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RADICAL CATHOLICISM: THE POLITICAL THOUGHT AND ACTION OF EMMANUEL MOUNIER

by

Kevin J. Cassidy

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Political Science in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

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5/12/77
Date

Melvin Richter
Chairman of Examining Committee

5/12/1977
Date

Executive Officer

Supervisory Committee:

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The City University of New York

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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations of Mounier's works are used throughout the dissertation.

PCP	La pensée de Charles Péguy
RPC	Révolution personnaliste et communautaire
PCPH	De la propriété capitaliste à la propriété humaine
PM	A Personalist Manifesto
CPFT	Christian Personalism Faces Our Times
SV	Spoil of the Violent
EP	Existentialist Philosophies
BNA	Be Not Afraid
P	Personalism
FC	Feu la chrétienté
CD	Les certitudes difficiles
OM	Oeuvres de Mounier

PART ONE:

CATHOLICISM AND SOCIAL CRITICISM

CHAPTER ONE

EMMANUEL MOUNIER

and the

TRADITION OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY

Thesis

The Catholic Church in France has long been identified with political reaction. Gradually, however, increasing numbers of Catholics, hierarchy and laity alike, have accepted liberal democracy and the tradition of social reform that later developed with it. This change in Catholic political attitudes was due in part to the Christian Democratic movement which began in the early nineteenth century with Lamennais and reached its greatest success in the post-war Mouvement Républicain Populaire.

Christian Democratic thinkers were primarily concerned to separate the Church from its long alliance with monarchy. They defended the position that the ideals of democratic political life were entirely in harmony with Christian values. The Church, they argued, should therefore indicate its approval of the liberal democratic state. In addition, Christian Democrats were convinced that the traditional noblesse oblige approach to the problems of the poor was insufficient to meet the needs of the new industrial proletariat. They favored a reformed capitalism which, by means of social welfare legislation, would provide the necessities of a decent and humane life for all.

Emmanuel Mounier represents an important turning point in Christian Democracy. He shared the basic philosophical values of the movement and its Catholic understanding of the meaning of the political order. While accepting the Christian Democratic belief in democracy, Mounier also believed,

however, that contemporary liberal democracy was not a true democracy. Modern capitalism, Mounier argued, failed to benefit the working class and the poor and, through its unequal distribution of wealth, thoroughly undermined the basic liberal principle of political equality.

According to Mounier, Christian Democracy could only realize its goals of social justice and political equality through a form of democratic socialism. Prior to Mounier no twentieth-century Christian Democrat had made this argument; no one had responded in this manner to the conditions of contemporary industrial society. Personalism, as Mounier's ethical and social thought came to be known, was the first real alternative for those left-wing Catholics who rejected the union of democracy and capitalism but who also refused to embrace authoritarian forms of socialism.

Mounier's thought was also precedent-setting for Catholics because it was the first serious attempt to relate Catholic values to the cultural critique associated with the Left. The acquisitiveness, status-seeking and lack of social concern that the Left rejected as bourgeois were also condemned by Mounier and he did so from essentially Christian principles. His purpose was to show Catholics that the social vision of the Left, far from being incompatible with Catholicism, was essentially in harmony with the perennial values of Catholic social thought.[1]

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[1]Mounier did not support all left-wing groups and especially objected to the authoritarianism that was characteristic of some. This will be discussed at length in chapters five and seven.

Finally, Mounier also argued for a new type of political action. Christian Democratic parties had always been Catholic efforts to influence politics. Although not officially sectarian they were accurately perceived as overwhelmingly Catholic in membership and issue orientation. Mounier, however, argued that those Catholics who understood the need for radical change in social institutions and social values should willingly work with non-Catholics who shared the vision of a democratic and humanist socialism. In sum, Mounier is important because of his historic attempt to adapt Christian Democracy's institutional ideas, social criticism, and forms of political action to the concerns of the French Left.

Emmanuel Mounier

The political ideas and action of Emmanuel Mounier were very much the expression of his religious commitment. He saw all of his work as an attempt to bear witness to his Christian principles. It is the purpose of the following pages to describe the evolution of Mounier's Catholicism and, in particular, to trace those elements that were responsible for its especially activist character.

The men and ideas who shaped Mounier's perspective generally represented an important change in the tradition of French Catholic piety.[2] It is worthwhile, therefore, to consider this tradition itself because it was very different

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[2] I am here referring primarily to Charles Péguy and Jacques Maritain as opposed to Jacques Chevalier who was more traditional.

than the Catholicism Mounier would later advocate. Four factors in the history of French Catholic piety will be briefly considered: Cardinal Bérulle, Quietism, Jansenism, and later Italian piety.

Founded by Bérulle, the "French School" of spirituality has always been characterized by a strong emphasis on the individual's private prayer life. Bérulle (1575-1629) was extremely influential in the French Church and at the Court, and his ideas became the dominant ones in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[3]

Bérulle's understanding of man was imbued with "Augustinian pessimism."[4] Man's sinful nature was incapable of any good action without the intervention of Christ. The Christian was to prepare for this intervention by studying the interior life of Christ and conforming himself to it. Mental prayer, particularly the discursive variety, should be practiced at frequent intervals each day. A systematic program of asceticism was held necessary to discipline a material nature corrupted by sin. Only through constant mortification would the Christian develop the capacity to receive Christ's intervention through grace.

The Bérullian emphasis on the interior life was intensified by the Quietists whose popularity was especially great

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[3]Bérulle's ideas were disseminated by other equally famous churchmen: Bossuet and Fénelon. The standard reference on this subject is the multivolume work of Henri Brémond, A Literary History of Religious Thought in France (New York: Macmillan, 1928).

[4]Louis Cognet, Post-Reformation Spirituality (New York: Hawthorne, 1959), p. 72.

during the second half of the seventeenth century. The Quietists advocated the cessation of all activity in favor of a contemplative opening of oneself to God. Traditional prayers of petition, discursive mental prayer, and external good works were held inferior to a state of non-thinking and non-seeing. This would lead to a complete oblivion of the self and thereby to illumination by God. Quietism was condemned by the Papacy in 1687, but it had already exerted a strong influence on French spirituality.

Jansenism, another influential French heresy, developed shortly after Quietism. Similar in many ways to Bérullian spirituality, Jansenism professed an even greater skepticism about human nature. The flesh was totally evil and redeemable only through the works of the spirit. The Christian's tasks were penitential rigor and liturgical prayer.

The Jansenists rejected the casuist approach in moral theology and distrusted theological reasoning in the exposition of Christian dogma. They rejected the new humanism which seemed to glorify man at God's expense. Although Jansenism had died out by the beginning of the nineteenth century, "it seemed to persist in the habit of mind that it induced, a kind of Puritanism which prevailed."[5]

The emphasis on private, internal piety continued, although in a different manner, during the nineteenth century. After the Revolution the Papacy succeeded in destroying the

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[5]Lancelot Sheppard, Spiritual Writers of Modern Times (New York: Hawthorne, 1967), p. 17.

nationalist "Gallican Church" and reestablished the power of Rome. The net effect was not merely administrative. Roman jurisdictional power was accompanied by an Italian piety which soon displaced traditional French spirituality.

The Italian school was "more indulgent, more superficial on occasion, but also more popular, giving more emphasis to feeling...but based also on an increased frequentation of the sacraments and the multiplication of exercises of devotion."[6] More attractive than the rigors of Bérullian spirituality and Jansenism, this new approach prevailed with the majority of French Catholics and became the first truly mass spirituality in modern France.[7]

The ultimate triumph of the new piety was the canonization of Teresa of Lisieux, a cloistered nun from Normandy who died in 1897 at the age of 24. Her "little way" did not emphasize the mystical prayer and ascetical discipline that had characterized earlier French saints. She emphasized fidelity to the duties of one's station, mental calm, and frequent reception of the sacraments. Her cult quickly became one of the most popular in twentieth-century Catholicism.

It is important to note that the traditional French spirituality and the more recent Italian piety were in complete agreement on the meaning of the devout life: the development of the "interior life." They differed on the

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[6] Ibid., p. 47.

[7] During the Bérullian period formal spirituality was generally an interest limited to the upper classes.

means but not on the end. Social concerns were of a strictly secondary importance. While the individual Christian was expected to assist the poor, he was not to exhaust himself in social and political work because these activities were frequently obstacles to the inner life of prayer and meditation.[8] It was this inner life, nourished especially by attendance at mass and reception of the sacraments, that was the Catholic's first concern. This was the Catholicism in which Mounier was raised.

Emmanuel Mounier was born into a middle-class Catholic family in Grenoble in 1905. The son of a pharmacist, he entered the University of Grenoble to study medicine. During a religious retreat at the end of his second year of studies, he underwent an experience that he was able to explain only in terms of an intense conversion. He left medicine and expressed a determination to study philosophy "in view of the apostolate."[9] He remained at Grenoble to pursue his new goal under Jacques Chevalier, a professor of philosophy there.

Chevalier was a Catholic who was especially interested in the role of philosophy in ethical and religious formation. He was less concerned with intellectual rigor than with the quality of the student's religious values. Not surprisingly, his approach reflected "a Jansenist's distrust of the role of

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[8]Obviously there are exceptions to this, e.g., St. Vincent de Paul. However, they are always seen as exceptions and not the rule.

[9]Quoted by Georges Izard in "Emmanuel Mounier," L'Express, (March 29, 1960).

philosophical methodology in Christian speculation."[10] Mounier was happy with this approach. Writing to Chevalier about the latter's seminar he said, "At each new time I feel that I penetrate more deeply into the interior life of our group, it seems to me that I am more intimately yours. The grandeur of the end to be attained calls me and stimulates me....I count on you to form my intelligence."[11]

In 1927 Mounier left Grenoble for Paris to study for the agrégation in philosophy at the Sorbonne. Not surprisingly, he was completely alienated by the rationalist climate he encountered there. To Mounier the Sorbonne ignored the real heart of philosophy which was the eternal questions of how shall we live and what shall we do. "Oh, the narrow minds, the satisfied people, the intellectuals, the academicians.... You see, it is necessary at any price that we make something of our lives. Not that which others see and admire but this feat of strength which consists of communicating the Infinite."[12] To Chevalier he wrote that he was so disgusted that he would have given up philosophy had it not been "for

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[10] John William Hellman, "Emmanuel Mounier and Esprit: Personalist Dialogue with Existentialism, Marxism and Christianity" unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1969, pp. 5-6.

[11] Mounier, "Letter to Jacques Chevalier, Dec. 8, 1925," O.M., IV, 419. Underlining is mine.

[12] Mounier, "Letter to Madelene Mounier, Jan. 12, 1928," O.M., IV, 430. Underlining is Mounier's.

you and my past and the true philosophy."[13]

When Mounier left Grenoble for Paris Chevalier referred him to a Parisian friend, Père Pouget, an elderly priest whose main scholarly interest was biblical criticism. Mounier studied theology with him informally for two years acquiring a solid, if traditional, formation in dogmatic theology, Christian mysticism, and the history of religion, as well as biblical criticism. In addition, Mounier was influenced by the particular spirituality practiced by Pouget, who was a member of the religious congregation founded by St. Vincent de Paul to assist the poor. Pouget emphasized the necessity of social action in addition to belief and often referred to Aquinas' understanding of charity as the perfection of the Christian life. The Christian was to bear witness to this highest of values by the manner in which he related to all other persons. In this way each member of the Church would carry out Christ's command to "teach" the faith.[14]

Pouget's teaching did not bring a fundamental change in Mounier. If he was more concerned than many Catholics with

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[13]Mounier, "Letter to Jacques Chevalier, May 25, 1928," OM, IV, pp. 433-434. Not many years later Mounier saw the shortcomings of his early training with Chevalier and recalled his years at the Sorbonne as his first experience of philosophy as a rigorous discipline. He then saw his period with Chevalier as "three fertile years but all too undisturbed which hardly extended the geography of my mind." He lamented having "read little and meditated much." Mounier, "Letter to Jacques Lefrancq, Aug. 25, 1933," OM, IV, p. 418.

[14]Cf. Jean Guitton, Portrait de M. Pouget (Paris: Gallimard, 1941).

the needs of others,[15] he also accepted the conventional Catholic spirituality that emphasized the inner life of prayer and worship. Mounier wanted to do his major agrégation research on St. John of God, a medieval Spanish mystic. It was not until his encounter with the thought of Péguy in 1929 that his religious ideas, and with them his social beliefs, began to change radically. This was an intensely personal experience for Mounier but it also took place within a larger ecclesiastical context that was responsible for it. A few years earlier, in 1926, the Vatican had condemned the Action-Française, which profoundly changed the situation of French Catholics.

The Vatican's pronouncement liberated the French Church from a burden it had carried for centuries: the deeply held belief that the union of Church and State was the only acceptable relationship between the religious and political realms. In one stroke Pope Pius IX forced French Catholics to accept the secular state and democracy as Pope Leo XIII had earlier urged them to do. For the first time since the Revolution the Church was freed to give its complete attention to religious matters and its pastors and theologians soon discovered that France was no longer a Catholic country.[16]

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[15]While a student at the University of Grenoble, Mounier had spent a considerable amount of time assisting the curé of a very poor parish in his attempts to provide for the material well-being of his parishioners. Ironically, the curé later became a member of the French hierarchy and helped to prevent the rumored condemnation of Esprit by Rome.

[16]This phenomenon has been amptly documented in France. See especially Adrien Dansette, Destin du Catholicisme Français, 1926-1956 (Paris: Flammarion, 1957).

The working class had left the church en masse and only in certain regions was the middle class still strongly Catholic. In sum, the majority of French Catholics neither attended mass nor concerned themselves with the religious upbringing of their children.

The effort to resolve this religious crisis led concerned Catholics to a rediscovery of that small elite which had created a Catholic literary revival at the turn of the century. Péguy, Claudel, Bloy, Mauriac, Bernanos and, slightly later, Maritain were among this group. They had demanded a Catholicism that would mean more than Sunday mass and private devotions, a Catholicism that would require the practitioner to determine consciously his personal, business and economic relations according to Gospel values. In this manner the whole of society would become more Christian. Such a change could not come from the political power of the institutional Church but only from the lives of the Christians within it.

In effect this literary elite, particularly Péguy, Bloy and Maritain, provided an alternative to traditional French spirituality. For concerned Catholics in the 1930's it would no longer be sufficient to occupy oneself with questions of the interior life. Mounier, under the influence of Péguy, left the pursuit of "philosophy in view of the apostolate" and became an activist intellectual receiving in the process a new understanding of the Christian message.

Péguy

Mounier had discovered Péguy while still a student of Chevalier's at Grenoble. It was not until he arrived in Paris, however, that Péguy's thought became influential. During his first year at the Sorbonne Mounier's only close friend, Georges Barthélemy, died. Mounier came close to despair and began to reexamine his whole outlook on life.[17] He had found philosophy at the Sorbonne to be totally removed from life and Paris seemed cold and impersonal, "la grande ville indifférente." It was in the middle of this crisis, Mounier said, that "Péguy saved me."[18] He explained it this way:

> ...Then Péguy intervened. This was during the Christmas vacation of 1928-1929. I recall well that I was struck by his prose work. I understood then why I was hesitating so much at the edge of the well-regulated way which leads directly from the École Normale to the enseignement 'supérieur.' He crystallized all the extra-University part of my life and, more than that, thumbed his nose at the academic life. 19

Péguy's vision was based on an understanding of the material order as an expression of the spiritual. He had been strongly influenced by Bergson who saw in the physical universe a spiritual, creative force that was always evolving

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[17] Mounier, "Letter to Jéromine Martinazzi, May 18, 1930," O.M., IV, 468.

[18] Ibid. Out of this personal crisis also came Mounier's first book, La Pensée de Charles Péguy hereafter abbreviated as PCP.

[19] Mounier, "Letter to Jéromine Martinazzi, April 1, 1941," O.M., IV, 452.

and which gave life its meaning. Péguy expressed this significance of the material as follows:

> In the carnal order...in all the temporal order, a body is necessary, a temporal flesh which is the support, the material (and) which by nature makes itself the support, the material of an idea. The political and social order, the historical order, are precisely this problem of the relationship of the body to the spirit....We cannot naturally understand any political or social idea or, I would dare to add, religious idea which is realized or is able to appear without a certain body. 20

The Unity of the spiritual and the physical is both symbolized and intensified in the Incarnation in which God becomes man in the person of Jesus Christ.[21] Through the Incarnation God reveals Himself not as some indeterminate being locked in the solitude that is the "sterility of the Absolute," but as a person who loves His creation intensely. Christ is the embodiment of this love and also the symbol of the presence of the eternal in all temporal beings. God is "dependent" on creation for the communication of Himself; the eternal is hidden in the temporal which is its expression. Although the eternal or spiritual is always first and prior to the material, the two are never separated in the natural order. The contemplation of the universal is possible only through the particular, the material.

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[20]Charles Péguy, À Nos Amis, À Nos Abonnés, III, 365 (XI, 42) as quoted in PCP, O.M. I, 100.

[21]Cf. Paul Archambault, review of PCP in Le Petit Démocrat, Aug. 2, 1931.

The real discoverer of truth will not remove himself from the world around him. Only through the experience of people and things is "meaning" provided and it is intuited rather than reasoned to. In the religious realm this means that grace is available only to him who is open to the persons and events of his life. God, who is spiritual, is encountered only through a conscious involvement in his material creation.

To Péguy, Bergson's vision was a call to a life of action.[22] The world must be remade to reflect better the eternal order which is "behind" it. Man, who possesses the power to reduce the evil in society, can contribute to this goal. Thus Péguy speaks of "saving" the world and continuing the work of the incarnate Christ. By his temporal action man shares in the divine task of communicating the Absolute. Thus Péguy, a Dreyfusard, could say: "Deep down we were men concerned with eternal salvation and our adversaries with temporal salvation. That is the true, real division of the Dreyfus affair."[23] And of military duty: "Happy are those who die for a temporal land when a just war calls....Happy are those who die for carnal cities, for they are the body of the city of God."[24]

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[22]Péguy's interpretation of Bergson was accepted as a valid one by Bergson himself. See Mounier, "Péguy, médiatur de Bergson," and Albert Béguin,"Note conjointe sur Bergson et Péguy," in Béguin and Thevenay, eds., Henri Bergson: essais et témoignages inédits. (Neuchatel, Switzerland, 1941), pp. 91-96.

[23]Péguy, Oeuvres, II, 648 as quoted in N. Jessum-Wilson, Charles Péguy (London: Bowes and Bowes, 1965), p. 63.

[24]Péguy, Oeuvres, II, 800 as quoted in N. Jessum-Wilson, pp. 44-45.

Among the targets of Péguy's activist zeal was the French Church which, he believed, did not reflect genuine Christian values and thus failed in its task of communicating the Absolute to men. Using Bergsonian terms he argued that the Church represented "static" rather than "dynamic" religion. Static religion was institutional religion and, no matter how sacred its origins, it could not be equated with genuine religion. By their very nature institutions betrayed the enthusiasm that was at the heart of religion. The true or "dynamic" Christianity was a disquieting, radical force which accepted no compromises in demanding a complete break with the conventional values of material acquisition, comfort and security. It required a life of poverty which alone could separate man from his possessions and open him finally to other men and to God.

The institutional Church had betrayed this radical message. Christianity was now equated with the little pieties and petty regulations which were observed by conventional French Catholics. Members of the bourgeoisie, they had never rejected the materialist values of their class but instead had created a cultural Christianity that accepted them. The working class had left the Church rather than pay homage to a bourgeois institution.

For the post Action-Française generation of Catholics, Péguy provided a compelling and fashionable explanation of the de-christianization of France. His political thought followed a similar pattern. Like Christianity, democracy was the material expression of a great spiritual ideal. The

Republic had been founded on the honor and dignity of the individual. "Liberty, equality and fraternity" effectively symbolized the nobility of the democratic vision of man and society. But these values had somehow been lost in the petty party politics of the Third Republic. The political class, basically bourgeois in origin, was committed only to wealth and power. These values were encouraged by capitalism's emphasis on higher profits through ever-increasing production and consumption. Thus the capitalist bourgeoisie had corrupted democracy just as they had completely subverted Christianity. The spiritual was no longer expressed in the material that had come to dominate it. The crisis of modern France was essentially metaphysical.

Maritain

Mounier's understanding of the relationship between religion and politics had been shaped by Péguy, but Péguy was not available to explain the crises of the 1930's. This role was to be filled by Jacques Maritain.

If the French Church experienced a period of conflict and self-examination at the beginning of the 1930's, French society underwent an even more profound period of instability and even chaos at this time. The effects of the Wall Street crash finally reached France in 1932 and 1933 after a period of comfortable economic stability at the turn of the decade. Having considered themselves immune from the depression, the French were even more shaken in their faith in the liberal economic order when the crisis hit France. Unemployment and

inflation rose steadily without significant relief from government policies. The crisis of confidence in the economic order was combined in France with severe doubts about democratic institutions caused by the frequent change in governments and the seeming inability of any of them to deal effectively with these events.

Finding a solution to this crisis became the dominant concern of many intellectuals, especially younger ones. The latter, having been trained to remain aloof from events, now took sides. Their positions were soon heard through the numerous new reviews which they launched.[25] Despite their ideological differences these reviews shared the same enemies. They rejected the materialism and individualism of modern life and called for a reordering of Western values. Virtually all of them rejected liberal democracy and had a special abhorrence for the conventional political partisanship of Third Republic governments. These new reviews were also united in rejecting capitalism and most were opposed to the communist alternative offered by the Soviet Union.

Mounier's own perspective, inherited from Péguy, coincided with these positions. Mounier was, therefore, concerned

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[25]The reviews included Réaction, Les Cahiers of Jean Pierre Maxence, and La Revue Française of Thiery Maulnier which were particularly Rightist. In addition, there were a variety of socialist reviews: Ordre Nouveau of Robert Aron, Denis de Rougemont and Alexander Marc, Plans, L'Homme Nouveau, Le Plan du 9 Juillet and eventually Esprit. There were many others as well which are too numerous to list here. Only Esprit was to survive the war and continue into the present. For a more thorough description of these reviews, their personnel, and ideologies, see Jean-Louis Loubet del Bayle, Les non-conformistes, des années Trentes (Paris: Seuil, 1969) 495 pages.

to relate his Christian values to the concerns of this new Left, to demonstrate the relevance of the Christian understanding of man and society to the questions raised by the new reviews. Esprit was founded in 1932 for this purpose. Mounier, however, was as much concerned with the French Church as he was with the secular Left. In this respect Esprit was also an attempt to demonstrate the religious legitimacy of the new politics, i.e., to indicate to Catholics that left-wing thought and the Christian message were not irreconcilable.

For Mounier, Maritain was the model of the liberated Catholic intellectual genuinely concerned with society's problems and not simply with those of the Church. Maritain had severed his connection with Action-Française and published his Primauté du Spirituel to counter the "politique d'abord" attitude of Maurras' organization. His prestige as a philosopher was constantly growing as he led the revival of Thomistic thought at the Institut Catholique.

Mounier was a frequent visitor at the home of Maritain in the Paris suburb of Meudon in the early 1930's. There he participated in the informal discussions Maritain held with Gabriel Marcel, Étienne Gilson, Jean Danielou, Georges Rouault, and others. It was at these gatherings that Mounier actually developed the idea of Esprit and Maritain became its most important early advisor. Maritain, together with the Russian existentialist Berdyaev, contributed important articles to the first issues of Esprit, immediately bringing prestige to the fledgling journal.

Maritain's articles dealt with social and political themes, and correspondence between him and Mounier indicates that Maritain's perspective was especially influential in shaping the general orientation of the review in these areas.[26] Maritain believed that the Western democracies and Communism both suffered from the same basic malady. Both failed to recognize the primarily spiritual character of man. Communism refused to consider man's basic need for freedom whereas the West had gradually ignored his need for community and a sense of purpose beyond production and consumption. What was necessary, argued Maritain, was the establishment of a public set of values based on man's highest spiritual capacities, i.e., a "certain common philosophical structure, a certain metaphysical and moral attitude, a certain common scale of values, in a word, a certain common conception of the universe, of man, and of human life."[27] Social, political, and economic structures would then be the embodiment of these values. It was precisely this goal of establishing a new set of values that Mounier would set for himself in creating Personalism.

Maritain's goals were not substantially different from Péguy's regarding the relationship between religion and politics. Maritain especially served Mounier by helping him to

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[26]Mme. Paulette Mounier, ed., "Naissance et début de la revue Esprit évoqués à travers les rapports de Maritain et de Mounier (letters, notes, articles)," Bulletin Des Amis d'Emmanuel Mounier, XXXIV-XXXV, November, 1969.

[27]Jacques Maritain, The Angelic Doctor (New York: Dial Press, 1931), pp. 81-82.

clarify further the values he had received from Péguy and to relate them more systematically to the political and economic crises of the 1930's.[28] Later, however, Maritain and Mounier separated over the latter's relationship to the Left.

The differences that developed between Mounier and Maritain were not simply political; they extended to the nature of the intellectual enterprise itself. Mounier studied Thomism with Maritain and rejected it. He found it to be an exceedingly abstract system which invited the subject to reason and intellectualize only. Mounier adhered to the Bergsonian approach he had received from Péguy and which requires the inquirer to involve himself actively in the object in order to know it.

Mounier was also skeptical about the influence of Thomism on Christianity. He shared Péguy's preference for the "dynamic" element in religion, the radical vision of life that inspired. Thomism, in its effort to define and distinguish, impressed its own logic on this vision. The result was a reductionism that left religion with nothing but abstract concepts. The impact of the Christian message was lost.

In refusing Maritain's method of philosophy and his approach to religion, Mounier also refused systematic philosophy and theology as professional pursuits. Instead he chose the life of the activist intellectual. He was less concerned with analytical scholarly pursuit than with the propagation

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[28]This is the subject of a subsequent chapter.

of his ideas in religious and political forums. In this respect he was identical to those thinkers who had shaped the Christian Democratic tradition in France.

Christian Democracy

The preceding pages have attempted to sketch the Catholic ideas and attitudes that helped to form Mounier's religious consciousness. It is now necessary to consider the tradition of Christian Democracy which first formulated the political problems that Mounier later made his own and which provided a series of solutions to which Mounier's thought is essentially a response.

It has been customary to view Catholicism and republicanism as the two major political forces in France. Prior to 1789 the Church had long identified itself with the monarchy, seeing in it an institution providentially ordained by God for man's temporal welfare. Concomitantly the church had associated itself with the aristocratic class whose fortunes were also linked to the throne. Rooted out by the Revolution along with the monarchy and aristocracy, the Church entered the nineteenth century ready to align itself with the reactionary forces that sought a restoration of legitimist rule.

With the Concordat of 1801 the Church supported the reign of Napoleon and, with the Emperor's final defeat, enthusiastically rallied to the new union of throne and altar under Louis XVIII who proclaimed Catholicism to be again the official religion of the State. The French Church continued its support of monarchist institutions by backing Louis

Philippe despite his regime's indifference to religion.[29] With the collapse of the July Monarchy in the turbulence of 1848, most Catholics, far from supporting the new revolution, looked for a new monarch to save them from republicanism. Led by the eloquent Montalembert, Catholics overwhelmingly supported the electoral candidacy of Louis Napoleon as President.

