satisfied in her civil conditions, in her political guarantees, demands a government which consolidates, with an intelligent firmness, those institutions conforming to her modern genius and to her manners.'¹⁹⁶ But by now the die was cast.

The *coup d'état* of 2 December 1851

During the early hours of 2 December 1851 Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte set in motion Operation Rubicon. By the time Paris awoke, placards had been posted throughout the city proclaiming the dissolution of the Assembly. Falloux's first reaction was to go to the Palais-Bourbon to discover what was taking place. The Palais-Bourbon, however, had been sealed off by troops. After much hurrying and scurrying, an increasing group of representatives led by Berryer converged on the *mairie* of the tenth arrondissement, which was reasonably near to the Palais-Bourbon. There, with due constitutional propriety the improvised Assembly invoked Article 68 of the Constitution and the President was voted out of his office by 300 votes, General Oudinot was put in command of the troops, and prison governors were ordered to release all political

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., ii, 266: 'Les partis extrêmes ont toujours la même méthode: se livrer à des démonstrations exagérées, rechercher des satisfactions personnelles sans en calculer l'effet sur l'opinion générale.'

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., ii, 295: 'L'abrogation de la loi du 31 mai n'était qu'un appel à la popularité.'

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., ii, 331: 'La France n'est plus révolutionnaire, elle est en grande majorité conservatrice, mais conservatrice de la révolution de 89, inclusivement. La France, satisfaite de ses conditions civiles, de ses garanties politiques, demande un gouvernement qui consolide, avec une intelligente fermeté, des institutions conformes à son génie moderne et à ses mœurs.'

prisoners who had been arrested the previous night. Soon however troops were seen amassing in the street outside. In spite of Oudinot's pleas to a brother officer, the representatives were taken to the barracks at the Quai d'Orsay, where troops had already been stationed in readiness for the outcome of the debate in Assembly on the Quaestors motion on 17 November by General Magnan, Commandant of troops in Paris.¹⁹⁷ At midnight the prisoners were taken in prison vans¹⁹⁸ to their respective prisons at the fortress of Mont-Valérien, Mazas or Vincennes. While incarcerated at Mont-Valérien, Falloux received an unexpected visitor in the person of Persigny, who had helped plot the *coup*. When asked if he had forgiven Persigny for not having given him any warning of the *coup*, Falloux replied that he would never have forgiven him if he had been warned. For three days Falloux remained at Mont-Valérien. In the meantime opposition to the *coup* had been crushed in both the working-class Faubourg Saint-Antoine, and the bourgeois Boulevard des Italiens. Belated opposition was to appear in the provinces and was also brutally and swiftly crushed.

Montalembert was not among those representatives arrested on the 2 December. As he had been a party to the Élysée faction, his person was left untouched. Moreover, he was increasingly alarmed after the *coup* by reports from the provinces telling of widespread rebellion: this confirmed his fears of the red dawn of 1852. On 12 December he wrote to the *Univers* that a vote against the *coup* was to side with the socialist revolution.¹⁹⁹ In the journal *La Bretagne* he even included the name of Falloux among those who could be counted on to vote in favour of the *coup* in the plebiscite of 20 December. Falloux's own attempt at publishing a rebuttal of this statement was a futile task, as stringent censorship of the press was in force. Nonetheless Montalembert himself inveigled Louis-Napoleon and Morny to allow a letter to be published in the *Constitutionnel* on 19 December that put Falloux's position in unambiguous terms.

Theoretically, Falloux disavowed that the Legitimists within the Party of Order had betrayed the Revolution of February. Like the Girondin faction in the Revolution of 1789, it was the revolutionaries'

¹⁹⁷ Ridley, *Napoleon III and Eugénie*, p. 294.

¹⁹⁸ On spotting these carriages Falloux commented to de Ressaiguier, 'Décidément, je ne tutoierai plus Morny.' (Falloux, *Mémoires*, ii, 314.) Charles, Duc de Morny (1811-65) was the half brother of Louis-Napoleon by Hortense de Beauharnais and the Comte de Flahaut (1785-1870). A former school fellow of Falloux (*Ibid.*, i, 26), Morny was Minister of the Interior in December 1851.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, ii, 337

turn to be defeated, and 'it is order which triumphs.'²⁰⁰ To Falloux, revolution had a Janus-face: foundation and destruction. The latter had dominated after 1789 and the former after 1848. But Falloux did not specify what permanent good had been brought about by the Second Republic: all he says is that 'in 1789 the Constituent Assembly descended rapidly into the Convention; in 1848 the Constituent Assembly grew peacefully into the Legislative Assembly.'²⁰¹ On the other hand the divisions within the Party of Order, especially during the debate on the revision of the Constitution played into the hands of the Bonapartist lobby. In early 1852 indeed he made the public statement that 'the Second of December should have been foreseen. It is as much the work of its victims as of its victors.'²⁰² He did not mean to include himself in that indictment, but those of Thiers's kind who proved to the President and to France that parliamentarians were a stubborn, self-interested mob of squabblers. But to venture outside this historical progress, one would find 'only mistakes, surprise and catastrophe.'²⁰³ This was his forecast for the Second Empire.

In reality, however, the political experience of the Second Republic had been an overall failure. The achievements that Falloux had a hand in shaping were in jeopardy: the protection of the Pope in Rome depended on the good will of a man, Louis-Napoleon, who was to come under increasing pressure to abandon him. The *loi Falloux* had triggered off one of the most troublesome journalistic controversies of Falloux's life. The rule of a constitutional Assembly had been discredited partly by its own blindness and partly by the President's manoeuvres. The restoration of a monarchy that in his view could have safeguarded the Assembly's constitutional freedom was jettisoned by the blinkered attitudes and near-total lack of political sense of the Comte de Chambord and the selfish ambition of the Duchesse d'Orléans for her son. Furthermore, the failure on the part of parliamentary politicians can only have reinforced Chambord's view that France was not to be left in their hands, and certainly no plan for restoration. Although the fears that had beset Falloux at the time of the Republic's inception had not come to pass, or what was feared had been vigorously suppressed, such as the threat of a proletarian uprising in Paris and in the provinces, there was no guarantee that the Empire of an unscrupulous adventurer was going to bring any peace more permanent than the July Monarchy. In other words, it could all happen again.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., ii, 330: 'c'est l'ordre qui triomphe.'

²⁰¹ Ibid.: 'En 89, on descend rapidement de la Constituante à la Convention; en 1848, on remonte pacifiquement de l'Assemblée Constituante à l'Assemblée Législative.'

²⁰² Ibid., ii, 370: 'Le Deux Décembre devait donc être prévu. Il est autant l'œuvre de ses victimes que de ses auteurs.'

But Falloux cannot escape some blame for the breakdown of the Second Republic: he may have declared an open mind at an early stage of the Republic, but his heart was not in the maintenance of the regime, only of order: the suspicions of the Left that a royalist *coup d'état* was being planned only served to undermine any semblance of unity in the face of developing Bonapartism. In the meantime, Falloux made good his forced retirement from political life and turned his gaze towards his estates in the West.

²⁰³ Ibid., ii, 331: 'Il n'y a hors de là que méprise, surprise et catastrophe.'

In the Wilderness: 1852-1870

Dealings with the Comte de Chambord - Dix Ans d'Agriculture: Rebuilding France from Exile - Return to Bourg-d'Iré - Sarah the Cow - A regret for the Past - The Church under the Second Empire - 'Une audience impériale' - The Society of St Vincent de Paul - Veillot - The Syllabus Errorum and the Vatican Council

UNSURPRISINGLY, Falloux abstained from the plebiscite after the *coup d'état* in December 1851. The repression of the reds that followed the *coup d'état*, which was in many ways the logical continuation of the policy of the Party of Order in 1848-51, when the *démoc-soc* movement was harassed by the agents of order, placed a problem before the Legitimist party. For although the *coup* had dashed hopes for the time being of a Bourbon restoration, the exorcism of *spectre rouge* initially won many plaudits.

Falloux hoped that given his anger and disillusionment with Napoleon III, he would be avoiding public office for the time being in any case. But he was soon nominated as a Deputy for Maine-et-Loire for the elections to the Legislative Body in February 1852. Falloux priggishly decided to follow his 'favourite habit, the habit of the truth',¹ by writing a public letter to his electors, which was published in the *Union de l'Ouest* on 24 January 1852.

This letter struck a cautiously optimistic note: 'More than ever, you must speak to the parties of reconciliation, to the power of moderation and equity, to the population of morality and of order!' He added, 'I omit deliberately a mention of liberty; this word will be badly understood at this time. It will come in its day and will result naturally from the first conditions put into practice with sincerity.'² He furthermore extolled those 'two sentiments of a profound justice,' which were that 'for a great people there is no prosperity without authority; there is no authority without unity.'³

After this letter was published, however, Falloux had a lot of explaining to do: he wrote to Jules de Lasteyrie, an Orléanist and grandson of Lafayette,⁴ on 6 February: he emphasized those passages in his letter that begged the government for moderation, and he added that he had not written one word of praise either for the *coup* itself or for the regime's subsequent offensive actions, such as the confiscation of the

¹ Falloux, *Mémoires*, ii, 368: 'Je résolu de sortir encore une fois d'embarras par mon habitude favorite, l'habitude du vrai.'

² *Ibid.*, ii, 370: 'Parlez, plus que jamais, aux parties de réconciliation, au pouvoir de modération et d'équité aux populations de moralité et d'ordre! J'ometts, à dessein, une mention de liberté; ce mot serait mal compris dans ce moment. Il viendra à son jour et résultera naturellement des ces premières conditions, mise en pratique avec sincérité.'

³ *Ibid.*, ii, 369-70: 'deux sentiments d'une profonde justesse. Ces deux sentiments, les voici : — Il n'y a pas, pour un grand peuple, de prospérité sans autorité; il n'y a pas d'autorité, sans unité.'

