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Modern Intellectual History, 12, 3 (2015), pp. 555–578 © Cambridge University Press 2015
doi:10.1017/S147924431400078X

CITIZENS OR FAITHFUL? RELIGION AND THE LIBERAL REVOLUTIONS OF THE 1820S IN SOUTHERN EUROPE*

MAURIZIO ISABELLA
School of History, Queen Mary University of London
E-mail: m.isabella@qmul.ac.uk

Historians of liberalism have tended to ignore or underplay the contribution of southern Europe. However, in the 1820s this part of the world was at the forefront of the struggle for liberal values. This essay explores the relationship between constitutional culture and religion during the liberal revolutionary wave that affected Portugal, Spain, the Italian peninsula and Greece, by examining parliamentary debates, the revolutionary press, literature targeting the masses, religious sermons and exile writings. It argues that rather than rejecting religion, liberals strove to find an accommodation between their values and revealed truth—they were convinced that no society could survive without religious morality. In this way, they developed a variety of religious attitudes that ranged from deism to forms of crypto-Protestantism without abandoning their established religions. At the same time, although they defended individual rights and freedom of expression against the opposition of the churches, and argued for reformed and enlightened forms of religiosity, most of them considered the religious uniformity of their societies advantageous and even opposed religious toleration.

The 1820s were marked by the emergence of a “global revolutionary south”: the Cadiz military *pronunciamento* by Rafael Riego inaugurated the *trienio liberal* in Spain, facilitated the explosion of similar revolutionary movements from Oporto and Lisbon in Portugal to Turin and Naples in the Italian peninsula, to Sicily, Greece and Russia. As a result the Ibero-American colonies broke free of the metropoles, while similar movements touched the distant cities of Goa and Calcutta in India, and likewise other places in Asia such as the Philippines. The revolutionary wave of the 1820s coincided with what Christopher Bayly

* I would like to thank Joanna Innes, Roberto Romani, Helena Rosenblatt and Konstantina Zanou, as well as audiences in Palermo and Oxford for helpful comments on earlier version of this piece. The research for this article was carried out while holding a Leverhulme Research Fellowship.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924431400078X Published online by Cambridge University Press

has defined as a constitutional moment of global liberalism.[1] The Spanish Constitution of 1812 in particular enjoyed an unprecedented popularity across the globe and represented a text of comparison and a source of debate for any self-defined liberal, from Latin America to Goa. Calls for a Constitution brought with them a variety of political claims and local aspirations, from a desire to limit or challenge monarchical power or curb colonial rule to a wish to promote decentralization, demolish the Napoleonic state and reinstate local autonomy, introduce representative government, protect civil rights, guarantee freedom of the press and access to jury trials, or weaken aristocratic power. However, it was under the banner of a constitutional charter that self-defined liberals advanced their requests for reform and political participation across the globe. The terms "liberal" and "liberalism" during the revolutions were always associated with constitutionalism.

A second, equally important, feature of early liberalism that Bayly highlights is the extent to which the new ideological currents or political arguments that liberals were formulating stemmed in part from an existing toolkit of traditional religious thinking, imported or autochthonous. Christian doctrines, Nonconformist and Catholic, as well as local religious traditions and texts, played a significant role in shaping Indian liberalism in the early decades of the nineteenth century. It was only partly by defying existing religious values and partly by engaging with them that Indian liberals addressed such issues as toleration, freedom of expression, morality, and political reform and legitimacy.[2] But this was true also for liberals in other parts of the world. Catholicism represented a common cultural humus across the Ibero-American world and in most of the Mediterranean, while Orthodoxy provided the background to the rise of nationalism and liberalism in the Balkans. As historians of the Atlantic and the Balkans have shown, the values of the Enlightenment and those of liberalism emerged within these religious cultures, at times challenging them, at times finding more or less awkward accommodations with them.[3]

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[1] C. A. Bayly, "Rammohan Roy and the Advent of Constitutional Liberalism in India: 1800–1830," *Modern Intellectual History*, 4/1 (2007), 25–41. Bayly , *Recovering Liberties: Indian Thought in the Age of Liberalism and Empire* (Cambridge, 2011), 50–60.

[2] Bayly, *Recovering Liberties*, 19–21, 35–41.

[3] Javier Fernandéz Sebastián, "Toleration and Freedom of Expression in the Hispanic World between Enlightenment and Liberalism," *Past and Present*, 211/1 (2011), 159–97; Stuart B. Schwartz, *All Can Be Saved: Religious Tolerance and Salvation in the Iberian Atlantic World* (New Haven and London, 2008); Scott Eastman, *Preaching Spanish Nationalism across the Hispanic Atlantic 1759–1823* (Baton Rouge, 2012). Paschalis Kitromilides, "Orthodoxy and the West: Reformation to Enlightenment," in M. Angold, ed., *Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 5, *Eastern Christianity* (Cambridge, 2008), 187–208.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924431400078X Published online by Cambridge University Press

This article considers the relationship between these two aspects of early liberalism: constitutional culture and religion. It does so by exploring their relevance for the revolutions of the 1820s in southern Europe. The introduction of constitutional texts into Portugal, Spain, Turin, Naples and Greece—even if only temporary in some cases—raised the crucial question of the place to be accorded to religion in the new liberal order, the latter's relationship with the Church, and the compatibility of state religions with the acknowledgement of free expression, toleration and individual rights.

By choosing southern Europe as its focus, this essay takes a regional approach and addresses what I argue was then a coherent political and intellectual space pertaining to a broader global revolutionary moment, at once transatlantic and Asian. In spite of the fact that most of these revolutions constituted imperial crises that led to the weakening or disintegration of existing geopolitical spaces, the political and constitutional culture of liberalism created new common ground across the Atlantic and between different continents.[4] As Bayly has demonstrated, events in Spain, Portugal, Naples and Greece were likewise relevant to Indian liberals. Nonetheless, while the global historiographical turn has brought with it a radical revision of the map and the dynamics of the age of revolutions and has dramatically extended the international reach of intellectual history, historians of ideas have underestimated the importance of southern Europe when elaborating their global map. There are, then, a number of justifications for this regional, transnational focus. First of all, in the 1820s the revolutions in southern Europe were almost simultaneous events. Second, it was the liberals from this same region who viewed their struggle as unitary, and considered their revolutions a crucial step in the regeneration of the South. These movements shared striking similarities and were interconnected in various ways: from Portugal to Greece, the Cadiz Constitution represented the key constitutional document and the framework of reference for any and every political debate, not least as regards the part that religion was supposed to play in the new political order; revolutionaries from the region were engaged in a transnational debate and moved from one revolutionary centre to another; networks of volunteers from Italy, Greece, Spain and Portugal connected southern European liberalism with French, English and Latin American debates.[5]

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[4] On this intellectual space see Gabriel Paquette, *Imperial Portugal in the Age of Atlantic Revolutions: The Luso-Brazilian World, c.1770–1850* (Cambridge, 2014). Javier Fernández Sebastián, ed., *Diccionario político y social del mundo iberoamericano: La era de las revoluciones, 1750–1850* (Madrid, 2009).