In 1864 Pope Pius IX promulgated his Syllabus of Errors. This encyclical condemned many of the institutions considered essential to republican political life: freedom of conscience and religion, freedom of the press, popular sovereignty, and the separation of Church and State. The opposition of the French Church to democracy was thus given official support from Rome.[30] When in 1905 Church and State were officially separated in France, the French Church reacted bitterly.

In addition to its rejection of political democracy, the Church gave little support to the drive toward economic reform, including the long and difficult effort to achieve better salaries and conditions for the new industrial working class that developed in the nineteenth century. During this period the Church was completely occupied with establishing ties with the various regimes that followed the Revolution. Totally concerned with "the reconstruction of the ecclesiastical edifice," the Church failed to notice the conflict

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[29]Adrien Dansette, Religious History of Modern France (New York: Herder & Herder, 1961) I, 208-210.

[30]This position was reversed by an encyclical of Pope Leo XIII in 1891, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

between its own doctrine of social justice and the new poverty.

Despite the early attempts of some Catholic laymen to introduce legislation on behalf of workers, the Church generally looked upon these efforts as threats to the traditional social hierarchy which it understood as the "natural" form of society.[31] It was the duty of the aristocratic class to maintain the poor in adequate circumstances. The efforts of Count Albert de Mun, along with other nobility such as La Tour du Pin, Villeneuve-Bargemont, and Le Play, represented the type of work on behalf of the poor that the church approved.

Du Mun saw his work "as an attempt to revive and apply the kindly medieval Christian doctrines enforcing the duty of charity, the sinfulness of avarice, the dignity of human labor, and the social responsibility of property as substitutes for the individualistic counsels of the classical Liberal economists."[32] He wanted to recreate the old guild system in which the workers, owners, and manager-technicians of a particular industry would jointly direct its operation. The State's only role would be to correct abuses within a guild's operation.

Clearly, De Mun's program failed to recognize how the new economic relationships of capitalism served to effectively

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[31]The traditional Catholic doctrine regarding the structure of society will be discussed at length in chapters three and four.

[32]Parker Moon, The Labor Problem and the Social Catholic Movement in France (New York: Macmillan, 1921), p. 5.

work against the guild system. Given the power of owners over labor, any such joint system would have been paternalistic at best. De Mun's own activities were carried out through his Oeuvre des Cercles, "workers' groups clustered around the chapel," where laborers were trained in his ideas by aristocratic army officers like himself, employers, and priests. The clearly paternalistic character of the Oeuvre drove away the most vigorous members of the working class. It was De Mun's intention, and that of the Church by its support of this type of effort, to create an alliance between the aristocracy and the workers. The labor movement, however, had progressed too far to find this acceptable.

Thus the Church responded in a similar way to the growth of political democracy and to the demand by workers for economic justice. In both cases the Church chose to ignore important, indeed, decisive new realities. Instead it identified itself with an order that was passing away. In sum, the Church ignored and then condemned the birth of modern social institutions.

Despite the reactionary character of the Church, a more progressive, counter-tradition, referred to as Christian Democracy, has always existed within modern French Catholicism. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries an influential minority of Catholic intellectuals argued that Catholicism and liberal democracy were reconcilable and that, in fact, the interests of Catholicism were best served under democratic institutions. Many of these same Catholic leaders

were also active in the movement to secure economic rights for the new industrial proletariat.

These earlier progressives were the first to enunciate the positions on political democracy and social justice that would later be adopted by the mid-twentieth century Church. Moreover, these intellectuals and the movements they founded succeeded, especially in the early decades of this century, in training a substantial number of laymen and clergy in the principles of this counter-tradition. Gradually, therefore, their progressive ideas came to enjoy a respectability within French Catholicism that made a new Catholic politics possible. Historically, this Christian Democratic tradition has had two distinct strains: Liberal Catholicism and Social Catholicism.

Liberal Catholic thinkers were "liberals" in that they supported the formal political procedures of the democratic state, e.g., representative structures, the formation of political parties, regularly held elections, and especially the civil rights and liberties generally associated with a democratic society. Liberal Catholics argued that the Church could best further its interests by making use of these institutions. Pope Leo XIII endorsed the Liberal Catholic position in 1891 in his encyclical, Au milieu des sollicitudes, in which he called on French Catholics to cease the political arguments among them and support the Republic.[33]

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[33]It should be noted that Leo XIII's encyclical was not a doctrinal endorsement of democracy, particularly of the principles of liberal democracy. The Pope merely recognized that the Republic was likely to be the dominant political form in France. Numerous authors have also indicated that the Pope hoped that Catholics would form the nucleus of a major conservative party under the Republic.

For the most part Liberal Catholics were not concerned with questions of economic justice. On the contrary, they were concerned with strictly Catholic interests in the new democratic order. They were especially aware that non-Catholics in the Assembly looked upon them with suspicion because of the reactionary politics of their Church. They were especially concerned to avoid alienating their middle-class colleagues with legislative proposals designed to directly assist the working class. In addition, most Liberal Catholics were themselves members of the middle class and shared their colleagues' antipathy toward the lower classes.

The term "Social Catholicism" refers to the efforts of Catholics to organize on behalf of the poor and especially the indigent industrial workers. The term has been used to refer to all Catholics who, regardless of political position, were concerned with the plight of the lower strata of society. However, as Duroselle has shown, the phrase was linked to conservative aristocratic Catholics who, believing in noblesse oblige, felt it their duty to assist the poor.[34] Rejecting modern capitalism and the social changes it created, these aristocrats took special pleasure in assisting the new industrial poor whose very existence seemed to clearly demonstrate the inability of capitalism and liberal democracy to create a just society. Most noted of the Social

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[34]Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, Les débuts du catholicisme social en France (Paris: P.U.F., 1950).

Catholics were those already referred to above: De Mun, La Tour de Pin, and Villeneuve-Bargemont.

Liberal Catholicism and Social Catholicism represent, respectively, the two characteristics of the Christian Democratic tradition described above: 1) the desire to demonstrate the harmony between democracy and Christian principles, and 2) the strong concern for the welfare of the working class. Gradually these two efforts were united--minus the reactionary element from Social Catholicism--at the very end of the nineteenth century and during the first decades of the twentieth. This new entity represented the birth of Christian Democracy as a modern political movement.

René Rémond has pointed out that Christian Democracy has three fundamental principles,[35] and all of these are also central to Mounier's thought. Rémond recognizes the political principle, i.e., the Catholic support of democracy, and the economic element: the concern for the welfare of the poor. In addition, Christian Democracy has another characteristic which is particularly religious: the intent to dissociate Christianity from a compromising alliance with established political institutions. Rémond actually considers this to be the first principle of the movement since the major thinkers within this tradition were motivated especially by religious values. In Rémond's view, therefore,

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[35]René Rémond, Le monde se fait tous les jours (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1953), p. 176.

Christian Democracy must be understood as having religious, political, and economic bases.[36] These three themes will be developed in the following pages through a consideration of the more important thinkers in the tradition.

Lamennais

Félicité de Lamennais was the first Catholic leader in France to attempt the reconciliation of the Catholic Church and modern democracy. He, more than other churchmen in the first half of the nineteenth century, understood that the Church could no longer maintain its influence by relying on the support of Catholic princes. Lamennais recognized the increasing influence of democratic thought and institutions throughout Europe. If it were not to become a cultural relic the Church would have to adjust itself to this new force.

Lamennais' first step corresponded to Rémond's first principle of Christian Democracy: separate the Church from established political institutions. This meant a severing of the ties that bound the Catholic Church to the Bourbon Restoration and an advocacy of the general principle that Church and State ought always to be separated. Lamennais rejected legitimacy as a political doctrine because the Restoration had succeeded in keeping the Church in a subsidiary and

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[36] This position is supported by other students of the tradition as well, e.g., François Goguel and Mario Einaudi, Christian Democracy in Italy and France (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1952); Michael Fogarty, Christian Democracy in Europe: 1820-1953 (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1957); Louis Biton, La démocratie chrétienne dans la politique française (Auyers: Siraudeau, 1955).

compromising position which prevented it from permeating society with authentic Christian values. "Did the Son of God die upon the cross 1800 years ago to reestablish the Bourbons on the throne?" Such was the situation as it appeared to Lamennais.

Having rejected the monarchy because of its proven unworthiness, Lamennais turned to democracy as the Church's new partner in Christianizing the social order. Although he supported representative political institutions, Lamennais equated democracy with the concept of liberty and the masthead of L'Avenir, the journal he founded in 1831, carried the words "God and Liberty." Invoking the revolutionary spirit of liberty, he argued for a program that in point after point anticipated those of the European Christian Democratic parties in the twentieth century. Through his journal and activist organization he and his collaborators at L'Avenir propagandized for freedom of the press, freedom of education against the state monopoly in schooling, freedom of association especially for religious congregations, universal manhood suffrage, and especially for freedom of religion through separation of Church and State.

Lamennais' advocacy of the separation of Church and State and of the civil liberties associated with democracy was not the expression of a belief in the independence of politics. Although he rejected monarchy, Lamennais retained the goal of a spiritual-political unity, an organic linking of religion and political society. In his own words, his efforts were designed to reconstruct the political order with

the aid of religion.[37] This implies a clear dependence of the political upon the religious. "Lamennais' philosophy of authority, therefore, does not start in the political sphere nor is it, in contrast to early traditionalism, one-sidedly royalist, nor, by the same token, is it one-sidedly democratic. It is theocratic and its theocratic content can be allied with a Catholic democracy as easily as with a 'monarchy by the grace of God.'"[38]

The significance of Lamennais' position for Catholic thought is the argument that a spiritual-political unity can exist without official ties between Church and State. A Church that is no longer linked to the State will not be corrupted by political considerations. As such it will be able to form the populace according to values of a pure, uncompromised Christianity. Democracy will then succeed because of the inherent virtue of its citizens. The liberty of the Church is thus the ultimate basis of democracy's success.

It should be emphasized that unlike other advocates of democracy, Lamennais based his argument on religious rather than political liberty. His principal concern was the freedom of the Church, not the freedom of the individual. Nevertheless, he was unswerving in his adherence to the institutions of liberal democracy.

What separated Lamennais from other Liberal Catholics, such as Montalembert, was his concern for the economic

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[37]These words appear at the beginning of the second volume of his Essai sur l'indifférence en matière de religion.

[38]Hans Maier, Revolution and the Church (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), p. 187.

position of the working class. As early as 1823 Lamennais wrote that while the Revolution had pronounced the people sovereign, it had also allowed them to be subjected to an economic servitude that was as degrading as anything they had heretofore experienced.[39] The workers, said Lamennais, were being exploited by the merchants of labor who concentrated riches in their own hands while ignoring the plight of the poor. Invoking traditional Catholic principles, he stated that society should be founded on the family, the commune, and the trade association rather than upon the laissez-faire institutions of modern capitalism.

Buchez

Lamennais had only briefly considered the question of social justice. This concern was strongly emphasized, however, by Pierre-Joseph Buchez (1796-1865). Indeed Buchez's thought was a socialist alternative to Liberal Catholicism.[40]

Buchez argued that the French Revolution remained unfinished. It had established political equality and would be completed only when it achieved economic equality as well. Toward this end he proposed the abolition of laissez-faire capitalism and the establishment of workers' associations that would own and regulate all aspects of production. This

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[39] On this aspect of Lamennais' thought, see Dansette, I, p. 255.

[40] As noted earlier, I am using the term "Liberal Catholic" to refer to those Catholic supporters of the Republic who did not demonstrate an interest in the economic conditions of the working class. Montalembert is the best example. Buchez' thought is a "socialist alternative" to this type of Liberal. Lamennais' economic views, however, were much closer to Buchez' than to Montalembert's.

would end the exploitive use of labor by ownership and thereby do away with the inequality of modern class society.

The associations depended on an attitude of total commitment by the workers.[41] According to Buchez this value could be inculcated through Christian principles. The Christian opposition to egoism and materialism could overcome bourgeois individualism and replace it with a dedication to communal ends, i.e., those of the associations. Like Lamennais' politics Buchez's institutions were an effort to "reconstruct the political order with the help of religion."

Buchez's Christianity was a secularized version based on Saint-Simon's Nouveau Christianisme. Christianity was pure love, without fixed ecclesiastical forms and regulations.[42] It was an inner commitment which nevertheless expressed itself in every aspect of life. The Revolution, for example, with its emphasis on "liberty, fraternity and equality," was simply "'the last and most progressive consequence of modern culture and has originated wholly in the Gospels.'"[43] The revolutionaries were really Christians because of the values they espoused and their activist dedication to them. In

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[41] According to French law there was no way to prevent a member of the association from leaving it and claiming a certain portion of its economic resources. Buchez expected that Christian values would successfully motivate against such departures. See Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, Les Débuts du Catholicisme Social en France: 1822-1870 (Paris: P.U.F., 1951), p. 91.

[42] Buchez opposed the power of the institutional Church and especially the support given by the Church to the monarchical institutions of the old regime.

[43] Buchez, Histoire parlementaire de la Révolution française, I, as quoted in Hans Maier, Revolution and Church (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), p. 203.

Buchez's thought "pratique" and "réalisation" dominated the more contemplative understanding of the Gospels.

Buchez's movement expired in the events of 1848 when Catholics, fearing the possible excesses of the new revolution, abandoned all thought of an alliance between the Church and workers' groups.[44] Although unable to develop a socialist movement, Buchez helped shape the future of Catholic thought through his influence on Lacordaire and Ozanam.[45]

Lacordaire and Ozanam

Lacordaire was a Dominican priest and former member of the staff of L'Avenir. In 1848 he founded l'Ère Nouvelle with Frederick Ozanam, a specialist in medieval history who had become increasingly interested in "le problème ouvrier."

L'Ère Nouvelle was the first Catholic publication to argue that charitable organizations, the Church's traditional solution to the problem of poverty, were no longer sufficient to meet the needs of the new industrial proletariat. Appalled at the social effects of unregulated capitalism Lacordaire and Ozanam spoke in terms of a "Christian economy." More specifically, they argued for a broad program of social legislation including the protection of children in work, governmental support in sickness and old age, compulsory arbitration

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[44] Buchez had become influential through the two journals which he founded, Européen and Atelier, and through those working-class associations he was able to establish. See Maier, pp. 210-211.

[45] See Maier, p. 216, on the influence of Buchez on Ozanam and Lacordaire.

in industrial disputes, and the principle of the right to work.

Ozanam placed great faith in the guild system arguing that industries should be organized in co-partnership structures providing for profit sharing between factory owners and workers. He rejected the Liberal economic teaching and argued, as Lamennais had, for various intermediate level organizations including family, commune, and trade association.[46] He wanted a system in which "voluntary community takes the place of forced taxes and loans; that love creates what justice alone cannot create."[47] Basically his economic program was a statement of the social imperatives that Ozanam derived from Christianity.

The religious impulse behind l'Ère Nouvelle's economic program became even more manifest in its treatment of democracy. Lacordaire and Ozanam considered the coming of the Republic to be a providential event and urged all Catholics to support it.[48] However, they did not conceive of democracy as a system of political procedures. It was rather "the state of a just social constitution, i.e., a sketch for a future new ordering of society...The republican-political component is still present but no longer forms the main ingredient of the word."[49]

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[46]The traditional economic teachings of the Church will be discussed at length in a subsequent chapter.

[47]Maier, p. 244.

[48]As was pointed out earlier, Lamennais also shared in this willingness to invest a political form with theological significance.

[49]Maier, p. 295.

The basis for this approach was Ozanam's vision of a society animated by spiritual values. His ideal was that of the Christian community of the primitive church at Jerusalem with its norm of fraternal love. Ozanam and Lacordaire were motivated more by an ideal, a form of radical religion, than by any clearly understood political theory. This becomes especially apparent in the reliance that both place on the necessity of educating the citizens of a democracy in Christian values. Ultimately democracy is the living out of these values.[50]

Although Liberal Catholics enthusiastically supported l'Ère Nouvelle's advocacy of democracy, they vehemently rejected its economic program. The journal's clear questioning of the economic status quo and its references to "christian socialism" horrified the majority of Liberal Catholics. The latter had always looked to Catholicism for a defense of the social order, a reassuring explanation of social inequality and, above all, a condemnation of socialism. According to Montalembert, the leader of the Liberal Catholic opposition to l'Ère Nouvelle's social program, the Church had always taught that "there must be some men who work hard and live poorly. Poverty is a law that governs part of society. It is a law of God which we must accept." The Church's instruction to the poor, Montalembert concluded, could be summed up

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[50]Lacordaire, in describing how he had arrived at religious faith through his social beliefs, said, "Nothing seems more clear to me than this consequence: society is necessary, then the Christian religion is divine because it is the sole means to lead society to perfection in taking man with all his weaknesses and the social order with all its conditions." This is a dominant theme in Christian Democracy and is expressed by all the major thinkers in the tradition.

in a few words: "self-restraint and respect for others."[51] Therefore, there could be no particularly Catholic responsibility for the situation of the working class.

L'Ère Nouvelle is generally considered to have been the first Christian Democratic movement because it was the first to emphatically link a Christian concern for the working class with a Catholic acceptance of the Republic.[52] It is through l'Ère Nouvelle therefore, that the distinction between Christian Democracy and Liberal Catholicism becomes especially clear, as well as the difference between Christian Democracy and Social Catholicism.

Although the ideological significance of the l'Ère Nouvelle program has been duly noted by historians of Christian Democracy, the political significance of the Liberal Catholic opposition to it has been ignored. Montalembert expressed the social views of the greater part of those Catholics who supported the Republic. As members of the middle class they accepted the bourgeois political and social order which seemed as final to them as it did to a Cousin or a Guizot. In no way were they sympathetic to calling the

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[51] Dansette, I, p. 259.

[52] Obviously Lamennais combined these two principles as well. However, the social welfare principle was a secondary one for Lamennais.

structures of this order into question.[53]

This split between the progressive leadership of Lacordaire and Ozanam and the more conservative majority of Catholic republicans was an accurate indicator of the future of Christian Democracy. Throughout its history, from l'Ère Nouvelle to the MRP, the movement would articulate important reformist goals which it would seldom succeed in realizing. Although Christian Democracy would succeed in reconciling larger numbers of Catholics with the Republic the deputies elected by these Catholics were seldom interested in far-reaching change.

Pope Leo XIII and the Abbés Démocrates

The reconciliation of Catholicism with the democratic state and the affirmation of the rights of the working class in industrial society were proclaimed officially, if belatedly, in the encyclicals of Pope Leo XIII during the last decade of the nineteenth century. The Pope stated that so long as liberal and socialist techniques were regarded only as techniques they were in harmony with Catholicism.

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[53]Although the disturbances of 1848 undoubtedly contributed to this Catholic fear of social change--l'Ère Nouvelle was founded in April, 1848--they were not responsible for them. The conservatism of the Catholic middle class was apparent before these events as well as after them.

It should be noted, however, that the split between Christian Democrats and Liberal Catholics was not a total one. They cooperated on questions of mutual, i.e., religious interest. The primary example of the latter was the passage of the Falloux laws giving Catholics control of the educational system. Lacordaire and Montalembert collaborated in this effort.

Libertas Praestantissimum (1888) approved the liberal ideas of democracy and tolerance while Au milieu des sollicitudes (1891) directed French Catholics to support the Republic thereby creating the so-called "Ralliement" of Catholics to democracy. In the same year the Pope's famous Rerum Novarum encyclical accepted the principles of class-based organizations and state intervention in the economy. It also gave structural economic reform preference over simple charitable assistance. In proclaiming these new teachings Leo XIII finally and officially separated the Church from the monarchical order and gave his blessing to those who for decades had worked to reconcile Catholicism with democracy and social reform.

The Pope was not, however, attempting to establish a new Catholic theory of politics or economics. He simply abandoned the debates that had accumulated around absolutism and Liberalism by returning to Catholic sources. In Immortale Dei, his encyclical on the foundation of states, he indicated that his chief concern, like that of Lamennais, Lacordaire and Ozanam, was the social role of religion. He held up the image of a restored and renewed Christianity able to penetrate all the institutions and mores of society. Like these other Catholic progressives he had no real political theory of democracy or social change. While accepting democracy he identified his social goals with the

> ...aspiration towards an idealized Middle Ages, all of which is to be found in the Christian Democratic tradition: society conceived of as a living being, no longer

> finding in the State a conscience and a will; it is the spiritual power which will give to the various organs a singular impetus and will assure their unity of intention. Society will have for its conscience the will of the Church. 54

The Pope's new social concerns inspired a group of young liberal priests who attempted to realize the teachings of Rerum Novarum and Au milieu des sollicitudes in French society. These abbés démocrates believed in social as well as political equality and were opposed to the existence of an upper class. They appealed to class consciousness in encouraging workers to defend their own interests through labor unions and the ballot. The abbés démocrates hoped, as Ozanam had before them, that through the development of class consciousness the workers would be able to make effective use of the institutions of political democracy. For these priests "to go to the people, meant simultaneously to go to the Republic, just as to adhere to the regime meant to share in the aspiration of social progress."[55] The abbés démocrates were an especially activist embodiment of Rémond's model of Christian Democracy.

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[54]Joseph Hours, "Les origines d'une doctrine politique: la formation en France de la démocratie chrétienne et les pouvoirs intermédiares," in Claude Bernardin (ed.), Liberalisme, traditionalisme, décentralisation (Cahiers de la Fondation des Sciences Politiques, XXXI Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1952), p. 110.

[55]Marcel Prélot, L'histoire des idées politiques, p. 705.

Marc Sangnier and the Sillon

The statements of Pope Leo XIII on political democracy and the welfare of the working class gave the Christian Democratic movement a respectability it had not heretofore enjoyed among many Catholics. Nevertheless, the papal teachings did not create any great movement on the part of the majority of Catholics toward the Republic and social reform. The creation of a popular base for Christian Democracy was the work of Marc Sangnier and his Sillon movement.

In Sangnier's mind democracy and Christianity were practically identical. He defined democracy as "the social organization which tended to maximize the conscience and responsibility of each" and saw in it the elements of the Christian ethic: "This respect for the individual, this acute sense of the infinite value of a single human soul, this declaration that man has rights, which his very nature confers on him and which are prior to all written law--all that is pure Christianity."[56] In his view politics would not compromise religion; rather, religion would place its values, its moral energy, at the service of the City to moralize it just as it had always moralized individual life. Again, the social role of religion surfaces as the basic concern of Christian Democracy.

Sangnier did not expect to achieve his social goals through conventional political activity. He was primarily

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[56]Quoted in François Goguel and Mario Einaudi, Christian Democracy in Italy and France (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1952), p. 112.

concerned with changing the values of society and believed that this could be accomplished through the example of the Sillon members who would become living witnesses to the values Sangnier cherished. He therefore devoted much of his extraordinary energy to the spiritual development of the "Sillonistes" inculcating in them those values he associated with democratic life: "the fraternal spirit" and selfless dedication. He especially urged his followers to reject the selfishness of the middle class which valued its bourgeois pleasures above the welfare of the working class.[57]

Despite this heady tone the economic program proposed by the Sillon was essentially that of its Christian Democratic predecessors. Sangnier advocated state intervention via social legislation only to stop industrial abuses and to provide a minimum wage. He supported worker-controlled labor unions but also cooperative associations of employers and workers which would manage their particular industry and be able to do away with the wage system. He also advocated common property to be held by associations of workers in addition to private property. These were no more than variations on the Church's traditional economic teaching.

Despite these limitations Sangnier's influence was extremely important in the history of Christian Democracy. Most of the young Catholics who joined the Sillon brought

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[57]This criticism of "bourgeois" middle-class values is a theme that is repeated in twentieth-century Christian Democracy. It indicates once again the distance between the intellectual leadership of the tradition and its political constituency.

with them an external, formalistic conception of their religion. They did not want to be directly bothered by it except to furnish a narrow, religious compartment of their lives with it. The Sillon gave them an entirely different perspective. They began to find a set of moral values in their Catholicism which animated their whole lives and motivated many of them to social and political action.

If the Sillon possessed no real organizational structure, officers or operating principles; its alumni nevertheless used their energy to influence a wide variety of French groups. In his treatment of the Sillon, Adrien Dansette states that those who were once members of the Sillon

> ...were to be found everywhere there was work to be done to rejuvenate French Catholicism. History was to trace their influence among the clergy, in journalism and in publishing. They played their part in the formation of the specialized Catholic Action movements, of the Popular Democratic Party, and of the M.R.P. [58]

Sangnier and his Sillon helped to make Christian Democracy a social force.

The Jeune République and the Parti Démocrate Populaire

The first actual party of Christian Democrats was the Jeune République founded in 1912 by Marc Sangnier just two years after the papal condemnation of the Sillon.[59] Its

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[58] Dansette, II, p. 288. See also Dansette's "The Rejuvenation of French Catholicism: Marc Sangnier's Sillon," Review of Politics, XV (January, 1953).

[59] The Sillon was suppressed by Pope Pius X in 1910 because it 1) presumed to be free of ecclesiastical authority; 2) argued for the levelling of all classes and 3) worked with non-Catholic groups for the reform of civilization, essentially a religious task according to the Pope.

membership included many of those who had been followers of Sangnier in the Sillon. The Jeune République was originally founded as a league for social action rather than as a political party and was more interested in political education than in parliamentary politics.

Sangnier believed that the conventional political parties of the Third Republic had failed to live up to the republican ideal by not sufficiently concerning themselves with the humanist values on which the republican tradition rested. Thus he spent much time articulating an ideology which emphasized the spiritual nature of the human person and the need for a politics that saw the total development of the person as its major concern. This demand for the recognition of "moral and spiritual forces," never clearly defined, became a watchword among Christian Democratic parties and a convenient slogan for their concern with the role of religion in democratic life.[60]

Despite its lofty aims, the Jeune République had relatively little effect on French political life. Sangnier was a romantic who believed that democracy, understood in the classic sense, could be applied to all political problems. For the most part he remained aloof from social, economic and political realities and stressed the necessity of personal reform as a prelude to political change.

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[60]The emphasis on the "person" would be more fully developed later by Emmanuel Mounier who also attempted to make more specific the concept of "moral and spiritual forces."

Of greater parliamentary importance was the Parti Démocrate Populaire founded in 1924. The PDP's early members were usually former Sillonistes who had rejected Sangnier's autocratic leadership in both the Sillon and the Jeune République. They hoped to remedy the shortcomings of both by establishing a new party.

Like the Jeune République, however, the PDP articulated its principles in personalist terms. Democracy in its most complete form, said one of the party's founders, "must favor the full development of the human personality." Since morality was a vital part of personality, the PDP insisted that, "the State must respect the sources of religious and moral life from which so many men draw the energy to devote themselves the better to the general interest.[61] Again, the traditional Christian Democratic defense of religion was emphasized.

The emphasis on the spiritual was more than an ideological ploy. Ultimately spiritual goals predominated over political ones in the Party. The PDP gave its greatest attention to what it described as moral and civic education. During the late 1920's and early 1930's it argued that the economic and political crises of the time reflected a more basic moral crisis that could only be solved by a change in

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[61] Le Parti Démocrate Populaire, Compte rendu de l'Assemblée générale constitutive des 15 el 16 novembre 1924 à Paris, Salle Saint-Georges (Paris: Sécretaire général du Parti Démocrate Populaire, n.d.), as quoted in R. William Rauch, Politics and Belief in Contemporary France (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1972), p. 38.