Orléans family lands.⁵ He argued that nothing constructive could be achieved in the short term without the 'the great reconciliation which is alone the key'⁶ 'Indeed,' he added sarcastically 'after sixty years of discord, vicissitudes, and of unprecedented crimes, every single one of us shall wait for every recrimination to wear itself out, for injustice to end!'⁷

The attitude of the Comte de Chambord had meanwhile become more inflexible, more 'absolutist'⁸ and 'he affected to ask the advice of no one, which is worse than asking things sometimes from bad counsellors.'⁹ Falloux ascribed this new tendency to the Prince's appreciation of the 'easy success of the *coup d'état*', and the 'applause that followed it, the popular suffrage that sanctioned it' with the obvious exception of armed force and the choice of men.¹⁰ On 27 April 1852 the Committee of Twelve, the establishment of which had been announced in 1850 in the Wiesbaden *Circulaire*, was abolished and replaced by the Committee of Five, which was constituted by the intransigent wing of Chambord's person entourage, especially the Duc de Lévis and the Duc des Cars. A Bureau du Roi was also set up, but its influence was minimal. Above all, the salient characteristic of Chambord's policy at this time was that his supporters were expressly forbidden from taking the oath of loyalty to the new Constitution, and from entering any elective body, be it a municipal council or the Legislative Body.¹¹ There were fears that local Legitimist magnates would rally to the Bonapartist regime on account of its thorough repression of all Red activity.¹² When the nation voted by plebiscite to endorse the Second Empire on 20 November 1852, one fifth of the electorate abstained: most of these abstentions were due to pressure from Frohsdorf.

Falloux's attitude towards abstention reflected the needs of the hour: thus he had abstained from voting for Louis Napoleon in December 1848. Within the Legislative Body, the royalist opposition was

⁴ Ibid., ii, 373.

⁵ Ibid., ii, 372.

⁶ Ibid., ii, 373: 'la grande réconciliation qui seule...est la clef...'

⁷ Ibid: 'Comment, après soixante ans de discordes, de péripéties, de crimes inouïs, nous attendrions les un et les autres que toute récrimination se fût tue, que toute injustice eût cessé!'

⁸ Ibid, ii, 367.

⁹ Ibid.: 'et il affecta de ne plus demander de conseils à personne, ce qui est pire que d'en demander quelquefois à de mauvais conseillers.'

¹⁰ Ibid., ii, 366: 'Le facile succès du coup d'État, l'applaudissement qui le suivit, le suffrage populaire qui le sanctionna, persuadèrent au Prince qu'il y avait là, sauf la violence des procédés et le choix des hommes, un avertissement utile, un bon modèle peut-être.' For a more detailed discussion on the similarities between the *coup d'état* of 2 December 1851 and the changes in policy of the Comte de Chambord in this period, see S. D. Kale, 'French Legitimists and the Politics of Abstention, 1830-1870', *French Historical Studies*, xx, 4 (Fall, 1997), 66-69.

¹¹ Falloux, *Mémoires*, ii, 367.

minimal, almost non-existent. Abstention was initially welcomed, but became frustrating for Falloux especially during the Second Empire.

On 24 November 1860 Napoleon III issued a decree that allowed greater parliamentary participation in the regime, through the Legislative Body. The decrees were about as liberal as could be hoped given the previous eight years of despotic rule. Nonetheless within liberal Legitimist circles, it was thought that some form of liberalization was on the horizon. Falloux and Berryer were curious to discover the views of Chambord now that the situation had changed.

By June of the following year, Chambord's long awaited change of policy on electoral abstention had yet to come. On 3 June 1861 he sent a letter to Chambord in which he advocated a return of the Legitimists to parliamentary life. In it, he described in some detail the concerns of the Réunion Daru that the Orléanists would steal some, if not all of the limelight in defending from the tribune the interests that had been the traditional rallying cries of the Legitimists, such as liberty of the Church and decentralization of the administration. He added that Berryer had almost on his own kept the Legitimist party alive during the eighteen years of the July Monarchy. Falloux wrote to Berryer four days later, on 7 June 1861, 'The more I reflect on it, the more I am convinced that the supreme service to render to M. le Comte de Chambord is to oppose with an invincible resistance the illusions which have for so long limited him, and which have dragged him to an attitude that you have so rightly characterized in recalling the policies of M de Polignac.'¹³

Falloux disavowed personal interest, as he then thought that the state of his health was too precarious for him to re-enter political life.¹⁴ By this he meant that he was unable to stand for election; such considerations did not prevent him from aspiring to an important role in the early years of the Third Republic.

But the dynastic instability of the Second Empire, and the Emperor's reckless foreign policy increased Falloux's great concern that should the Empire fall, the Legitimist party, and the Pretender would be impotent as a leader in the face of disaster. Instead, Chambord demanded that those who 'do not share

¹² Kale, 'French Legitimists and the Politics of Abstention', 681.

¹³ Falloux, *Mémoires*, iii, 114: 'Plus je réfléchis, plus je suis convaincu que le suprême service à rendre à M. le comte de Chambord est d'opposer une invincible résistance aux illusions dont on l'a si longtemps bercé et avec lesquelles on l'entraîne à une attitude que vous avez si justement caractérisé en rappelant la politique de M. de Polignac.'

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, iii, 130.

my manner of seeing [things]’¹⁵ should ‘sacrifice their personal opinion to avoid fatal divisions and then can march united under the same and communal direction.’¹⁶ He added that those who did not do so, followed their own path at their peril.¹⁷

Dix Ans d’Agriculture: rebuilding France from exile

‘Le vrai campagnard est en même actif, et sédentaire; sensible à l’honneur, inaccessible à l’ambition, il sert son pays sans quitter son foyer.’¹⁸

In a previous chapter, it has been noted that Falloux’s role in the Catholic *œuvres* of charity in Paris was more that of a team player, rather than of an individual taking his initiative. But by the time he returned to his estate in 1852, nearing the age of forty-one, he had had behind him a short but tempestuous career in politics which had ended in defiant humiliation on 2 December 1851. For all intents and purposes Falloux’s public career was over, and as Napoleon III consolidated his hold over France during the 1850s, it seemed unlikely that he would ever return to the political scene, at least as a deputy. But Falloux was not persuaded that the distinction between public and private, or indeed in this case, local and national, was relevant in the battle for the soul of his country. He thus turned his eyes from the political wilderness to the rural wilderness that constituted his estate. His essay, *Dix Ans d’Agriculture*, is written as a testament to the benefits that could accrue from local action by a benevolent royalist landlord.

Return to Bourg-d’Iré

His rural paternalism was based, to a large degree, upon his upbringing in the Anjou, if his descriptions of his childhood at the beginning of the *Mémoires* are to be believed, where society was harmonious. Anjou was, like the Vendée, the ‘ardent and pure hearth of royalist tradition.’¹⁹ One can argue that the source for Falloux’s Legitimism was not so much his political thought, but was instead a deep, tribal loyalty: it was simply unthinkable for him to be otherwise. He was at pains to proclaim his loyalty to the Anjou, especially after visiting the area following the abortive uprising led by the Duchesse de Berry in 1832: ‘I promised myself that I should never pass a single year without seeing Anjou once more, and no journey, no pleasure, has made me revoke this promise. Each time I left, I was stricken with a deep sadness. Then, I would love everything - the trees, the empty paths, the pebbles helping the stream to gush along, the old

¹⁵ Ibid.: ‘ne partagent pas ma manière de voir...’

¹⁶ Ibid., iii, 132: ‘de sacrifier leur opinion personnelle, afin d’éviter des divisions funestes et de pouvoir marcher unis sous une même et commun direction.’

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Falloux, *Dix Ans d’Agriculture*, in *Librairie Agricole de la Maison Rustique* (Paris, [1863]), p. 47.

farm-dog.’ So the glamour of Paris accordingly paled into insignificance, ‘Paris in this period [the early years of the July Monarchy] was by no means unattractive to me; but my fondness had never been, and never will be, more than skin-deep.’²⁰ It was a difference that was more than a simple one of sentiment. Falloux believed that provincial France was naturally conservative in politics,²¹ and that too often the manner in which national politics were directed in Paris, they made them simply Parisian politics.

The estate of Bourg-d’Ir  was in a parlous state when he arrived there after his rather summary exit from the political life. His father, the first Comte de Falloux, who died in 1850, had devoted the last twenty years of his life to improving his lands, although not the actual estate of Bourg-d’Ir , to which he moved after the emigration.²² Indeed it was one of these innovations that was the source of his son, Alfred’s, success in later years, the introduction of Durham cattle in 1845.²³ Even if at the time of his birth, the village of Bourg-d’Ir  was ‘was one of the most picturesque, and also most primitive, of the whole country’²⁴ he desired nonetheless not to live amid picturesque ruins, but to breathe new life into his ancestral lands.

He turned his attention to the ch teau itself, which was in need of repair. He was not concerned about the aesthetic grandeur of the building, but he did want it to be comfortable for all seasons.²⁵ This entailed dividing the ch teau in two, for visitors and the family. For decoration within he had paintings copied of *Sainte Monique et Saint Augustin   Ostie*, Vernet’s *La Bataille de Fontenoy* and Tintoretto’s *The Battle of Lepanto*. He also placed a portrait of Pius IX in this gallery: beneath it was Tenerani’s statue *The Guardian Angel*, a present from his brother. At the feet of the angel there was a child pausing between a good thought and an evil one. He would explain to visiting priests that the angel was not ‘of the *Univers*

¹⁹ Falloux, *M moires*, i, 9: ‘Tout ce pays n’avait pas seulement l’aspect ext rieur de la Vend e, il  tait aussi, comme elle, l’ardent et pur foyer des traditions monarchiques.’

²⁰ *Ibid.*, i, 67: ‘Paris,   cette  poque, n’ tait certainement pas sans attraits pour moi; mais il n’avait jamais p n tr , il ne p n tra jamais plus avant que l’ piderme.’

²¹ For example, Falloux summed up the attitude of the country towards the Second Republic at the time of the election of 23 April 1848: ‘r signation   la r publique; inqui tude sans panique; volont  r fl chie de lutter avec patience contre tous les exc s.’ (*Ibid.*, i, 284.)

²² Falloux, *Dix Ans d’Agriculture*, p. 10.