[5] On the constitutional culture of Spain and Italy see Jens Spaeth, *Revolution in Europa 1820–23: Verfassung und Verfassungskultur in den Königreichen Spanien, beider Sizilien und Sardinien-Piemont* (Cologne, 2012); Ignacio Fernandez Sarasola, *La Constitución de*

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Finally, across the region liberal reflections on the role of religion in society were determined by a number of similar factors. Everywhere the rise of popular politics and the potential hostility of the masses—and of the Church establishments—to liberal values represented challenges that revolutionaries could not ignore. The disquieting memory of the Napoleonic occupation of the region, and the lessons learnt from it, left a particularly deep impression upon Southern liberals and upon their attitudes towards religion and the Church. The Napoleonic invasion of southern Europe entailed first and foremost a traumatic cultural war in which the French conquerors' assault, in the name of progress and reason, upon religious practices, popular superstitions and the Church as an independent institution resulted in widespread uprisings and revolts, supported by the local clergies and ecclesiastical hierarchies, against the foreign occupier. These experiences showed the ambiguous, double-edged relationship between religion and nationalism: when the two could be combined, as happened in Spain after 1808, then the liberal project could be assured of a broader social base, and the masses could be persuaded to back a constitutional order. But the phenomenon of the *insorgenze* and of Sanfedismo in the Italian peninsula demonstrated also that the alliance between the local revolutionaries, the Napoleonic invader and revolutionary patriotism was often viewed by local populations as antithetical to their religious values.[6] Liberals had to combat a counterrevolutionary ideology the principles of which were incompatible with the secular state, freedom of expression and pluralism. In the minds of counterrevolutionary thinkers and Church authorities, "the secular order required a sacred foundation," one based on a divine authority and absolute religious truth that could neither be questioned nor undermined without the destruction of society, and could only be guaranteed by the existing absolutist political order.[7] This was not only true of Catholicism, but also of Orthodoxy: the Orthodox Church did indeed condemn revolutionary principles, and any form of political critique or rebellion against Ottoman rule, on the grounds that submission to the Porte was consistent with the divine plan and would serve to ensure the ultimate survival of the Orthodox faith.[8]

Cádiz: Origen, Contenido y proyección internacional (Madrid, 2011); on exiles see Maurizio Isabella, *Risorgimento in Exile: Italian Emigrés and the Liberal International* (Oxford 2009); Juan Luis Simal, *Emigrados: España y el Exilio Internacional, 1814–1834* (Madrid, 2012).

6 Michael Broers, *The Politics of Religion in Napoleonic Italy: The War against God 1801–1814* (London and New York, 2002).

7 Emile Perreau-Saussine, *Catholicism and Democracy: An Essay in the History of Political Thought* (Princeton, NJ and Oxford, 2011), 32–3.

8 Richard Clogg, "The 'Dhidhaskalia Patriki' (1798): An Orthodox Reaction to French Revolutionary Propaganda," in *Anatolica: Studies in the Greek East in the 18th and 19th Centuries* (Aldershot, 1996), 87–115; Clogg, "Anti-Clericalism in Pre-independence Greece *c.*1750–1821," in ibid., 257–76.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924431400078X Published online by Cambridge University Press

As this article will demonstrate, rather than rejecting religion, liberals strove to find an accommodation between their values and revealed truth. They did so at a time, after the collapse of the Napoleonic order, when Church and religion had re-emerged with a renewed prestige and enhanced popular support. Thus, rather than simply a step towards the secularization of the political sphere, the revolutions of the 1820s need to be understood as one of those moments in which the relationship between religion and politics, freedom and faith, Church and state were renegotiated, and new political tenets and sources of legitimacy were combined with older ones, and with religious justifications and principles in particular. In general, revolutionaries developed a variety of religious attitudes that ranged from deism to forms of crypto-Protestantism, without abandoning their established religions. At the same time a number of key elements of this early liberalism built on the culture of Catholic and Orthodox Enlightenment, with an emphasis on the compatibility between Christian doctrine and human progress and reform.[9] This, however, was not a peculiarity of southern Europe. Reconciling religious values with the novel political framework of the post-revolutionary world, rethinking religion itself so that it might mount a challenge to the status quo, and establishing an accommodation between the sacred and revolution constituted central problems for nineteenth-century liberals more generally.[10] Religion represented a contested territory for liberals and their adversaries everywhere. While the revolutions were unfolding in southern Europe, an intense debate about the relationship between religion, freedom and toleration took place among both Catholics and Protestants in France, where a Catholic revival was met with a renewed anticlerical movement.[11] In Britain too in the 1820s the relationship between politics, national education and religion was fiercely contested, not least because of the debate leading ultimately to the emancipation of Catholics.[12] Last but not least, southern European liberals were engaged in a conversation with northern European intellectuals. After the revolutions, it was the latter who influenced any evolution in "southern" liberal thinking. During the southern European revolution itself, the peculiarity of liberal thought was characterized by Southern liberals' defence of the religious homogeneity of their nations as

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9 L. Lehener and M. Printy eds., *A Companion to the Catholic Enlightenment in Europe* (Leiden, 2010); Paschalis Kitromilides, *Enlightenment and Revolution: The Making of Modern Greece* (Cambridge, MA, 2013).

10 Gareth Stedman Jones and Ira Katznelson, eds., *Religion and the Political Imagination* (Cambridge, 2010). Dale K. Van Kley, *The Religious Origins of the French Revolution: From Calvin to the Civil Constitution, 1570–1791* (Basingstoke, 2000).

11 Helena Rosenblatt, *Liberal Values: Benjamin Constant and the Politics of Religion* (Cambridge, 2008).

12 Joanna Innes, "'L'éducation nationale' dans les îles Britanniques 1765–1815: Variations britanniques sur un thème européen," *Annales HSS*, 65/5 (2010), 1087–1116.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924431400078X Published online by Cambridge University Press

an important precondition for the success of the liberal experiment, and their argument that political reforms as well as liberal principles were consistent with Christian values.

RELIGIOUS NATIONS, INTOLERANT NATIONS?

A remarkable feature of liberal constitutionalism in southern Europe in the 1820s was the centrality it accorded to a religious definition of the nation. The relationship between nationality, religion and citizenship was shaped across the region by the reception and discussion of the Cadiz Constitution of 1812, which the Spanish revolutionaries reintroduced in 1820 without any major modification. Article 12 of the Constitution stated that the religion of the nation was Catholic, a religion that the nation had a duty to protect by prohibiting the exercise of any other. The centrality of the religious idea of nationality had a number of implications. As has been observed, given the subordination of individual right to the supreme community of the nation, citizenship itself acquired a religious connotation. Specific legislation implemented in 1822 by the Spanish penal code stipulated that those guilty of apostasy risked forfeiting their rights as Spanish citizens.[13] The association between religion and monarchy had been a pillar of the ideology of the Ibero-American world in the pre-revolutionary era. The liberal revolution associated religion with the rights of the nation and with the preservation of civil rights.

In Greece there was no previous relationship between state and religion to provide an element of continuity between the pre-revolutionary and the revolutionary polity. The Orthodox community in the Ottoman Empire was organized according to the Millet system, which guaranteed through the Greek Orthodox patriarchate a degree of autonomy to the Orthodox community, an ethnically diverse community bound by religion and its universal principles, and by an allegiance to the empire, with its rules, legal system and political subordination to a Muslim-defined imperial governance.[14] Rather than rejecting religion or the legacy of orthodoxy, however, the revolution represented a step towards its nationalization, and this at a number of different levels. First of all, the revolutionaries advocated the creation of an autocephalous church. During the first year of the revolution, while closely following Greek events from Paris, Adamantios Korais called for the establishment of a national Greek

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13 Fernández Sarasola, *La Constitución de Cádiz*, 112–13.

14 Karen Barkey, "In the Lands of the Ottomans: Religion and Politics," in Stedman, Jones and Katznelson, *Religion and the Political Imagination*, 90–111.