French values. A change of heart on the part of Frenchmen was required before the institutional order would ever be permanently renewed.

Despite the important similarities to the Jeune République and Parti Démocrate Populaire did attempt to distinguish itself in a significant way. Its members were critical of their predecessors in the Christian Democratic tradition, especially the abbés démocrates, the Sillon and the Jeune République, for not having sufficiently distinguished between the religious and political realms. The founders of the PDP were careful not to form a denominational party, accepted the secular state as a fact and totally avoided the Church hierarchy.

Despite these precautions the PDP quickly took on a Catholic image. When the government of Edouard Herriot proposed to break recently restored diplomatic relations with Rome, enforce the laws against religious orders and impose the laic laws in Alsace and Lorraine, the PDP and the Jeune République joined forces with other Catholics to defeat Herriot's program. Within the party itself intense debates raged among members concerning the exact type of secularization the Party would officially accept. Many found it difficult to entertain even the moderate "laicité" position which merely directed the state to be impartial in dealing with various religions.[62] Obviously the PDP shared the

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[62]The "laicisme" position, in contrast to the "laicité" described above, meant that irreligion would be a kind of religion of the state.

concern of its Christian Democratic predecessors for the rights of religion.

The Parti Démocrate Populaire lasted only 16 years and the roots of its demise were similar to those of the failure of its predecessors: ultimately there was not a sufficient constituency for a progressive Catholic group. Since most Catholics were to be found in the Center or on the Right, there was no place for a party like the PDP which, in its strongly reformist platform, demanded that Catholics move to the Left.

Despite its relatively short life, the PDP was an important event in the history of Christian Democracy. It was the first serious parliamentary experience for those who believed in Christian Democracy. Although it averaged only 12 or 13 deputies, it was frequently able to count on 30 votes in the Assembly. Among its early members was Robert Schuman and when, in its later years, it organized a youth division, Georges Bidault was among those who joined. Ultimately the M.R.P. was to benefit from the organizational and parliamentary experience provided by the PDP.

Mounier stands in a long line of Christian Democratic thinkers in France. The principles articulated by these thinkers reflected their desire to discover the best relationship between religion and politics and to contribute thereby to the christianization of society. Although their thought dealt with politics, their primary concern was religious. In this respect they were very much a part of what T. M. Schoof, a Dutch historian of theology, has referred to

as the "new integralism."[63] Although the "new integralism" abhorred the idea of an established church, a concept basic to Integralism, the movement shared its namesake's basic goal: to make fundamentally Christian values the dominant ones in society.

The twofold approach employed by Mounier and his predecessors in Christian Democracy demonstrates the basically religious quality of their concerns. They first endeavored to persuade their co-religionists, whether popes, bishops, or laymen, of the validity of their political views. Mounier's Esprit was always considered a Catholic journal, and it attempted to show that Christian values were entirely compatible with a left-wing critique of the values of contemporary western society.

Christian Democratic thinkers also attempted to convince the French political world that Catholic republicans were both Catholic and republican, i.e., that their republicanism was as genuine as their Catholicism. Mounier extended modern Christian Democratic thought by arguing that its goals of democracy and social justice could only be achieved in socialism. Thus his political dialogue was with the French Left rather than with the traditional liberal forces, and his Personalist ideas were expressed in the terminology of humanism instead of in the traditional categories of Catholic theology.

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[63] T. M. Schoof, A Survey of Catholic Theology 1800-1970 (New York: Paulist-Newman Press, 1970). Actually Schoof uses this term in reference to more properly theological thinkers including Maritain. Nevertheless, the Christian Democratic thinkers clearly share the basic characteristics of the "new integralism."

In sum, Mounier's political thought and action, like that of Christian Democratic theorists before him, is best understood as an example of the social role of religion. Formed by the Catholicism of Chevalier, Péguy, and Maritain, Mounier wanted most to share with his co-religionists the radical message he had discovered within the tradition and, by articulating his religious values in Personalist terms, to make a revitalized Catholicism relevant to the concerns of all Frenchmen.

CHAPTER TWO

HUMAN NATURE

Emmanuel Mounier repeatedly insisted that he was not a philosopher and that Personalism was not a philosophy. Mounier preferred to consider himself an educator, i.e., one who would dramatize or "bear witness to" the spiritual and social capacities of man and oppose the materialist and individualist tendencies in modern culture.

Despite his extensive formal training in philosophy, Mounier did not attempt to set out a theory of human nature. He was a Catholic who was far more concerned with the fact that modern social values and institutions were, in his opinion, in direct conflict with the fundamental Catholic understanding of man and society. He attempted, therefore, to restate the meaning of the Catholic position for contemporary man. In particular he wished to demonstrate that Catholic values, when separated from very traditional theology and philosophy, served as an excellent basis for a reconstruction of the social order. Personalism was his statement of these values.

Although unsystematic, Mounier's thought on human nature is based on two recurrent themes: that man is radically spiritual and that he is basically communal. These are constituent parts of the Catholic perspective and Mounier draws on different traditions within Catholicism to restate them. In his earliest formal consideration of man and society Mounier made use of the theory of Thomas Aquinas. During this early period, however, as well as in his later writings, Mounier also relied on the ideas of Charles Péguy. Both

sources will be considered here. Finally, the influence of phenomenology on Mounier's concept of man will be discussed.

Mounier did not achieve a synthesis among these different perspectives. It will be argued, however, that his approach added an activist component to traditional Catholic thought and thus provided Catholics with a new understanding of their humanity and their relationship to society.

Thomism

Mounier's early understanding of man was expressed in the traditional distinction between matter and form. Man exists between two poles: a material pole which is the condition of man's existence but which is not the source of his personality; and a spiritual pole which concerns personality itself.[64]

This is essentially the Thomist position which bases the individuality of each thing in creation on matter, i.e., on the distinct determination of that thing with respect to location in space. Aquinas calls this "materia prima" which is not able to <u>be</u> of itself but which is pure potentiality for being. It received its being from a spiritual or metaphysical energy referred to as a "soul" or "form."[65] It is this life principle which makes an object what it is. Each thing

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[64] Jacques Maritain, <u>Scholasticism and Politics</u> (New York: Macmillan, 1940), p. 58.

[65] This is usually referred to as the doctrine of "matter and form." Thomists emphasize that this unity between matter and form should not be seen as a time sequence. Only the limits of language make it seem so.

is a special particularization of the life principle which is shared by all types of being. The human being is thus a unique unity of matter and form, i.e., of both flesh and spirit. Man is not the relationship between independent thought and independent extension or body. Rather "soul and matter are two substantial co-principles of one and the same being, of a single and unique reality whose name is man."[66]

Matter and form represent two differing tendencies in man. Although human nature is a unity, these two tendencies, referred to by Mounier as the "individual" and the "person," are often unreconciled.[67] The "individual" exhibits "the narrowness of being" and the "grasping for oneself" which derives especially from matter.[68] Pursuing only material goals the individual lives on the surface of life. His spiritual resources are always scattered because he abandons himself to the superficial flow of his perceptions, emotions, and reactions. As a result he never achieves any real self-knowledge. Unable to discover his final meaning, he is characterized by an "undirected liberty."[69]

With no ultimate goal the individual is easily overcome by his own avarice or selfishness. This quality is described by Mounier as an "incitement to jealousy, to demands, to monopoly, and then, to seeking for each characteristic thus

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[66]Maritain, Scholasticism and Politics, p. 61.

[67]The same terms are used by Maritain.

[68]Mounier, PM, pp. 70-71.

[69]Ibid.

being developed, a barricade of security and egoism."[70] The individual absolutizes his own ego. He is biological man, concerned entirely with his own preservation. He understands community only in the instrumental sense, i.e., as a means to provide for his own material needs.

The "person," however, represents form as opposed to matter, i.e., man's spiritual capacities rather than his materialist inclinations. Whereas the individual is entirely immersed in the immanent, the person, although rooted in the immanent, interprets and dominates it by posing transcendent ends. In this sense the person can be defined as a moral being, i.e., as an end in itself.[71] Mounier defined the person as:

> ...a spiritual being....It maintains this existence by its adhesion to a hierarchy of values that it has freely adopted, assimilated, and lived by its own responsible activity and by a constant interior development; thus it unifies all its activity in freedom and by means of creative acts. 72

Although the above is stated in non-theological terms, Mounier did not hide the fact that the "spiritual" nature of the person and the "hierarchy of values" that supports it are God given: "Its condition as creature subjects the person to an infinite reality that transcends it, upon whom it depends,

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[70] Ibid., p. 5.

[71] Maurice Blondel, "Les équivoques du 'personnalisme,'" Politique, VIII (March, 1934), p. 194.

[72] Mounier, PM, p. 68. Underlining is mine.

by whom it is sustained."[73] More specifically, Mounier argued that while the person is something ontologically transcendent to the biological and the social...only a Christian metaphysics gives assurance of this transcendence."[74]

Mounier's private journal sheds more light on the Christian character of Personalism. The journal records a lengthy conversation in the early 1930's between himself and his counterpart at Ordre Nouveau, Alexandre Marc. Both reviews were critical of modern cultural values and both based their political programs on the ideas of Proudhon. Yet they could not agree on a complete understanding of man. According to Mounier, Marc saw in God "an opposition to human creation, He who bullies the person because He is always the first creator, at the source of his activity or at least of his creation."[75] Contrasting his stand to that of Marc, Mounier said, "We are upholding the Christian position." He was unyielding on the point that man, if he is to understand himself, must accept the transcendence of God while also rejoicing in his own capacities: "Though He is the primal agent of each operation of every creature, God has nevertheless given to every person a power of acting that warrants his being declared the author of his own action."[76]

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[73]Mounier, CPFT, p. 366.

[74]Ibid., pp. 330-331, 365.

[75]Mounier, "Entretiens VI," OM, IV, p. 508.

[76]Mounier, CPFT, p. 330.

The "Christian position," of course, is hardly a simple concept. However, Mounier is much closer to Aquinas on the question of man than Augustine. In discussing the idea of progress Mounier details his understanding of the capacities of human nature: "Original nature has not been sullied by original sin....It is only that its potency has been greatly impaired. All natural activity is still good although weakened by its lesions...."[77] Although man has suffered what Mounier calls "a deep ontological wound" through original sin, he is still "a being whose nature has not been so radically vitiated as not to be capable of sound and meritorious acts."[78]

This is essentially the position of Aquinas who recognized the existence and dignity of a purely natural sphere of rational and ethical values. The basic human capabilities are not powerless because of sin and therefore need not be absorbed in the power of the divine in order to function. Sin has made it much more difficult for man to respond to the values of the transcendent order but not impossible. It is this weakness that is the source of man's greatest anguish. "To endure God without being able to be God, that perhaps is the first acceptance demanded of man."[79]

However, this is a much more optimistic position than Augustine's. In the latter's theology fallen man is not free

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[77]Mounier, BNA, p. 88.

[78]Mounier, CPFT, p. 367.

[79]Ibid., p. 366.

in the sense of having a good or righteous will. As Professor Herbert Deane has stated it, "...Augustine asserts that everything that fallen man does on his own initiative and with his own powers is sinful and wrong...Any good action performed by any human being is to be attributed not to his unaided will or inclination but to the grace and love of God working within him."[80]

Mounier clearly rejects the Augustinian view arguing, for example, against conventional Lutheran interpretations "for which nature is a mass of perdition, against the Orthodoxy for which nature is, in itself, a process of corruption, as also against the 'realist' politicians."[81] Although Mounier recognizes "the enormous power of evil" and "the chronic weakness of man apart from God," he maintains the basic goodness of man's nature.

Mounier also describes man as fundamentally social. By his nature man is intrinsically connected to "three united societies: beneath him, the society of matter to which he must bring the divine spark; next to him, the society of men which his love must pass through in order to rejoin his destiny; above him, the totality of the spirit which offers itself to him and pulls him beyond his limits."[82] Thus man's fulfillment, experienced in the divine, is achieved only through an active participation in the material and social

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[80]Herbert Deane, The Political and Social Thoughts of St. Augustine (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), p. 26.

[81]Mounier, CPFT, p. 360.

[82]Mounier, RPC, p. 153.

order. The temporal world finds its meaning in its relationship to the eternal.

This approach, reflective of Aquinas' hierarchical perspective, makes possible Personalism's emphasis on man as a social being in the sense that the social order plays a positive role in developing man's natural capacities. Mounier's "society of men" alluded to above is, therefore, not simply an arena in which conflict among selfish, isolated individuals is played out. It is rather that space in which man unites with others in constructive activities which fulfill his human capacities. Thus "person" and "community" are absolutely inseparable, and Mounier complained that it was only because of the shortcomings of language that he had to call one of his first works Révolution personnaliste et communautaire. It should not even have been necessary, he said, to include the last two words in the title. The political order is not, as it was with Augustine, primarily a device for thwarting man's evil inclinations. It is also a reflection of his ability to live and act harmoniously with others.

Péguy

The second source of Mounier's understanding of man was Charles Péguy. Péguy's ideas received formal consideration by Mounier only in his first book, La Pensée de Charles Péguy. Nevertheless, Péguy's vision influenced Mounier much more than Aquinas' system. Mounier's approach to social and political questions, although defensible in terms of Aquinas, were inspired by the life and thought of Péguy and are only fully explained in terms of Péguy.

Mounier began with Péguy's principle that the fundamental fact of being is the unity of the spiritual and the material. In his first book he quotes Péguy to emphasize the importance of this point:

> In the carnal order...in all the temporal order, a body is necessary, a temporal flesh which is the support, the material (and) which by nature makes itself the support, the material of an idea. The political and social order, the historical order, are precisely this problem of the relationship of the body to the spirit....We cannot naturally understand any political or social idea or, I would dare to add, religious idea which is realized or is able to appear without a certain body. 83

According to Mounier the unity of the spiritual and the material is both symbolized and intensified in the Incarnation in which God became man in the person of Jesus Christ. Through the Incarnation, God revealed Himself not as some indeterminate being locked in the "logical solitude" that is the "sterility of the Absolute," but as a person who loves His creation intensely. Christ is the embodiment of this love and also the symbol of the presence of the eternal in all temporal beings. God is "dependent" on creation for the communication of Himself; the eternal is hidden in the temporal which is its expression. Although the eternal or spiritual is always first and prior to the material, the two are never separated in the natural order. The contemplation of the universal is possible only through the particular.[84]

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[83]Charles Péguy, À nos amis, à nos abonnés, III, 365 (XI, 42) as quoted in Mounier, PCP, OM, I, 100.

[84]Mounier, PCP, p. 104.

In Mounier's opinion Bergson had provided a philosophical basis for this understanding of the Incarnation and the unity of the material and the spiritual.[85] For Bergson all of reality is "duration," an undivided, moving surge, a flux, or real flow, a continuity of becoming. This duration or flux is always in the process of evolving and is responsible for the changing character of all reality including man. Duration represents or expresses a spiritual intention developing in time, an "élan," as Bergson called it, which expresses itself in the ever changing tangible forms. Each human being is one small expression of this spiritual reality which is being itself. Each man shares in its creative power and has no existence outside of it.

This is not, however, to be understood as an impersonal idealism. Bergson places great emphasis on man's ability to encounter this source of being through the intuitive act, a type of natural mysticism. This intuitive understanding is possible, however, only to those immersed in the material order since it is through this order that being expresses itself. This means that "psychology opens on to metaphysics and ontology; if being is as it appears to consciousness, ontological inquiry must proceed on the basis of...what is

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[85]Péguy was very strongly influenced by the ideas of Henri Bergson and, accompanied by Georges Sorel, attended many of Bergson's lectures at the Collège de France. However, Péguy was not the only Bergsonian influence on Mounier. Jacques Chevalier, Mounier's undergraduate mentor, was also a Bergsonian and wrote one of the standard works on Bergson: Henri Bergson (London: Rider & Co., 1928).

exhibited in immediate experience."[86] Hence, transcendence and immanence are intertwined in the process of one's experience.

Man's fulfillment on both the natural and supernatural levels requires an open, positive response to the material world. Because all of reality is ultimately spiritual, man must approach materiality not with the instinct of possessiveness but with a sense of mystery for what it expresses and points to. Mounier cites Gabriel Marcel's Being and Having to argue that possession usually means that man is ultimately possessed by his own possessions and thereby closed to the spiritual possibilities within oneself and the world.

Yet man is a concrete being, incarnate existence, and therefore required to make use of things. Man is called to renew nature through his ability to create rather than to possess. In his capacity to bring new things out of nature, he shares in the creative capacity of the divine and if he works with a sense of the meaning of matter and without the passion to possess it, he is capable of encountering its source, Being itself.

This participation in and detachment from the material world requires a similar attitude toward one's own goals and plans. To be irrevocably committed to one's self-appointed vocation is to shut oneself off from the deeper possibilities to which one may be called.[87] According to Mounier, Being

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[86]Ian W. Alexander, Bergson: Philosopher of Reflection New York: Hillary House, 1957), p. 11.

[87]Mounier, PCP, p. 100.

communicates itself only to those who, in their openness to the life around them, are ready to receive it. Theologically this means that God's "grace," or assistance, is available to those who are willing to take the risk of not remaining attached to personal goals and possessions. In this respect "grace is not a gift but something which man must find at his own risk and peril."[88]

The personification of this attitude, for both Mounier and Péguy, was St. Joan of Arc. The shepherdess from Lorraine willingly left the emotional security of a conventional life to undertake a task which first appeared hopelessly beyond her abilities. She was willing to do so because of her conviction that the events of the time required it of her. Her reliance on God's power was the true mark of her public commitment. Action, Péguy said in his treatment of Joan, will easily become self-serving unless the actor continually renews his idealism through his relationship to God.

Péguy, Mounier argues, is therefore no Pelagian. He glories in man's action because he believes in the saving action of God who has intervened in history and continues to do so by providing man with the space necessary to live according to his ideals. Man can never overcome his weakness and despair without a hope in a force beyond history which acts in history. Man is saved,

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[88]N. Jessum-Wilson, Charles Péguy (London: Bowes & Bowes, 1965), p. 74.

> By that which always begins anew and always pledges itself,
> Which guarantees all.
> Which guarantees tomorrow, today and this evening, and this noon, this morning.
> And life during life, and eternity during time. 89

If this is poetically vague, the consequences of it were not so in Péguy's mind. An openness to God required a painful purification on man's part. The despair which accompanies the human condition is necessary to break down man's self-assurance and the habitual character of his responses. Only in this spiritual nakedness can he receive grace. Material poverty is also required for essentially the same reason. Only when he loses the sense of security that money brings can man depend on the spiritual for the meaning in his life. Only when he is willing to risk everything, even life itself, can he cooperate with God in remaking the world.

The rigor that is so characteristic of Péguy's approach to religion is also apparent in Mounier's. The true Christian, in Mounier's view, understood his Christianity to be the result of a serious, adult decision, of a "conversion" to a way of life rather than merely a habit of mind that he had been brought up with. Christian belief was not simply a source of consolation, as most Christians seemed to think, but rather, in the words of Kierkegaard, a "terrifying state" because of the demands it made. By his commitment the Christian risked absolutely everything because he dedicated himself to a life lived according to principles that were at

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89 Charles Péguy, Porche du mystère de la dèuxieme vertu, V, pp. 347-348 (III, 591) as quoted in Mounier, PCP, OM, I, p. 118.

odds with most of the values of modern society.[90]

Although Christianity meant a life lived in union with God, Mounier's Christian understood that God was to be encountered in other persons and that, therefore, if he could not love them he could not love God who is also a Person. The charity required here was not the sentimentality that too many Christians equated with the term, nor was it the "systematic defense of parish-pump communities and limited societies" which hook "Christian strength and largeness to a petit-bourgeois pusillanimity."[91] Catholics always had the tendency "to confound evangelical brotherhood with a taste for little coteries." Instead of attempting to create genuine community with all men, the Catholic adult was "absorbed in his own good works, tending his beautiful soul or his boy scout troop, after carefully closing all doors and windows beyond the four square feet of his apostolate. He mistakes living in a hothouse for purity in the world."[92]

A real love of man meant working to make a more humane society and not counting the cost of such efforts to oneself.[93] On the individual level, Christianity is then not complacency but heroism. In social terms, as Mounier wrote in 1948, "Christianity is not a brake, it is a madness, an

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[90]This theme is developed in Mounier, EP, pp. 24-35, 96-100.

[91]Mounier, SV, p. 40.

[92]Ibid., p. 43.

[93]On this point see also Thierry Maulnier, "L'Esprit d'Emmanuel Mounier," Revue Hommes et Mondes, (May, 1950), pp. 125-128.

irrational force of upheaval and progress."[94]

The typical modern Christian had rejected these values in favor of the pursuit of middle-class goals. This is the "bourgeois Catholic" who completely ignores the rigor of Christianity. He surrounds himself with good things, as well as a good conscience, believing that his avoidance of sexual promiscuity or any act of strong impulse makes him a just man. He ignores the Cross and the life of renunciation it asks of the Christian. "He is good for neither sin nor peace, for neither unhappiness nor joy."[95] The bourgeois is incapable of love, at least the love that Christ exhibited which means a total giving of self. As a result he can never be a real Christian believer because he cannot understand the meaning of the message.[96]

An intense desire for security is the cause of this fear of risk and self-giving. It is also the chief characteristic of the bourgeois and he has reshaped Christianity to suit the need. God and religion have become for him no more than "a superior organization of Messrs. Universe Ltd. The Builder is the best of builders; eternity is the best of investments; life should be the prudent management of holdings in the virtues with a view to their final realization."[97] The consequences have been profound. In France Christianity has been

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[94]Mounier, BNA, p. 171.

[95]Mounier, RPC, p. 392.

[96]Ibid., p. 391.

[97]Mounier, SV, p. 22.

dethroned and a "utilitarian religiosity" reigns in its place. The virtues of faith, hope, and charity now come after economy, security, and social immobility. The devout among the bourgeoisie have attempted to make "the Catholic, apostolic Church into the back parlor of a shop, a confidential salon where anemic virtues stagnate in a curtained half-light, ignorant of everything unconnected with ecclesiastic gossip, (and) the sterile confidences of lonely lives."[98]

Mounier's religious criticism, as well as his approach to politics and political action, is best understood in terms of Péguy's distinction between the "mystique" and the "politique."[99] The mystique is essentially an ideal, a vision of life, capable of motivating men to selfless action. According to Péguy, however, the mystique is also an expression of spiritual Being which animates all of creation. The mystique is, therefore, a form of revelation, a statement of the eternal meaning of the temporal order. Mounier echoes this when, in commenting on Péguy's idea, he describes the mystique as being "above the egotistical, temporal interests which gravitate around individual, class, and nation; it is properly speaking, the sense of the eternal."[100]

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[98] Ibid., p. 23.

[99] The mystique-politique relationship is a central theme in Péguy. Analyses of it can be found in Hans A. Schmitt, Charles Péguy: The Decline of An Idealist (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1966); Marjorie Villiers, Charles Péguy: A Study in Integrity (London: Collins, 1965); and N. Jessum-Wilson, Charles Péguy (London: Bowes & Bowes, 1965).

[100] Mounier, PCP, OM, I, p. 73.

When man commits himself to a mystique he cooperates with God in the work of reducing the power of evil in society. The world is then better able to reflect the eternal order which is "behind" it and which gives it existence. In this sense Péguy speaks of "saving" the world and sharing in the divine task of communicating the Absolute.

The "politique," on the other hand, is the use of these ideals for selfish ends. The politique usually takes the form of the institutionalization of the mystique in which it comes to serve the ends of the institution and not those of the ideal. Hence Péguy's adage, "Everything begins in mystique and ends in politique." Even the mystique which shares in the eternal is not exempt from the constant corruption which is the characteristic of the temporal.

Péguy gave many examples of this process of decline. He distinguished the socialist mystique, which he understood as the just organization of work, from the politique of the socialist parties which seemed to be concerned with parliamentary maneuvering and the development of materialist, bourgeois tastes among the workers. The mystique of democracy and the Republic was founded on honor and the dignity of the individual as well as the other ideals of 1789 but had degenerated into the politique of the Third Republic with its petty party interests. The Dreyfus mystique of justice had ultimately become, through the later actions of Dreyfusards such as Jaurès, nothing but a means for gaining political power. And, worst of all, the Christian mystique had become,

through the influence of the bourgeoisie, a justification of selfish, materialistic values.

Mounier's economic and political criticism, as well as his famous attack on conventional Catholicism, are based on Péguy's idea of the mystique. His rejection of capitalism, parliamentary democracy, and Catholic piety are best understood as condemnations of corruptive "politiques." His efforts to set out institutional alternatives, as well as his creation of Personalism, were essentially efforts to revive the bases of the old "mystiques" by giving them new forms.

Péguy's understanding of man and society, effectively summarized in the mystique-politique distinction, is obviously different than Aquinas' approach. Both approaches, however, emphatically defend the spiritual element in man's nature. This point is made especially clear by Jacques Maritain in his Bergsonian Philosophy and Thomism.[101] Maritain states that it was Bergson's appreciation of the spiritual, on which Péguy relied, that led him from an earlier scientific materialism to a discovery of the metaphysical order.[102] Although critical of Bergson's methodology, Maritain identifies himself with Bergson's defense of the spiritual. Mounier relied on both traditions, without dealing with their philosophical differences, because he was primarily

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[101] Jacques Maritain, Bergsonian Philosophy and Thomism (New York: Philosophical Library, 1955).

[102] See especially the "Essay of Appreciation" in Bergsonian Philosophy and Thomism. The same point is also made with great emphasis by Étienne Gilson in his The Philosopher and Theology (New York: Random House, 1962), pp. 118-119, 130-131.

concerned with this principle on which they both agreed, i.e., the spiritual element in man.[103]

If the Thomistic and Bergsonian philosophies are, as Maritain has pointed out, in fundamental agreement on this principle, the same cannot be said of their understanding of man's social obligations. The activist heroism that Péguy derived from Bergson cannot be required by Aquinas' doctrine of man's social nature. Before considering this problem, however, it is necessary to examine a third influence on Mounier's understanding of man's sociability. This is phenomenology.

Phenomenology

Mounier's interest in phenomenology is traceable to Paul Landsberg, a young German emigré who wrote a series of articles for Esprit in 1937 and 1938. Landsberg started from the premise of man's character as a "situated" being. Man is flesh and blood, a being who understands himself in terms of his concrete surroundings. He is "the me here and now," a lived experience.[104] He is "being with" and cannot be understood as an individual but only in terms of his relationship with others. Hence, the "we" is prior to the "I."

Landsberg extended Mounier's understanding of values by establishing them on a situational base. Every situation

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[103]Mounier's failure to deal with the differences between these two approaches will be taken up at greater length in the conclusion of this chapter.