²³ Falloux, *M moires*, i, 67.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, i, 8: ‘Entre tous les villages du pays, celui du Bourg-d’Ir   tait l’un des plus pittoresques, et aussi des plus primitifs.’

²⁵ *Ibid.*, ii, 362.

school. See how he is calm and gentle and how with charity he stretches a fold of his cloak over the child that he wants to guide.²⁶

Friends and former political colleagues would visit. Père Lacordaire struck up a friendship with Falloux's irascible gardener,²⁷ and Montalembert delivered a speech to the *école libre* in the village on honour and moral dignity, after Lacordaire had delivered a sermon on education. Falloux believed that it was probably the only occasion at which the two had spoken together.²⁸ This was probably true, if one were to discount their joint appearance in court in 1831, after their experimental *école libre* in Paris had been closed by the police. Another distinguished visitor was the Irish politician William Monsell (1812-94),²⁹ a friend of Augustin Cochin. While Montalembert was reading to the assembled company Lacordaire's review in the *Correspondant* of Albert de Broglie's *Histoire de l'Église et de l'Empire romain, au IV^e siècle*, Monsell dozed off and began to snore loudly; on being woken, he explained that it was the hour at which Parliament usually sat.³⁰

The advantage of being a rural landlord was that more could be done: this was not, after all, as unprecedented a situation as had been the poverty within the city. Nonetheless, Falloux drew new moral strength from his life in the country, and was able to see France from an angle that was not jaundiced by a Parisian manner of looking at life. For one thing, Falloux felt more confident in dealing with material difficulties. By the mid-1850s, 8,523 metres of drainage had been lain down, although wholesale irrigation proved more difficult, and he rebuilt labourers' cottages on the estate. He tried to ensure that the majority of workers whom he employed were local.

But it was not, of course, just the material well being of his tenants that concerned Falloux, nor was he only concerned with his estate. Although he undoubtedly regarded the life of the countryman as intrinsically more moral, he did not rest content with the mere idea of a rural idyll. France, if she could but only heed the call of the countryside, would be saved: 'The possession of land is indeed one of the highest duties of this world; if each of us would think it over well, the general state of our country will be altered in

²⁶ *Ibid.*, ii, 365: 'Regardez-bien cet ange-là, il n'est pas de l'école de l'*Univers*. Voyez comme il est doux et calme et comme il étend avec charité un pli de son manteau sur l'enfant qu'il veut guider.'

²⁷ *Ibid.*, iii, 21.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, iii, 22.

²⁹ Monsell later became Lord Emly.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, iii, 23.

fifty years, and in this social restoration, agriculture would play the leading role.³¹ If the restoration could not be effected politically and by implication instantly, then Falloux was stating, rather disingenuously, that he was prepared to wait for the process to be completed in a way that was *pointilliste* but not piecemeal, although he preferred not to address this inconsistency, being temperamentally inclined, in spite of his political finesse and pragmatism, to believe that a panacea could always be found. That such a solution for the general good of the country proved elusive was undoubtedly a cause of depression, but the success of his own experiments at Bourg-d'Iré was a consolation rather than a hope.

Writing in 1862,³² when the Second Empire seemed well established, as the Prince Imperial Napoleon had been born six years before in 1856, Falloux recognized that 'historical greatness comes easily from purity of morals; this connexion is so true, and so independent of any preconceived theory, of any political colour, that the same causes produce the same effects in a republic as in a monarchy.'³³ (Is his choice of words significant in this context? One should note that he does not use the word 'empire'—was this simply to avoid the eye of the censor, or did he mean that *la pureté des mœurs* could not flourish in the conditions that then prevailed in the Second Empire?) Although the piece was superficially apolitical, the Second Empire was criticized throughout, even if only by implication. The sentiment expressed was defiant: Falloux wished to say that the countryside could flourish, but this was by no means because of the present regime. On a personal level, his revitalizing of the local economy was an essential process both for his health and his sanity during his years in the political, if not the rural, wilderness after the *coup d'état*, at least until his election to the Académie française in 1856. Furthermore, incursions on country life by the Empire were not direct in the Angevin region. To a large extent in his role as landlord, Falloux had far more influence than did many a Bonapartist prefect.³⁴

Inevitably, Falloux used the pamphlet to compare the country favourably with the city. 'A nation, like a budget, has its consolidated mass and its floating mass, its passing problems and its permanent

³¹ Falloux, *Dix Ans d'Agriculture*, p. 40: 'La possession de la terre est donc une des plus hautes fonctions de ce monde; si chacun de nous y réfléchissait bien, l'état général de notre pays serait modifié en cinquante ans, et dans cette restauration sociale, l'agriculture jouerait le premier rôle.'

³² *Dix Ans d'Agriculture* was originally published in the *Correspondant* in 1862

³³ Falloux, *Dix Ans d'Agriculture*, p. 44: 'La grandeur historique naît aisément de la pureté des mœurs; cette filiation est si vraie, si indépendante de toute théorie préconçue, de tout drapeau politique, que les mêmes causes produisent les mêmes effets dans une république ou dans une monarchie.'

³⁴ J. F. McMillan, *Napoleon III* (London, 1991), p. 63.

interests: the urban population represents one, and the farming population represents the other.³⁵ One should remember that this passage was written when Paris was undergoing one of its most significant, if not its greatest, change in its long history, under the auspices of Baron Haussmann; Falloux referred to this process, although not directly by name, as ‘the exorbitant development of public works’.³⁶ Falloux feared that this urban growth, sponsored by the government, had a detrimental effect on agriculture, and therefore on the moral fibre of the nation. The former member of the Committee of Public Works thought he could recognize the danger signs, as workers on these ‘public works’ were exposed to a way of life that was far inferior to that of the average soldier, as it was ‘without rule, without discipline, [and] without a mind to return.’³⁷ As for the de-population of the countryside, the ‘gouvernement’, a term vaguely used by Falloux, looking over his shoulder nervously in the direction of the censor, ‘seems pleased to accelerate it’³⁸ and he railed against the status quo for allowing a situation in which ‘agriculture is paralysed, and menaced in France by the bias of the administration in favour of towns at the expense of the country.’³⁹ He complained further about promises that had not been honoured: ‘one always comes across this singular mixture of favours and negligence, of numerous promises, and of action that is all too rare.’⁴⁰ It was indeed the hypocrisy of regimes—and here he was more general in apportioning blame—that galled him: ‘since the revolution...agriculture has been held in very high regard in France, but more in honour than in trust, more celebrated than helped.’⁴¹

Once a peasant had abandoned the fields in favour of the meretricious charms of the city, he or she was as good as lost. Falloux feared especially the effects of the urban metropolis on the young, ‘the town too often changes distractions into traps, places camaraderie in jeopardy. In a vast agglomeration of men, it is very hard for youthful vivacity not to degenerate into licence.’⁴² It would, furthermore, be very difficult

³⁵ Falloux, *Dix Ans d'Agriculture*, p. 43: ‘Une nation a comme un budget, sa masse consolidée et sa masse flottante, ses problèmes passagers et ses intérêts permanents. La classe industrielle, la population citadine représentent les uns, la population agricole représente les autres.’

³⁶ Ibid., p. 34: ‘le développement exorbitant des travaux publics.’

³⁷ Ibid.: ‘C’est un recrutement égal, si ce n’est supérieur, au recrutement de l’armée, avec cette aggravation que celui-ci est sans règle, sans discipline, sans esprit de retour.’

³⁸ Ibid.: ‘le gouvernement semble se plaire à l’accélérer.’

³⁹ Ibid., p. 36: ‘l’agriculture est donc paralysée, menacée en France par la partialité de l’administration en faveur des villes aux dépens des campagnes.’

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 30: ‘on retrouve toujours ce mélange singulier de faveurs et de négligences, de promesses nombreuses et d’effets plus rares.’

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 29-30: ‘depuis la Révolution...l’agriculture a donc été fort en honneur en France, mais cependant plus en honneur qu’en crédit, plus célébrée que servie.’

⁴² Ibid., p. 41: ‘La ville change trop souvent les distractions en piège, la camaraderie en danger. Dans une vaste agglomération d’hommes, il est bien difficile que la jeunesse ne dégénère pas en licence.’

for him to return to the country, and to settle back into old routines: 'Only a near superhuman courage can keep for him the desire and the possibility of a peaceful household, a regular family; if he returns to his ancestral hearth, it is because of disillusion and what is more under the yoke of deadly habits, that he is searching to put himself somewhere where he will not come across them again.'⁴³

But it was not only in the city where one could fall: Falloux was preoccupied by the threat posed by the *cabaret*, the tavern, which could 'very quickly become bad and illicit meeting-places'⁴⁴ where dice, cards and wine would lure peasants into temptation. In this context he saw the development of the railway as a blessing; 'the railway is an infinitely greater moralizing force than the old roads. The highway of former years was framed, at short distances, by a double row of taverns that had no other purpose than to roll a die, to quench the thirst, to present to the driver of the *diligence* and to the postillion a glass of wine that was always welcome, in winter for warmth and in summer for refreshment.'⁴⁵ It is hard now not to smile at the form of enthusiasm in a former age for technological progress, especially when Falloux sincerely declared, 'and after the monastic institutions, nothing will better symbolize cenobitic austerity than the guardian of the level-crossing and the signalman.'⁴⁶

But embedded in this treatise there is a veiled threat, that the peasantry of the West were not to be underestimated by interfering regimes. 'When has one seen the farming class take the initiative of revolt or refuse to give help in events that restore order? The wars of the Vendée have thrown on the peasants of the West a renown that had gained the homage of Napoleon and inspires the respect of whoever respects himself.'⁴⁷ The tactic was, therefore, to invoke the name of the god-like uncle of the present Emperor, and to hint at the hollowness of the 'brilliance' of the Second Empire. For, the argument ran, to leave the Vendée well alone was a sign of self-respect, and it must be remembered that General Bonaparte himself had refused to fight in 1795 alongside General Hoche (the then lover of Josephine de Beauharnais) in the

⁴³ Ibid., p. 35: 'Un courage presque surhumain peut seul lui conserver le désir et la possibilité d'un ménage paisible, d'une famille régulière; s'il revient au foyer paternel, c'est à la force de mécomptes et pourtant encore sous le joug de funestes habitudes, qu'il cherche à implanter là où il ne les retrouve pas.'