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Church.[15] Second, they soon adopted religion as one of the key cultural traits that defined the Greek nation, along with ethnicity and, above all, language.[16] The interconnection between religion and language existing within the framework of the Ottoman Empire, as guaranteed by the millet system, with the supremacy it granted to the Greek phanariot families and the Greek-speaking clergy, therefore provided the background for the rise of Greek nationalism and its manipulation and adaptation of religion.

Only a few months after the beginning of the revolution, in 1821, Theorodos Negris, gathering the leaders of Eastern Roumeli in what came to be defined as the Areopagus, drafted a first political document about the organization of the state. It stated that while all religions were tolerated, "the Eastern Church of Christ and the current language only are recognised as the authorised religion and speech of Greece," thus rehearsing uncontroversially the defining cultural traits of the new community.[17] Orthodoxy was confirmed as the state religion in the subsequent constitutional documents also.

The recognition of a state religion raised a number of questions regarding its compatibility with other principles, enshrined in the constitutions, that defined citizenship—in particular the principles of freedom of conscience and freedom of expression. Although a compromise between competing principles clearly needed to be found, southern European liberals were determined to devise legal solutions that protected the religious homogeneity of their societies and recognized individual rights within this religious cultural space. As a consequence, toleration and freedom of expression came to be substantially limited by this pre-existing cultural characteristic of the nation. The assumption of liberals in southern Europe was that toleration for other faiths applied only to foreigners; these liberals held themselves to be ruling over religiously homogeneous societies either as a result of the revolution itself or for historical reasons.[18]

In Naples members of the Neapolitan Parliament agreed at first to confirm Article 12 of the Spanish Constitution, but appended the word "public" to the stipulation about the forms of worship that were banned, implying that the

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15 Paschalis Kitromilides, "Itineraries in the World of the Enlightenment: Adamantios Korais from Smyrna via Montpellier to Paris," in Kitromilides, ed., *Adamantios Korais and the European Enlightenment* (Oxford, 2010), 1–33, at 26.

16 Effi Gazi, "Revisiting Religion and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Greece," in R. Beaton and D. Ricks, eds., *The Making of Modern Greece* (Farnham, 2009), 95–196.

17 Charles Anthony Freeze, *The Orthodox Church and Independent Greece 1821–1852* (Cambridge, 1969), 45–6.

18 On Naples see Luigia Caglioti, *Vite parallele: Una minoranza protestante nell'Italia dell'Ottocento* (Bologna, 2006). In Greece Jews were either massacred or expelled from the territories controlled by the revolutionaries, and tensions emerged also with the Catholic minorities. Katherine Fleming, *Greece: A Jewish History* (Princeton, NJ, 2008), 15–17.

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private exercise of other faiths was acceptable if foreigners were to pray in the privacy of their own households. This limited form of toleration seemed to win universal agreement in the Parliament. Yet this same word was dropped in the final version of the Constitution, following bitter hostility from the leaders of the Catholic Church, and from the clergy in general.

Most prominent among the senior clerics hostile to the Constitution was the Archbishop of Conza, Arcangelo Lupoli, a highly educated and energetic prelate, committed to the reform of his bishopric, to which he had been appointed in 1818, and to the renovation of its churches. For Lupoli any attempt to undermine the role of Catholicism as state religion by permitting even the mildest form of toleration represented first and foremost an attack on the freedom of the Church and an assault upon religion, since it would limit the scope of God's own reign, which represented in turn the foundation of any state and community: "the Church is the kingdom of God on earth, a sign as free in majesty as the Kings of Kings, through whom it has been communicated, is free." A state religion, concluded Lupoli, was a vital support to government, since without religion the social order would disintegrate: "far from finding ourselves in society, we would find ourselves in a wood or in a forest."[19] For a priest by the name of Felice Racioppi, the inclusion of the word "public" in the text might well lead to a plurality of creeds entering the kingdom and destroying its unity. Society would dissolve, families would be divided, and in the end, Racioppi concluded, civil war would break out.[20] Heeding this opposition, the king used his right of veto to modify the final text and leave the wording of the Cadiz Constitution intact.[21]

In spite of this bitter conflict that resulted in the victory of the Church, the views of the Neapolitan hierarchy and those of the majority of the deputies were in fact closer than it would seem at first sight. What brought together both supporters of the Constitution and its critics was the conviction that the religious uniformity of the nation had to be protected, and that religious pluralism was a threat to society. In his *Catechismo costituzionale per uso del regno Unito delle Sicilie*, the Benedictine monk Luigi Galanti, an unflinching supporter of the new order elected to the Neapolitan Parliament in 1820, confirmed that the religious homogeneity of the Neapolitan nation was a source of strength, unity and cohesion, a cultural specificity in which the country could and should take pride. The introduction of other cults was seen as a threat to national unity and

19 Arcangelo Lupoli, *Rimostranza dell'Arcivescovo di Conza per la liberta' della chiesa* (Conza, 1821), 5, 14–15.

20 Felice Racioppi, *Al Parlamento Nazionale, Petizione del Canonico Felice Racioppi di Apice in P.U.* (Avellino, n.d.).

21 Aurelio Lepre, *La rivoluzione napoletana del 1820–21* (Rome, 1967), 247–53.

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to the social fabric, while the public practice of other faiths could easily produce anarchy:

Having just the one religion, we do not need to proclaim freedom of worship, as other countries, where there are followers of different religions, have been obliged to do. Happy as we are to have this powerful bond, we will not live in fear of those bloody scenes between Catholics and Protestants witnessed even in recent years in France.[22]

Admittedly, some liberals, for their part, were more keen to defend toleration for foreigners. In the 1822 Portuguese Constitution the affirmation of a constitutionally protected state religion was associated with explicit toleration of the public practice of other religions by non-nationals. But the basic assumption that the nation was, and should remain, homogeneous from a religious point of view was not questioned in Portugal either. Article 25 of the *bases* discussed in 1821 stated, "The religion of the Portuguese nation must be Catholic, Apostolic, Roman. All foreigners are permitted the particular exercise of their respective cults." Many deputies associated religious toleration with economic progress, and observed that the great prosperity of countries such as the United States of America, England and Holland was evidence for the link between the peaceful coexistence of different religious beliefs and economic success. Likewise, it was argued, the Portuguese Empire could only thrive if foreigners were allowed to flock into its territories and practise their cults.[23] Some went so far as to claim that toleration was first and foremost a Christian virtue, one praised by the New Testament and advocated by Jesus Christ and the Apostles, a Catholic duty towards foreigners compatible with historical praxis across the world. Intolerance was coterminous with fanaticism, violence and civil strife. Although it was a duty to defend Catholic truth, Christianity also taught its followers to tolerate those who erred.[24] However, while deputies in principle acknowledged the importance of respecting the religious beliefs of foreigners, they took seriously the notion that the Catholic nature of the monarchy and the nation had to be defended. In their view the text of the *bases* seemed to reconcile these two seemingly antithetical principles. As Sousa Machado suggested, the freedom of conscience of the individual had to be protected as much as the religious integrity of the Portuguese nation: the undue proliferation of religious sects was as dangerous to society as a complete intolerance of individual religious

[22] Luigi Galanti, *Catechismo costituzionale per uso del regno Unito delle Sicilie* (Naples, 1820), 16. On Galanti see Enrico Narciso, "Illuminismo e cultura sannita nel secolo XVIII," in Narciso, ed., *Illuminismo meridionale e comunità locali* (Naples, 1988), 25–62, at 49–50.

[23] *Diario das Cortes*, 1821, 1771–3.

[24] Ibid., 6 Aug. 1821, 1799–1802.