[104]Paul Landsberg, "Le sens de l'action," Esprit, VII, (October, 1938), p. 96.

involves values, is made up of them, and cannot be understood apart from them. Moreover, a knowledge or understanding of these values requires an involvement in the situation. "Values are not facts which can be ascertained like other facts, and the situation itself is no more a fact than the values. Its truth is accessible only by integral participation in its structure."[105] The argument is that truth is not something that somehow drops into the mind, as it were, but that "it is the transformation of the mind itself by the essence and according to the essence of the object of knowledge."[106] This process, which is part of each act of knowing, is the real meaning of the "tabula rasa" metaphor.[107]

Landsberg simply applied this to situations in addition to objects, arguing that "engagement in an historical cause which contains certain values, far from being an obstacle to knowledge,...is simultaneously both a necessity of the moral life and an indispensable means of knowledge itself."[108] Values exist in people and people are always "situated." Engagement in the situation is thus the truest way to know values because it alone is open to them in the manner that they exist.

Paul Landsberg's emphasis on engagement and its connection to values reflects the influence of his teacher, Max

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[105]Paul Landsberg, "Réflexions sur l'engagement personnel," Esprit, VI (November, 1937), p. 186.

[106]Paul Landsberg, "Introduction à une critique du mythe," Esprit, VI (January, 1938), p. 526.

[107]Ibid.

[108]Landsberg, "Réflexions...," pp. 186-187.

Scheler. Scheler's first principle was that the feeling-states were not deducible from reason and will and were prior to them. In these essentially non-rational acts, values originate. "It is *in* such acts of preferring, rejecting, loving, hating, as intentional functions, where values become apparent, i.e., during the pursuance of emotional acts the a priori value content is given."[109] Therefore, all of ethics rests on the data of moral cognition and its a priori conditions. Although ethics is not equated with moral cognition, it is constituted by what is received in moral cognition.

In Scheler's view "man is, before he can think and will, *ens amans*."[110] Love and hatred are, therefore, man's first contact with the world and determine his ongoing relationship with it. Through them man accepts or rejects other persons and things, thereby creating his own situation. Thus, say Scheler and Landsberg, a man--or a family or a society--can only be understood properly in terms of his situation because the latter is constituted by his values. To deal with man only in abstract terms is to deny his nature.

For Mounier this phenomenology was essentially a reinforcement of the Christianity that he had received from Péguy. The openness and commitment that Péguy defended were given a new emphasis by phenomenology. The concept of being "situated"

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[109]Manfred S. Frings, *Max Scheler* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1965), p. 67.

[110]Max Scheler, *Schriften aus dem Nachlass* (Bern: Francke Verlag, n.d.) as quoted in Frings, *Max Scheler*, p. 67.

was especially important in this respect. It was much more than a matter of location. It meant being vulnerable to everything that surrounds one and being continually affected and changed by it. Mounier states that "people always speak of 'engagement,' as if it depended on ourselves; but we are already engaged, embarked, involved."[111]

Man must maintain an attitude of openness, an "active receptivity" to those whom he encounters. Mounier uses the German term, "Mitsein," meaning "being with" and the Latin, "adsum," which he translates as "Here I am (to you, at your disposal)."[112] Other persons bring man out of himself and help him to break down his innate selfishness. Hence, Mounier can say of the person that "other persons do not limit it, they enable it to be and to grow. Thus the person only exists toward others, only knows itself in knowing others, only finds itself in being known by them."[113]

The notion of "I" is only logically antecedent to "we" because man becomes a person only in relation to the other. Without this relationship, i.e., without accepting the other as an independent being with human needs and capacities, he remains the "individual," closed within himself and characterized by avarice and superficiality. In being open to the other, in extending himself to him, he becomes aware of

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[111]Mounier, Personalism (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, n.d.), p. 92.

[112]Ibid., p. 20.

[113]Ibid.

another part of his nature. As he responds to demands that are made upon him he becomes conscious of a deeper self, of capacities heretofore unused, and he begins to make decisions to shape this deeper self.

This is essentially the "I-Thou" relationship which is obviously not original to Mounier, expressed as it is in the thought of Martin Buber as well as Gabriel Marcel. It is a love relationship rather than one of mere compatibility, agreement, or complaisance. "Love aims above the individual to the Person who calls him....The friend does not demand of the loved that he reflect him, console him, or entertain him, but to be his unique self and to provoke a unique love."[114] By his very nature man is capable of this and true community is the establishment of this relationship among men.

If phenomenology served to reinforce the "committed" Christianity Mounier had received from Péguy, it also undermined the more traditional Thomism that Mounier had especially employed in his earliest works. With the influence of phenomenology Mounier ceased to see Christianity in terms of definitions of man. It was more "concrete;" the concern of the Christian was "this corner of the universe whence I derived my blood, my language, my parents, my condition, upon this epoch which has fashioned me, upon this very date at which...nothing is precisely the same as it was a year ago or even yesterday."[115] Mounier thus concludes that it is more

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[114]Mounier, RPC, p. 193.

[115]Mounier, CPFT, p. 376.

fitting to speak of the human "condition" than of human "nature" since the former term allows more latitude "for the indetminable virtualities of man," while at the same time affirming his spiritual capacities. Thus, "the human person is placed, ontologically and historically, in a certain situation that forms part and parcel of its very definition as well as of its ultimate capabilities."[116]

A Catholic philosopher and associate of Mounier, Jean Lacroix, says that according to Mounier "man is not an ontological nature; he is a history which makes itself from the starting point of nature."[117] When pressed to clarify this, Lacroix stated that Mounier was not a Thomist because he rejected the idea that it was possible to define man as an "essence" outside of history.[118] From Mounier's phenomenological perspective man was basically indefinable because our cognition of him is not capable of setting his limitations. "To define a man or a thing is the most superficial act in the process of knowing. The more we accept reality, the more it ceases to be comparable to an object placed in front of us on which we can take our bearings....Inexhaustibility cannot be estimated and intangible things cannot be strung together."[119] Therefore, the Thomist notion of man, although

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[116] Ibid., p. 366.

[117] Jean Lacroix, "Un témoin et un guide: Emmanuel Mounier," Vie et vérité, LI (1960-1961), p. 48.

[118] Interview with Jean Lacroix: Lyons, France, June, 1972.

[119] Mounier, EP, pp. 13-14.

important for its spiritual perspective, unjustifiably limits man's potential by the method it employs.

Conclusion

Mounier's free use of such diverse thinkers as Aquinas, Péguy, and the phenomenologists demonstrates his extreme eclecticism. Moreover, Mounier never concerned himself with the serious philosophical differences among these systems of thought. His later critique of Thomism, described above, is an important example of this. Although he never entirely rejected Aquinas, he never attempted to work out systematically the problems between Thomism and phenomenology.

Nevertheless, Mounier's eclecticism made a contribution. To appreciate it and especially to understand Mounier's overall purpose, it is necessary to consider the type of Catholic thinking he was faced with. T. M. Schoof, a contemporary Dutch historian of theology, has described the perspective of pre-Vatican II Catholicism: "the reality of faith was regarded as a timeless, changeless metaphysical 'system' which was, therefore, able to ignore all new discoveries and to keep the 'spirit of the times' safely outside the walls."[120] Catholic theological thinking, dominated by Thomism, had remained oblivious to the concrete experience of Christians in the world. It was a process of thought closed in upon itself and concerned only with a continuing analysis of its own

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[120] T. Mark Schoof, A Survey of Catholic Theology (New York and Paramus, New Jersey: Paulist-Newman Press, 1970), p. 36.

concepts. The separation between theological reflection and life experience was a very clear one.[121]

The rigid Thomistic distinction between essence and existence provided a very static concept of man which, said Mounier, tended to encourage conservatism. Ultimately, the emphasis on nature as a way of viewing man "tends soon to spell itself with a capital N and to set itself up as a justification of the established order."[122] It is not surprising, therefore, that in every age the Church has been linked to conservative institutions. To separate Christian values from a compromising alliance with these institutions--Mounier's primary concern--it was necessary to deal with the intellectual origins of the problem.

The approaches of Péguy and the phenomenologists avoided the separation between life and thought, experience and reflection. If these approaches were different from those of Aquinas, their conclusions were not ruled out by his. Aquinas' understanding of man's spiritual and social capacities does not necessarily exclude the positions that Péguy and the phenomenologists arrived at. Péguy's passionate advocacy of a committed social concern and phenomenology's emphasis on concrete circumstances offer an intensity that is not present in Thomism but which need not be denied to Catholic teaching.

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[121] Ibid., pp. 101-115, 146.

[122] Mounier, CPFT, pp. 368-369.

It must be pointed out, however, that if Aquinas' approach does not exclude Mounier's vision, neither does it require it. Mounier frequently appeared to equate Christianity with his own vision. His attempt to make Péguy's heroism obligatory set various Catholic critics against him. Jean de Frabeques, the young editor of the rightist Réaction, rhetorically asked Mounier how many people had the self-knowledge and self-mastery to undertake such a life.[123] Claude Mauriac echoed this sentiment when he said to Mounier, "It is not the well-being of man but his grandeur that you are searching for."[124] Mounier, the critics argued, was requiring more of Christians than Christianity did.

Paul Ricoeur, the noted phenomenologist and disciple of Mounier, has provided a useful approach to this problem.[125] The relationship between Christianity and Mounier's Personalist version of it can be clarified somewhat by a consideration of the two phrases "en chrétien" and "en tant que chrétien." Mounier was a Personalist "en chrétien," i.e., as an expression of his Christian beliefs. The connotation is one of subjectivity and spontaneity. "En tant que chrétien," on the other hand, indicates that Christianity requires the particular perspective of Mounier whereas, of course, there

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[123] Jean de Frabeques, "La question du personnalisme," Combat (March, 1937).

[124] Claude Mauriac, "Nostalgie de l'héroisme," Revue hebdomadaire (March 6, 1937), pp. 51-54.

[125] Paul Ricoeur, "Une philosophie personnaliste," Esprit, XIX (December, 1950).

are numerous other approaches to Christianity and Christian ethics. The critics are right, however, in that Mounier wished to steal the thunder of Christianity for his own version of it.

The importance of Mounier's Personalism does not rest in any philosophical or theological synthesis for he did not achieve one, nor was it his intention to do so. Personalism is a restatement of the Catholic understanding of man's spiritual and social capacities. It is a restatement, however, that places a new emphasis on experience and social life. Personalism, as Ricoeur and Schoof have pointed out, was one of the intellectual forces that contributed to the movement of Catholic theology away from a preoccupation with its own concepts, principles, and institutions and towards an appreciation of man's immediate situation and experiences as profoundly relevant to his salvation.[126] In historical terms this movement realized itself "when the magisterium of the Church finally terminated its exclusive contract with neo-scholasticism at the Second Vatican Council."[127]

For Mounier the more immediate significance of his approach was the fact that it provided a basis for an activist Catholicism. Personalism demonstrated to Catholics that there was a connection between their religious commitment and

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[126]Schoof, p. 146 and Ricoeur, pp. 869-870. Schoof sees this movement as the most important theme in Catholic theology during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

[127]Schoof, p. 151.

the situation they faced as French citizens in the 1930's and 1940's. From the Personalist perspective it was altogether natural that Catholics should be part of the effort to reconstruct the social, political, and economic institutions of France. Mounier's analysis of these institutions is the subject of the following two chapters.

CHAPTER THREE

BOURGEOIS VALUES AND CAPITALISM

The present chapter consists of two parts. The first explains Mounier's rejection of modern social values. His criticism is based on Catholic principles and his use of this tradition will be evaluated. This part of the chapter will conclude with a description of his alternatives to modern culture. The second section is concerned with Mounier's treatment of capitalism which he understood as both cause and effect of modern values. An analysis will be made of Mounier's use of traditional Catholic thought to condemn capitalism.

Part I: "Bourgeois Values"

Mounier left little doubt about the basis of his social criticism. He began his Révolution personnaliste et communautaire with the words of Péguy: "The revolution will be a moral one or it will not be."[128] Civilization was "first of all a metaphysical call, an adventure in the eternal order of things," and therefore it was first necessary to evaluate the underlying values of western society.[129] Since in Mounier's mind economic and political disorders were the results of aberrations in the moral order, it was essential to seek out these more basic evils first. "What we are fighting," Mounier said, "is not the uncomfortable city but the immoral city...."[130]

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[128]Mounier, RPC, OM, I, p. 137.

[129]Mounier, PM, p. 6.

[130]Mounier, RPC, OM, I, p. 141.

Mounier's social criticism was not, however, set in the form of rigorous ethical analysis. Rather it was a commentary on the conduct of men's lives in modern society, on what they really cared about, on what was of ultimate importance to them. Like Charles Péguy, Mounier attempted to make his message more provocative by centering it on one social class, the bourgeoisie. By creating what was in effect a caricature of the individual bourgeois, he tried to dramatize the impact of modern society's two greatest evils: materialism and selfish individualism.

According to Mounier the materialism that is at the heart of bourgeois life expresses itself in a variety of ways. The bourgeois is especially desirous of tranquility and security, "tranquility for the present moment, security for tomorrow, and a solid retirement for his last days."[131] Comfort is an even greater concern. Indeed, "comfort is to the bourgeois world what heroism was to the Renaissance and sanctity to medieval Christianity--the ultimate value, the ultimate motive for all action."[132] Since these goals are obtained through monetary wealth, the bourgeois is continually obsessed with his position in the economic order.

Wealth provides what Mounier sees as a more sophisticated form of materialism: status. "The whole life of the petty bourgeois is dominated by a single value: getting ahead, and it is always the same thing. If not for himself,

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[131]Mounier, PCP, OM, I, p. 85.

[132]Mounier, PM, p. 18.

it is for his son who must 'move up,' who must 'have an easier life than we have had...making it.'"[133] The bourgeois first wants to achieve white-collar status, then a suburban home, automobile, and beach residence, then, through attention to serious wealth, assimilation into the upper class. However, he seldom realizes all of these goals. His reality, Mounier says, is "his shop, the square of sidewalk outside of it, the cash register within, and his dreams inside the register."[134]

The tragedy is that the bourgeois is so completely dedicated to these goals that he has lost the capacity for a spiritual life. He has denied the deeper parts of his human nature. In Mounier's words, he "has lost the true sense of being, he moves only among things, and things that are practical and have been denuded of their mystery. He is a man without love, a Christian without conscience, an unbeliever without passion. ...for him there is only prosperity, health, common sense, sweetness of life, comfort."[135] The average bourgeois sees nothing wrong with the ultimate values in his life:

> One enriches oneself honestly...One raises one's sons to go higher than oneself. One looks for a little ease and when one has found it, how good it is! Where is the evil? Where is the sharing in lies?

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[133] Mounier, RPC, OM, I, p. 242.

[134] Ibid.

[135] Mounier, PM, pp. 17-18.

> Where is the complicity in the reign of money? And (why) this anguish which has become a part of me? We are all normal men! 136

Like Péguy before him, Mounier uses money as a symbol of the materialism and selfishness that characterize bourgeois society. The desire for money expels the humaneness from man and replaces it with a narrow individualism. Since money is obtained through "ruthlessness, conniving, and avarice," it removes any sense of fraternity or love from human relationships. Community is then replaced by "private life" which is a rationalization for preferring the solitary enjoyment of possessions over cooperation with others in social endeavors. Thus money separates men by encouraging them to find satisfaction in ignoring each other.[137]

In sum, money has corrupted both man's relation to the social order by turning him away from other persons and his connection to the order of material objects by limiting their worth to strictly economic value. Thus moral and religious values have been thoroughly undermined by the pursuit of money. "'In the same way that the Gospels are a complete statement of Christian thought, so the savings bank book is the total summary of modern thought. It alone is strong enough to hold off the Gospels because it is the book of

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[136] Mounier, RPC, OM, I, p. 248.

[137] Mounier, PM, p. 17 and RPC, OM, I, p. 238. The emphasis on the evil of money and the bourgeois as hoarders of money is especially indicative of the medieval origins of Catholic thought. This point is developed later in this chapter and will receive lengthier treatment in chapter five which will describe Mounier's alternative institutions and his relationship to anarchism.

money which is the antichrist.'"[138]

Mounier's attack on the bourgeoisie did not go unchallenged. François Mauriac in an article entitled "Les jeunes bourgeois révolutionnaires," pointed out that Mounier and his colleagues at Esprit were themselves of bourgeois origin. Mauriac then argued at length that it was through the engineers, doctors, savants, philosophers, poets, and even saints of the bourgeois classes that the genius of the French people had expressed itself. Only Péguy, of peasant stock, has been an exception to this rule, said Mauriac, and he was an "isolated miracle."[139]

Mounier did not respond to Mauriac's article indicating, one must assume, that he recognized the validity of Mauriac's argument. But his failure to reply also indicates that Mounier was not primarily interested in the bourgeoisie as a socioeconomic group. Mounier was not attempting to judge a rigorously defined class. He was more concerned with a set of moral values generally associated with the bourgeoisie than he was with the bourgeoisie itself. Indeed, these values were often shared by members of other classes. Thus Mounier described as "bourgeois" the working-class salesgirl who coveted the luxury goods she sold. The same label also

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[138]Charles Péguy, Note conjointe sur M. Descartes, IX, 244s. (II, 1434s) as quoted in Mounier, PCP, OM, I, p. 90. The effect of the bourgeoisie on Christian values has already been referred to in chapter two. Mounier's Spoil of the Violent (SV) discusses this question.

[139]François Mauriac, "Les jeunes bourgeois révolutionnaires," Journal L'Echo de Paris, March 25, 1933.

applied to the blue-collar laborer who identified with the goals of the entrepreneur.[140] "The bourgeois is not the definition of a class but of a mind, a mind which is in power from the captains of industry down to the popular masses."[141] The task then would be to reeducate society according to a different set of values.

The alternative that Mounier offered was essentially a restatement of the traditional Christian position on material wealth. Mounier defended private property according to Aquinas' argument that, because man is ultimately responsible for himself, he must have the means to provide for his well being. Given the limits of man's nature, private ownership is more appropriate than communal property.[142] However, he must use the material world in light of his spiritual end. Materiality cannot be allowed to become an end in itself. It is a gift of God to be used by man "an instrument of his return to God."[143]

More specifically, this means that the life of the Christian must be one of simplicity. He should possess that which is necessary for a healthy and reasonably secure life. In the latter respect it is important that he not be continually preoccupied with the quest for survival. The Christian should also enjoy a basic level of comfort and the means

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[140] Mounier, RPC, OM, I, pp. 241-242.

[141] Ibid., p. 250.

[142] Mounier, PCPH, OM, I, p. 448. Mounier also enumerates Aquinas' other defenses of private property.

[143] Ibid., p. 441.

necessary to develop his creative capacities.[144] To seek more or to see these requisites as ends in themselves is to ignore his true nature which is more than material.

There is, says Mounier, "one general rule for all possessions: be in the world as if one were not, possess as if one did not possess."[145] Only by separating oneself from possessions can one begin to separate from one's ego which prevents unity with God. "Man finds himself only in losing himself."[146]

Freeing oneself from material wealth is a social as well as spiritual responsibility. What one does not require can then be given to those who are in need. "No one," says Mounier, "has a right to be rich." He quotes St. Basil, one of the early Fathers of the Church: "The bread that you store away is the bread of him who is hungry; the shirt that you lock away is the shirt of one who has no clothes...the money that you heap up is the money of the poor."[147] The poor, as Aquinas had stated, are justified in taking from the superabundance of the rich when they have no other means of support.[148]

Mounier reminds the reader that in Catholic thought private property is not an absolute right. It exists only in terms of the good of the community and becomes illegitimate

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[144] Ibid., pp. 454-455.

[145] Ibid., p. 436.

[146] Ibid., p. 434.

[147] Ibid., p. 459.

[148] Ibid., p. 462.

when used against the interests of the community. The heart of property, therefore, is communal obligation. Aquinas defended private property almost with regret. The basic emphasis of his system was social. Therefore, "the proper attitude of the property owner," says Mounier, "is communication, a personal enjoyment in and for the community."[149]

In sum, the traditional Catholic doctrine of property is opposed to the bourgeois values of materialism and individualism. The material world is only a means to bring man to his final, spiritual end. He must use it with this end in view and with an awareness of the needs of others.

Critique

In the previous chapter it was pointed out that Mounier appeared to argue two positions on the question of human nature: the traditional Thomist approach and the more activist, heroic vision of Péguy. Mounier defended the latter by means of the former. To a certain extent he appears to have proceeded in a similar fashion in his economic thought. There is the traditional Catholic doctrine on material wealth as well as a demand for almost ascetical abstinence from material goods. Mounier supports man's right to reasonable comfort, security, and position but then vitriolically castigates the bourgeoisie for attempting to realize these goals. His attack on money, particularly the equating of it with "the antichrist," is surely extreme. Yet in another part of

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[149] Ibid., p. 451.

the same work he states that,

> ...it would be singular indeed if the human spirit were so indigent that the predominance of the spiritual could be assured by only setting limits in advance to the fecundity of matter. Overabundance can be a real threat to the spiritual but that menace must actually be met by personal effort and forethought.... 150

These contradictions in Mounier's approach can, however, be resolved. To do this it is necessary to consider briefly the history of the Catholic position. Traditionally, Catholic theologians have argued that the renunciation of riches is not obligatory. Only the law is binding for the Christian. The renunciation of wealth is suggested to one who wishes to be perfect.[151] Thus voluntary poverty, which Mounier appears to require, is only recommended and need not be followed to achieve salvation.

This teaching, long established in the Church, has, however, undergone revision because of the work of modern scripture scholars who have pointed out that the New Testament does not readily support it. The Gospels, it is argued, defend two apparently contradictory positions: 1) that voluntary poverty must be the mark of all Christians and that 2) wealth is not to be condemned nor are the wealthy required

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[150] Mounier, PM, p. 193.

[151] The pursuit of perfection is left to the members of religious orders according to this view.

to give up their riches.[152]

These two positions are reconciled in the attitude of the Christian. He is expected to be inwardly detached from wealth. This does not mean that he cannot actually own it although such ownership is usually an obstacle to spiritual growth. Nevertheless, it was Christ's practice to praise the rich man's virtuous deed rather than to condemn his wealth.[153]

What is required of all Christians, rich or poor, is a "love of poverty," or, more accurately, a generous willingness to part with one's wealth when the needs of others require it.

> The question is not 'How much ought I to give? Am I giving enough?' Such a question implies an attachment to worldly goods, and a desire to hold on to as much as possible of them. The correct question to be asked is exactly the opposite: 'Am I obliged to hold on to my possessions? How much ought I to keep.' [154]

Mounier's position is not contradictory when understood in terms of this more recent Catholic position. In condemning the bourgeoisie he was condemning those who did not exhibit a detachment from wealth and who refused to give generously of their abundance. They loved not poverty but riches. He defended the right to property and he also

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[152] On Christian poverty see the parable of "the rich young man" in Mark 10, 17-27 as well as in Mathew and Luke. On wealth and the wealthy see the parable of Zaccheus in Luke 19, 1-10 as well as other parables: Luke 15, 11-32; Matt. 20, 1-16; Matt. 18, 23-25. For the above interpretation of this question and the various positions on it see Jacques Leclerq, Christianity and Money (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1959) especially pp. 21-31.

[153] Again, see Luke 19, 1-10.

[154] Leclerq, Christianity and Money, p. 49. Emphasis is Leclerq's.

believed that it could be great danger to the wholehearted openness required by the Gospels.

The philosopher Gabriel Marcel has developed an approach to man's relationship to materiality that is particularly helpful in this question.[155] Marcel distinguishes between "being" and "having." "Having" means relating to an object merely in terms of its material elements, attributes, or functions. One possesses an object by laying hold of these attributes, using the object according to its functions. The rational, problem-oriented man of modern industrial society takes this approach to materiality.

Having is ultimately unsatisfactory to man because it prevents him from experiencing material reality in terms beyond the quantifiable or the functional, e.g., the aesthetic. This non-quantifiable element Marcel calls "being." It is "what withstands--or what would withstand--an exhaustive analysis bearing on the data of experience and aiming to reduce them step by step to elements increasingly devoid of intrinsic or significant value."[156] Man is especially characterized by the capacity for being and experiences it as

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[155]See especially Marcel's Being and Having which was first published a year after Mounier's work on this theme, De la propriété capitaliste à la propriété humaine (PCPH). In a later edition of PCPH Mounier refers to his satisfaction in reading Marcel's views which were similar to those he had published. Mounier had become acquainted with Marcel when he frequented the home of Jacques Maritain in the years immediately prior to the establishment of Esprit. There is no evidence to indicate that this was a lasting relationship, however, since the two men had basically different concerns.

[156]Gabriel Marcel, The Philosophy of Existence as quoted in Kenneth T. Gallagher, The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel (New York: Fordham University Press, 1962), p. 52.

fullness, plentitude, or "the inexhaustible within himself which is the only source of fulfillment and joy."[157] Ultimately being cannot be described because it is pure experience eluding all material categories or attributes. "We can discuss only that which is not being."[158]

Modern man has reshaped himself according to his function for having while ignoring being. He can never find satisfaction because he feeds his need for the unpossessable by attempting to possess more. The result is not fulfillment but anxiety.[159]

Marcel's concept of "having" provides a more philosophical basis for the materialistic "bourgeois values" which Mounier condemns. Moreover, Marcel's understanding of fulfillment through "being" gives greater meaning to the more traditional concept of man's "spiritual" nature which Mounier emphasizes. An appreciation of being also requires the same material detachment that Mounier asks of the Christian. Finally, Marcel's approach provides a more adequate foundation for Mounier's belief that the ultimate meaning of reality is available only through an open, unpossessive acceptance of the material world.

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[157]Gallagher, The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, p. 56.

[158]Gabriel Marcel, Man Against Mass Society, p. 130 as quoted in Gallagher, p. 56.

[159]Marcel says that, "having as such seems to have a tendency to destroy and lose itself in the very thing it began by possessing, but which now absorbs the master who thought he controlled it." See Marcel, Being and Having, pp. 134, 160 as quoted in John B. O'Malley, The Fellowship of Being (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), p. 32.

Part II: Capitalism

Mounier was primarily concerned with the relationship between capitalism and bourgeois values. Materialism and selfish individualism were, he believed, reflected in modern capitalism which tended to encourage these values.

Mounier argued that capitalism is wrong because the profit principle, the system's most basic tenet, is completely materialistic. It reduces all questions to the mathematics of money gained vs. money lost and thus makes it impossible to organize the economy around the goal of achieving material well-being for all. In principle, human needs are, therefore, second to the exigencies of profit. Since the person's spiritual growth is ordinarily impossible unless his basic material needs have been met, capitalism is ultimately anti-human. In effect, it does not recognize the final, spiritual end of man. "The concern for profit...expels or progressively corrupts all human values: the love of work and its materials, the sense of social service and of human community, the poetic sense of the world, private life, the interior life, and religion."[160]

The situation of the working class is the best example of the basic materialism pervading capitalism. Workers are paid by means of a wage system determined by management. According to Mounier, salaries are a concession to labor by ownership, "an alms-giving by an arbitrary and purely material power" to recipients who are allowed no voice in the enter-

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[160] Mounier, RPC, OM, I, p. 272.

prise.[161] The result is a working class that is frequently underpaid and often alienated from its work.

Under capitalism the workers have become a class which is deprived of the dignity that comes from mastery over one's work and participation in its design. Workers have become "exiles from culture, from the freedom of life, from the humble joy of labor and, like genuine exiles, strangers to themselves."[162] In short, the interests of a purely material commodity, capital, are placed above those of persons.