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 37: 'le cabaret de village tourne très-promptement aux mauvais lieux clandestins.'

⁴⁵ Ibid.: 'le rail est infiniment plus moralisateur que les anciennes routes. Le grand chemin d'autrefois était bordé, à courte distance d'une double haie de chaumières qui n'avaient d'autre mission que d'héberger le roulier, d'étancher sa soif, de présenter au conducteur diligence et au postillon un verre de vin toujours indispensable, en hiver pour se réchauffer, en été pour se rafraîchir.'

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 38: 'et après les institutions monastiques, rien ne saurait mieux enseigner l'austerité cénobitique qu'un gardien de barrières et un transmetteur de signaux.'

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 43: 'Quand a-t-on vu la classes agricole prendre l'initiative de la révolte ou refuser de prêter son concours à des événements réparateurs? Les guerres de la Vendée ont jeté sur les paysans de l'Ouest une

campaign that finally extinguished the Vendée uprising. That this was a decision that was dictated more by career considerations than by respect for the *chouans* was a possibility that has been ignored by Catholic historians both in the nineteenth century and up to the present day.⁴⁸ The present cycle of interference and neglect was not a sign of such a self-respect. Nor of course was Falloux suggesting that self-respect was not at the core of the sturdy folk of the West: 'During the period under the monarchy of prosperity, this would be the result of characters fiercely hardened, of rigid probity, of a fidelity that was both respectful and independent.'⁴⁹ The rural life, Falloux implies, was of its very nature religious, as it was the perfect expression of natural law: the whole treatise is steeped in religious language, even if Catholicism is not mentioned within its pages.

For a regime to search for security on the field of battle, or around the table, negotiating a treaty, was a chimera compared with the real security of a France at ease with itself, purified by agricultural labour: 'Our generals and our soldiers make a magnificent canvas for our diplomats, but they sew it in the style of a Penelope.'⁵⁰

But, like many Legitimists including the Comte de Chambord himself, Falloux had an ambiguous and troubled attitude towards his country's foreign policy. His attitudes were more the product of disquiet about France's collusion with Cavour in 1859, and the subsequent acquiescence in the attempts by the Kingdom of Italy throughout the 1860s to destroy the Papal States. He did not object in principle to military conscription, even if he worried that it did 'take away the flower of labouring youth,' he nonetheless described it as 'the most noble tribute that one can pay the country.'⁵¹ The impression of the veteran returning to the fields, Cincinnatus-like, was very great on Falloux's imagination: 'When the appeal of the contingent is not exaggerated, when, after a few years, the soldier can see once the country [region?]

splendeur de renommée qui avait attiré l'hommage de Napoléon et qui inspire le respect à quiconque se respect soi-même.'

⁴⁸ See, for example, Michael Davies' book on the Vendée uprising, *For Altar and Throne* (Minnesota, 1997), p. xvii.

⁴⁹ Falloux, *Dix Ans d'Agriculture*, p. 44: 'Dans les temps de prospérité monarchique, cela donnait des caractères fièrement trempés, des probités rigides, des fidélités respectueuses mais indépendantes.'

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 45: 'Nos généraux et nos soldats taillent un magnifique canevas à nos diplomates, mais ceux-ci le brodent à la façon de Pénélope.'

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 34: '[Conscription] enlève la fleur de la jeunesse laborieuse, mais le service militaire est le plus noble tribut que l'on puisse payer à la patrie.'

of his birth, he will return in the vigour of age and will joyfully exchange the sabre for the tools of his forefathers.⁵²

Sarah the Cow

Unlike Falloux's denunciations of capitalism, he still did not prevent his putting his herd of Durham cattle to good business use. The Durham cattle were a sturdier breed than the local breeds, were thin, long-legged, and had hard coats.⁵³ Sarah, his favourite cow, produced 27,000 francs' worth of produce in thirteen years, including twenty-nine litres of milk per diem. She gave birth to two sets of twins, who themselves were both 'fécondes'.⁵⁴ Over the decade there were fifty-three births altogether. The products of the cattle ultimately contributed to the well-being of France and the community at home:

National consumption progresses in the same proportion as the fortune of the property-owner and of the farmer, and the quantity of meat doubles itself, and it enters into the meals of the labouring classes. Here is one of the chief advantages in France of the naturalization of the Durham breed, and this is enough to justify it. But it is not the only justification: at the same time as the meat doubles itself, so the bread doubles itself, and that is how it is done.⁵⁵

A regret for the past

There was another lesson to be drawn, but this time from the past. Falloux believed that the *ancien régime* would have been a better place, or at least the revolution would have been a milder affair, had the gentlemen farmers of the eighteenth century, rather than the nobles of Versailles or the lawyers of the Third Estate, taken the initiative: 'perhaps the course of our history might have been different, perhaps we would have known liberty without the follies which compromised it, without the crimes that had dishonoured it.'⁵⁶

The Church under the Second Empire

Many influential Catholics, not least Louis Veuillot, gave Napoleon III their unqualified approval from the time of the *coup d'état* of 2 December 1851 to the end of that decade. In Brittany where Catholics had particularly rallied to the Second Empire, one clerical writer, M. Brosnais-Saint-Marc, even described

⁵² Ibid.: 'Quand l'appel du contingent n'est pas exagéré, quand, au bout de peu d'années, le soldat peut revoir le pays natal, il y revient dans la vigueur de l'âge et, tout joyeux, échange le sabre contre l'outil paternel.'

⁵³ Ibid., p. 20.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 26.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 21: 'l'alimentation nationale progresse dans la même proportion que la fortune du propriétaire et du fermier, et la quantité de viande se doublant, elle entre enfin dans le repas des classes laborieuses. Voilà l'un des principaux avantages de la naturalisation en France des durham, et cet avantage suffisait pour la justifier. Mais il n'est pas le seul: en même temps que se double la viande, se double le pain, et voici comment.'

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 45: 'Si beaucoup de gentilshommes français au dix-huitième siècle avaient été en mesure de se permettre une telle réplique, peut-être le cours de notre histoire eût-il été changé, peut-être eussions-nous connu la liberté sans les folies qui la compromettent, sans les crimes qui la déshonorent.'

Napoleon III as a new Charlemagne. Even if the Empress Eugénie was a devout Catholic (and, but for her association with the Bonaparte family,⁵⁷ a crypto-Legitimist), the Emperor of the French, formerly a Saint-Simonian, found the fanatical adulation from his clerical allies not to his taste, and commented to Persigny that 'They disgust me.'⁵⁸

But the intransigent Bonapartist wing of the Church was not going to get it all its own way. In 1853 the ailing journal the *Correspondant* was adopted as the flag-sheet of the liberal Catholics: its purpose was to give a spirited and intelligent defence of liberal Catholicism, the publicity of which had been eclipsed by the salvos of the *Univers*. Although 'always devoted to the alliance of religion and liberty',⁵⁹ the *Correspondant* had to act within the constraints imposed by imperial censorship, and thus much of the controversy within its pages concerned religion rather than politics. Advocating liberty at a time of strict press censorship was no easy task. In time, however, the liberalism of the *Correspondant* would increasingly identify itself in opposition to the intransigent ultramontanist of the *Univers*.

In October 1858 Falloux wrote to his friend de Séré that the 'blind devotion'⁶⁰ of many Catholics for the Emperor was doing great damage to the Church, even greater than the political allegiance of the Church to the government of the Restoration, as the Empire flagrantly sponsored immorality and encouraged the anticlerical press, while it imposed restrictions on the Society of St Vincent de Paul.⁶¹ The complacent collaboration of the clergy for the Empire struck Falloux as short-sighted, as there was no guarantee that it would ultimately be as permanent as any other regime in France during the previous seventy years. 'Now it is the turn for us, poor laymen, who have to pronounce at the top of our voices the *Non licet*...'⁶² especially since the clergy in his opinion were playing a dangerous game: 'The French clergy thus gambles, on a single roll of the die, their independence and with their independence, all that had value for it.'⁶³

But the complacency of the Bonapartist clergy did not outlast the decade. At a reception at the Tuileries on 1 January 1859 the Emperor said to Hübner, the Austrian ambassador, that he regretted that

⁵⁷ Eugénie's father had collaborated with the French during their occupation of Spain in the Napoleonic Wars.

⁵⁸ Comte A. de Falloux, *Mémoires d'un Royaliste* (3 vols, Paris, 1925-6), iii, 58: 'Ils me dégoûtent.'

⁵⁹ Falloux, *Mémoires*, iii, 27: 'dévoué à l'alliance de la religion et de la liberté'.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, iii, 64: 'le dévouement aveugle.'

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*, iii, 61: 'C'est à nous, pauvres laïques, qu'il appartient maintenant de prononcer à haute voix le *Non licet*...'

relations between the two countries were 'no longer so good as formerly',⁶⁴ even if his personal feelings towards Francis-Joseph were unchanged. This was in the aftermath of Orsini's assassination attempt on the life of Napoleon and Eugénie outside the Opéra on 14 January 1858. On 23 April 1859 Austria issued an ultimatum to Sardinia, which was ignored. The following month Napoleon marched into Italy, and won two victories over the Austrians at Magenta and Solferino in June. In the aftermath of Napoleon's triumph over the Austrians the existence of the Papal States was once more called into question, as the Austrian presence in the peninsula had been permanently weakened.