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opinions.[25] Some went so far as to suggest, just as most Neapolitan liberals had done, that only the private, not the public, practice of other faiths should be tolerated.[26] While the Portuguese constitution made more generous and explicit allowances for aliens than had the Neapolitan and Spanish revolutionaries, it did not challenge the assumption that the religious unity of the nation had to be safeguarded.[27]

Another area in which individual rights and religion could clash was represented by the introduction of freedom of the press. The debates on the adoption of Article 372 of the Cadiz Constitution, which concerned freedom of the press, and the scope or limits of censorship, are indicative of the prevailing views among the members of the parliaments.[28] In Spain and Portugal the Inquisition was once again abolished and freedom of the press guaranteed; however, ecclesiastical preventive censorship was introduced, although strictly limited to religious dogma and to the publication of the Holy Scriptures. The controversy over these measures was sharpened by the opposition of many, if not all, bishops and leaders of the national churches, who loudly voiced their hostility to the free press and raised concerns about the threats it posed to public order and religion. Yet the combination of defending freedom of expression and protecting religious dogma was justified with a set of common arguments. As even the Archbishop of Toledo, Cardinal Borbon, the leader of the Spanish Church and a supporter of the constitutional regime, was willing to concede, since freedom and religion went hand in hand, a free press, rather than undermining it, would ultimately contribute to the spreading of religious truth. This argument, by replacing reason with Catholicism, mirrored that of Enlightenment philosophers, who were less committed to a pluralism of ideas than to the ultimate victory of reason over superstition and error.[29]

In Naples, too, liberals argued that the broadest possible freedom of the press was a vital pillar not only of the constitutional system and of a flourishing society but also of religion itself. They saw their faith in the emergence of a public opinion founded upon wisdom and rationality as fully compatible with the principles of Revelation. For the anonymous journalist writing for *L'Imparziale*, "the tribunal

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25 *Diaro Das Cortes*, 6 Aug. 1821, 1802.

26 Bispo de Béja, in *Diario das Cortes*, 3 Aug. 1821, 1772.

27 For the text of the *bases* see now Benedicta Maria Duque Vieira, ed., *O Problema político português no tempo das primeiras cortes liberais: Estudoes e documentos* (Lisbon, 1991).

28 Annibale Alberti, ed, *Atti del Parlamento delle Due Sicilie 1820–21*, 3 vols. (Bologna, 1926), 2: 170–77.

29 On the legislation see Sarasola, *La Constitución de Cádiz*, 263; on the cardinal Borbon see Rodríguez López Brea, *Don Luis de Borbón el cardinal de los liberales: 1777–1823* (Toledo, 2002), 302–4.

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of public opinion ... knows that in all the triumphs of religion there was no more effective tool than the pen of the impious."[30]

In Portugal, too, deputies defended freedom of the press and criticized preventive censorship. They argued that because freedom of the press was associated with the natural right of freedom of expression, it should not be limited by any religious consideration. They argued as well that censorship of the press would foster superstition and, through secrecy, encourage erroneous beliefs. Genuine religious principles could only thrive with free discussion, the sole means by which truth might prevail and errors be challenged, and religious belief could not be founded upon constraint but only upon free will and intimate conviction. These views were advanced by a member of the Cortes who was also a cleric, the Abate Castelo Branco, who passionately believed in the full compatibility of religion with individual freedom. The risk, as others observed, was that once the idea of preventive censorship was admitted, it was difficult to make a clear distinction between religious and non-religious writings, and the enemies of freedom would easily find reasons to object to the beliefs of most philosophers and to extend the reach of censorship, thereby trampling upon constitutional rights.[31] It was through preaching and pastoral activities, not through laws, that religion would flourish.[32]

But, for most deputies, Catholicism required some sort of protection as a state religion. Admittedly, in the past the use of censorship had led to grave abuses, which meant that it had to be properly regulated, and its boundaries clearly defined. However, the absence of any form of preventive censorship on religious publications would encourage the spread of heresies, and therefore pose a direct threat to the integrity of the national community whose shared religious values were those of Catholicism. For Anes de Carvalho the backwardness and ignorance of Portuguese society, subjected to three centuries of despotism by the Holy Inquisition, did not permit an untrammelled freedom of the press on religious matters. Moreover, Portugal had embraced Catholicism, a religion based on a set of unquestionable truths that only the Church could shield from error.[33]

30 "Dell'utilità dei giornali in uno stato costituzionale," *L'Imparziale*, Naples, 14 Aug. 1820, 4. Similar arguments in "Atti de' varii poteri. Potere legislative. Affari ecclesiastici," *Il Censore*, Naples, 16 Jan. 1821, 61–2; Luigi Galanti, "Rapporto della commissione di esame a tutela della costituzione sulla mozione del signor deputato Catalano," in *Lettera dell'Arcivescovo di Napoli al parlamento nazionale e risposta del Parlamento* (Naples, 1821), 14.

31 The debates have been published in Augusto da Costa Dias, *Discursos sobre a libertade de imprensa no primeiro parlamento português (1821)* (Lisbon, 1978), 72–4 and 126–30 for Castelo Branco's interventions, 92–3 for Senor Peçanha, 94 for similar ideas by Carmelo Fortes.

32 Fernandes Tomás, in ibid., 106.

33 Ibid., 76–7.

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Only the wisdom of bishops on questions relating to salvation, it was added, could determine what was acceptable or not on matters concerning dogma.[34] This latter position was the one that prevailed, and ecclesiastical censorship was allowed for matters relating to religious doctrine.[35]

PREACHING THE CONSTITUTION

The rise of popular politics in Europe, and the increasing turbulence of the masses during the age of revolutions, forced liberals to consider how best to ensure their support for the liberal experiment, and how to communicate the benefits of representative government. This was not something to be taken for granted, in the light of what had happened in southern Europe in the previous two decades. Given how easily the uneducated were swayed by the cultural leadership of the Church, the education of the masses and the communication of the content of the Constitution represented a priority for the revolutionaries. During the revolutions the regular and secular clergies were divided in their attitudes towards liberalism, but liberals nonetheless saw them as crucial mediators to reach the masses, using religious literature to do so. The moulding of a "liberal" public sphere was thus attempted through the dissemination of catechisms, short dialogues to be read out loud, and public speeches both in religious and non-religious spaces. This was happening simultaneously also in Latin America, where religious literature was produced in support of emancipation and of the Constitution.[36] An analysis of popular literature, as well as of revolutionary sermons, thus provides us with additional sources to understand the content and nature of liberalism in the period, and the way in which the constitutions were understood, explained and communicated by laymen and members of the Church. In addition, it shows the importance of the broader social context with which liberals had to engage, and which in turn influenced the content and nature of early liberalism, determining its messages and options.

Popular literature in the vernacular, political catechisms, dialogues addressing the illiterate, and journalism all strove to reassure their readerships or audiences that patriotism, secret societies and constitutional principles were a far cry from atheism or heresy. Even children might become the target of a popular literature

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34 Ibid., 101.

35 Anna Moura Faria, "A condiçao do clero português durante a primeira experiência de implantaçao do liberalism: As influências do processo revolucionário francês e seus limites," *Revista portuguésa de Historia*, 23 (1987), 301–31. On censorship see also José Tengarrinha, *Da Liberdade Mitificada à Liberdade Subvertida* (Lisbon, 1993).