This disorder is a result of the separation which capitalism has achieved between economics and morality. In this respect, capitalism is merely another example of the modern tendency to separate the material and spiritual realms entirely. The problems of capitalism can only be resolved by a return to a true hierarchy of values. "One of the major deviations of capitalism is to have subjected the spiritual life to consumption, consumption to production, and production to profit, whereas the natural hierarchy is just the reverse."[163]

Mounier claimed to find the source of capitalist materialism in the origins of the system. The profit principle first assumed systematic importance during the early modern period. It was at this time that capitalists first considered money to be not merely a means of exchange but also a

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[161]Mounier, PM, pp. 201, 21.

[162]Ibid., p. 21.

[163]Mounier, PCPH, OM, I, p. 453.

source of profit in itself through credit. Money then became a commodity to be bought and sold. "This unnatural fecundity of gold, which men of former ages called usury, is the source of what we call capitalist profit."[164]

This is the traditional Catholic teaching and it is based on the premise that money is a consumption good, analogous to food, and is used up in the act of spending or exchanging. Unlike other forms of property, e.g., land or animals, money should not produce an income which would be title for a return. Its only purpose is to serve as a medium of exchange.[165]

The misuse of money, i.e., the seeking of it as an end in itself, is the cause of capitalism's disorders. The development of unusually large sums of money has broken down "the natural rhythm of things." There is no longer a necessary connection between work and the acquisition of wealth. Money need no longer follow the pattern of human labor; it now accumulates and collapses according to its own norms. "It is completely estranged from labor and social responsibility which are economic functions of the person."[166]

The freedom of money has changed the meaning of work. It is now a burden to be assumed by the less fortunate of society whereas it had once been an activity mandated by God for all men. Those who are now condemned to labor can no

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[164] Mounier, PM, p. 182.

[165] Ibid., p. 182.

[166] Ibid.

longer take satisfaction in it because they are consumed by the desire to free themselves from it.

The accumulation of new fortunes has enlarged and intensified the social inequality and class differences that were already in existence. This becomes clear when one examines the supposed virtues of capitalism.[167] It claims to defend the person but leaves him with little or no voice in the economic structures that shape his life. From the capitalist right to individual responsibility the system has created economic impunity for a few. Capitalism has always exalted initiative but accords it primarily to the powerful. Despite the claims of capitalism's apologists, liberty is available only to an economic elite which "is in possession of all the squares and of all the crossings of the city of man; it enslaves governments and public opinion."[168]

"Public opinion" returns one to the focus of Mounier's argument: modern social values. Usury and the "unnatural fecundity of money" which resulted from it were not simply fiscal changes. They made possible radical alterations in the structures and purposes of modern life. Ultimately they have substituted materialism and individualism for the spiritual values that man once accepted as primary.

Critique

The Catholic teaching against usury is not as simple a matter as Mounier indicates. While condemning usury in

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[167]The following is from Mounier, PCPH, OM, I, p. 449.

[168]Mounier, RPC, OM, I, p. 184.

principle the medieval Church also took note of "extrinsic claims" which might justify the practice. Among these were a loss incurred in loaning the money, a gain foregone, and a premium to cover risk. Thus the ban on usury was applied according to economic circumstances.[169]

As modern economies developed, their institutions became more complicated. "Extrinsic claims" multiplied and the Church gradually relaxed its ban on interest. Specifically, the Church recognized the role of investment capital in economic development. Money had now become a productive force itself and was no longer merely a means of exchange, a consumption good, but more akin to property. Its owner, therefore, was entitled to a return on the use made of it by others. In this manner it became possible for the modern Church to sanction capitalism without entirely reversing itself on the usury question.[170]

Despite its acceptance of usury and the basic principles of capitalism, the Church did not relinquish the two concerns that made it oppose usury initially: social justice and the

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[169] Franz Mueller, "The Church and the Social Question" in Joseph N. Moody and Justus George Lawler, (eds.), The Challenge of Mater et Magistra (New York: Herder and Herder, 1963), pp. 33-49. Mueller's essay is a very thorough and scholarly treatment of the topic.

[170] John F. Cronin, Catholic Social Principles (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1950), p. 258 and Jacques Maritain, Freedom in the Modern World (New York: Scribners, 1936), pp. 127-128.

Mueller emphasizes the role of two later scholastic thinkers, St. Antoine of Florence (1389-1459) and St. Bernadine of Siena (1380-1444) in developing these variations on Aquinas' principles. See Mueller, "The Church and the Social Question," p. 42 ff.

hierarchy of values. The Church argued that all economic institutions must serve the common good. It adopted Aquinas' position that although the appropriation of material goods should normally take place through individual ownership, these goods must be used in such a way that they do not conflict with the welfare of all.[171] Any practice which violates this norm is prohibited. Hence, the Church condemned capitalism when it "directed business and even the whole economic system according to its own will and advantage, scorning the human dignity of the workers, the social character of economic activity, and social justice itself and the common good."[172] However, the Church did not condemn capitalism in principle. In Quadrigessimo Anno (1931), the first encyclical to deal with capitalism at length, the Church stated that the system, "is not to be condemned in itself.... It is not of its own nature vicious."[173] Clearly, the Church in Mounier's time had rejected its fundamentalism on the question of capitalism. Mounier is therefore incorrect in implying that capitalism is unacceptable to Catholics.

However, Mounier's major concern was not with the principles of capitalism but with its effects. He condemned capitalism because of his conviction that its modern effects

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[171]St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, II, p. 2, ques. 66, 2. For a succinct exposition of Aquinas' theory of property see "Appendix I" of Maritain's Freedom in the Modern World, pp. 193-214.

[172]Pope Pius XI, encyclical letter, Quadrigessimo Anno (1931) as quoted in Cronin, p. 259.

[173]Ibid.

could no longer be justified according to its principles. A closer analysis of the Church's concept of capitalism will provide support for Mounier's argument.

As Ernst Troeltsch has pointed out, the Church's teaching is based on a very simplistic view of capitalism that was accurate only for the early modern period.[174] At that time commerical relations were still of a personal human character and could, therefore, be "'developed and penetrated ethically.'"[175]

This point becomes especially clear when one examines, as Troeltsch had done, the medieval Church's understanding of capitalism:

> The whole spirit of this way of thinking on economic matters may be summed up thus: property and gain are based on the personal performance of work; goods are exchanged only when necessary, and then only according to the principles of a just price, which does not give an undue advantage to anyone; (the just price is best regulated by the Government), consumption is regulated (a) in accordance with the principle of moderation, which only permits the natural purpose of the maintenance of existence to be fulfilled, and (b) which makes room for a generosity which takes the needs of others into account. 176

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[174]Ernest Troeltsch, The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches, I (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), p. 320. Mueller points out that Max Weber makes essentially the same point in his Essays in Sociology (New York: Oxford, 1946), pp. 371, 331.

[175]Max Weber, Essays in Sociology, p. 371 as quoted in Mueller, p. 59.

[176]Troeltsch, The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches, I, p. 320.

The Church has never abandoned this approach despite its gradual acceptance of usury, investment capital, and other modern economic practices. Indeed, as Troeltsch has pointed out, modern Thomism includes many of the same elements, e.g., a certain amount of property for all; a close connection between labor and the possession of capital; a willingness on the part of owners to accept personal sacrifices to make this possible; a limiting of economic stimulation to the production of those goods which are absolutely necessary.[177]

The corporate capitalism of modern western economies certainly does not conform to the above strictures. Economic growth has become an end in itself. Production is not designed to provide all members of society with the basic necessities but to multiply expendable goods for those who can afford to purchase them. No attempt is made to link capital and labor, and certainly no sacrifices are made to do so. The concept of a "just price" which will provide an advantage to no one has long since given way to the highest price the market will bear. Those who possess a desired commodity, e.g., oil, are thus given an enormous economic advantage.

Contemporary economists, such as A. A. Berle and John Kenneth Galbraith, have pointed out that early entrepreneurial capitalism and modern corporate capitalism have very little in common.[178] Galbraith has argued that the structure of the

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[177] Ibid.

[178] John Kenneth Galbraith, The New Industrial State (New American Library, 1967) and A. A. Berle, The Limits of American Capitalism (New York: Harper & Row, 1966).

modern corporation makes it increasingly difficult to place responsibility on any particular individual. Decisions are usually the result of a team of executives. Moreover, these executives, if they are to retain their positions, have no choice but to choose those courses of action which serve to maintain the profits of the firm and, hopefully, increase them.[179]

Moreover, the modern corporation is simply a part of a highly complex and sophisticated national economy which has for its single value ever greater growth. This goal is promoted by the advertising industry which legitimizes the "bourgeois values" as acceptable social norms. Questions of "just price," the proper relation between capital and labor, and the providing of necessities for all are essentially irrelevant. The traditional teaching of the Church had not considered this new reality which is different from the world of the individual entrepreneur who could, from personal virtue, make the sacrifices required to create a just social order around a capitalist economy.[180]

Finally, the Church's teaching had always presumed the existence of political institutions capable of reconciling the many private interests of a capitalist society and bringing out of them a genuine common good. Indeed, this is the basic principle of Catholic political teaching. However, there has never been agreement, even among liberal thinkers,

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[179]Galbraith, The New Industrial State, p. 71 ff.

[180]Mueller, The Church and the Social Question, pp. 37, 59.

that liberal political institutions can create a genuine public interest out of the private economic interests that exist under capitalism. Indeed, the argument that capitalism prevents the establishment of a true public interest, while strongly debated, has become more frequent today.

The value of Mounier's anti-capitalism is his effort to relate the Church's traditional hierarchy of values to the radically changed circumstances of modern economic life, circumstances which the Church had largely failed to judge or even consider. Despite the Church's sanction of capitalism in principle, Mounier was able to construct the argument that modern capitalism, no longer what its early principles described, was incompatible with Catholic economic thought. In addition, Mounier used Catholic teaching to criticize certain values, particularly the unrestrained acquisition and use of private wealth, that are associated with capitalism. By using Catholic principles against modern capitalism and the values identified with it, Mounier provided a Catholic support for the socialist argument.

There are, however, noticeable problems with Mounier's approach. He occasionally implies that capitalism is the cause of materialism and selfish individualism as if these had not existed in earlier periods of history. Secondly, while noting the great social impact of modern capitalist institutions, he gives little consideration to any but the elitist theory of capitalist society. Finally, he seems to imply that his position is the only truly Catholic one. In reality a different evaluation of modern capitalism could

produce a different Catholic position. These are important weaknesses. Nevertheless, they do not invalidate Mounier's argument as a genuine Catholic position.

CHAPTER FOUR:

LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

The present chapter attempts to explain and evaluate Mounier's use of Catholic political thought to create a left-wing critique of liberal democracy and the Christian Democratic movement. The first part of the chapter describes Mounier's attack on Liberalism and his ambivalent approach to modern democratic institutions. The second section attempts to explain Mounier's positions in terms of Catholic political theory. A critique of Mounier's treatment of Liberalism is also provided here. The chapter concludes with an explanation of Mounier's rejection of Christian Democracy. His response to this movement makes especially clear both the basic principles and the primary concerns of his political thought.

Mounier's Interpretation of Liberalism

According to Mounier the bourgeois spirit which had gradually corrupted the moral and religious values of modern men had a similar impact on political life. In Mounier's view parliamentary democracy was, in effect, an institutionalization of bourgeois values. Liberalism was responsible for this because it had made politics officially neutral regarding the highest moral values.

In origin Liberalism was simply the political expression of the modern relativism which the Church had always condemned. Liberalism was the political effect of the Cartesian epistomological revolution which had established that men no longer shared a common teleology. Each man was now intellectually independent and owed allegiance to no one in the

question of ultimate values.[181] This meant that there would be no agreement on the final purpose of politics. For Mounier this was a violation of the natural order of things. Man did have an ultimate end, and politics therefore had to be based on this reality if it would truly serve man.[182]

In its relativism, however, Liberalism could only establish individual freedom as the highest political good. This was simply "freedom from" and meant merely "being on the verge of choosing, always in suspension and never determined."[183] It was the contrary of an end to be attained, or a goal to be achieved; it was a "freedom of indifference: freedom to be nothing...total indetermination."[184]

For Mounier this idea of liberty was contrary to man's nature. "A man never in fact experiences the required state of equipoise" that is the basis of liberty as indetermination.[185] Freedom is never mere spontaneity. It is personal choice, the choice of those activities which will determine who I am. Because I understand myself in terms of my ends, both temporal and eternal, freedom is actually more than choice: "It lies in the progressive liberation to choose the good."[186] For the Christian this means a relationship to God

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[181] Mounier, PM, p. 20 ff.

[182] Ibid., pp. 24-27. Mounier's articulation of the basic Thomistic perspective is also present in RPC, pp. 381, 852.

[183] Mounier, PM, p. 84.

[184] Mounier, P, pp. 54-55.

[185] Ibid., p. 55.

[186] Ibid., p. 63.

and, because God is available only through his creation, it means an awareness of and participation in the tasks of human society. Therefore, the truly free man is best described as the responsible man, "the man to whom the world puts questions and who responds accordingly."[187]

It is this normative element that Liberalism ignores. The emphasis on "indetermination," on "freedom from" has prevented Liberalism from being concerned with man's total situation while concentrating exclusively on juridical rights.[188] Rights do not provide social goals but only an absence of undue constraint. As a result Liberalism has settled for the lowest common denominator in social values: individualism and materialism.

Liberalism made the individual the highest value, indeed, the highest social value. When Liberalism conferred rights on the individual it only glorified his egotism, and when it exalted freedom it encouraged the selfish protection of private possessions held without concern for the social good. "Humanism?" asks Mounier, "This humanism of 'rights' is only a civilized disguise of the instinct for power."[189] The sublime language of Liberalism is only a cover for the reign of competition and force. Its institutions, e.g., popular sovereignty, equality, individual liberty, are merely rules for regulating this struggle. In essence Liberalism is

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[187] Ibid., p. 64.

[188] Mounier, CD, p. 61.

[189] Mounier, RPC, p. 159.

nothing but "the brutal affirmation of the self" against the other.[190]

The political life of Third Republic France was proof of this. Political questions were rarely more than the expression of economic conflicts and were usually resolved according to the relative strengths of the interests involved. The politicians, parties, and pressure groups that were so much a part of democratic life were merely the representatives of these selfish material interests.

The economic interests reflected the hierarchical class structure of modern society. Capitalism's economic elite, through its wealth and control of jobs and resources, was the dominant force in both party politics and public policy. This made a sham of the ideal of political equality. The basic values of the electorate were strongly influenced by advertising, the press, and the institutions of culture, virtually all of which were controlled by the wealthy. The ideal of the rationally free voter was a myth. "The capitalist democracy is a democracy which gives man liberties the usage of which is taken away by capitalism....Let us not ignore the nature of the problem: it is a question of the capturing of a weak democratic structure by an unacceptable capitalist structure."[191]

Mounier's argument with Liberalism was that it had rationalized, justified, and therefore encouraged the selfish

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[190] Ibid.

[191] Ibid., pp. 296-297.

and materialistic parts of man over his spiritual capacities. In so doing it had exalted the private sphere over that of the public and thereby developed an essentially anti-political attitude. For Mounier the epitome of the Liberal man was the bourgeois who used his wealth not to gain access to the public order for its own sake, but to demand protection from it in order to gain more wealth. The spiritual value of participation and concomitant personal growth was ignored.[192]

Mounier's rejection of Liberalism is not as emphatic or as total as the above would seem to indicate. On the contrary, Mounier shares much with Liberalism. This becomes especially clear if one compares his understanding of democracy and human nature with the Liberal view of these concepts. According to Mounier "'true democracy' is a regime which places the well-being of the human person at the basis of its public institutions."[193] More specifically, it is a "regime which rests on the responsibility and functional organization of all persons constituting the social community."[194]

Recognizing that this goal had never been achieved, he also described democracy as "the quest for the political means

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[192]This type of anti-Liberalism was characteristic of nineteenth century Social Catholicism. The anti-bourgeois tone was emphasized by Catholic members of the aristocracy such as De Mun and La Tour du Pin. The corporatism which these thinkers advocated is similar to Mounier's. This will be discussed in the next chapter which discusses Mounier's alternatives to capitalism and Liberalism.

[193]Mounier, "Pour une démocratie personnaliste," Le Voltigeur (November 2, 1938), p. 1. This weekly was founded by Mounier in order to communicate with a mass audience and to provide instruction for those who were actively involved in implementing his ideas. It did not survive the outbreak of the war in 1939.

[194]Mounier, RPC, p. 294.

which can assure to all the persons of a community the right to free development and to a maximum of responsibility."[195] The goal of democracy will be to give citizens "the best means of expression and development."[196] Authority must be understood as a vocation to "rouse persons," to help them achieve what they are capable of. In this respect Mounier argues that democracy is something "to be created" rather than a set of institutions to be defended. Mounier's last book, Personalism, reiterates these themes which appear throughout his earlier writings.[197]

Mounier's agreement with Liberalism was not limited to an understanding of the purposes of democracy and of the nature of man. In his later writings he reversed his earlier disdain for the constitutional safeguards of Liberalism and argued that they were absolutely essential. "We need...to be as careful of specific liberties," Mounier said, "as of general freedom."[198] Legally established rights are clearly necessary to protect individual freedom as well as "that sphere of action" in which the citizen participates in political decisions.[199] The protection of the individual also requires a

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[195] Ibid., p. 247.

[196] Mounier, "Pour une démocratie personnaliste," p. 2.

[197] The difficulty of creating institutions to actualize these goals has been pointed out by Roy Pierce in his Contemporary French Political Thought (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 61-62. This will be discussed at greater length in chapter five which deals with Mounier's institutional recommendations.

[198] Mounier, P, p. 59.

[199] Ibid., p. 114.

separation of powers among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches as well as a division of powers between the national and local authorities. Even political parties, which Mounier had shown no use for earlier, were, if reformed, valuable means of political education.[200] In sum, Mounier came to accept the machinery of the liberal democratic state.[201]

If Mounier understood the value of the basic institutions of liberal democracy, he continued to reject the principle of economic liberty which he believed responsible for both the corruption of democracy and the economic plight of the poor. In his last book he repeated his belief that "the Marxist criticism of formal democracy is on the whole unanswerable: many of the rights that the liberal State grants to its citizens are abrogated by the facts of their economic and social existence."[202]

In Mounier's opinion economic rights were nothing more than the historical expression of the economic position of their possessors: "The liberties of the nobility were menaced by those of the bourgeoisie; those of the bourgeoisie are threatened by those of the populace, the freedom of all may compromise that of the few."[203] The task of the democratic

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[200] Mounier, P, pp. 113-114.

[201] In large measure this change can be attributed to Mounier's recognition of the totalitarianism of Stalinist regimes in post-war Eastern Europe. This profoundly influenced his response to Communism and liberal democracy. Chapter seven will discuss his relationship to Marxism and Communism at greater length.

[202] Mounier, P, p. 115.

[203] Ibid., p. 60.

state must include providing for the economic well-being of all citizens. This would mean placing the means of production in public hands. A new social structure would then be possible and this would provide the basis for a true political equality.

Critique

There are three serious problems with Mounier's approach to Liberalism. First, Mounier has identified the tradition of Liberalism with certain currents of early Liberal thought particularly Utilitarianism. Second, Mounier presumes that Liberalism is incompatible with extensive economic planning and democratic socialism. Finally, Mounier is clearly inconsistent in first rejecting Liberalism and later accepting many of the mechanisms of the modern Liberal state. Each of these three problems will be considered below.

However, to interpret Mounier's position on Liberalism correctly, it is first necessary to consider Catholic political thought as enunciated by Aquinas and adapted by Maritain. Mounier's position that politics must take a stand on the question of ultimate human values is a modern interpretation of Aquinas' principle that politics and religion can never be completely separated.

Aquinas' understanding of politics was shaped largely by the political theory of Aristotle. Aquinas saw the political order as natural to man. It was not a necessary evil whose purpose was to subdue man's evil passions. Because original sin had not destroyed man's nature but only limited its

ability to respond to the rational, Aquinas emphasized the existence and dignity of a purely natural sphere of rational and ethical values. Thus, the human standards of fraternity and justice were not vitiated by sin nor absorbed in the glare of their supernatural destiny. The political had its own independent worth because of man's natural capacity for the associated life. Indeed, there could be no natural fulfillment outside of the political.

Although Aquinas recognized a supernatural order which ranked above the natural, it did not obliterate the natural. On the contrary, man's supernatural development was contingent upon his natural growth. The former did not take place outside of the latter. In the words of the Thomist aphorism, "grace builds on nature." Thus the political assumes a central position in man's fulfillment. Because it is essential to the fulfillment of his natural capacities, it is also essential to his relationship to God. Thus the Thomist position recognizes the independence of the political as part of the natural order and also provides it with a supernatural sanction.

Although the political had its own functions which Aquinas analyzed in his considerations on law, authority, and war, the temporal or political realm was by no means independent of the spiritual or religious realm. The spiritual and the temporal were not envisioned by Aquinas as two different societies, as Church and State are in the modern sense. On the contrary, they were two functions or two spheres within one single society--the Christian society--and "the temporal

power is subject to the spiritual as the body to the soul."[204] Aquinas, in Kerwin's view, felt that the temporal power should "do all within its power to direct men to their supernatural end and should be guided in this by the spiritual power. The temporal power should prescribe those things that lead to supernatural happiness and should forbid those things that divert man from it."[205]

According to D'Entrèves, "the theory of St. Thomas is the theory of the orthodox state."[206] Freedom was clearly second to orthodoxy which meant a "thorough, totalitarian intolerance."[207] Aquinas did not hesitate to urge the state to persecute certain non-Christian cults and to execute convicted heretics.[208] He also argued that unbelievers and heretics had no right to occupy positions of political authority. If they did so, Christian citizens were released from the obligation to obey them.[209] Although the temporal generally operated independently of the spiritual, it was clearly subordinate to the spiritual realm "in matters pertaining to salvation."[210]

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[204] Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Qu. 60, Art. 6, ad 3 um in A. P. D'Entrèves, ed., Aquinas' Selected Political Writings (Oxford: Blackwells, 1970), p. 167.

[205] Jerome G. Kerwin, Catholic Viewpoint on Church and State (Garden City: Doubleday-Hanover House, 1960), p. 32.

[206] A. P. D'Entrèves, Aquinas: Selected Political Writings (Oxford: Blackwells, 1970), p. XXII.

[207] Ibid.

[208] Ibid., pp. 155, 157.

[209] Ibid., pp. 157, 159.

[210] Dino Bigongiari, ed., The Political Ideas of St. Thomas Aquinas (New York: Hafner, 1957), p. XXXV.

The Church has never interpreted Aquinas' teaching as requiring a theocratic order. However, the Church long supported the unity of Church and State and, throughout the nineteenth century, condemned the Liberal principle of separation of Church and State and the complete independence of the political realm. It was not until the twentieth century that the Church accepted democracy and the concept of the secular state.

Jacques Maritain has been the chief architect of the adaptation of traditional Catholic thought to contemporary conditions. Maritain bases his political philosophy on a distinction between the medieval and modern worlds. In the former the temporal had a "ministerial" relationship to the religious, i.e., it was a means or an instrumental cause for man in the pursuit of his religious end.[211] The medieval world was, therefore, a "sacral" world.[212] The modern world is a "secular" one because it sees the temporal as an end and not just a means. The Christian must recognize this distinction because it is impossible to recreate a sacral society in the modern world except by analogy.

The Christian, Maritain points out, is not unfamiliar with this idea of the temporal as an end in its own right. Aquinas had argued that the political realm had its own independent worth because of man's natural capacity for the

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[211] Jacques Maritain, Freedom in the Modern World (New York: Scribners, 1936), p. 106 and Maritain, Man and the State (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 159.

[212] Maritain, Man and the State, p. 157.

associated life. "The body politic, which belongs strictly to the natural order, is only concerned with the temporal life of men and their temporal common good."[213]

Maritain is quick to point out, however, that this "temporal common good" is more than material.[214] Politics is really a division of ethics and its end is therefore the procuring of "the truly human and moral good of the social body."[215] The temporal good must be understood, as the "virtuous life of the multitude assembled in one."[216]

Mounier's position is the same as Maritain's. Moral values provide man with truly human goals, i.e., with those goals or ends which involve his whole person. These transcend economics and politics because man is a spiritual being whose capacities extend beyond these realms. However, man's spiritual fulfillment is not to be understood as separate from his social existence. Indeed, his ability to reach his full human potential is greatly influenced by the total set of circumstances or situation in which he exists. The political order, man's way of shaping the society in which he finds himself, cannot therefore be allowed to be value-free. The function of the political is to subordinate the material to the human, i.e., the administration of things to the organization of men, the economic to the political and, at its limit and without interfering with the jurisdiction of the

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[213] Ibid., p. 153.

[214] Jacques Maritain, The Things That Are Not Caesar's (New York: Scribners, 1931), pp. 138-139.

[215] Ibid., p. 141.

[216] Ibid., p. 144.

spiritual, to prepare each man through the development of his personality for the choice that the Spirit urges on him."[217]

Mounier's reference to the "Spirit" indicates a second or "higher" reason for the moral component in politics. Besides a natural moral capacity, of value in and of itself, man has a supernatural, i.e., a religious end which the political order must at least allow for. Thus politics and religion can never be entirely separated because politics shapes the temporal conditions of religious fulfillment. In Mounier's words, "the political is subordinate to the moral, the moral to the metaphysical, the metaphysical to the supernatural."[218]

The "subordination" of politics to the religious does not mean that there is a Christian politics, i.e., a set of political institutions endorsed by Christianity. Christianity does not imply any specific political positions or political institutions. Christianity can only provide a general perspective which may be used by an individual in making his particular political choices.[219] Christianity does not have a specific political program. As Mounier put it, "Nothing is more ambiguous, fragile, and contestable than political deductions drawn from Christian principles."[220]

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[217] Mounier, RPC, p. 381.

[218] Ibid., Appendix IV, p. 852.

[219] This is also the position taken by Domenach in his understanding of Mounier's place in modern Christian thought. See Jean-Marie Domenach, "Les principes du choix politique," Esprit, XIX (December, 1950).

[220] Mounier, FC, p. 540.

An accurate summary of the complex relationship between politics and religion in the Catholic theory is provided by Maritain in Man and the State:

> For human life has two ultimate ends, the one subordinate to the other: an ultimate end in a given order, which is the terrestrial common good, or the bonum vitae civilis: and an absolute ultimate end, which is the transcendent, eternal common good. An individual ethics takes into account the subordinate ultimate end, but directly aims at the absolute ultimate one: whereas political ethics takes into account the absolute ultimate end but its direct aim is the subordinate ultimate end, the good of the rational nature in its temporal achievement. 221

Maritain criticizes Liberalism for ignoring the moral goals of politics. Like Mounier, he considers modern social and political problems to be the result of the attempt to remove values from politics and reduce it to mere technique.[222] He prescribes a "new Christendom" in which Christians will endeavor to recreate a unity of moral values, not through the political power of the orthodox state, but through the example of their lives and their willingness to work within political and economic institutions to achieve policies which

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[221] Maritain, Man and the State, p. 62. Emphasis is Maritain's.