'Une audience impériale'

Falloux was named Director of the Académie française for the first trimester of 1860. Thus he was able to exercise the traditional privilege of the Director of the Académie française to seek permission from the Head of State for the candidature of Lacordaire to the Académie in February 1860, after the seat of Alexis de Tocqueville had been vacated on his death in April 1859. Lacordaire's choice for the seat of was not uncontroversial, as he had distanced himself from public life in Paris since the *coup d'état*. The candidature was nonetheless accepted by the Emperor with a bittersweet grace; once that business had been done he did not dismiss the Director of the Académie française, but he talked on about the state of the clerical party in France. He commented on their present ingratitude (this was only a couple of months after he had allowed an article to be published on the future of the Papal States, 'Le Pape et le Congrès', which advocated that the States consist of the city of Rome only). Napoleon complained furthermore of the unreasonableness of the Pope, and that he, the Emperor, was in effect a prisoner of powerful geopolitical forces. After his 'audience impériale' with the Emperor, Falloux told two clerical Deputies, Lemerrier and Keller, that during the interview he had seen the head of Orsini hovering over that of the Emperor: he added 'and it is with Orsini that we are doing business at least as much with Napoleon III.'⁶⁵

The Society of St Vincent de Paul

Another attack on the Church's independence was on the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul. The number of Legitimist sympathizers who were involved in the works of the Society was reason enough for the Minister of the Interior, Persigny to recommend in a circular in 1861 that the Society's central committee in Paris be

⁶³ Falloux, iii, 67: 'Le clergé français jouerait donc, sur un seul coup de dé, son indépendance et avec son indépendance, tout ce qu'elle lui avait valu.'

⁶⁴ J. F. McMillan, *Napoleon III* (London, 1991), p. 85.

⁶⁵ Falloux, *Mémoires*, iii, 83: 'Pendant que l'Empereur me parlait, la tête d'Orsini m'apparaissait au-dessus de la sienne, et c'est à Orsini que nous avons affaire au moins autant qu'à Napoléon III.'

disbanded. It seemed to go unnoticed that the liberal Catholic founder of the Society, the historian Frédéric Ozanam (1813-1853) was not a Legitimist, and that one of its most prestigious members was Augustin Cochin, who was also politically indifferent. To add insult to injury, Persigny added that the Society would do well to take a leaf out of the book of Freemasonry, and indulge in a more apolitical form of charitable work. This circular predictably received a virulent reception from the Catholic press, most notably from Poujoulat and Dupanloup (who was less of a Legitimist than Falloux).⁶⁶ Falloux, ever the salon politician, preferred to use other means, and visited his friend of twenty years, Persigny, with whom he recently had discussions on his return to the Church and Falloux had not only recommended a confessor but had also agreed to be godfather to Persigny's son, Jean.⁶⁷ Falloux left the meeting believing that he had succeeded in ending the official persecution of the Society, but other counsels prevailed over the weak-willed Persigny. In the *Mémoires*, there is no mention of Persigny's gratuitous comparison with Freemasonry. Persigny's pleas that he opposed the Emperor's policy on the Roman Question were accepted at face value by Falloux, at least as far as posterity was concerned, in the *Mémoires*.⁶⁸ Falloux decided that had it not been for the 'demagogic newspapers',⁶⁹ his mission to his old friend would have been successful. The General Council was suppressed for eight years, being restored once more in February 1870, when more liberal forces were holding the reins of power.

Veillot

One particular 'partisan of the Empire',⁷⁰ disheartened Falloux: Louis Veillot, whose *Univers* managed 'to profess itself to be the inflexible servant to principles, dealing with the highest contempt every transaction with the contingent events of politics, and yet at the same time it nurtured the faithful with theoretical and transcendent declamations, while submitting itself in fact, yielding itself to condescensions and

⁶⁶ F. A. P. Dupanloup, *Les Sociétés de Charité, Les Francs-Maçons et la Circulaire du 16 Octobre* (Paris, 1861); M. Poujoulat, *Lettre à M. Persigny à l'occasion de sa Circulaire contre la Société de Saint-Vincent de Paul* (Paris, 1861).

⁶⁷ Falloux, *Mémoires*, iii, 151.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*: 'Dès que M. de Persigny eut entrevu dans la politique de Napoléon III le dernier terme de ses dessins sur l'Italie, il s'y opposa avec l'ardeur qu'il apportait dans tout ce qui intéressait, à ses yeux, la durée ou la grandeur de l'Empire... Son dernier acte politique à Londres fut un effort vigoureux en faveur du roi de Naples et contre Garibaldi.' Persigny was ambassador in London. But see J. Ridley, *Napoleon III and Eugénie* (London, 1979), p. 480: '[In c.1862] Eugénie and Walewski thought that the troops should be kept in Rome at all costs; but Thouvenel, the Foreign Minister, and Fould and Persigny wished to withdraw them and leave the Pope to his fate.'

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, iii, 153: 'les journaux démagogiques'.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, iii, chapter VI.

connivances of the most dangerous kind.⁷¹ Veuillot was a redoubtable defender of the Second Empire until the war in Italy in 1859. After Pius IX had censured Napoleon III, the *Univers* was suppressed from 1860 to 1867, during which period it continued under the name of the *Monde*. In 1856 Falloux published his piece *Le Parti Catholique: Ce qu'il a été, ce qu'il est devenue*. This was an attack on the *Univers* school and all its works. He decried the fact that the *Univers* had made itself 'more imperialist than the Empire. Its masterly, dogmatic and transcendent despotism excels that of all the political theoreticians.'⁷² These 'perfides alliées' were the 'hypocrites of our times', who 'flatter power, and not the Church, peoples rather than popes.'⁷³ The *Univers* was lucky in that it attacked from a position of security, thanks to its support of the Empire: 'it is remarkable how it is often the most intrepid who risk the least.'⁷⁴ Falloux despised the intellectual philistinism of the journal, for the equal vigour with which Descartes was attacked as well as Voltaire⁷⁵ and the manner in which history was distorted: the massacre of St Bartholomew's Day was described in terms of a struggle of conservatives against socialists.⁷⁶ This was all the more surprising since the Second Empire was founded on the dreaded principles of 1789, not least the *Code civil* which had been formulated by the Voltairean Emperor Napoleon.⁷⁷

The *Syllabus Errorum* and the Vatican Council

Falloux, and the other writers for the *Correspondant*, desired to defend their adhesion to the *Syllabus Errorum*, and to attack those who were 'Speculators in absurdity and practitioners of insult [who] rushed into a frenzy of wild and arbitrary interpretations.'⁷⁸ The reader is left in little doubt that this is a reference to Veuillot. Furthermore, the *Correspondant* adamantly distanced itself from the *Syllabus's* freethinking critics: 'If modern society entertains the silly pride of thinking itself the accomplished model of all possible

⁷¹ Ibid., iii, 154-5: 'l'*Univers* se donnant pour le serviteur inflexible des principes, traitant avec le dernier mépris toute transaction avec les événements contingents de la politique; puis, en même temps qu'il nourrissait les fidèles de déclamations théorétiques et transcendantes, se prêtant en fait, se pliant aux condescendances et aux connivances les plus dangereuses.'

⁷² Falloux, *Le Parti Catholique: ce qu'il a été, ce qu'il est devenue* (2nd ed., Paris, 1856), p. 230: 'Seul, l'*Univers* s'est fait plus impérialiste que l'Empire. Son despotisme magistral, transcendant, dogmatique, dépasse celui de tous les théoriciens politiques.'

⁷³ Falloux, *Le Parti Catholique*, p. 216: 'Les hypocrites de notre temps flattent le pouvoir, et non l'Église; les peuples et non les papes.'

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 206: 'il est remarquable que ce sont souvent les plus intrépides qui hasardent le moins.'

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 236.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 240.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 282-3.

⁷⁸ Falloux, *Augustin Cochin*, p. 280.

societies, it is an illusion we have never fostered or flattered, and which is cruelly chastised by the numerous deep-rooted evils to which it is prey.'⁷⁹

Falloux stated in 1859 that 'we live under the sway of a constitution which wants to give more latitude to authority than to liberty.'⁸⁰ He predicted that the Empire would end either through anarchy or 'civil discord'.⁸¹ He warned that 'God often punishes egotism with egotism. Peoples, like individuals, who devote themselves to the exclusive preoccupation of their material interests, often go astray in the same interests which they know no longer either to understand or to serve.'⁸² The foreign policy of the Empire was askew, he believed. The desire of the Emperor to reverse the treaties of 1815 was based on a fundamental misunderstanding of politics. Why not therefore reverse all Europe to her state of 1815, Falloux asked rhetorically.⁸³ He took that question to its logical extreme: 'if the reign of treaties is past in order to make a place for the reign of sentiments and inclinations, if we must push back by force those peoples who are an obstacle to whatever of our desires, why not extend to the Turk this plan of reparation and of universal justice? Is the oppression of Mahomet on the most magnificent part of the globe therefore much more ancient and much more respectable than the domination of the house of Lorraine in Lombardy?'⁸⁴ Indeed, the plight of Italy, to Falloux's mind, was exaggerated, whereas the 'protests of Christians of the Ottoman Empire' went unheeded.⁸⁵ A year later he wrote, 'what responsibility, what duties weigh on the head of France! The destiny of our epoch, the problems of the East, and those of Empire, hang at this moment in suspense on her resolutions, and on hers alone. An age which has now

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 307.

⁸⁰ Falloux, 'Question italienne' (1859) *Discours et Mélanges politiques* (2 vols, Paris, 1882), ii 141: 'Nous vivons sous l'empire d'une constitution qui a voulu donner plus de latitude à l'autorité qu'à la liberté.'

⁸¹ Falloux, 'Question italienne', 141: 'L'anarchie ou les discordes intestines dévorerait bientôt cet établissement éphémère...'

⁸² Ibid., 140: 'Dieu punit souvent l'égoïsme par l'égoïsme. Les peuples, comme les individus, qui se vouent à la préoccupation exclusive de leurs intérêts matériels, s'égarent souvent dans ces intérêts mêmes qu'ils ne savent plus ni comprendre ni servir.'