36 Rafael Sagredo Baeza, *De la colonia a la república: Los catecismos políticos americanos, 1811–1827* (Madrid, 2009).

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that proclaimed the compatibility of constitutional principles with religion. In a dialogue published in Seville with the aim of teaching the children of the parish to read through being exposed to the ideals enshrined in the Constitution, and to the institutions introduced through it, a priest made it clear that "he who would be a good Christian must be a good Constitutional," the constitution being founded upon the "character of the nation, natural law, and the religion of the one true Jesus Christ."[37] In Spain and Portugal, catechisms argued that the Constitution had to be respected, among other reasons, precisely because it protected and defended the Catholic nature of the country.[38] In a catechism written for the Greek youth about the new Constitution, the Piedmontese Philhellene Alerino Palma argued that a plurality of religions was beneficial to society, and praised religious tolerance. However, he also defended the anti-Muslim stance of the Constitution on grounds that it was necessary to protect the newly founded state.[39]

This defence of the religious foundations of the constitutions was not simply geared to winning over the masses. Liberals shared the heartfelt conviction that religion was the pillar of any form of civil life. For the Portuguese liberal Almeida Garrett, no public life could thrive without the aid of religion. In the wake of Filangieri, Garrett thus defined religion as "the supplement of the criminal code of a nation; it is the most sacred bond that brings together men in a society."[40] While tradition and revolution were not deemed to be incompatible, patriots did, however, make it very clear that what they supported was an evangelical, progressive form of religion at odds with oppression or despotism. In the words of a Sicilian liberal, "the friends of liberty want a religion as pure as God himself, as simple as the Gospels ... they impute the same value to social duties and to religious duties, because to their way of thinking social duties are still religious duties."[41] Thus religious reform, Church and political reform went hand in hand, inasmuch as the revolution brought with it a regeneration that was ethical and moral, and therefore political and religious, at one and the same time.

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37 Don Apolinar Contoni, *Cartilla de explicacíon de la constitución política de la monarquia Española, para la instruccíon de los niños de la parroquia de Santiago de la ciudad de Baza* (Sevilla, 1821), repr. in *Catecismos politicos españoles* (Madrid, 1989), 205.

38 Ibid., 206. Inocencio Antonio de Miranda, *O Cidadão lusitano* (Lisbon, 1822), 48–50.

39 Alerino Palma, *Political Catechism for the Greek Youth* (in Greek) (Hydra, 1826).

40 Almeida Garrett, "Da protecção, e introspecção da religião, da instrução pública, e da corrupção da moral, que da qui provinha," in Garrett, *O dia vinte e quatro de agosto* [1821], in Garrett, *Obras Completas, Obra Politica, Escritos do vintismo (1820–23)* (Lisbon, 1985), 214–16. Similar ideas in *O parocho constitucional ou: Dialogo entre hum parocho de Riba-Tejo e hum citadão liberal de Lisboa seu amigo* (Lisbon, 1821).

41 Notizie Estere, "Francia, Parigi, 19 Agosto 1820," *Giornale patriottico di Sicilia*, Palermo, 25 Sept. 1820, 4.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924431400078X Published online by Cambridge University Press

Some revolutionaries thought that the nation needed not only the civil rights guaranteed by the constitutions, but also the moralization of religious practises, the abandonment of merely external forms of worship and the people's conversion to the true spiritual principles of Christianity. Political catechisms might therefore sometimes contain critiques of popular forms of religion vitiated by the needless proliferation of devotional chapels and churches that were the object of pilgrimages, often too lavishly endowed, to the detriment of parish churches and the education of the masses.[42] Religious worship had to be reformed to reflect the evangelical principles of the original religion, which, it was argued, "is entirely analogous to human rights." This could only be achieved through the combating of bigotry and of those superstitious practises that sustained the enemies of the revolution, and through the conversion of souls.[43] Liberal constitutions, it was argued, would in turn defeat fanaticism and intolerance and help religion regain its association with enlightenment.[44]

Some of this pedagogic literature could go so far as to advance notions of natural religion, identifying the rights of citizens with natural rights, defending forms of deism that were common among Freemasons and some members of secret societies, and challenging traditional religiosity. In a Portuguese catechism written in the classic dialogical style, the anonymous writer argued that natural laws, which ruled the universe as well as human existence, coincided with God's order and served as proof of its existence. When the Gospels and the prophets defended social virtues such as justice, charity, humanity, probity and patriotism, they were "doing nothing less than announcing the precepts of natural law." Thus the "partisans of natural law were not godless, but had nobler ideas than most regarding the Divine."[45]

But in most cases we are concerned rather with a reformed, anti-despotic brand of religion that recognized the role of priests and the Church in the political and moral education of the masses. In a dialogue published in Naples in 1820, a patriot strove to convince a priest that it was God's own plan to combat injustice, "so that henceforth the will of the nation, expressed through its representatives, not the will of one only, be the law."[46] At the end of the dialogue the priest agreed to preach in such a way as to convince his parishioners of the patriots' good

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42 De Miranda, *O Cidadão lusitano*, 55–6.

43 A.C.B.D., *Parlata dell'uomo sincero: Avviso alla piu' parte della nazione* (n.d., n.p., but Naples, 1820).

44 Candido de Almeida y Sandoval, *O fanatismo e a Intolerancia combatidos por hum filosofo Christão* (Lisbon, 1821), 3,4.

45 *Exposição da lei natural; ou catecismo do citadão* (Lisbon, 1820), 9, 55, 60.

46 *Catechismo patriottico estratto dalla opera di La Croix ed adottato al regno delle due Sicilie tradotto dal francese da Giovanni Taddej* (Naples, 1820), 10.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924431400078X Published online by Cambridge University Press

intentions and sound principles. Similar dialogues between clergy and ordinary people could be found elsewhere.[47]

Such fictional representations of priests demonstrate the importance attached by revolutionaries to obtaining the backing of the clergy. While friars were often criticized, and monasticism condemned, priests were seen as key allies in the process of educating the illiterate. For the Greek patriots the regeneration of the nation could only be achieved with the support of the clergy. On the eve of the revolution Count Ioannis Kapodistrias argued that the while the education and selection of the Orthodox hierarchy and clergy had to be improved, the "immense authority of the Church" could be mobilized by contributing to public education in their dioceses, as well as to the administration of justice.[48] A Neapolitan commentator on the Constitution likewise argued that priests' responsibilities should be exclusively those of "education, instruction, preaching."[49] For a university Professor from Coimbra, it was a cleric's duty to "instruct the people in its legitimate rights, and in its rigorous obligations."[50]

As a matter of fact, there were governmental initiatives aimed at guaranteeing the clergy's assistance in the task of converting the masses to the new regimes. In Spain, and in Naples too, where Spanish regulations were imitated, government policy obliged the clergy to catechize those attending Mass in the principles of the Constitution. Although some of these activities were government-led, it should be noted that across the region substantial sectors of the junior clergy actively supported the constitutional regime, and many priests and friars were members of secret societies. This convergence between sectors of the Church and liberalism was facilitated by the existence of movements or aspirations for reform within the national churches under way since the eighteenth century, movements whose concern to reconcile faith with reason and progress, and to purify religious worship, became an integral part of a liberal agenda supported by the

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47 "Dialogos de un Aldeano con el Domine del Lugar," *Diario de Barcelona*, 28 March 1820, 57–8.

48 Ioannis Kapodistrias, "The Address of Count Ioannis Kapodistrias to the Greeks" [1819], in R. Clogg, ed., *The Movement for Greek Independence 1770–1821* (London and Basingstoke, 1976), 131–6. On Korais's ideas about religion see also Clogg , "The Correspondence of Adhamantios Korais with the British and Foreign Bible Society (1808)," in Clogg, *Anatolica*, 65–84.

49 Nicola Salerno, *Compendio della Terapeutica costituzionale, o sia ristretto ragionamento su la cura de' mali politici e legali del nuovo governo costituzionae del Regno di Napoli* (Naples, 1820), 14–15.