[222] See especially Maritain, The Person and the Common Good (New York: Scribners, 1947), pp. 90-91.

consider man's moral as well as his material nature.[223] Mounier's Personalism is an attempt to accomplish the same end by providing a new secular statement of Christian values. Although both Maritain and Mounier claimed to recognize the separate existence of the natural or temporal, both clearly believed that it could fulfill its task only if it were based on values that were at least in harmony with those of Christianity.[224]

For Mounier Liberalism was not really compatible with the revised Christian theory of politics that he shared with Maritain. This view was the result of Mounier's identification of Liberalism with early Liberal thought and especially Utilitarianism. The incorrectness of this view has been demonstrated by Alan Ryan who argues that there are really two Liberalisms symbolized by James and John Stuart Mill respectively.

The former represents what Ryan refers to as the "market" or "economic" view of politics. It is based on negative freedom and it evaluates political activity merely according to its capacity to maximize pleasure and minimize pain. The

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[223]Maritain states: "The unity of a culture is determined in the first place and above all by a certain common philosophical structure, a certain metaphysical and moral attitude, a certain common scale of values, in a word, a certain common conception of the universe, of man and human life, of which social, linguistic, and juridical structures are, so to speak, the embodiment." Jacques Maritain, The Angelic Doctor (New York: Dial Press, 1931), pp. 81-82 as quoted in Charles A. Fecher, ed., The Philosophy of Jacques Maritain (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1938), p. 229.

[224]Maritain makes this especially clear in Man and the State, pp. 165-167 and Freedom in the Modern World, p. 107.

second Liberalism, that of John Stuart Mill, is the "participant" tradition which sees in freedom the possibility of "self-development."[225]

According to the younger Mill, Liberal freedom was not the indeterminate state that Mounier had made it out to be. On the contrary, it was the necessary condition for decision. J. S. Mill was especially concerned with the formation of character which he understood to be directly dependent on personal choices or decisions. It was crucial, therefore, that the individual have the greatest possible freedom, i.e., the greatest range of choices, if he were to realize his fullest potential. The tyranny of the majority was a danger precisely because it sharply limited this range.

If James Mill's approach represented the politics of the consumer, that of J. S. Mill was the politics of the participant. For the younger Mill politics was based on a hierarchy of values in which rationality, open-mindedness, and social involvement ranked highest. In this respect he was, as Ryan argues, more like a mid-nineteenth century Aristotle than a middle-class philosophical radical.

The evolution of Liberalism away from individualism and materialism and toward community and moral goals was continued by T. H. Green whose theory of politics is similar in many ways to that of Maritain and Mounier. Green rejected the pursuit of selfish pleasures and the life of indolence

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[225]Alan Ryan, "Two Concepts of Democracy: James and John Stuart Mill," in Martin Fleisher, ed., Machiavelli and the Nature of Political Thought (New York: Atheneum, 1972), p. 78.

and complacency. Man should live so that "the objects in which self-satisfaction is habitually sought contributes to the realization of a true idea of what is best for man--such an idea as our reason would have when it had come to all which it has the possibility of becoming, and which, as in God, it is."[226] Green's approach was essentially a political theodicy.

In Green's Liberalism rights were the response to man's moral capacities rather than the expression of his egotism. Liberty was the freedom to realize these capacities, to do something worth doing in terms of his perfectibility. Man's moral action was always carried out in relationship to others without whom he could not achieve his perfection.[227] "No one therefore can have a right except as a member 1) of a society and 2) of a society in which some common good is recognized by the members of the society as their own ideal good."[228] The function of the state therefore is to maintain conditions of life in which it will be possible for man to live according to his highest, i.e., theological, end. Green's political philosophy is, as Sir Ernest Barker has pointed out, the attempt to determine the state's "relationship to the moral

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[226] T. H. Green, PE, p. 177 as quoted in Melvin Richter, The Politics of Conscience: T. H. Green and His Age (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 198.

[227] Hobhouse makes basically the same points regarding man's spiritual capacities and his essentially social nature. See Hobhouse's classic summary, Liberalism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 63-67.

[228] Green, PO, p. 25 as quoted in Richter, p. 233.

constitution and development of man."[229]

If later English Liberalism did not deserve Mounier's attack neither did its French counterpart. At the turn of the century Emile Durkheim had set himself the task of constructing a secular ethic that would substitute for the religious values that had formed the bases of public morality. Durkheim's views were strikingly similar to those of Green and warrant Durkheim's being considered a liberal.[230] Like Green, Durkheim rejected the old Liberal dichotomies of individual vs. state and authority vs. liberty. He attempted to establish freedom in man's spiritual capacities rather than on material advantage and he was willing to accept a greater role for the state than most earlier Liberals had envisioned. For Durkheim as for Green the function of government was to make men moral.[231]

It is clear from the work of J. S. Mill, Green, Hobhouse, and Durkheim that the Liberal tradition is not limited to the set of ideas with which Mounier identified it. Indeed, Mounier's Personalist concerns were essentially those of the later Liberal thinkers. Mounier's narrow interpretation of Liberalism was essentially the result of his belief that this political tradition was inextricably bound to capitalism and,

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[229] Sir Ernest Barker, Political Thought in England, 1848-1914 (London, 1928), p. 12 as quoted in Richter, p. 191.

[230] Melvin Richter, "Durkheim's Politics and Political Theory," in Emile Durkheim et al., Essays in Sociology and Philosophy (New York: Harper-Torchbooks, 1964), p. 202.

[231] Ibid.

in particular, to the individualistic, utilitarian values that are associated with laissez-faire capitalism. It is important therefore to consider briefly the relationship between Liberalism and capitalism since this was the crux of Mounier's difficulty with Liberalism.

It is a fact that Liberalism developed at the same time as capitalism and, as Joseph Schumpeter points out, Liberalism's "rationalist scheme of human action and values of life" mark it as bourgeois in origin.[232] Nevertheless, the principles of modern Liberalism clearly transcend the limits of capitalism. T. H. Green, for example, argued that private property was essential for the development of the individual's character--a traditional Catholic position. Unlike many earlier liberals, however, Green was especially sensitive to the plight of those who, without property, "have not the chance of providing means for a free moral life."[233]

Although Green did not directly advocate socialism his principles could have provided the basis for its defense. It is not far from Green's position to E. H. Carr's assertion that Liberal freedom must of necessity include a material component. Carr agrues that by universalizing freedom Liberalism linked it with equality. "Once freedom was extended from the limited class which could take economic well-being for granted to the common man who was concerned first and foremost with

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[232]Joseph A. Schumpeter, Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1962), p. 296.

[233]T. H. Green, PO, p. 220 as quoted in Richter, The Politics of Conscience, p. 280.

his daily bread, freedom from the economic constraint of want was clearly just as important as freedom from the political constraint of kings and tyrants."[234]

There are, of course, numerous other Liberal arguments on behalf of socialism. Hobhouse, for example, points out that the basis of property is social: it exists only because of the protection afforded by society and the profits that are derived from its use are almost always the result of activities that are essentially social.[235] MacIver and Cohen emphasize the absolute need for extensive planning, including the possibility of socialism, in the face of complicated modern economies.[236] Although there is disagreement about how well planning will "work," there is a basic agreement on its legitimacy. In all cases, however, it is assumed that the socialism will be democratic, i.e., that it will be legitimized through democratic political procedures and that it will not endanger the personal liberties that are at the heart of Liberalism.

The fact that Liberalism is not bound to capitalism makes it easier to explain the inconsistency in Mounier's approach to Liberalism. Mounier's earlier condemnation of Liberalism and parliamentary democracy was based on his belief that they were inextricably linked to capitalism. He

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[234] E. H. Carr, The New Society (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), p. 107.

[235] Hobhouse, Liberalism, pp. 98-99.

[236] R. M. MacIver, The Web of Government (New York: The Free Press, 1965), pp. 255-269 and Morris Cohen, The Faith of a Liberal (New York: Henry Hold and Co., 1946), pp. 93-110.

did not condemn democratic procedures on their own account and his own tentative ideas on social organization are clearly based on Liberal values. His later public affirmation of the protection and procedures of the liberal state, essentially a response to Stalinism, was not an embrace of democracy and capitalism but of the former alone. His earlier attacks on Liberalism must be understood as essentially ideological, i.e., as an expression of his anti-capitalism. Despite his rhetoric he never ultimately accepted a society that was fundamentally illiberal nor was he ever really reconciled to capitalism. He is best described therefore as a democratic socialist.[237]

Mounier's socialism clearly places him to the left of Maritain. Although Maritain attacked capitalism on the same grounds as Mounier he did not find it necessary to condemn the French economic system and, despite his criticism of Liberalism, Maritain did not reject the politics of the Third Republic. Thus Maritain's approach was more conservative than Mounier's. This is especially evident in Maritain's ready rejection of the major alternatives to these institutions, e.g., anarchism, socialism and communism.

Mounier, however, chose to make use of the traditional principles to give Catholic support to those who wished to create alternatives to the political and economic institutions

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[237]Mounier did not arrive at democratic socialism easily. It was the result of a long and difficult intellectual struggle with the ideas and forces of anarchism, Vichy and Communism. Chapters five, six and seven respectively will consider Mounier's relationship to these programs.

of the "established disorder." He rejected the society produced by the French Republic and its economic system because he felt that this society did not represent a "common temporal good" in Catholic terms. This becomes especially evident in his reaction to Christian Democracy which claimed to apply Catholic principles and which enjoyed the tacit support of Maritain.

Christian Democracy

Mounier's critique of Christian Democracy is important because it demonstrates again his socialist perspective and makes especially clear his understanding of the subordinate role of politics in relationship to religion. His rejection of Christian Democracy was based on two distinct arguments.

On the most immediate level Christian Democracy was wrong because it accepted the relationship of democracy to capitalism. To participate in the politics of the Third or Fourth Republics was to support political systems which were masks for capitalist elites. Parliamentary political life was not concerned with the "temporal common good" in its moral dimensions but only with the material well-being of a comparative few.

Mounier especially objected to the positions of the Christian Democratic parties. Both the Parti Démocrate Populaire of the 1930's and the Mouvement Républicain Populaire (M.R.P.) implied that their generally centrist programs were the proper Christian response to political and economic questions. This put Christianity on the side of the middle class

and made it essentially a conservative or, at best, a centrist ideology. The result, said Mounier, was a "sentimental conservatism which would link the defense of the faith with that of out-of-date class systems; and a stubborn logic of money that would override the interests it ought to serve."[238] In short, Christianity became the defender of bourgeois interests.

The M.R.P. was especially guilty of this corruption of religion. In the name of "Christian civilization" it served up a set of "barren abstractions, legalistic calculations, and moral outbursts."[239] While constructing an elaborate doctrine based on Christian theology, it represented only interests of the middle class. Its "timid leftism" was essentially a "rear-guard position" because, in fact, it was willing to give up nothing for the benefit of the lower classes.

The position taken by most Catholic publications on the constitutional referendum of 1946 was indicative. They opposed the creation of a stronger presidency, arguing that Catholics had to oppose this infringement of the sovereign liberties of Christian civilization. For Mounier this was merely a defense of "bourgeois freedoms," of "freedom from," and to defend it in the name of Christianity was sacrilegious.[240] The same was true of the efforts of the M.R.P.

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[238] Mounier, P, p. 121.

[239] Mounier, "Lettre à Xavier de Virieu, March 1, 1950," O.M., IV, p. 828.

[240] Mounier, FC, p. 541.

deputies to provide at the time for the protection of Catholic schools. These schools did not necessarily serve the interests of Christianity but only those of "The Christian World," the bloc that Catholics formed as a socioeconomic unit rather than as a church or religious body. "The Christian World" was interested in the preservation of its own privileges, chiefly political and economic. Thus, "if these parties did not exist it would be necessary to create them," Mounier sarcastically concluded.

The economic interests of middle-class Catholics, rather than religious principle, were also the source of the M.R.P.'s self-righteous opposition to Communism. The anti-Communism was especially objectionable to Mounier because it helped to alienate the French working class from Christianity. The Church's loss of this group had become especially noticeable during the post-war period as Le Bras has pointed out in Introduction à l'histoire de la pratique religieuse and Godin and Daniel in La France: pays de mission. Mounier had few doubts about the cause of this exodus of the workers. It was due to the ever-increasing monopolization of Christianity by the bourgeoisie. The M.R.P. was merely an example of this.

François Mauriac, in an article written at the time of Mounier's death, attempted to blunt Mounier's criticism of Christian Democracy by putting it into a different perspective: "There was between him and the M.R.P. the eternal dispute of Mary and Martha. Mounier, who had chosen the better part, abused those who, in order to serve the State, consented to dirty their hands with its necessary tasks. His

intransigence was always the result of his ideological considerations."[241]

Undoubtedly, Mounier's identification with working-class interests and his doctrinaire rejection of liberal democracy did make his argument against Christian Democracy "ideological." However, Mauriac simply ignored Mounier's point that the M.R.P. was concerned with the economic and political interests of a predominantly middle-class constituency. Mauriac appears to have presumed that the M.R.P. deserved the support of all Christians regardless of class, merely because it was a confessional party.

Mounier's second argument against Christian Democracy was a more abstract or theoretical one and more clearly delineates his understanding of the relationship between religion and politics. Mounier saw this relationship in terms of Péguy's metaphysical distinction between "mystique" and "politique." Christianity was a mystique, a vision of life which, by its spiritual nature, possesses a transcendent and eternal existence. Although it could be comprehended only through Christ, the Spirit made flesh, and although it acted in history through men, its nature was not earthly and temporal. It was fundamentally other, i.e., divine.

Christianity's transcendent nature could never be completely expressed in any historical form, nor could it ever

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[241] François Mauriac, "L'example d'Emmanuel Mounier," Le Figaro, (March 27, 1950). This point has also been made by Étienne Borne, a Christian Democratic theorist, in "Emmanuel Mounier: crayon pour un portrait," France Forum, CII-CIII (April-May, 1970) and in Borne's recent book, Mounier (Paris: Seghers, 1972).

be equated with any human organization because the temporal cannot contain the eternal. Christian Democracy, however, by its intention of creating a Christian politics, was attempting to do precisely that. Therefore, it was not merely that Christian Democratic parties were wrong in their policies, platforms, or even their class base. It was that they had no right to exist.

The temporal, i.e., transitory nature of all political institutions, was especially evident to Mounier in the apparent decline of liberal democracy in the West. Christianity, therefore, had no reason to identify itself with this political system. Mounier made this point in a debate in the pages of L'Aube with Paul Archambault, a leading Christian Democratic theorist. Mounier argued that liberal democracy had become passé in the revolutionary 1930's and that the men of L'Aube, the Christian Democratic daily, were incapable of responding to the times because they had all been formed in the years between 1890 and 1914. Their ideology was that of 1789, he said, their optimism that of 1875, and their political style that of 1905.[242] "The question presents itself very simply: to know if we wish to die with that which is dying, or to detach our eternal values from the world which is in decline and to revive them at their source in order to assist in the birth of the world which is to come."[243]

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[242]Mounier, "Lettre ouverte sur la démocratie," L'Aube (Feb. 20, 1934) as printed in O.M., I, p. 292.

[243]Mounier, RPC, p. 374.

Eight years later Mounier emphatically reiterated his point that Christianity could not be linked to any set of political institutions. If by "Christian Democracy," he stated, one meant the "affirmation that Christianity is identified with the political forms or ideological utopias of parliamentary democracy, I say with all my strength: No! And I say it neither more nor less strongly to those who wish to identify Christianity with any other type of regime or civilization either (of) 'nouveauté' or 'réaction.'"[244]

Mounier faithfully adhered to this position throughout his political career. It cost him the support of many liberal Catholics who saw Christian Democracy as an opportunity to lead French Catholics out of their usually reactionary politics.[245] At the same time Mounier's position required him to reject the argument of some members of the Catholic Left that Christianity dictated a socialist political order.[246] To

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[244] Mounier, "Lettre à Monsieur le Secrétaire général de la Police, June 19, 1942," O.M., IV, p. 748.

This principle appears throughout Mounier's writings from the early thirties until his death and constitutes one of his political axioms. It is, therefore, most surprising that the major book-length treatment of Mounier in English, R. William Rauch, Politics and Belief in Contemporary France: Emmanuel Mounier and Christian Democracy (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1972), omits all mention of it. Rauch describes the frequent and varied attacks by Mounier on this political movement but ignores this principle which is the theoretical basis for all of these attacks and which alone explains them.

[245] This is not to say that the constituents of the M.R.P. were always true supporters of the Republic. Undoubtedly many Catholics supported the M.R.P. as simply the best way, under the circumstances, to defend their interests. They had not necessarily been converted to democracy.

[246] Mounier, FC, pp. 620-625. Mounier often explained that his socialism was a politics "en chrétien," i.e., the expression of his response to Christianity. This was not to say, however, that Christianity required socialism, i.e., that socialism was a politics "en tant que chrétien."

emphasize this point Mounier officially dissociated himself from the positions of a number of close friends, particularly those in the "Chrétiens Progressistes" movement. This was an umbrella organization which included some of the worker-priests, the "Jeunesse de l'Église" group of Père Montuclard which was attempting to create a more communal Catholicism, and the Union des Chrétiens Progressistes itself.

The members of the above groups shared Mounier's social criticism, and many of them had actually come to these ideas through Esprit and Mounier's books. They believed, as he did, that the true Christian was attempting to change radically society's values and institutions. This effort could succeed, many of them claimed, only through Marxist Communism and therefore the contemporary Christian was also required to be a Communist. Mounier rejected this argument on exactly the same grounds that he had rejected Christian Democracy: Christianity could not be identified with any political movement. The contradictory claims of the Traditionalists, the Christian Democrats, and the Christian Marxists showed clearly enough, he stated, that "if Christianity does require a spirit in politics, it does not require a particular politics."[247]

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[247] Mounier, "Les chrétiens progressistes," FC , p. 634. Mounier's position on Marxism and his relationship to the Communist Party are far more complicated than has been indicated above. Chapter seven will be entirely devoted to these topics. Here I have simply referred to Mounier's reaction to the "Chrétiens Progressistes" to illustrate his understanding of the relationship between religion and politics.

According to Mounier modern Catholicism was afflicted with a "clericalism of the intelligence." The average Catholic "does not have rational evidence for the existence of God; he knows, one has taught him, that one proves it irrefutably. He has not been led to an adult faith by the drama of a conversion;...he has found himself situated in the Absolute from his infancy; he knows that there is an Eternity, a Justice, a Truth."[248] Thus he need not search for answers as others do; and in problem-solving efforts he is likely to distrust the profane means which come from reason, experience, and technique.

In Mounier's opinion the Christian Democrats were simply another example of this Catholic failure to confront genuinely serious issues. Christian Democratic theory was a facile moralism, "the bastard and degenerate son of the spiritual life."[249] Moralism was a sort of ritual incantation of noble principles in the face of concrete problems which it avoided. Abstracted from the concrete, it had no connection to reality

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[248] Mounier, RPC, p. 398.

[249] Mounier, RPC, p. 400. See also Mounier, "Lettre à Francisque Gay, February 9, 1940," O.M., IV, p. 656. Gay was editor of L'Aube, the Christian Democratic daily at the time.

and only infuriated those who were genuinely engaged in finding workable solutions to pressing problems.[250]

The main ingredient of this moralism was usually the social teachings of the Church and especially its encyclicals. These were adopted by Catholics in general and Christian Democrats in particular as if they carried the authority of Scripture. They were used to create a spiritualist heaven apart from "the contradictions of man and the resistances of matter." This was also Mounier's criticism of the Semaines Sociales, an association of Catholic scholars which held annual conferences on the implications of Christian principles for social problems and which thus helped to formulate the doctrines of Christian Democracy. Such groups produced "the most magnificent syntheses that we possess," but these outlines were too abstract and removed from concrete problems. "We feel that the very harmony of formulas closes them to any future."[251] Without a healthy contact with the material problems, Catholic social thought had atrophied to the point

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[250]No doubt the same criticism could have been levelled against Mounier by M.R.P. members who held important posts in the government and who could have found little practical assistance in Mounier's personalism. This point was made against Mounier by one Christian Democratic writer, Pierre Debray, in his "Les origines intellectual du progressisme chrétien" in l'Ordre français (November, 1960) as well as by Pierre de Boisdeffre, "L'heritage d'Emmanuel Mounier," Le Carrefour (December, 1950).

[251]Mounier, RPC, p. 398.

where it was, in 1946, "50 years behind the development of ideas and facts."[252]

It was Mounier's unique contribution to have considered these "material problems" from a Catholic perspective and to have demonstrated that this perspective could support a socialist critique of modern political and economic conditions. Previously only the Traditionalists in the Catholic camp had provided a rejection of liberal society and based the argument on Catholic theory. Mounier was the first twentieth-century Catholic to have separated this position from reactionary politics.

Despite the obvious weaknesses referred to earlier, Mounier's attack on liberal society was important for Catholic social thought. By arguing that modern society had failed to meet the norms of Catholic thought Mounier made it possible for Catholics to begin to examine seriously the political alternatives offered by the Left without calling their religious values into question.

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[252]Mounier, FC, p. 537. The similarity of views expressed in RPC (1934) and FC (1950) indicates the continuity of Mounier's thought on the question of the official social teaching of the Church.

PART TWO:

THE SEARCH FOR A POLITICAL ALTERNATIVE

CHAPTER FIVE:

ANARCHISM

In his criticism of Western society, Mounier had argued that liberal democracy was essentially the political arm of powerful economic interests rather than the instrument of a true "common temporal good." His major concern was to discover a set of institutions which would place economics squarely under the authority of the public order. This, he hoped, would make it possible to organize both the economic and the political in light of man's spiritual capacities and thereby provide him with a truly integrated order in which his moral life would be in harmony with social values and institutions.

Mounier considered three alternatives to capitalism and democracy: anarchism, the Vichy regime, and Marxist Communism. The present chapter attempts to describe and evaluate Mounier's anarchist thought. His anarchism, although limited to the 1930's, is important because it clearly reveals the major concerns of his political thinking.

The first part of the chapter presents the institutional ideas of Mounier's anarchist period and discusses their origin in the thought of Proudhon. The second section evaluates Mounier's alternatives in terms of Catholic social teaching and the medieval structures on which it is based. The argument is made that, although Mounier did not create a complete anarchist system, his use of anarchism helps to demonstrate the radical possibilities of Catholic thought.

Mounier's Institutional Thought

Mounier advocated an economy divided into two parts. The first, a "planned sector," would be concerned with providing a "vital minimum" of basic goods and services to all citizens. Mounier described it as "a public service of vital necessities."[253] This part of the economy would, therefore, be based on the satisfaction of human needs, rather than on the profit goals of private investment. Economic "savings," i.e., surplus, could then be used to further develop the quality of life for each citizen.

There would also be a private or "free sector" in which "full play is given to free creation and free competition without, however, endangering the above-mentioned 'vital minimum' of anyone."[254] Mounier, however, was quick to distinguish this from an unrestrained capitalism. The free sector would be organized according to a "post-capitalist corporatism" and it would serve as an intermediate organization between the individual and the state. This would lessen the danger of political oppression.[255]

Mounier supported the principle of private property and stood by the Church's argument that property is necessary for the natural development of the individual person.[256]

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[253] Mounier, PM, p. 214.

[254] Ibid., p. 215.

[255] Ibid. The structure of these intermediate groups will be outlined below.

[256] On this point see Mounier, PCPH, OM, I, pp. 440-452. See also the review of this work by Eric Gill, "Property: Capitalist and Human," Blackfriars (October, 1936), pp. 739-744.

Proudhon's statement that "property is theft" was not to be understood in absolute terms. It is theft only when it is exploitative, said Mounier.[257]

Mounier's purpose was simply to make property more responsive to the common good. He wanted to create a "liberal collectivism" in which the basic needs of all would be met without destroying private ownership. He quoted Proudhon to explain his approach: "'Liberty is the first of economic forces and all that can be accomplished by it ought to be allowed, but where liberty is not able to attain justice the general interest requires the intervention of the collective force.'"[258]

Property was not a major point of emphasis, however. Mounier was concerned to construct a system that would be based on labor, the source of the Church's teaching on property, and not on capital. In Mounier's system "human work is the one and only agent that is proper and productive in economic activity; money can be gained only through personal union with labor, and responsibility can be assumed only through a human agent."[259] Work is, therefore, the inalienable right of each person, as well as a universal obligation.

Mounier rejected the stock market because it subordinated labor to "anonymous capital" and speculation. By

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[257]Mounier, AP, OM, I, p. 696. This is the generally accepted interpretation of Proudhon's remark. See, for example, James Joll, The Anarchists (Boston: Little Brown, 1965), pp. 64-67 and George Woodcock, Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements (New York: Meridian Books, 1962), pp. 113-114.

[258]Mounier, AP, OM, I, p. 696.

[259]Mounier, PM, p. 199.

allowing "absentee ownership" through stock purchases, modern corporations created a situation in which ownership no longer experienced immediate responsibility for the workers or the product. As a result there could never be the necessary direct and cooperative relationship between employer and worker.[260]

Mounier was especially critical of the wage system which, by dramatizing the separation of labor and management, intensified the class struggle. Through the wage system, labor was effectively denied control over its own work by the power of capital. "Capital not only has no preferential right to deduct its part of the profit prior to labor; it also has no authority to define and distribute the wages of labor."[261]

Mounier argued for a thoroughly decentralized system which would provide for "economic democracy." Owners would not be removed from the workers who themselves would take an active role in the management of the company. Every worker would thus contribute not only to the enterprise, but also to his own personal development as he exercised the "personal prerogatives of responsibility, initiative, mastery, creation, and liberty in whatever role is assigned him by his capacities and by the collective organization."[262]

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[260] Mounier, PCPH, OM, I, pp. 466-469.

[261] Mounier, PM, p. 201.

[262] Ibid., p. 203.

Mounier believed that the workers had come of age in terms of their consciousness of economic and political realities. He did not, however, believe that all were capable of managerial activity and argued that the best interest of workers lay in the development of an elite, rather than in mass political agitation. Although Mounier was initially attracted by early fascist structures which allowed for worker participation, he later rejected these institutions because of their perpetuation of the dominance of capital over labor.[263]

Mounier's decentralized system was based on the economic cell or enterprise which determined its own production. These enterprises would be coordinated by regional bodies reflecting local values and needs. The regional groups would be part of a federated organization that would exist on the national level. This would not be a rigidly centralized system, however, since local groups would have clearly delineated areas of autonomy. The state would involve itself in economic questions only to act as a final arbitrator and to protect the rights of all parties. Production would be essentially collective, but it would not require the presence of a dominating state power. Proudhon's greatest contribution, Mounier said, was to have understood that a collective approach to production could be created without destroying liberty.

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[263]In the mid-thirties Mounier and a few other members of the Esprit staff traveled to Rome to observe Fascist institutions at firsthand. Mounier's relationship to Fascism generally and to Vichy in particular will be discussed in chapter six.