⁸³ Ibid., 154.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 155: 'si le règne des traités est passé pour faire place au règne des sentiments et des inclinations, si nous devons repousser par la force les peuples qui font obstacle à tel ou tel de nos désirs, pourquoi ne pas étendre aussi jusqu'au Turc ce plan de la reparation et de la justice universelles? L'oppression de Mahomet sur la plus magnifique partie du globe est elle donc beaucoup plus ancienne et beaucoup plus respectable que la domination de la maison de Lorraine en Lombardie?' The husband of the Empress Maria-Theresa, Francis-Stephen, was the Duke of Lorraine.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 154: 'mais les protestations des chrétiens de l'Empire ottoman...'

completed its sixtieth year should give up adventures and adventurers, it is old enough to judge the consequences of the principles it lays down, or which it allows to be laid down for it.⁸⁶

In the late 1860s it was announced that a Council was to meet in Rome. This was a time of great excitement. The ailing Montalembert warned the faithful not to get over-involved in the question of infallibility. The *Correspondant* needed to have an article written on the Council. As soon as the Council had defined Papal Infallibility, the *Correspondant* published it. Falloux noted that in a time of great fervour, the enemies of the Church had multiplied, and had become more ardent.

In spite of his earlier warnings against the faithful becoming over-involved in the question of infallibility, Montalembert became increasingly concerned that it could only do the Church harm at this stage of its development. As Falloux wrote 'Infallibility had to be defined, since she had been [previously] defined by the reunited Council and Pope, but perhaps she had been defined less for the benefit of immediate circumstances than for those of a future whose proximity was more or less known to God alone.'⁸⁷ On 28 February 1870 Montalembert wrote a letter to Döllinger in Munich. He expressed his fears about the future of the Church and condemned the zeal with which the dogma of Papal Infallibility was being promoted. 'How could we then [in the years of the July Monarchy] have foreseen the triumph of those lay theologians of absolutism, who have offered up justice and truth, reason and history, in one great burnt offering to the *idol* which they set up in the *Vatican*?'⁸⁸ This letter was published in the *Gazette de France* on 7 March 1870. On 13 March Montalembert died. Pius IX, beside himself with anger, declared 'I know not what he said in the hour of his death; but I do know this man had one great enemy—pride. He was a liberal Catholic, that is, he was a half Catholic. Yes, the liberal Catholics are only half-Catholics.'⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Falloux, *Antecedents and Consequences of the Present State of Things in France and Italy: Translated from the French* (London, 1861), p. 22.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, iii, 182: 'L'infailibilité devait être définie, puisqu'elle l'a été par le Concile et le Pape réunis, mais elle l'a été peut-être moins pour les circonstances immédiates que pour celles d'un avenir plus ou moins prochain connu de Dieu seul.'

⁸⁸ J. B. Bury, *History of the Papacy in the Nineteenth Century (1864-1878)* (London, 1930), pp. 110-11.

⁸⁹ Bury, *History of the Papacy*, p. 111.

*Penelope's Tapestry: The Third Republic 1871-1873**Thiers - The Manifesto of 5 July 1871*

IN JULY 1870, with 'a light heart'¹ France went to war with Prussia. In Paris, Falloux witnessed the lack of discipline among the troops:² this was proof, if any were needed, that 'The Empire had not moralized the country any more than she had armed it.'³ For the duration of the war, Falloux remained at his estate at Bourg-d'Iré, and apart from the occasional passing balloon,⁴ did not witness many of the events of the Franco-Prussian War. For four months he heard no news of his friends Cochin and Rességuier in spite of the precarious lines of communication that had been established by hot-air balloons between Paris and the rest of France: none of these balloons that occasionally floated over the estate of Bourg-d'Iré brought any news in spite of the loud cheers from the ground. But Falloux was able to perform a patriotic duty by allowing six wounded soldiers to stay at his château: in due course they became firm friends.⁵

On 4 September 1870, two days after the defeat and capture of Napoleon III at Sedan, Gambetta had proclaimed the Republic from the Hôtel de Ville in Paris. For the moment, the running of the war overrode all considerations about the nature of government that was to rule France in the future. But this period was not destined to resemble the 'honeymoon' of the first days of the Second Republic after the February Revolution in 1848. Then, Falloux was prepared to support a 'sensible and serious Republic', but the circumstances of 1871 did not incline him to think that the same approach was possible. A royalist cannot lose faith in a republic twice. After the Armistice had been signed with Germany (ten days after the proclamation of the German Empire at Versailles) on 28 January 1871, elections were held for the Assembly in February. Conservative opposition to the war paid off and a significant Royalist majority was returned to the Assembly. This was the best opportunity since 1830 for the restoration of the senior branch of the Bourbon dynasty to the throne of France. But while an enemy army remained on French soil, the restoration could not be accomplished, lest there be bad portents for the restoration accomplished for the

¹ J. F. McMillan, *Napoleon III* (London, 1991), p. 160: 'd'un cœur léger.' This was the phrase of Émile Ollivier, Napoleon III's liberal chief minister at the Legislative Body on 15 July 1870 four days before the official declaration of war against Prussia. Ollivier lived to regret uttering a phrase that was so hubristic, and spent his remaining forty-three years in the political wilderness.

² Falloux, *Mémoires*, iii, 193-4.

³ *Ibid.*, iii, 200: 'L'empire n'avait pas moralisé le pays mieux qu'il ne l'avait armé.'

⁴ *Ibid.*, iii, 195.

third time by the aid of a foreign army. None the less he continued to be angered by the continuation of the sabre-rattling attitude of the Left under the direction of Gambetta, the *dictature révolutionnaire*. The Republic, founded by 'an insurrection in the face of the enemy',⁶ Falloux considered, was alienating herself by her 'presumptuous incapability, by the passions and partisan preoccupations taking precedence over patriotism, paralysing both generals and discouraging the soldiers.'⁷ The result of this mismanagement was a demoralized army and an anarchic Paris, and chaos in the large towns in the provinces, which were in the 'hands of idiots or mavericks'.⁸ Falloux wrote sardonically to Rességuier that at least 'she has enlightened the country on her true nature and instruments'⁹, which was a change from the agonizing suspense about the true nature of those in power in the first months of the Second Republic. In 1871 it was therefore obvious, to Falloux at least, that the restoration of the monarchy was the only sensible way for France to secure her future, after she had suffered the 'disasters of the Empire and the extravagances of the Republic imposed on the fourth of September 1870'¹⁰

Thiers

On the other hand, the return of Thiers from the political wilderness, as Chief of the Executive Power of the French Republic, was to have far-reaching and unseen consequences. His 'lightness' in negotiating peace terms with Bismarck sat uneasily with his undoubted patriotism and he boasted to other French about the compliments which Bismarck paid. He preferred to cede the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine to Germany, on the grounds that land was more easily regained than an indemnity payment; in any case he believed that the ceded land was 'only a very small slice'.¹¹ But, Falloux conceded, 'Very severe and ungrateful would be the one who flatters himself that he could have been able, in so desperate a situation, to have obtained more than the treaty of 1871.'¹² On the other hand, Falloux did condemn Thiers's irresponsibility before the Assembly. Thiers's complacency in the face of increasing unrest in Paris, which would lead to the Commune, was similarly condemned. His attitude towards the return of the monarchy was misread by

⁵ Ibid., iii, 197-8.

⁶ Ibid., iii, 212: '...Quatre-Septembre, c'est-à-dire de l'insurrection devant l'ennemi.'

⁷ Ibid., iii, 203: '...son incapacité présomptueuse, par des passions, par des préoccupations de coterie prenant le pas sur le patriotisme, paralysant les généraux et décourageant les soldats.'

⁸ Ibid., iii, 204: 'Les grands villes, les principales municipalités étaient dans la main des idiots ou des pervers.'

⁹ Ibid., iii, 206: 'elle a éclairé le pays sur sa vraie nature et sur ses vrais instruments.'

¹⁰ Ibid., iii, 202: 'des désastres de l'Empire et des extravagances de la République imposée le quatre septembre 1870.'

¹¹ Ibid., iii, 208: 'ce n'est qu'un bien petit morceau!'

Falloux, as it was by many others. Falloux believed that in 1871 Thiers was still at heart a monarchist, and that he believed that 'France had no better means of salvation than the return to the monarchy.'¹³ Falloux had forgotten that it was as long ago as 1850 that Thiers had affirmed that 'the Republic is of all governments that which divides us least'¹⁴, in his speech for the very law that Falloux sponsored, the *loi Falloux*. In the most recent biography of Thiers in English, by Bury and Tombs, it is argued that this phrase was not uttered in a facile political manner: it is likely that Thiers supported the idea of a conservative republic from as early as the Second Republic, a republic, that is, that existed in spite of, rather than because of, its foundation by traditional republicans. For Falloux, however, Thiers's advocacy of retaining the republican form of government in the 1870s was sad but not altogether surprising proof of Thiers's overweening ambition and craftiness. Falloux wrote to Thiers on 22 May 1871 (just as the *semaine sanglante* was beginning in Paris), that 'It is thus, to my mind, puerile, sometimes even criminal, to believe that some forms of government are irrelevant to the destiny of the people and each is as good as any other... One can never be prevented from thinking that in France the Empire meant nothing more than a despotism, that the Republic meant nothing more than disorder and that the Bourbon Monarchy was nothing more than a representative government.'¹⁵

This was written as a plea from one monarchist to the other: Falloux was appealing to a better side of Thiers, whose mind was already made up in favour of establishing a permanent Republic (in any case, Thiers would have had more to worry about than Falloux's letters at such a time, in spite of even his legendary energy). It took some gall also to argue to the man who was partly responsible for the downfall of the Restoration Monarchy that the regime of Charles X was a representative one through and through, even if Falloux did include the July Monarchy (and this is a motif that he employs elsewhere) as a Bourbon one. After the hopes for a royalist restoration had evaporated, Falloux recognized that, 'The wind...blew in the Republic's favour. The Republic was M. Thiers, but for how long? Who was M. Thiers himself? An old man, whose faculties were worn out in the tenure of power, in place of being reinvigorated in the

¹² Ibid., iii, 208-9: 'bien sévère et bien ingrat serait celui qui se flatterait d'avoir pu, dans une situation si désespérée, obtenir mieux que le traité de 1871.'

¹³ Ibid., iii, 248: 'la France n'avait pas de meilleur moyen de salut que le retour à la Monarchie.'