50 "Papel de hum academico, impresso de ordem do Governo: Conimbricenses," *Gazeta de Lisboa*, 3 Oct. 1820. See also *Cathecismo Constitucional: Reimpresso, corregido e augmentado offerecido a's cortes gerais,extraordinarias, e constituentes da nação portugueza* (Lisbon, 1821), 36.

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clergy.[51] This happened simultaneously in southern Europe and in Ibero-America alike.[52] Priests delivered sermons in churches specifically to welcome the Constitution, to thank the king for having granted it, to mark the inauguration of parliamentary sessions, or to commemorate key revolutionary events. The political content of these sermons gave these traditional forms of communication of *ancien régime* societies a new meaning.[53]

A common theme of the orations delivered by members of the clergy was the biblical or evangelical root of constitutional government. Priests reminded voters on the eve of the election for the new parliamentary assemblies of the divine origin of laws, and of the need for legislators to be inspired by divine wisdom in their legislative activities, which should be based on respect for God, love for the people and prudence.[54] Theology and the biblical narrative came to the support of the constitutional regimes. In a sermon delivered in Oporto in Portugal to celebrate the new provisional government, Santa Barbara highlighted God's endorsement of representative government by referring to the Exodus, when God had ordered the Jewish legislator to be advised by seventy wise men who would share with him the burden of power. He also argued that the Catholic Church should be based on similarly anti-despotic principles. According to Jesus Christ's wish, "the Sovereign power of the Church resides in the Ecumenical Councils: and what are these Councils, if not Cortes, that represent Christian society?"[55] Santa Barbara told his audience (which included the Bishop of Oporto and the Bishop of Cabo Verde, as well as the political leadership of the city) that when religion had not been anti-despotic, it had become no more than "fanaticism, superstition, simony, intolerance and cruel persecution."[56]

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[51] Helena Rosenblatt, "The Christian Enlightenment," in Stewart J. Brown and Timothy Tackett, eds., *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 7, *Enlightenment, Reawakening and Revolution 1660–1815* (Cambridge, 2006), 283–301; M. Rosa, ed., *Cattolicesimo e lumi nel settecento italiano* (Rome, 1981); William Callahan, *Church, Politics and Society in Spain, 1750–1874* (Cambridge, MA, 1984).

[52] Alfredo Avila, "El Cristiano Constitucional: Libertad, derecho y naturaleza en la retórica de Manuel de la Bárcena," *Estudios de Historia Moderna y Contemporanea de México*, 25 (2003), 5–41; Víctor Peralta Ruiz, "Sermones y pastorales frente a un nuevo lenguaje político," in V. Hébrard and G. Verdo, eds., *Un objecto de Historia: Las Indipendencias Hispanoamericanas (1810–1830)* (Madrid, 2013), 117–34.

[53] Gérard Dufour, "Estudio Preliminar y presentación," in Dufour, *Sermones revolucionarios del Trienio Liberal (1820–1823)* (Alicante, 1991), 7–57.

[54] Don Mariano Garcia Zamora, *Breve discurso o sermon que ne la misa de espíritu-santo celebrada en la iglesia catedral de Caragena sita en Murcia . . . : A los electores de partido* [1820], in Dufour, *Sermones revolucionarios*, 89, 92–3.

[55] António Santa Barbara, *Sermão em acção de graças pela desejada e muito feliz união da junta provisoria do governo supremo do reino com o governo interino de Lisboa—verificada no 1.º de outubro de 1820* (Porto, 1820), 27.

[56] Ibid., 20.

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Addressing his parishioners in a church in Otajano, a town not far from Naples, a priest who was presumably himself a member of the Carboneria, described the regeneration of the nation and the transition from despotism to freedom in biblical terms, as a "political redemption" that came after the suffering of the "daughter of Sion on the banks of the river of Babylon," a redemption that in his narrative was best exemplified by the upheavals occasioned by the Napoleonic conquests, invasions and wars across the continent that had oppressed the European nationalities.[57] Thus sermons and pastoral addresses set the rise of constitutional government and national regeneration within the framework of a providential, divine design. From time to time these biblical justifications of constitutionalism were reappropriated by lay revolutionaries, keen to remind the members of the clergy hostile to the regime that they had systematically misrepresented the content of the biblical message with their craven support for despotism and autocracy. For an anonymous patriot addressing Portuguese priests and friars in 1821 it was not by pure chance that the Jewish people had abandoned theocracy to embrace republican government, chosen by all the tribes. Therefore the Portuguese nation possessed the right to sovereignty through its representatives by virtue of divine law.[58]

In the specific case of the Greek revolution, the language of national regeneration and redemption was couched in eschatological visions that belonged to an Orthodox religious tradition dating back to the origins of the Muslim "captivity," that of oracular literature. Oracles commenting on the apocalypse cast the Ottomans as the Antichrist and foresaw liberation from oppression, occasionally associated with a specific date. None of these texts was explicitly nationalist. However, they provided a religious narrative and a historical, millenarian framework for the call for emancipation, which the famous revolutionary Righas Velenstinlis was among the first to adopt in 1790 when he published the Oracles of Agathangelos in Vienna.[59] But a similar language could also be found in the Martirologues, or the Sermons of Consolation that represented the most common form of religious texts, accessible to ordinary *reyes* for centuries. It should therefore come as no surprise that a Messianic language

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57 *Allocuzione del Sacerdote Don Luigi Amendola, recitata nella parrochiale chiesa di S. Giuseppe di Otajano nel di' 16 luglio 1820* (Naples, 1820), 6.

58 *A Soberania da Nação, ou manifesto aos Frades e Clérigos, obra util a todo o citadao* (Lisbon, 1821), 4, 5, 12.

59 Marios Hartzopoulos, "From Resurrection to Insurrection: 'Sacred' Myths, Motifs, and Symbols in the Greek War of Independence," in Beaton and Ricks, *The Making of Modern Greece*, 81–93, at 88. Paschalis Kitromilides, "Athos and the Enlightenment," chap. 7 of Kitromilides, *An Orthodox Enlightenment: Symbolic Legacies and Cultural Encounters in Southeastern Europe* (Aldershot, 2007), 257–72, at 269.

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inscribing the emancipation of the Greeks within a providential design became common coin during the revolution among all social groups.[60]

These biblical, providential frameworks communicated different interpretations of the constitutional regime; some were within the liberal camp, while others bolstered a reductionist, or anti-liberal, reading of recent political events. Santa Barbara's sermon was primarily a celebration of Enlightenment and of constitutional monarchism: he condemned the excesses of the French Revolution, and referred to the 1791 monarchical Constitution as its wisest institutional result. However, the sermon also mounted an explicit defence of revolutions against those who claimed that they are "fatal to the happiness of the people," since it was calumny and oppression, not philosophy, that caused political convulsion.[61] In words reminiscent of Mme de Staël's famous dictum, Santa Barbara claimed that despotism was a modern phenomenon, while liberty was ancient. Thus he described the recent events in Portugal as peaceful, based on concord of all the people and forces, and as a "restoration" of Portuguese institutions, damaged in recent decades against the monarch's own wishes.

Priests might at times go so far as to defend in churches the radical principles of the Carboneria, the left wing of the liberal front in the revolution of Naples, in spite of the fact that the Pope himself had condemned this organization. Don Luigi Amendola, addressing his congregation, phrased the transformations introduced by the Constitution in personal terms, by listing what it was doing for each and every one of them:

> It restores to you the first right of man, that will henceforth never be alienated ... it renders the press necessary to you, so that your voice may reach the king ... *religion is yours*. And so that you may with inner worship and outer adore the one creator, it allows you to profess the One, True, Catholic and Roman religion ... It grants the right of representation.[62]

Thus an analysis of the literature for the masses and the sermons demonstrates that while liberals were borrowing from the Church the language of religion, the Church was itself engaging at the same time with the language of liberalism in order to find ideological accommodation between its values and those advanced by the revolutionaries. This said, the Church hierarchies and a part of the clergy also endeavoured to combat liberal manipulations of religion, and the ensuing ideological conflict, during the revolution and after it, was bitter indeed.