Mounier was consistently opposed to the reliance on large-scale state power as a means of social reform because of the inherent danger to personal freedom. Just as the democratic ideology of 1789 had left nothing between the individual and the state, thereby creating a vacuum later filled by economic interests, so socialism might threaten the individual with a governmental oppression. Personalism, said Mounier, was a reaction against both "une démocratie malade de l'argent et un socialisme malade de l'État."[264]

Communism was the greatest offender against personal liberty. Mounier referred approvingly to Bakunin's description of Marx as the Bismarck of socialism. In the works of Proudhon and the other anarchists, Mounier found a ready-made list of the wrongs that had resulted from the Communist reliance on state power: an all-inclusive centralism, the non-division of powers, an inquisitorial police force, the destruction of the rights of the family and, ultimately, the denial of direct political power to the workers.[265]

Mounier attributed the "statism" of Communism to its rationalist and supposedly scientific foundations. Believing that they possessed the truths of social organization, the Communists were willing to take whatever steps were necessary to implement them. The result, said Mounier in quoting Bakunin, was "'the reign of scientific intelligence, the most aristocratic, the most despotic, the most arrogant, the most

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[264]Jean-Marie Domenach, "Les principes du choix politique," Esprit, XIX (December, 1950), p. 821.

[265]Mounier, AP, OM, I, p. 691.

distrustful of all regimes.'"[266] The anarchists, particularly Proudhon and Kropotkin, shunned this utopian belief in perfect institutions. As a result they did not deliver the workers over to an oppressive state but attempted to facilitate the creation of organizations and economic institutions that would emanate from the workers themselves.

Mounier's institutional suggestions were obviously not original. They were essentially the ideas of Proudhon, and Mounier made no attempt to hide his indebtedness to the anarchist thinker. "Here we are Proudhonians," he said to a prospective contributor to Esprit in 1934.[267] Speaking specifically of Proudhon's federalism he said: "I see hardly any practical difference between the formulas of the federative principle and those of the pluralist state of which Personalism has more than one time sketched the inspiration."[268] The reasons for this identification with Proudhon are not difficult to discover.

Proudhon believed that the major problem with political democracy was economic, i.e., the economic inequality which capitalism permitted made the political equality of democracy meaningless. The modern democratic state was basically the tool of the big bourgeoisie who already dominated the economy and simply used the state to protect their own

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[266] Ibid., p. 692.

[267] Marcel More, "Liminaire," Dieu Vivant, XVI (December, 1950), p. 7.

[268] Mounier, AP, OM, I, p. 693.

interests.[269] It was necessary, therefore, to destroy the state and create a radically egalitarian society based on a federalism of small economic groups. "It was size that Proudhon saw as the main danger to man's liberty."[270]

However, the heart of Proudhon's anti-capitalism was moral, a factor which especially appealed to Mounier. Like Mounier, Proudhon led a rigorously moral personal life and a strain of moralism runs through all of his writings. Proudhon strongly believed in ultimate norms and refused to acknowledge as human those who did not. He believed that capitalism stifled man's true self, particularly his spiritual self, by forcing him into social relationships that were profoundly anti-human. In a tone that Mounier would later adopt Proudhon asked:

> How could any virtue or good faith survive in a society whose basic maxim is that economics has nothing to do with justice, that it is totally separate from it, that the idea of economic Justice is an economic utopia and that thus the existing economic order (or so it is claimed) is not based on any judicial considerations? In a society where men can promise each other anything they like, but where as a result of their economic relations they owe each other absolutely nothing in reality, and where in consequence...every man is entitled to pursue his own interest to the exclusion of others.... 271

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[269] Alan Ritter, The Political Thought of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 106.

[270] Stewart Edwards, "Introduction," Selected Writings of P. J. Proudhon, ed. by Stewart Edwards and trans. by Elizabeth Frazer (Garden City: Doubleday-Anchor, 1969), p. 28.

[271] Proudhon, On the Political Capacity of the Working Classes, as excerpted in Proudhon, Selected Writings...., p. 52.

According to Proudhon it was necessary to create new social structures that would directly encourage man's moral development as well as serve his economic needs. Social reform would never be successful without a concomitant change in the personal values of men. In this respect Proudhon's economic institutions were designed to encourage altruism and oppose competition.[272] This appealed to Mounier's understanding of the role of society in man's ultimate fulfillment. In his Anarchie et personnalisme Mounier praised the anarchists for their attempt to "rejoin the dislocated pieces of economic man" and their desire to "save the person through his works."[273] He believed that for the anarchists the economic order was "less an order for man to fabricate than an order of nature to rediscover."[274]

Finally, Proudhon stood for many of the traditional values which Mounier, through Péguy, had come to espouse. Proudhon believed that work was a value in itself and a necessary discipline against man's "ineradicable tendency toward evil."[275] Proudhon praised the virtues of the simple life

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[272]Joll, The Anarchists, p. 156.

[273]Mounier, AP, OM, I, pp. 697-698. This idea is developed by Proudhon in his Justice as excerpted in Proudhon, Selected Writings...., p. 83.

[274]Mounier's choice of words is somewhat inappropriate. Proudhon did see the economic as "an order for man to fabricate" according to rational designs and he did not accept the "natural" approach of Catholicism. Mounier, however, seems to be concerned with Proudhon's idea that work, economic activity, is natural to man and in this case Mounier's phrasing is understandable.

[275]Edwards, p. 27. See also Joll, pp. 64-67, as well as Proudhon himself in Proudhon: Selected Writings, p. 81.

and the moral peace that it afforded.[276] His ideal was the peasant life he had experienced as a youth.[277] There is in Proudhon "a sense of the marriage of the laborer to the soil, a mystique of the land...."[278] With these values goes a strong belief in the role of the family, especially the patriarchal family, and an intense nationalism. It was Proudhon's adherence to these conservative values that led such reactionaries as Georges Valois and Charles Maurras to claim Proudhon for the political Right despite his fundamental opposition to authoritarianism.[279]

The moralism that was characteristic of Proudhon was also present in another theorist who was particularly influential on Mounier during the pre-war period. This was Hendrik de Man, a Belgian socialist and ex-Marxist, who was popular among a number of the left-wing political groups at the new journals in Paris.[280] De Man had been reared in a

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[276] Woodcock, Anarchism, p. 28 and Mounier, AP, OM, I, pp. 699-700.

[277] April Carter, The Political Theory of Anarchism (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 63.

[278] Edwards, p. 14.

[279] Ritter, p. 7. The influence of Proudhon on more conservative thinkers is surveyed by Mathew Elbow in his French Corporative Theory: 1789-1948 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953), pp. 27-29.

[280] Mounier had said in a retrospective on the early Esprit, "We had neither Marx nor Kierkegaard, nor Jaspers. We were looking for a place to camp between Bergson and Péguy. Maritain and Berdyaev, Proudhon and De Man." Marcel Moré, "Liminaire," Dieu Vivant, XVI (December, 1950), p. 7. On the general influence of De Man on the Esprit staff see Michel Winock, Histoire Politique De La Revue 'Esprit' (Paris: Seuil, 1975), pp. 95-103.

strictly religious atmosphere that was based on a rigid form of Dutch Protestantism. Motivated socially as well as religiously by an "impassioned purism," the youthful De Man was attracted to the writings of Proudhon for the latter's wholesale rejection of capitalist values.[281]

De Man's rejection of capitalism, like Mounier's, was based on moral rather than economic grounds. Capitalism was responsible for the worker's loss of personal dignity, i.e., for his inability to perceive himself as anything but an economic function. De Man's socialism was primarily an assertion of a counter order of values. He attempted to create a basis for a new economic system on the values of service and joy in work.

For de Man it was not merely that socialism ought to be based on these ideals. He believed that, in fact, the socialist revolution was motivated more by ideals than by the misery of the working classes. Socialism was essentially a decision of conscience, a personal decision directed toward the goal of the complete development of the human person. The working classes had to understand their revolt in these terms lest they simply strive for bourgeois goals and defeat the immediate need of socialism: the creation of a proletariat capable of ordering society according to the ultimate values of truth, beauty, and goodness.[282]

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[281]Peter Dodge, Beyond Marxism: The Faith and Works of Hendrik de Man (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), p. 10.

[282]Jean Touchard, Histoire des idées politiques (Paris: P.U.F., 1967), II, p. 796.

Catholic Principles

Although Mounier was an enthusiastic follower of Proudhon's ideas, there is also a marked similarity between Mounier's institutional thought and the traditional social teaching of the Church.[283] Mounier's glorification of labor as opposed to commerce and especially his advocacy of worker participation are the same concerns that animate the Church's support of the old guild system. Indeed, Mounier outlined his decentralized system in such general terms that it is not always possible to note the differences between his approach and that of the Church.

Mounier also followed the Catholic position in protecting the institution of private property. He restricted its use to the "free sector" of the economy, which would be separate from the "planned," i.e., socialized sector. Moreover, by protecting property he skirted the Church's condemnation of those who would abolish private ownership under socialism.

In sum, it would seem that Mounier was attempting to restate traditional Catholic thought in terms that would be somewhat similar to the Proudhonian principles that were especially popular with the predominantly anti-capitalist "jeunes équipes" of the 1930's. The question, of course, is whether Proudhonian anarchism and traditional Catholicism are so easily reconcilable.

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[283] Throughout this early, anarchist period of his thought Mounier frequently expressed his admiration for the Middle Ages. See Mounier, PM, p. 20, PCPH, OM, I, p. 466, and AP, OM, I, p. 694.

The traditional social teachings of the Church were propagated in France through the movement generally referred to as Social Catholicism.[284] It was especially characterized by a concern for the proletarian conditions of the modern working class, and it laid the blame for these conditions on the principles and practices of capitalism and democracy. For the Social Catholic, "the coming of an era of happiness for the popular classes was the veritable end of human evolution."[285] However, this "era of happiness" was not to be understood merely in economic terms but included a spiritual or moral revitalization of the workers as well.

Common to the economic thought of the Social Catholics was a pluralism which emphasized the necessity of workers' associations which would represent workers' interests while avoiding class struggle and violence. A wide variety of associations was advocated, although the most popular were the revised guild systems of Count Albert de Mun and Léon Harmel

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[284]It is important to again distinguish Social Catholicism from Liberal Catholicism. The latter, associated especially with Lamennais and Lacordaire, was an attempt to reconcile the Church and the Liberal state. Indeed, it was an attempt to use the parliamentary and other public possibilities of modern democracy for the service of the Church.

Social Catholicism was a Catholic effort on behalf of the poor in industrialized society. It was not concerned overtly with political questions although most of its members were profoundly conservative in their politics. Liberal Catholicism did not have the opportunity to develop a social welfare doctrine because the political pressure of the Second Empire effectively ended its influence during the middle and latter part of the nineteenth century. Liberal Catholicism did not develop a social program until the twentieth century.

[285]Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, Les Débuts du Catholicisme Social en France (Paris: P.U.F., 1950), p. 9.

and the corporatism of the royalist René La Tour du Pin. Organizations similar to the modern labor union were also proposed by more democratic advocates, but these thinkers were a minority in the Social Catholic Movement.[286]

Characteristic of all Social Catholics, as well as Proudhon, was a strong distrust of any state involvement which went beyond the protection of workers against such abuses as the employment of young children and the absence of a minimum wage. Local administrative sovereignty should be in the hands of worker-employer associations. Hence, the remark of Duroselle that "no Catholic seems to have been able to envisage state action in industry without horror."[287]

Obviously there are important similarities between the Proudhonian program of Mounier and that of the earlier Social Catholics. Both approaches emphasize the needs of the workers and attempt to base their economic institutions on a theory of work. This emphasis on work stems from the traditional Catholic economic principles which glorified the value of labor and prohibited any gain acquired apart from it. Thus both approaches share an unmitigated hostility to modern capitalism especially in its laissez-faire form. At this point, however, the similarities cease and the differences begin.

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[286]An important member of this minority was Frederick Ozanam. Although a proponent of democracy, he did not start from a political theory but from a vision of society animated by religious values. His ideal was that of the Christian community of the primitive Church at Jerusalem with its norm of fraternal love.

[287]Duroselle, p. 704.

Social Catholicism was strongly paternalistic in its approach to workers. De Mun, La Tour du Pin, Léon Harmel, and Charles Périn, despite their varied approaches to worker participation, all suggested structures which placed the workers in roles that were essentially consultative, rather than decision-making.[288] Since these organizations were designed as much for the moral and spiritual development of the workers as for their economic betterment, it was presumed that the worker members would take their direction from the leadership which was primarily aristocratic in origin and presumably possessed of the background necessary to instruct in the principles of religious and social knowledge. The Social Catholics were fervent advocates of the aristocratic ideal of noblesse oblige.[289]

In politics, Social Catholicism was identified with monarchism. Despite his corporative approach, La Tour du Pin insisted that the major political authority be monarchical; and he defended the theories of de Bonald and de Maistre who had earlier set out a basis for corporatism.[290] De Mun, a monarchist member of the National Assembly, equated the

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[288] In addition to Duroselle, one of the more complete treatments of Social Catholicism generally and these thinkers in particular, is Parker Moon, The Labor Problem and the Social Catholic Movement in France (New York: Macmillan, 1921). On Harmel see Hans Maier, Revolution and Church (Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1969). On a more general level there is Adrien Dansette's standard, Histoire Religieuse de la France Contemporaine (Paris: Flammarion, 1965).

[289] Moon, p. 68 ff.

[290] Mathew H. Elbow, French Corporative Theory, 1789-1948 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953), pp. 44, 59.

Republic with the proletarian condition of the workers.[291] Frédéric Le Play and Charles Périn, earlier economists who had a great influence on Social Catholicism, were reactionary and monarchist in their politics.

Mounier and Proudhon differed fundamentally with Social Catholicism on both paternalism and monarchism. In his Personalist Manifesto, Mounier strongly identified himself with the situation of the workers and advocated a restructuring of economic institutions that would make it possible for the worker to exercise to the maximum his responsibility and initiative. Above all, Mounier rejected "every kind of paternalism, i.e., every attempt on the part of the ruling classes to improve the workers' conditions from without and from on high, even when the attempt is disinterested...."[292] Although Mounier did at one time hope to train a working-class elite in the principles of Personalism, he expected this elite, rather than aristocrats or bourgeois intellectuals, to help workers themselves to formulate a new economic order.

Mounier rejected monarchism even more emphatically than the paternalism of the Social Catholics. His major purpose in founding Esprit had been to separate the religion of Catholicism from the politics of monarchy. As indicated in the previous chapter, Mounier refused to consider an alliance

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[291]Moon, p. 89. De Mun later accepted the French democratic state when Pope Leo XIII, in the encyclical Au Milieu des Sollicitudes (1892), warned French Catholics to cease political fighting among themselves and accept democracy.

[292]Mounier, PM, p. 204.

of Christianity with any political form. The French monarchy had been the greatest offender in this area and had often succeeded in blunting what Mounier understood to be the radically spiritual message of Christianity. In addition, the monarchy reflected only the interests of the aristocracy while refusing genuine, independent representation to other groups in society.

The extremely hierarchical character of the Church's approach is especially apparent if one examines the understanding of society that is the basis of its teaching. Society is seen as a reflection of "the mighty organized structure of the Medieval Church" with its three classes of priests, monks, and laymen, which combine to form a united community. The different classes in society, including the sublevels within the lay or secular realm, represent different tasks to which individual members are called by Providence.[293] The Church, and especially the medieval Church, had accepted social inequality as "natural."

Troeltsch sees this hierarchical teaching resting on two main principles: patriarchalism and organicism. The patriarchalism is essentially the model of the male-dominated family with the willing submission of the wife and children,

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[293]Ernst Troeltsch, The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches, I, (New York: Harper & Row), pp. 425-426, 298-299. Troeltsch refers especially to the thought of Aquinas and argues that the latter's acceptance of hierarchical social structure is the result of the influence of Aristotle.

On the hierarchical aspect of Catholic thought see also Elbow, p. 44 and Charlotte Touzalin Muret, French Royalist Doctrines Since the Revolution (New York: Columbia University Press) on du Man and La Tour du Pin.

as well as of the servants, to the authority of the husband-father. It was a patriarchalism of love, however, with the differences in position to be used by those in authority "as an opportunity for the exercise of charity and devotion towards their less fortunate brethren."[294] Hence the paternalism of Social Catholicism and its emphasis on noblesse oblige. Those occupying the lesser stations in society were to see their positions "as occasions for displaying the virtues of trust, patience, and humility to those above them."[295] Thus the Social Catholic emphasis on the religious and pedagogical role of the workers' groups.

The organic component of the Church's teaching is the understanding that all members of society exist as members of a vital, living whole. The members of this organism share a strong sense of solidarity because of their identification with a common purpose. Ultimately the purpose is religious because the basic unity of the organism stems from the idea of the Christian community, the Church, in which all are members of Christ and will be more completely united with him after death. It is this exalted understanding of the basis of the organism which makes the patriarchalism bearable to lower orders and gives it its legitimacy.

Given this perspective the medieval Church would not have been able to accept capitalism because the latter would change the meaning of the various orders within society and

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[294] Troeltsch, p. 285.

[295] Ibid.

especially their relationship to each other. When profit became possible apart from work, a new merchant class was born, a class which had no intrinsic meaning in the traditional hierarchy of functions. The rise of this class and its gradual accumulation of economic power meant that the worker lost his dignity since he was now dependent on the economic decisions of the capitalist class which determined the monetary value of his goods. Finally, the aristocracy, the assigned protector of the lower orders in society, gradually lost its power to the ascendant merchant class. In sum, the whole hierarchic structure of society, based especially on a static conception of functions, was seriously endangered by the dynamism of capitalism. The personal relations that were characteristic of the traditional order would be replaced by impersonal economic relations.

Obviously the paternalism and monarchism of Social Catholicism are entirely appropriate in light of the Church's hierarchical understanding of society. The emphatic egalitarianism that Mounier borrows from Proudhon is not. Proudhon refused to accept the inequality of the status quo. He did not believe that the hierarchical structure of society was in any way "natural." It was not surprising, therefore, that Proudhon specifically condemned the Catholic Church. He did so not only because of the Church's teaching, but also because Catholicism, as the hierarchical religion, was the counterpart of a hierarchical system of secular government.[296]

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[296]Edwards, p. 21.

Proudhon and Mounier believed that only a more egalitarian society could produce social harmony. The main obstacle to this was the economic domination by a relative few. The revolutionary task was to democratize completely economic relationships, i.e., to accomplish in the economic order what the French Revolution, which Proudhon accepted as a turning point in history, had started in the political realm.

Proudhon's and Mounier's goal of creating economic democracy indicates that they were unwilling to accept the "organic," "natural" change of traditional Catholicism. Instead, both thinkers argued that men should choose their social goals and methodically go about the business of realizing them. The only "natural" order was the one which corresponded to the egalitarian vision.

Mounier's failure to consider all the implications of the Church's doctrine is especially evident in the "post-capitalist" structures that he advocated. Although patterned on Proudhon's ideas, Mounier's system also bears a resemblance to the medieval guild structure. He was apparently willing to consider this medieval type of corporatism without recognizing the conservative purposes it had traditionally served. This is best understood by briefly examining the medieval Church's reliance on the doctrine and its adoption by Social Catholicism.

Well into modern times the Church had advocated the guild system as a basis for economic institutions, and the corporatism advocated by Social Catholics such as La Tour du

Pin was essentially a development of this medieval approach.[297] Medieval corporatism made it possible to provide for social needs apart from a strong state. Thus the Church was able to argue against the development of a powerful state without leaving society bereft of an organizational structure. All needs could be met by the economic unit itself. This unit doubled, as it were, as a social and quasi-political structure because of the responsibility it assumed in regulating industries and providing for the social welfare needs of its members. The guild thus served as a kind of buffer between the individual and the state.[298]

Troeltsch indicates that the guild system effectively served the purposes of the status quo since it was based on the differentiation of labor according to physical, intellectual, and governing activities with income largely regulated by social position and with social mobility generally restricted. Although one might conceivably argue that the emphasis on labor and a just wage should lead to a radically equalitarian social system, the guild principle of organization, based as it was on the hierarchic vision of society, precluded such a possibility.

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[297] On Social Catholicism and the guild system see Elbow, Moon, and Duroselle.

[298] Montesquieu represents another important origin of the "intermediate" organization idea. According to Touchard, Montesquieu relied chiefly on parliaments and the nobility, with the special emphasis on the latter, to play this intermediate role. There is no evidence, however, to indicate that Mounier was aware of Montesquieu's approach, whereas he had been trained in the Catholic tradition.

Mounier never dealt with this question. When one considers his thought as a whole it is very clear, as mentioned above, that he was committed to egalitarianism and opposed to any rigid hierarchy. However, as a Catholic thinker it was incumbent on him to confront the above issue more directly.

Conclusion

Mounier's institutional thought is essentially in harmony with that of Proudhon, that is, Mounier's positions do not contradict Proudhon's. To a certain extent this harmony can be attributed to the obvious lack of definition in Mounier's institutions. As they stand, however, the structures advocated by Mounier, as well as the values on which they rest, are compatible with Proudhon's thought.[299]

If the above is true, can Mounier still be considered a Catholic thinker? It might be argued, for example, that Mounier's program cannot be reconciled with Catholicism because it ignores the conservative, hierarchical character of Catholic teaching. Therefore, Mounier would not be justified in identifying with those other components of Catholic tradition which are similar to anarchism, e.g., worker participation in management, de-emphasis of the role of the state, and especially the primacy of moral considerations in institutional thought. In rejecting the paternalism and monarchism that are natural to the Church's sociology while accepting its more attractive components, Mounier is using the Catholic position in a piecemeal way.

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[299]My interpretation of Proudhon is based on the ideas of Ritter, Edwards, Joll, and Woodcock.

This argument, however, ignores the development that had already taken place within Catholicism by the time Mounier began to publish his ideas. The Christian Democrats, as well as Pope Leo XIII in Rerum Novarum, had already demonstrated that Catholicism need not be identified with traditional social structures and monarchical government; that Catholicism was not incompatible with the institutions of liberal democracy.

Mounier's contribution was simply to carry this a step further by pointing out those values in anarchist thought that were in harmony with Catholic tradition. In so doing he could show Catholics that radical thought could not be quickly dismissed as contrary to their religion. If he did not create a complete, radical alternative to the established order, his examination of anarchism demonstrated the support that a Catholic might be able to give such an alternative.

Taken strictly as an institutional system, however, Mounier's proposals are obviously inadequate. Roy Pierce has pointed out that Mounier's definition of democracy suggests either "a sort of automatic harmony based on proper functional organization...or a constant process of discussion, negotiation, and compromise."[300] Yet Mounier's institutional recommendations do not allow for either of these alternatives.

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[300]Roy Pierce, Contemporary French Political Thought (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 61. Pierce is referring to Mounier's definition of democracy discussed in the previous chapter: democracy as "the system which rests on the responsibility and functional organization of all the persons constituting the social community."

This type of inadequacy has prompted Jean-Marie Domenach, a disciple of Mounier and current editor of Esprit, to describe Mounier's institutional ideas as "the weakest part of his thought,"[301] an opinion Mounier himself seems to have shared.[302] Domenach was especially concerned with the traditional arguments made against Proudhonian anarchism. The latter system, for example, was designed for a society of peasants, small craftsmen, and merchants. As such it provided little guidance for those confronted with a society based on technology and large-scale industrialism.[303]

Anarchism is primarily a rebellion against the concentrated institutional power inherent in both capitalism and Communism. It is a revolt against the dehumanizing elements of both systems, against their use of the masses as mere functions of production. These were Mounier's concerns as well.[304] His institutional thought was an attempt to relate them to Catholic thought in a new way.

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[301] Jean-Marie Domenach, "Les principes du choix politique," Esprit, XIX (December, 1950).

[302] Mounier, BNA, p. 145.

[303] This was one of Mounier's reasons for rejecting anarchism and supporting Communism during the immediate postwar period.

[304] On the relationship of these aspects of anarchism to Mounier's thought see also Noureddine Zaza, Étude critique de la notion d'engagement chez Emmanuel Mounier (Geneva: Librarie E. Droz, 1955), p. 95 and Winock, pp. 95-103.

CHAPTER SIX:

"WITNESS" AND THE VICHY REGIME

The present chapter is concerned with two subjects: Mounier's understanding of "witness" (témoignage) as a means of social action and his relationship to Vichy and the Resistance during the war. The former, it will be argued, determined the latter. Both Mounier's political mistake in working with Vichy institutions and his later Resistance work were the result of his preoccupation with the concerns of "witness." The chapter will conclude with an evaluation of this relationship between the moral and the political in Mounier's wartime work.

"Witness"

Throughout his public life Mounier argued that the crisis facing society was essentially a crisis of civilization, i.e., a crisis of values. The political and economic problems confronting democracy and capitalism were basically spiritual ones. "If all evil is at root a transgression against the light, then our first task, both in urgency and principle, is a general revision of our values."[305]

The "revision" foreseen by Mounier was to be more than an academic, philosophical statement of values, although such

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[305] Mounier, "Les directions spirituelles du mouvement 'Esprit,'" Bulletin des amis d'Emmanuel Mounier, XIII-XIV (March, 1959), p. 14. This is a report presented by Mounier to those about to found Esprit at their first meeting, which took place over a number of days at a villa in Font-Romeu in the south of France. Although this report later appeared in revised form as the lead article, "Refaire la Renaissance," in the first issue of Esprit, the original version provides a far more complete picture of the scope of Mounier's aims. Unfortunately, the original version has not been published in Mounier's Oeuvres and is available only in the issue of the Bulletin referred to above, which is now out of print but available at the Bibliothèque Emmanuel Mounier outside of Paris.

activity was essential.[306] Society would change only when individual people changed. The Esprit group would have to be more than the staff of a journal; they would also have to function as a "spiritual cadre" willing to live their lives according to Personalist values. Mounier made this especially clear at the founding meeting of Esprit: "We will operate as much or more by what we are than by what we will do or say. An action's success depends on what it carries within it...(Our) action is not directed essentially toward success but toward witness."[307]

The reliance on the spiritual quality of the Esprit members meant that each would have to consider himself "converted" to Personalist values: "metanoia: change the heart of your heart and, in the world, all that it has contaminated."[308] This would mean an abstinence from excessive material comforts and the class privileges of bourgeois society, as well as the acceptance of a life of material simplicity comparable to that of the workers. It would also mean a willingness to commit oneself to others in collective under-

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[306] François Goguel, the political scientist and friend of Mounier, lists four activities that were a part of Mounier's program in the prewar period: 1) a "revolution against the myths:" analysis of the prevailing political ideologies; 2) a refusal to participate in capitalist institutions; 3) abstention from party politics and participation in the "amis" groups connected to Esprit; 4) preparation of a program for a future revolution. See François Goguel, "Positions politiques," Esprit, XIX (December, 1950), p. 805 f.

[307] Mounier, "Les directions spirituelles..., pp. 1, 19.

[308] Mounier, RPC, OM, I, p. 148 and CPFT, p. 326. See also Zaza, p. 64.

takings both within the community and in the larger society itself.

Lives lived in this manner would gradually provide men with an effective alternative to the bourgeois values of Western society. "One must believe, first of all, that the truth acts simply by its presence.... It is not force which makes revolutions; it is the light. The spirit is the sovereign of life."[309] Mounier stated, therefore, that Personalism would "always give the techniques of education and persuasion priority over the techniques of enforcement, diplomacy, or deception; for man only works well when he is working with the whole of himself."[310]

As Paul Ricoeur has pointed out, this approach is essentially a pedagogy, i.e., an effort to inculcate values, particularly the Christian values of charity and sanctification.[311] Moreover, the Christian idea of the communion of saints is the most accurate symbol for the new order; which will be the final result of this witness. In Mounier's words:

> If we were to describe its ideal realization, we should describe it as a community in which each person would at all times be able to achieve his fruitful vocation in the totality, and in which the communion of all in the totality would be the living outcome of the efforts of each one. Each one would have a place of his own in the whole which no one else could fill, but which would harmonize well with the whole.