¹⁴ J. P. T. Bury and R. P. Tombs, *Thiers 1797-1877: A Political Life* (London, 1986), p. 123.

¹⁵ Falloux, *Mémoires*, iii, 217: 'Il est donc, à mon sens, puéril, parfois même criminel de professer quelles formes de gouvernement sont indifférentes à la destinée des peuples et se valet toutes les unes les autres... On n'empêchera jamais en France que l'Empire ne signifie et n'appelle le despotisme, que la République ne signifie et n'appelle le désordre, que la Monarchie bourbonnienne ne signifie et n'appelle le régime représentatif.'

austere meditations of great devotion and duty. His moral decline accompanied his political decline. The man most capable of resurrecting and guiding France had become the man most obstinate in disuniting and corrupting her.¹⁶ Falloux heard, and believed, the stories that were circulating about Thiers's greed, smuttiness and senility.¹⁷ That these stories were believed by Falloux, whose own manners were universally deemed to be impeccable, demonstrates the measure in which he feared and hated republicanism, and he clearly believed furthermore that republicanism was a moral and intellectual cancer, to which the formerly brilliant Thiers had succumbed. A vigorous conversation between them shortly after the Manifesto of 5 July 1871 in which Falloux tried unsuccessfully to persuade Thiers that his judgement was fallible, especially on the eve of the insurrection in Paris in March of that year, reinforced the view that Thiers was living in a fool's paradise. But Thiers was responsible, Falloux believed, partly for the schism that had grown within the forces of the Right, by playing them off against each other, while he made a pact with the Left. In the light of recent historiography it seems that Falloux's judgement was erroneous as Thiers seems to have been more concerned with achieving a centrist consensus rather than with selling his soul to Gambetta.¹⁸

At the start of the Third Republic, it was a widely held view among royalists and Catholics that the defeat in the war of 1870-1 was a punishment sent from Providence for her decadence and attachment to the godless legacy of the Revolution. The Basilica of Sacré-Cœur, which was begun at this time, was a material offspring of this view. Given his pragmatism and relative liberalism, Falloux was not a strong proponent of this set of ideas but their hold on him was strong enough for him to be frustrated by what he saw as Thiers's complacency about the future of the Republic. On the other hand, Falloux was at a sufficient distance from such a worldview to be equally frustrated by the rejection of the tricolour by the Comte de Chambord; he especially disliked the rhetoric of the Counter-revolution, which was to set the tone of the dialectic within French royalist thought at least for the duration of the Third Republic, and beyond.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, iii, 265: 'Le vent...soufflait en faveur de la République. La République, c'était M. Thiers, mais pour combien de temps [*sic*]. Qu'était M. Thiers lui-même? Un vieillard, dont les facultés s'épuisaient dans la jouissance du pouvoir, au lieu de se retremper dans les austères méditations d'un dévouement et d'un devoir. L'abaissement moral accompagnait en lui l'abaissement politique. L'homme le plus capable de relever de guider la France allait devenir l'homme le plus opiniâtre à la diviser et à la dévoyer.'

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, iii, 262-3.

¹⁸ Bury and Tombs, *Thiers*, p. 222.

The Manifesto of 5 July 1871

Whatever the manoeuvrings of Thiers, there lay in wait a 'cruel surprise'¹⁹ from a different quarter. On 5 July 1871, the Comte de Chambord issued a manifesto, from the château of Chambord, which proclaimed: 'Frenchmen! I am completely ready to help my country bring itself up from its ruins and to take its place in the world; the only sacrifice that I cannot make for her, is that of my honour...I should not let the flag of Henry IV, Francis I and Joan of Arc leave my hands...Frenchmen! Henry V cannot abandon the flag of Henry IV.'²⁰ The ardent language of the manifesto did not impress Falloux: it was testament of a 'complete disregard of the state France was in'.²¹ After the Royalist success in the elections in February 1871, Republicans were starting to gain seats, a process well in motion by the elections of 2 July, and the Royalist majority was being steadily nibbled away. In the immediate aftermath of the manifesto of 5 July there needed to be consensus among Royalists about the correct action to take: some deputies even resigned; others sent a covering letter with the manifesto of 5 July to their departments, that expressed their unease with the manifesto's conclusions.²² To decide on what path to take, a large group of members of the moderate Right met at the lodgings of de La Rochefoucauld, at the Hôtel des Réservoirs. The meeting concluded with a statement:

The personal inspirations of M. le Comte de Chambord are his own property.

In whatever manner that one judges them, one cannot doubt the nature of their sincerity, going as far as sacrifice, which inspires respect.

After, just as before, this solemn document, those men attached by principle to a hereditary and constitutional monarchy, because they regard it as a guarantee of salvation for the country, remain devoted to the interests and liberties of France. Full of respect for her wishes, they do not separate themselves from the flag which she has given herself, a flag that has been adorned by the courage of her soldiers and has become, through opposition to the bloody standard of anarchy, the flag of social order.²³

¹⁹ Falloux, *Mémoires*, iii, 243.

²⁰ Ibid., iii, 237: 'Français! Je suis prêt à tout pour aider mon pays à se relever de ses ruines et à reprendre son rang dans le monde; le seul sacrifice que je ne puisse lui faire, c'est celui de mon honneur...je ne laisserai pas arracher de mes mains l'étendard d'Henri IV, de François I^{er} et de Jeanne d'Arc...Français! Henri V ne peut abandonner le drapeau de Henri IV.'

²¹ Ibid., iii, 239: '...d'une méconnaissance absolue de l'état de la France.'

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., iii, 240-1: 'Les inspirations personnelles de M. le comte de Chambord lui appartiennent.

'De quelque manière qu'on les juge, on ne leur contestera pas un caractère de sincérité, allant jusqu'au sacrifice et qui inspire le respect.

'Après comme avant ce grave document, les hommes attachés au principe de la monarchie héréditaire et représentative, parce qu'ils y voient une garantie de salut pour le pays, restent dévoués aux intérêts de la France et à ses libertés. Pleins de déférence pour ses volontés, ils ne se séparent pas du drapeau qu'elle s'est donné, drapeau illustré par le courage de ses soldats et qui est devenu, par opposition à l'étendard sanglant de l'anarchie, le drapeau de l'ordre social.'

It was thought that the word 'sacrifice' implied that the Comte de Chambord was willing to renounce his right to the throne on this issue: Falloux himself believed that such an action would indeed be 'a generous act, worthy of all the admiration and gratitude of the country.'²⁴ Copies of this declaration were accordingly posted throughout all the departments that were represented by deputies of the moderate Right. Unfortunately, this note was not signed, and Chambord was not to know at this relatively early stage that a large body of Legitimist opinion hoped that he was to have second thoughts or was about to abdicate. In any case, soon after the meeting at the Hôtel des Réservoirs, the deputies of the Right divided themselves into two groups: the more moderate started to meet at the Pavillon Colbert and the more extreme members frequented the small street of Cheveau-Légers, and were soon themselves to be known as the *chevaux-légers*, the light cavalrymen.²⁵

Falloux and others realized that on this occasion the Comte de Chambord was totally out of step with public opinion—to Falloux it proved how far Chambord was under the tutelage of his advisors, if he had accepted their advice on an issue which was so sensitive. It was claimed by some that the change of flag would result in a mutiny in the army. Thiers commented to Falloux that Chambord was the true founder of the Third Republic and that posterity would name him the French Washington.²⁶

Falloux was amazed at the misdirected sense of loyalty towards the Comte de Chambord that manifested itself after 5 July 1871. The 'séduction du sacrifice' spread through Legitimist circles, to Falloux's amazement. As tactfully as he could, he compared those Legitimists to knights 'in desperate combat where they sought nothing more than honour and death. But these knights sacrificed only themselves; they did not sacrifice their country; they neither outraged nor slandered anyone. They were not refusing to die, they had refused to lie.'²⁷ The last sentiment was rather disingenuous of Falloux, as he had described only a couple of pages earlier his depression at the tendency of Legitimists who had initially criticized Chambord's ruinous attachment to the white flag and then hastily retreated behind a virulent

²⁴ Ibid., iii, 241: 'car je pensais alors et je pense encore aujourd'hui que l'abdication eût été un acte généreux, digne de toute l'admiration et de toute la reconnaissance du pays.'

²⁵ C. N. Desjoyeaux, *La fusion monarchique 1848-1873, d'après des sources inédites* (Paris, 1913), p. 223.

²⁶ Falloux, *Mémoires*, iii, 249.

²⁷ Ibid., iii, 247: 'comme de valeureux chevaliers l'ont fait autrefois dans des combats désespérés où ils ne cherchaient plus que l'honneur et la mort. Mais ces chevaliers n'immolaient qu'eux-mêmes; ils n'immolaient pas leur pays; ils n'outrageaient et ne calomniaient personne. Ils ne refusaient pas de mourir, ils auraient refusé de mentir.'



defence of their King's words.²⁸ Other members of the Legitimist intelligentsia put a brave face in public but in private gave vent to their despair: Pujoulat's summation of the situation was especially eloquent: 'M. le Comte de Chambord no longer has a future. You do not miss a miracle of Providence twice with impunity!'²⁹

Falloux wrote to Broglio on 5 November 1871 that the prevalent attitude among Legitimists since the 5 July 1871 was no longer the device that had served them for forty years, 'All for France and by France', but instead 'All for the King and by the King'.³⁰ Falloux believed that such an attitude was unworthy of them: 'This is neither monarchist, nor aristocratic, nor French. Perhaps it would have been less permitted in the society of old than in the society of today, and one cannot edify anything under such an axiom.'³¹

Falloux asserted that Chambord was only the guardian of the hereditary principle, and not its embodiment:

In these present circumstances, M. le Comte de Chambord does not have the right to put his principle in the drawer, to turn the key, and to put the key into his pocket and to say, "No one will touch it, even France in peril, while one has not satisfied a demand that is neither inherent nor adequate to the principle itself." Nothing would be further from the heart of M. le Comte de Chambord, but there are illusions that he must fight at any price when they drive him to conclusions that are obviously fatal.³²

What Falloux deemed to be suitable for France was set out in this letter:

I would endeavour to get a proposition accepted that is equivalent to this:

'1. France is a monarchy, the crown belongs to the House of Bourbon by right of primogeniture; the person of the King is inviolable; the ministers are accountable; this is the same text as the Constitution of 1790;

'2. Two chambers with their principal prerogatives;

'3. The flag.'