60 Astérios Argyriou, *Les exèges grecques de l'apocalypse à l'epoque turque (1453–1821): Esquisse d'une historie des courants idéologiques au sein du people grec asservi* (Thessaloniki, 1982), 101–2.

61 Santa Barbara, *Sermão*, p.17.

62 Gennaro Campanile, *Allocuzione nel rendimento di grazie all'altissimo per l'ottenuta costituzione* (Naples, 1820), 27–8, italics in the original.

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Liberalism could only be defeated if the Church managed to regain the terrain lost in the previous years, reclaim the correct interpretation of new words, and reconquer the public religious sphere previously invaded by supporters of the constitutional order. In this respect, the anti-revolutionary homilies published by Archbishop Clary of the city of Catanzaro in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, just after the end of the revolution in 1821, significantly entitled *Il liberalismo cristiano*, represents an interesting case in point.[63] Clary aimed at providing an anti-revolutionary interpretation of the concepts that constituted the foundations of *liberalismo*, namely liberty, society, nationality and patriotism, so that Christians could be true *liberali*, rather than *libertini*.[64] For Clary, moral freedom could only exist in association with virtue, and political freedom in compliance with law and with respect for authority. In either case freedom thus found its legitimation in obedience to God. Outside these boundaries there existed only slavery and vice. The Christian nation, as opposed to the revolutionary one, was an organic and living whole bound together by the principle of fraternity, whose head, represented by the king, could not be separated from the body. This is why the true liberal nation was the one loyal to the monarch who had put an end to the constitutional experiment.[65]

TRANSNATIONAL DEBATES: A VIEW FROM NORTHERN EUROPE

Southern European revolutionaries raised questions that belonged to a broader European debate involving northern European observers and displaced intellectuals from the South. The attention paid by liberals in France and Britain to southern developments shows how important these events were for European liberalism as a whole. In the 1820s French liberal Catholics' views on religious freedom were affected both by the trauma of the revolution and by the need to react to the rising influence of intransigent Catholicism. Thus they took distance from first Rousseauian ideas of civil religion, which imposed a specific form of worship on society, and second from French ultraroyalism, which allied itself with a conservative brand of religion hostile to freedom of expression. While they were aware of the power of religion over society, they were also committed to the legal equality granted by the French Charte to all creeds.[66] A Catholic critique of the intolerant nature of the Spanish charter was provided by

[63] Michele Basilio Clary, *Il liberalismo cristiano: Omelie sacro-politiche* (Messina, 1821).

[64] Ibid., 3–5, 14–17.

[65] Ibid., 93–120.

[66] Dominique Dufour de Pradt, *De la Révolution actuelle de l'Espagne, et de ses suites* (Paris, 1820). On French liberal Catholicism see Rosenblatt, *Liberal Values*, 185–6; and George Armstrong Kelly, *The Humane Comedy: Constant, Tocqueville and French Liberalism*

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Dominique Dufour de Pradt, one of the most influential commentators on the revolutionary wave that had hit the southern hemisphere and southern Europe in the post-Napoleonic era. For de Pradt the religiously exclusive nature of the Spanish Constitution guaranteed a form of intolerance mirroring the anti-Catholic prejudice of the British political system, which denied the Catholics all political rights. While he conceded that "religious uniformity is a good thing in a state," he insisted that religious intolerance was also "a great evil." Religious freedom, argued De Pradt, did not entail admitting that there was no such thing as religious truth. Toleration was rather a reciprocal act that entailed respect for the freedom of others, including the freedom to be in error, since "error can only incite indulgence, and never the wish to exclude." This is why he was hostile to the existence of a religion of state recognized by a constitution. For De Pradt the French Constitution was markedly superior to the Spanish and the English, for while it declared Catholicism to be the state religion, it did not attach any privilege to it at the expense of others.[67] For Jean-Denis Lanjuinais, a member of the peerage and a supporter of the Charte, the Spanish Constitution, as adopted also in Naples, inasmuch as it denied to other Christian and non-Christian religions even the private right of worship, not only was contrary to natural justice, freedom and the commercial interests of the state, but also clashed with the spirit of the Gospels. Ultimately, argued Lanjuinais, it would introduce nothing less than "a State inquisition."[68]

The conviction that a society that was homogeneous in religion was superior to one in which a plurality of faiths thrived, a conviction common to many Mediterranean liberals, was also at odds with the views put forward by Benjamin Constant in these same years. It was precisely against the notion, so common among French Catholics too, that the religious unity of a state was to be recommended, that the Protestant thinker reminded his readers of the advantages that religious pluralism had brought to Europe. Not only had the rise of Protestantism contributed to the reformation of Catholicism, but the proliferation of religious sects could only be beneficial, given that moral improvement, rather than dogma and authority, represented the key contribution provided by religion to society.[69]

(Cambridge, 1992), 92–3 et seq. De Pradt's intervention in French Restoration debates on religion was represented by his *Les quatre Concordats* (Paris, 1818).

[67] De Pradt, *De la Révolution actuelle*, 194–6.

[68] Jean-Denis Lanjuinais, *Vues politiques sur les changemens à faire a la constitution de l'Espagne, afin de la consolider, spécialement dans le Royaume des Deux Sicilies* (Paris, 1820), 20.

[69] Rosenblatt, *Liberal Values*, 172–6. Benjamin Constant, *Principles of Politics* [1815], in Constant, *Political Writings*, ed. B. M. Fontana (Cambridge, 1993), 285.

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On the other side of the Channel, Benthamite liberals were equally critical of religious intolerance, without ignoring the peculiar conditions of the south. Bentham and his supporters, who were deeply interested in the expansion of constitutional culture in southern Europe and the rest of the world, were unimpressed with the way in which the constitutions of southern Europe, starting with the Spanish, had dealt with issues of freedom of expression and religion, and objected to the limits imposed by censorship.[70] For the case of the Greek revolution, Jeremy Bentham's critique of the association between citizenship and religion was explicit and had been communicated directly to the Greek revolutionaries, with whom he was in close contact. For Bentham, the greatest happiness principle required the maximum extension of political participation, so he objected to the exclusion of Muslims and Jews from citizenship rights. Bentham was well aware of the exceptional circumstances of the Greek revolution as an anti-Ottoman struggle, and of the need to protect the Greeks from their current enemies. However, he was also convinced that a reasonable compromise could be reached. Bentham recommended to the Greek revolutionaries that if their constitution assured a Greek majority in Parliament they could allow Muslim political participation.[71]

As the case of Bentham and his circle demonstrates, liberals in France and Britain were not only aware of constitutional developments in the Mediterranean, but maintained close links with the region and with those southern intellectuals who lived abroad before, during and after the revolutions. Conversely, it would be impossible to understand the evolution of southern European liberalism without considering the interaction between the revolutionary diaspora that moved across Europe and the Atlantic, and the intellectual circles of the host countries. It should therefore come as no surprise that diasporic liberalism displayed a number of converging features with the political beliefs of French and British observers. Whether from a distance, or after the revolutions themselves, in the context of retrospective reflections as to the reasons for their failure, or under the influence of the living example of other societies, southern liberals provided a more critical account of the provisions that had been introduced by the revolutionary constitutions with regard to religious toleration. Adamantios Korais, the most eminent Greek diasporic intellectual based in Paris, in his extensive commentary upon the 1822 Constitution of Epidaurous, lamented the fact that the new document did not guarantee religious toleration, and that on

[70] Frederick Rosen, *Bentham, Byron and Greece: Constitutionalism, Nationalism, and Early Liberal Political Thought* (Oxford, 1992).

[71] Ibid., 84–9. Jeremy Bentham, "Observations," in Bentham, *Securities against Misrule and Other Constitutional Writings from Tripoli and Greece*, in Bentham, *Collected Works*, ed. T. P. Schofield (Oxford, 1990), 209–15, and esp. 254–6.

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the contrary it had made one creed predominant. Thus his own recognition that religion was one of the fundamental defining traits of the Greek nation did not lead him to advocate special constitutional provision for a state religion.[72] In assessing the reasons that led to the failure of the revolution, Alvaro Florez Estrada, while in exile in London, pointed to religious intolerance as one of the major weaknesses of the constitutional regime, precisely because it had caused widespread criticism among potential allies outside Spain who otherwise sympathized with the revolutionary cause and had praised some aspects of the Cadiz document.[73] In the publications of the Spanish, and those of the overwhelming majority of Italian revolutionaries living abroad, even those who never dared to question the Catholic nature of their nations argued in favour of permitting a plurality of creeds as a measure in tune with civilization, not only because it complied with basic civil rights, but also because it encouraged economic prosperity by favouring the immigration of communities that could contribute to the economic well-being of the nation.

Others came to embrace a position similar to that of Benjamin Constant, one that was appreciative of religious pluralism, in the context of an overall admiration for the fundamentally anti-despotic ethical foundations of the English political system, based on freedom, debate, the existence of several religious groups and political participation. An exiled Spanish journalist, writing in the exile magazine *El Español Constitutional*, published in London, represented religious intolerance as a Catholic pathology based on a mistaken interpretation of Christianity; like John Locke, he saw Christianity as a universal religion embracing all the different creeds.[74] The Milanese liberal Giuseppe Pecchio, himself exiled in England, noted that while irreligion was hardly tolerated in Britain, being considered morally reprehensible, the challenge posed by the Nonconformist sects to the Established Anglican Church had done much to weaken monarchical rule, to promote political freedom and to enhance morality. In his opinion, a diversity of religious opinions, rather than undermining the religious nature of society, "stimulates emulation, and keeps up the flame of love for religion." As the history of England demonstrated, it is to the multiplication of religious sects that "we owe the almost total destruction of the doctrine of the divine right of kings and

72 Kitromilides, "Itineraries in the World of the Enlightenment," 22. Korais's views are included in his *Simeioseis eis to Prosorinon Politevma tis Ellados tou 1822 etous* (Notes on the Provisional Constitution of Greece of the Year 1822), ed. Th. P. Volidis (Athens, 1933), 3–8.

73 Alvaro Florez Estrada, *El Español Constitucional*, 1825, 452–3.

74 "Filantropismo—tolerancia religiosa," *El Español Constitutional*, 1819, 51–6, at 52 ff.

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bishops."[75] Thus in many cases Protestantism became a source of inspiration even for exiled Catholics, Italian and Spanish, and for Orthodox like Korais. Southern liberalism in exile took it as a model of evangelical morality, one opposed to the corruption of their own churches, without, however, explicitly abandoning their original faiths.[76]

CONCLUSIONS

This article has argued that in southern Europe liberals strove to reconcile religion and constitutional guarantees in a variety of ways that ascribed individual rights to a plurality of interpretations of Catholicism and Orthodoxy. These interpretations often diverged substantially from those upheld by their churches, and demonstrate the adaptability of religious language to the new political context. At the same time, the recognition of the importance of religion came at the expense of religious toleration, itself a controversial and divisive issue. It is worth considering why it was so hard to accommodate toleration within the liberal order in Naples and Spain in particular. As I have observed, when remembering the *trienio* in the years after the revolution some liberals admitted to having then accepted the confessional nature of the state only begrudgingly, because the political context did not allow otherwise. Their recollections suggest why some liberals did not acknowledge any discomfort with the restrictive nature of the religious definition of the nation that featured in the Spanish Constitution in Spain and Naples. First, liberals preferred to defend the constitutional text in its entirety from any external attack or from the criticisms that more conservative liberals were levelling at its democratic nature. Second, prudence dictated that all direct confrontation with the Church over such matters be avoided. Since religious tolerance was not an issue that would win the Spanish *exaltados*, or the Neapolitan patriots, additional support from their social base, but could rather alienate popular opinion, they opted not to embrace it. The revolutionaries chose other battles to fight against the clerical opposition, namely those in favour of freedom of the press, a right bitterly opposed by many senior members of the clergy.[77]

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75 Giuseppe Pecchio, *Semi-serious Observations of an Italian Exile during His Residence in England* [1830] (Philadelphia, 1833), 188, 197, 198.

76 See, for example, the case of the writings of Joaquin Lorenzo Villanueva in his magazine *Ocios de espanõles emigrados*. Gregorio Alonso, "Learning from the Enemy: Liberal Catholicism and Protestantism in the Exiles Experience," in D. Muñoz-Sempere and G. Alonso, eds., *Londres y el Liberalismo Hispánico* (Madrid, 2011), 59–75. Isabella, *Risorgimento in Exile*, 129–34.

77 Juan Francisco Fuentes, "El liberalismo radical ante la unidad religiosa," in *Libéralisme chrétien et catholicisme libéral en Espagne, France et Italie dans la première moitié du XIXe siècle* (Aix en Provence, 1989), 127–41.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924431400078X Published online by Cambridge University Press

Historians have argued instead that the majority liberal view on state religion, citizenship and toleration in the 1820s simply reflected the homogeneous nature of the society that liberals were trying to govern. For the case of Spain, when more explicit support for toleration arose, it was the posthumous result of reflections while abroad regarding the failure of the liberal experiment—itself often opposed by the masses—and while under the influence of different social and political models.[78] However, attempts to reconcile religion with individual values stemmed from a more general concern shared by liberals across Europe to build a new order on the basis of the existing social fabric, and a genuine concern to steer clear of excessively abstract principles that paid little or no heed to concrete social and historical contexts. To disregard these latter would have been not only counterproductive but also frankly self-defeating and dangerous. The cultural and religious homogeneity of the societies they were ruling over was seen as an advantage and a circumstance to be cherished. In other words, emphasis on the reconciliation between religious values and liberal principles demonstrates the markedly communitarian dimension of early liberal ideology. The importance attributed to religion in justifying representative government and national regeneration was the result of a number of different, at times competing, priorities. Following a model established under Napoleon, religion was undoubtedly seen as an instrument of social control. But liberals were also genuinely convinced that religious morality was essential to any political community, political principles alone being insufficient as a foundation for social order. From this perspective liberal values had to be a product of religion, albeit a reformed one: political reform was coterminous with religious reform. The popular literature, religious documents, sermons and speeches used to demonstrate that the intimate association existing between liberty and religion were not simply the tools of an opportunistic propaganda, but stemmed from heartfelt convictions. What George Kelly has written about French liberalism could well apply more broadly to southern European revolutionaries, and to their Latin American counterparts: "Liberals applauded the revolution's achievements in freeing society from servitude to a royal religion . . . Yet liberals had a nagging feeling that they lacked a faith powerful enough to underwrite political legitimacy."[79]

[78] Fernandéz Sebastián, "Toleration and Freedom of Expression."

[79] Kelly, *The Humane Comedy*, 91–2.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924431400078X Published online by Cambridge University Press