If M. le Comte de Chambord accepts this monarchy which is the same as that of the Restoration, he accepts the representative system, and he restores for the House of Bourbon and France every virtue of the hereditary system... If M. le Comte de Chambord refuses, he would not be able to find either in his conscience or in his spirit a single argument for such a refusal, and he would have from that moment the clear intention himself to place the crown on the head of his legitimate heir, and his most faithful friends would be obliged to bow before such a verdict.³³

²⁸ Cf. the passage above with: 'Comment comprendre que les vieux serviteurs de la royauté... aient pu, en quelques jours, changer de langage du tout au tout!' (Ibid., iii, 245.)

²⁹ Ibid., iii, 246: 'M. le comte de Chambord n'a plus d'avenir. On ne fait pas impunément rater deux fois un miracle de la Providence!'

³⁰ Desjoyeaux, *La fusion monarchique*, pp. 225-6.

³¹ Ibid., p. 226: 'Cela n'est ni monarchique, ni aristocratique, ni français. Cela eût peut-être été moins admis encore dans la société ancienne que dans la société moderne, et l'on ne peut rien édifier sur un tel axiome.'

³² Ibid., p. 225: 'Dans les circonstances actuelles, M. le comte de Chambord n'a pas le droit de mettre son principe dans un tiroir, de tourner la clef, de mettre la clef dans sa poche et de dire: «Personne n'y touchera, dût la France en périr, tant qu'on n'aura pas satisfait à une exigence qui n'est point inhérente ni adéquate au principe lui-même. Rien ne serait plus éloigné du cœur de M. le comte de Chambord, mais il y a des illusions qu'il faut combattre à tout prix quand elles conduisent à des conséquences évidemment funestes.'

³³ Ibid., p. 226: 'Je m'efforcerais de faire accepter une proposition équivalente à ceci: «1° la France est une monarchie, la couronne appartient à la maison de Bourbon par droit de primogéniture; la personne du Roi

As a corollary to his statement that the Comte de Chambord was only the guardian of the hereditary principle, Falloux did not think that it was Chambord's prerogative to decide on the flag: that was the prerogative of the National Assembly alone. This was an opinion that he published in an article, 'Le voilà donc connu, ce secret plein d'horreur' in the *Correspondant* on 3 January 1872. He ventured to suggest in this article that the princes of Orléans rule in the interim period before the restoration proper. (His own choice for this role was the Duc d'Aumale, the uncle of Louis-Philippe, Duc d'Orléans, who was Chambord's heir.³⁴)

By 1873 Falloux's feelings were near to despair:

From afar, with an unspeakable sadness, I would contemplate the terrible fate of France. Scarcely had one solved the situation at its base when everything would tumble from the summit. Nothing resembled more the legend of Tantalus or the story of Penelope than the enterprise forever renewed and forever prevented from reaching its elusive goal.³⁵

After the débâcles of 1871-3, Thiers was voted out of the office of president on 24 May 1873. He was replaced by Marshal Macmahon, who earned Thiers's enmity for so doing. But it was Macmahon's mismanagement of his subordinates, admittedly in an area that was perennially ticklish such as anti-clericalism, that led to the so-called *coup d'état* of 16 May 1877, and to his loss of office in 1879: he was replaced by Jules Grévy, and the Republic of the Republicans had begun. Even without the white flag, the moderate Right had shown that it could not rule France in a competent fashion.

est inviolable; les ministres sont responsables; c'est le texte même de la constitution de 1790; 2° deux chambres avec leurs attributions principales; 3° le drapeau. Si M. le comte de Chambord accepte cette monarchie qui est celle même de la Restauration, il accepte franchement le régime représentatif, et il rend à la Maison de Bourbon et à la France toute la vertu du principe héréditaire... Si M. le comte de Chambord refusait, il ne pourrait trouver ni dans sa conscience ni dans son esprit un seul argument valable pour un tel refus, et il aurait dès lors l'intention évidente de poser lui-même la couronne sur la tête de son héritier légitime, et ses amis les plus fidèles devraient s'incliner devant un tel verdict.'

³⁴ Ibid., p. 231. Henri, Duc d'Aumale (1822-97) was the son of Louis-Philippe, King of the French: in the negotiations over fusion, Aumale had kept himself impartial; Louis-Philippe, Duc d'Orléans (1838-94) was the son of the Duc d'Orléans, the eldest son of Louis-Philippe, King of the French, who died in a carriage accident in 1842.

³⁵ Falloux, *Mémoires*, iii, 267: 'De loin avec une inexprimable tristesse, je contemplais le déplorable sort de la France. A peine avait-elle raffermi sa situation par en bas que tout croulait par en haut. Rien ne ressembla tant à la fable de Tantale ou à l'histoire de Pénélope, que l'entreprise toujours renouvelée et toujours avortée de son insaisissable salut.'

Conclusion

THE CAREER AND PUBLISHED WORKS of Alfred de Falloux display the trials and tribulations of public life in nineteenth-century France to a degree that can enable one to see this period as a continuing struggle of a 'moderate'. Falloux, as well as many others of his generation who shared his attitude about the necessity of change, had found that the changes brought about in the mid-nineteenth century were not to his liking. These changes were in a direction that confounded Falloux especially. Change did not come in the form of 'progress', but of the temper in which opinions and convictions were held, and the manner in which they were expressed. Even though Falloux did not scruple to avoid a harsh tone in his public criticism of rivals whom he did not deem to be worthy of his respect, he regretted the development of mass journalism that had made the noisy excesses of ideology open to the public. It was a form of demagogy that perhaps he despised the most. But he never abandoned his conviction that moderation and the civilized manner of salon politics were a far superior method of conducting public affairs.

Falloux's career is indicative also of how a moderate can make as many enemies as friends in his career. This was a predicament especially of nineteenth-century French politics, and was to remain the scourge of parliamentary life through to the instalment of the Fifth Republic by General de Gaulle in 1958. It was certainly not something that was unique to the Third and Fourth Republics, which have both suffered a bad historical reputation for political jobbery. Falloux's instinctive prejudice against republicans was to some degree a major cause of the long-term failure of the causes he espoused. The *Mémoires* show the strength of distrust of a man whose moderation might lead one to believe that he was prepared to do business with them, but as has been shown, the more intimate the experience he gained, the more his prejudices were reinforced: never are they given the benefit of the doubt, even if he did give the benefit of the doubt to the apparently incongruous role of the monarchists in the Second Republic. The final insult was that the republicans' victory was secured by the apostate monarchist Thiers, rather than by one from their own ranks. None the less, if the *républicains de la veille* were beyond the pale, Falloux was prepared at least to bury the hatchet with those whom the more intransigent wing of the Legitimists believed were apostate Orléanists. The great paradox of his career is that those whose political skill was no match to his own ultimately defeated him. Certainly craftiness is an attribute that often goes hand in hand with intransigence, and for the Comte de Chambord it was very useful indeed. He underestimated Thiers's skill as a politician in the early 1870s, preferring to save face by claiming that senility and a Faustian pact with

the Left were too much for one mere mortal to combat. But to scrutinize Falloux's career from a purely Namierite angle is not enough, even if that suited his own temperament.

One of the ironies of Falloux's world-view is that his constitutionalism was a relic of a bygone age rather than a forward-looking vision. As a mild anglophile, his conservatism was more akin to Burke and certain elements of Joseph de Maistre (who defended the government order as ordained by God: to ignore the constitutional niceties of government in favour of absolutism was not only anachronistic in the nineteenth century but also against divine providence). This was the world-view of a man of a deeply early nineteenth-century temperament: the novels of Scott, the works of Joseph de Maistre and the drama composed by the great poets of the seventeenth century all infused his imagination. Falloux's life saw the growth of the press in France, and many of the controversies that filled his life were conducted by means of the press. This was demonstrated most effectively in answering the invective of Veillot, and in throwing down the gauntlet more than once himself (for example *Le Parti catholique*).

It was his attachment to the Church that made him the most formidable enemies. In the controversy with Veillot, if the tenor of the language of *Le Parti catholique* is a proper gauge of those feelings that he generally hid so well, his soul was wounded by the attacks made on him in the name of the Church he so adored. His lifetime saw the innate optimism of the liberal Catholics transformed into the apocalyptic enthusiasm of the *Univers* school. But it was the wisdom of Madame Swetchine, who herself had suffered great trials that were spiritual as much as they were physical (for much of her life she was an invalid), that gave him the strength to continue. In the sense that was intended, Tocqueville's judgement that Falloux had no personal ambition was true. If there ever came to a conflict between his Catholicism and his royalism, then the Church would win: this was, however, largely because the Church as an institution was far more tangible than the distant Pretender at Frohsdorf, and it dominated his private life (above in the salon of Madame Swetchine) far more than did his royalism.

His genuine concern for the plight of the poor, when given practical application, fell short of providing any overall solution. As has been shown, he did not necessarily follow to the letter the maxim that the poor were ever present, and that this was due to their immorality, but he believed that the abnormal extent of poverty in the nineteenth century was due to the abdication of responsibility of society, a society that not only followed the rules of *laissez-faire* economics, but also allowed socialism to flourish. However, his fear of social anarchy could lead him to make precipitate decisions, especially in the

company of those who did not share his political views: the supreme example of this was the atmosphere of distrust that he did not dispel while on the Committee for Public Works in May and June 1848.

None the less Falloux was more distrusted than he deserved: there was a side to his nature that was caring and solicitous for the sufferings of those whose birth had rendered them less fortunate than others. Such attributes are not the hallmark of a thorough villain. Cultivated, scheming, devout, compassionate and passionate, Alfred de Falloux is not only a man of his time, but a character whose contradictions reveal a slice of the nineteenth century to the student of France's tumultuous history.

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