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[309] Mounier, RPC, OM, I, pp. 146, 149.

[310] Mounier, P, p. 42. Emphasis is Mounier's.

[311] Paul Ricoeur, "Une philosophe personnaliste," Esprit, XIX (December, 1950), p. 868.

> Love would be the primary tie and not any constraint or any economic or "vital" interest or any extrinsic apparatus. Each person would there find, in the common values transcending each one's own limitations of place and time, the tie that binds all the members in the whole. 312

Mounier recognized that such a vision was not realizable on earth but argued that it should be the goal toward which all action is ultimately directed. It should give a "basic direction" to present activity. "It is this ideal, in fact, which must orientate the...aspirations of a Personalist system."[313] Conventional political activity would be strictly secondary to the work of instilling new values.[314] The revolution would be first and foremost a revolution in the hearts of men, and only later would it gradually express itself in political change.

As Esprit grew in popularity, Mounier attempted to enlarge the "spiritual cadre" to include all those among the readership who wished to contribute to the effort of establishing Personalist values in society. In 1935 he established a newsletter, the Journal Intérieur, both to instruct the members of these Esprit "amis" groups and to serve as a means of communication among them. During the 1930's he spent as much

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[312] Mounier, PM, p. 95. See also Zaza, pp. 95-96.

[313] Mounier, PM, p. 96.

[314] Mounier had said, "I will say right off that the political point of view is a secondary point of view.... What we are fighting is not a 'cité inconfortable,' it is a 'cité mauvaise.'"--Mounier, "Les directions spirituelles...," pp. 5-6.

time lecturing on Personalism and establishing amis groups as he did in editing Esprit.[315] The audiences to whom he spoke were, however, made up primarily of intellectuals and members of the middle class; and it was from this group that most of the membership for the Esprit groups came. In a Journal issue of 1936 Mounier expressed his dismay at the difficulty of attracting working-class members to the movement, which he admitted was peopled with those who came from "bourgeois and semi-bourgeois backgrounds" and who often did not appreciate the necessity of the quasi-religious conversion to personalist values that he demanded.[316]

The amis members were to pursue whatever actions they found most fitting. On the local level members were encouraged to analyze their environment according to its economics, politics, social hierarchy, intellectual life, and religious values. A lengthy, detailed report could then be prepared. This would provide each member of the group with a thorough knowledge of his community and thereby enable him to choose efficacious action.

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[315] In the December, 1935 issue of the Journal Intérieur the following cities and towns were listed as having groups: Paris, Auger, Avignon, Bayonne, Bordeaux, Bourg, Bourges, Caen, Chambéry, Dijon, Grenoble, Lille, Louent, Lyon, and Mâcon, with correspondents but no groups in nine other cities. It is impossible to determine any membership figures since these groups were not formally structured and changed frequently. No apparent attempt was made to keep figures at the offices of Esprit in Paris.

[316] Mounier, Journal Intérieur, VI-VII (April, May, 1936), p. 2.

Members of the activist groups submitted articles to local newspapers and reviews and engaged in numerous debates in the press with those who differed with their approach to the problems of the time. The amis were enthusiastic lecturers on Personalism and attempted to multiply their numbers in this manner. They published pamphlets and tracts for street corner distribution. On a higher theoretical level, some members made studies of the impact of the press on society and the effects of modern warfare, as well as an evaluation in 1938 of various aspects of the Popular Front. All of these were published in Esprit.

Special emphasis was placed on working within one's profession in order to establish its methods and goals on Personalist values. It was also suggested that groups be organized in religious associations or within political parties. Eventually there could be "cells of doctors, teachers, professors, workers, etc....each attempting to invigorate his party, his trade, his faith, and his co-religionaries with the sense of our values and of our common revolt."[317] In this way, Mounier explained in A Personalist Manifesto, the amis would "implant in the vital organs, at present diseased, of our decadent civilization, the seeds and ferment of a new civilization."[318]

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[317] Ibid., II (December, 1935), p. 2.

[318] Mounier, PM, p. 281. Mounier hoped to further this goal by establishing a Centre Esprit where the Esprit staff would live communally. The Centre would be a "foyer" for Personalism, providing both intellectual instruction and moral example of the Personalist life for all who might be interested. Mounier indicated that he was as sure about the

The decided lack of political involvement was noted by some of the amis at the annual Esprit conference in 1938. The conference report blamed this apoliticism on the groups' "political moralism" and "deductive politics."[319] Mounier's response was the establishment of still another publication, Le Voltigeur. Published bi-monthly as a newspaper, Le Voltigeur was meant for those of the amis who wished to engage in direct political activity. The paper was placed under the editorship of Pierre-Aime Touchard, an associate of Mounier, who also hoped to reach a wider audience than Esprit and thereby provide political guidance to a more general readership.[320] The paper lasted until the outbreak of the war in 1939.

Despite the establishment of Le Voltigeur, it is clear that Mounier was still far more committed to the task of directly influencing men and those social institutions,

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necessity of this project as he had been about any decision in his life. (See Mounier, "Lettre à Emile-Albert Niklaus, January 3, 1939," OM, IV, p. 626, as well as other letters to Niklaus, pp. 613-619.)

The Center was established immediately after the war in two adjacent buildings on a spacious old estate in Châtenay-Malabry, a few miles south of Paris. At the present time Mounier's widow lives there, as do a number of Mounier's collaborators and their families. These include Jean-Marie Domenach, the editor of Esprit; Paul Ricoeur, a philosopher at the Sorbonne; the historian, Henri Marrou; and Paul Fraisse. The small Bibliothèque Emmanuel Mounier is also housed there.

[319] Journal Intérieur, XXVIII (October, 1938), p. 5. No specific author was listed for this report.

[320] Le Voltigeur consisted of articles of immediate political interest and editorial comment. It did not concern itself with philosophical and religious themes in the manner of Esprit. The issues of Le Voltigeur are available at the Bibliothèque Emmanuel Mounier in Châtenay-Malabry.

especially schools, churches, and the media, which shaped men's values.[321] The Journal Intérieur discussed the possibility of cooperation with the Socialists and Communists in local electoral activity but dismissed such activity as "marginal."[322] Mounier made this attitude especially clear in his reply to an Esprit reader who had suggested that party and electoral activity were the only meaningful actions. Mounier responded that this was to see everything in material terms. "History gives us a little modesty.... The great movements of civilization, which alone leave their mark, are characterized by slowness and perseverance."[323]

Mounier's feelings about politics were never more evident than in his response to the "Third Force," a small political movement attached to the early Esprit.[324] The members of the Third Force shared Mounier's social criticism

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[321] Mounier's willingness to turn over the editorship of Le Voltigeur was itself an indication of this.

[322] Journal Intérieur, XXVIII (October, 1938), p. 7. No individual author listed.

[323] Mounier, "Lettre à Guy Malengrau, October 24, 1936," OM, IV, p. 600.

[324] In actuality the Third Force came first, existing as early as 1931, and Esprit was initially conceived as an organ for the movement which was led by Georges Izard, André Déléage, and Louis Galey. The loyalty of these three was to the political movement which, in the manner of all the "jeunes équipes," they conceived of as an expression of their personal political principles. Mounier, a good friend of Izard's from their days at the Sorbonne, was asked by the latter to edit the review. In a number of early, bitter policy sessions Mounier fought for and won autonomous control of the review which he retained when the Third Force and Esprit officially split in the summer of 1933. On the very early history of Esprit see Pierre Andreu, "Esprit" (1932-1940), "Itinéraires," XXXIII (May, 1959), p. 42.

and hoped to create a mass political movement based on them. In declining to join the movement, Mounier commented that

> ...(political) action has its demands: short cuts, exaggerations, silencings and disciplines, publicity work, inflation of leaders, artificial demonstrations, precipitous proclamations of ill-considered ideas, a whole ensemble of necessary impurities which those who affirm spiritual bases cannot assume. 325

According to Mounier the members of the Third Force were clearly rejecting the first principle of action that he had formulated at the beginning of Esprit: that "we will operate as much or more by what we are than by what we do or say." Mounier lamented that "all their work turns toward success, all of ours toward witness. It is so different."[326]

At the same time that Mounier was refusing to involve himself in direct political activity, he was moving Esprit toward an ever greater involvement in political questions. In the mid-thirties he turned Esprit from its earlier "neither Right nor Left" position on politics to an open affiliation with the Left, arguing that it was on this side of the political spectrum that he found the values and men who shared his movement's aspirations. Moreover, an undeclared position could always be taken as tacit support of the Right.[327]

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[325] Mounier, "Lettre à Georges Izard, March 23, 1932, OM, IV, p. 493. Emphasis is mine.

[326] Mounier, "Lettre à Paulette Leclerq, June 7, 1933," OM, IV, p. 532. Although Mounier's argument with the Third Force took place in 1933, it reflected an attitude in Mounier that did not change until the post-war period when he began his relationship with the Communist Party.

[327] Esprit, (April, 1934), p. 202. See also Mounier, "Les cinq étapes d'Esprit," Dieu Vivant, XVI (1950) and reprinted in Bulletin des amis d'Emmanuel Mounier, XXIX.

Esprit backed the Spanish Republic in the Civil War, despite the support generally given Franco by French Catholics and the French hierarchy. It opposed the Munich agreement because of the appeasement of Hitler and disregard for the rights of the Czechs. It also supported the Popular Front, although Mounier feared that the Front would be devoured by "La politique," i.e., the petty, selfish considerations of the politicians.[328]

Although many of the young reviews of the 1930's collapsed during the last years of the decade, Esprit flourished in its new role of engagement, strengthening Mounier in the conviction that his contemporaries were concerned with values if they were presented in the context of immediate political situations. Thus Esprit did not hesitate to take stands which its readers, a majority of whom were Catholics, often found startling and shocking, thereby embroiling itself in further controversy, especially with the Action Française and

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(March, 1967), pp. 9-25. This was a lecture given by Mounier on December 23, 1944 at the home of Marcel Moré. Mounier described his understanding of the changes that both he and the review had undergone since Esprit's founding in 1932. This is an essential document for understanding Mounier's perspective on politics.

[328]It is not within the scope of this work to treat the particularities of Esprit's political positions. This has already been done very thoroughly by other authors: François Goguel, "Positions politiques," Esprit, XIX (December, 1950); Jean-Marie Domenach, "Les principes du choix politique," Esprit (December, 1950); R. William Rauch, Politics and Belief in Contemporary France: Emmanuel Mounier and Christian Democracy, 1932-1950 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1972); John W. Hellman, "Emmanuel Mounier and Esprit: Personalist Dialogue with Existentialism, Marxism and Christianity" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation), Harvard University, 1969.

other right-wing groups which had Catholic support. It was this type of activity, i.e., the pointing out of the value questions inherent in political events, that Mounier saw as his form of political involvement.

The positions taken by Esprit established Mounier as a political or engagé intellectual, a label that he liked. One might ask, however, how truly engagé Mounier was if he also encouraged abstinence from party politics. The same question might be asked from a different perspective: what is the political significance of Mounier's activity as a "witness"?[329]

Mounier's rejection of the party politics of the period was not a rejection of political activity itself. All politics is based on values, and Mounier rejected the politics of modern democracy because he believed it rested on values which were ultimately anti-human. Priority, therefore, had to be given to the creation of a new basis for politics. Only after the accomplishment of this task could modern politics fulfill its task of achieving a "common temporal good."

Mounier knew that the highest human values could only be communicated through personal example.[330] Therefore, political life, an expression of man's moral life, could only be given its new foundation by using the means generally

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[329]The following defense of Mounier's activity is tentative. A fuller consideration of these themes will be presented in the concluding chapter. At that time the totality of Mounier's work will be evaluated.

[330]This point is made by Tocqueville in Democracy in America, Phillips Bradley (ed.), II (New York: Vintage Books, 1945), p. 156. It is also the subject of Plato's concern in the "Phaedrus" dialogue. See The Dialogues of Plato, B. Jowett (ed.) (4 vols.; London: Oxford, 1964), III, p. 186.

associated with moral purposes. In sum, Mounier would attempt to create a new consciousness from which new political values would gradually develop.

If politics is ultimately man's attempt to shape his society according to his true nature, it is not apolitical to propagate a vision of that nature. Moreover, to refuse to participate in a politics based on a contrary view of nature can thus be considered a political act provided, of course, one explains the reason for such an action. Mounier's attack on Liberalism and capitalism constituted such an explanation, and Esprit's stands on political events dramatized the importance that he attached to the political order.

Mounier certainly did not believe that political problems would end when all men possessed true moral values; that politics would somehow be replaced by ethics. Had he restricted himself to propagating Personalist values, without also taking positions on the important political events and institutions of his day, it would be easier to consider him apolitical. During the prewar and postwar periods he avoided the danger of apoliticism. However, during the war itself his overwhelming concern with moral values caused him to ignore the specifically political crisis that was Vichy.

Vichy

It has been argued by some that Mounier's conduct during the occupation of France by the Germans made him nothing short of a collaborationist.[331] Others have claimed, on the

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[331] See especially Roger Garaudy, Lettre à Emmanuel Mounier (Paris: La Nouvelle Critique, 1950), pp. 8-13.

contrary, that he was "résistant" and, indeed, the "spiritus rector" of the Resistance.[332] Actually there is some evidence to support both positions. His reaction to Vichy was very much the result of his witness approach to social change. Mounier was far more concerned with man's moral condition than with strictly political considerations, and this was the cause of his ambiguity toward Vichy.

Mounier's argument against democracy had always been a moral one: liberal democracy tended to support and encourage those values, particularly individualism and materialism, which were ultimately anti-human. It was without regret, therefore, that he observed the death of the Third Republic in 1940. Indeed, the defeat of France was not understood by Mounier as primarily a defeat at all. It was the result of the values of French society, which had made its citizens incapable of rising to the challenge of fascist power.[333]

The defeat of the Third Republic had a deep historical meaning to Mounier. Western civilization, according to his philosophy of history, had been steadily declining since the

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[332] Jean-Marie Domenach, Emmanuel Mounier (Paris: Seuil, 1972), pp. 109-119.

[333] See Mounier, "Letter From France," Commonweal, XXXIII (October 25, 1940), p. 8. Mounier's lack of regret at the demise of the Third Republic was not the same as the satisfaction of Catholic Traditionalists and other counter-revolutionaries. See Michel Winock, Histoire Politique de la Revue Esprit, 1930-1950 (Paris: Seuil, 1975), pp. 210-211. Mounier hoped to see a drastically reformed Republic after the war. In this respect he shared the Resistance vision of postwar politics as a "république pure et dure." (The phrase is that of Henri Frenay, the "Combat" leader with whom Mounier worked: Henri Frenay: The Night Will End (New York: Macmillan, 1975).

end of the Renaissance when the values surrounding liberal individualism began their ascendancy in Europe. France's defeat dramatized the culmination of this process. The Nazi's were the "new barbarians" who, like those of the fifth century, would purge the Western World of its corrupt forms and values.[334] "Did we not say a few years ago that we would only release ourselves from bourgeois man and the bourgeois Church by iron and fire? Has the time not come? Is this not the meaning of a totalitarian victory?"[335]

In his Bergsonian understanding of history the real significance of events had little to do with politics itself. Rather, one had to get behind the spectacular happenings of a dramatic period and understand the deeper meaning. This meant that fascism, by far the most determining factor on the continent, was telling something to Europeans: "What is dead is dead; a new visage is stamped on history which we await, an authoritarian visage; we are not able to elude these large-scale movements of history...."[336] Fascism would remake Europe whether one wished to admit it or not. History, said Mounier, frequently brings about good through evil, a new standard by means of an aberration. This was "the terrible ambiguity of all historical forces."[337] It meant that "the German victory is not just a victory of matériel and police.

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[334]Mounier, "Entretiens XII, May 8, 1941," OM, IV, p. 706.

[335]Ibid.

[336]Mounier, "Entretiens X, August 4, 1940," OM, IV, p. 668.

[337]Mounier, "Entretiens XII, May 18, 1941," OM, IV, p. 709.

A powerful expansive force pushes it from within.... The Revolution of the twentieth century that we wish with all our energy is coming with it. In this sense a stronger bond is able to bind us more firmly to certain adversaries than to certain allies."[338]

Mounier argued that in a period of such historical import one's duty was to avoid taking a narrow partisan position. Frenchmen should reject the "petty nationalist protectionism" of those who condemned the existence of Vichy. Vichy was "indifferent in itself," only the historical forces behind it had meaning. Duty required that one work to further these forces which would liberate France from the decadent values and institutions of pre-war society. The task was to remove the anti-human tendencies that Vichy and the occupation harbored so that a new and better social order could subsequently develop.[339]

Mounier's willingness to consider the wartime situation from a long-range perspective that was favorable to Vichy may have been encouraged by a very immediate factor: the ideology of Vichy which, like Personalism, claimed to be based ultimately on moral purposes. The Vichy regime explained its

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[338] Ibid., pp. 708-709. In fairness to Mounier it should be added that in the next sentence he ruled out any collaboration with Laval and Darlan.

[339] See Georges Hourdin, "Il y a dix ans meurait Emmanuel Mounier," Information Catholiques Internationales (March 15, 1960), p. 21 and Mounier, "Entretiens XII, May 18, 1941," OM, IV, p. 708.

domestic policy as an attempt to create a Catholic social order.[340] One of its earliest domestic programs was the reinstatement of religious training in the school system.[341] It also created policies designed to foster traditional family life, long the basis of Catholic social teaching, and substituted "Work, Family, and Country" for the Republic's "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity."

The anti-republican bias of Vichy was expressed in a preference for corporatism and decentralization, as opposed to the capitalism and centralized "statism" that it associated with the Third Republic.[342] Corporatism was expected to end the competition and class struggle of capitalism. Genuine participation by the workers in economic decisions was strongly emphasized in the regime's earliest corporative

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[340] Robert Aron sees Personalism as a major influence at Vichy. Raoul Girardet lends support to this argument by his contention that the ideas of the "jeunes équipes," were important at Vichy. These arguments are contested, however, by a variety of writers, including Robert O. Paxton, Stanley Hoffman, and Gladys Kammerer. The latter group sees Vichy in terms of the traditional conservative forces in French politics. This view seems more compelling, especially since the Personalists at Vichy whom Aron cites were few in number and did not hold top positions in the regime. See Robert Aron, The Vichy Regime, 1940-1944 (New York: Macmillan, 1958), p. 145; Robert O. Paxton, Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944 (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1972), pp. 139-142; Stanley Hoffman, "Aspects du régime de Vichy," Revue française de science politique (Jan.-March, 1956); Gladys Kammerer, "The Political Theory of Vichy," Journal of Politics (Nov. 5, 1943). Girardet's article is in Jean Touchard (ed.), Tendances politiques dans la vie française depuis 1789 (Paris: Hachette, 1960).

[341] Vichy's Minister of Education was Mounier's mentor from the University of Grenoble, Jacques Chevalier.

[342] Aron, p. 145.

plans.[343] All of these were ideas which Mounier had often endorsed.

Despite its attractive ideology, Mounier seems to have harbored few illusions about Vichy's determination to accomplish its proposed reforms. He believed that the Vichy leadership was composed of selfish, power-hungry men.[344] His work would, therefore, be the propagation of Personalist values as it had been before the war. It would be especially necessary to keep these values before Frenchmen as an antidote to Nazism. "This is not a position of political efficacy...," he said in his diary, "but neither is it a position of retreat. I intend to be efficacious, but my methods will be other than political."[345]

Mounier revived Esprit in Lyons in November of 1940, despite the opposition of a number of his Christian Democratic friends who told him that they felt betrayed by the journal's reappearance under the aegis of Vichy.[346] Mounier

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[343] Paxton, p. 213. Paxton points out, however, that the ideal of strong worker participation appeared only during the early period. See p. 217.

[344] Mounier visited Vichy briefly in 1940 and decided against the regime at that point. He was especially critical of Laval and Darlan. See Winock, p. 212 and Mounier, "Entretiens, XII, May 18, June 15, and July 28, 1941," OM, IV, pp. 708-712. Winock points out that Mounier broke with Chevalier over the general character of the regime.

[345] Mounier, "Entretiens XI, March 30, 1941," OM, IV, p. 701. In the rest of this entry in his journal Mounier emphasized that he is simply carrying on the type of work that he had always envisioned for himself, i.e., the propagation of values, rather than political activity as it is generally understood.

[346] In September of 1939 Mounier had been drafted as a second class infantryman in the Auxiliary service of the Army. Due to an eye injury received in his youth, he was

retorted that they looked at everything from the vantage point of their "private retreats."[347] The attitude of "absolute opposition" to Vichy was, he said, "dangerously abstentionist." He condemned the Christian Democrats for their "all or nothing" approach to politics and their effort "to seek refuge in the absolute while history flowed by...."[348] His attitude, he claimed, was that which Landsberg had called for in advocating immediate engagement without concern for the impurity of the situation.[349]

Esprit appeared in its regular monthly format until its suppression by Vichy in August, 1941 for its "general tendencies." Mounier had thought, he said, that for Esprit to "disappear purely and simply would indicate a retreat, a need to hide oneself, to have oneself not seen too much, to flee the danger. It is preferable to fight openly and to have ourselves suppressed in such a way that things would be clear."[350]

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assigned duty as a clerk at an installation near Grenoble. About a year later he was demobilized and went to Lyons in the unoccupied zone where he taught philosophy in a school run by the Lazarists, and also in the École Robin in Vienne. In this manner he supported his family--his wife had had a child in 1937--while planning the reappearance of Esprit.

[347] Mounier, "Entretiens X, August 4, 1940," OM, IV, p. 668.

[348] Mounier, "Lettre à Étienne Borne, February 22, 1941," OM, IV, pp. 694-695.

[349] Ibid.

[350] Mounier, "Les cinq étapes...," p. 48.

Esprit's fight was not, however, fought quite as "openly" as Mounier believed when he looked back on this period. He wanted the review to serve as a "présence" of Personalism within occupied France. His strategy, he said, was "'faire de l'armement spirituel clandestin,'" i.e., to profit from the similarity in the names of our values and those proclaimed (at Vichy) and, by means of this coincidence, to introduce therein the desirable content."[351] The goal was to use terminology that would be sufficiently ambiguous to get by the censor and yet be adequately "armed" to be of inspiration to the readership. Without such an effort the French as a nation might "asphyxiate" in the atmosphere of totalitarianism. Esprit would help dispel this bad air "with a little oxygen."

In one of the wartime issues of Esprit, Mounier did publish a critique of the increasingly monolithic character of the Vichy regime, and in another he successfully argued that France was slipping into a betrayal of the values that she had always stood for. He was also able to publish an article, at first blocked by the censor, which demonstrated that Charles Péguy, one of the patron saints of Vichy, could not be used as a supporter of anti-semitism; and through the wartime Esprit Mounier often attempted to demonstrate the evil of racism. Otherwise, the closest he could come to an exposé of Vichy ideology was a series of articles called "Les notions ambigues" in which he discussed the true nature of

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[351]Mounier, "Entretiens X, August 4, 1940," OM, IV, p. 668.

community, mystery, and especially the more emotional values advocated by fascists, e.g., dynamism, enthusiasm, and "jeunesse."

Despite the censor's rejection of his most critical articles, Mounier felt that he was successful in his efforts at "open clandestinity." "When they no longer see certain words, they are incapable of reading the sense of the text."[352] One might well ask, of course, whether Esprit's readership was any more capable than the censor in picking through the complicated subtleties formulated by the agrégé philosopher. When Mounier defended Esprit against Garaudy's charge of collaboration, he did so by pointing out that it was through the stupidity of the censor that he was able to maintain the integrity of Esprit.[353] It is at least arguable, however, that these articles were, from Vichy's point of view, harmless enough to be published if, indeed, they were not also helpful to the Vichy cause by their superficial support of its ideology.[354]

In Vichy's youth organizations and its École Nationale des Cadres d'Uriage, Mounier found a more direct way of propagating Personalist values, a way that he described as "ten times more important than Esprit." Through his efforts with

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[352]Mounier, "Entretiens XII, May 8, 1941," OM, IV, p. 707.

[353]Mounier, "L'avilissement ne rend pas," OM, IV, pp. 185-186.

[354]Winock defends Mounier by arguing that the suppression of Esprit served to dramatize the true character of the Vichy regime. However, this is essentially an "after-the-fact" defense. See Winock, p. 235.

these organizations he felt that he was having his greatest impact in steering French society away from Nazism (as well as Liberalism) and toward a new order. Unlike the renascent Esprit, however, the youth groups and the school at Uriage were almost all founded by and tied to Vichy.

The Vichy youth organizations had been organized to rejuvenate French youth after what was considered to have been the morally debilitating atmosphere of liberal individualism. It was also hoped that they would restore the morale of younger French soldiers whose only experience after their initial training had been total defeat at the hands of the Germans and the subsequent armistice. Of course, these groups also provided the regime with an excellent means of surveillance of a large part of French youth.

Mounier was particularly enthusiastic about Jeune France, which enjoyed a greater degree of freedom from the government and had actually been established independent of it, although Vichy subsidized it. He was invited by friends to join its "Bureau d'études" but refused, stating that he wished to remain free of any ties to the government. However, he did agree to act in an advisory capacity and lectured occasionally on personalist theory and social criticism. He was expelled from Jeune France in September, 1941, after Esprit had been suppressed by Vichy.

Mounier was more influential with Les Compagnons de France founded by Henri Dhavernas, a scouting leader, in August of 1940. Like most of these groups, the Compagnons were organized in a scout or military manner with emphasis on

discipline and the practice of virtue. Faithful adherents of the Vichy line, they made a veritable religion out of fidelity to Pétain, who told them that they were to be the "avant-garde of the National Revolution."[355]

The Compagnons were admirers of the Middle Ages and for them the National Revolution meant an opposition to liberal democracy, capitalism, and especially to individualism. The community was considered primary, although the value of the "person" received great emphasis. Mounier wrote regularly for the group's journal and is considered to have been particularly influential in developing the ideological components of the Compagnons.[356] Many Catholic members, strongly influenced by Mounier's Personalism, later joined the Jeunesse de l'Église, which was to become a part of the post-war Chrétien Progressiste movement of Christian Marxist orientation.[357]

Of all the groups Mounier felt that he was most influential with Les Chantiers de Jeunesse, which was also the group most closely linked to Vichy. Like the other organizations, the Chantiers were founded to rejuvenate morally or indoctrinate youth. By January of 1941 all young men of

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[355] La France militaire, September 10, 1941 as quoted in Paxton, p. 161.

[356] Cf., Jacques Duquesne, Les Catholiques sous l'occupation (Paris: Editions Bernard Grosset, 1966), p. 203. This is a very comprehensive work on Catholic participation in Vichy and the Resistance.

[357] R. William Rauch, Politics and Belief in Contemporary France (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1972), p. 219.

draft age were required to spend eight months in the Chantiers, where they usually did necessary forestry work. The Chantiers were very military in structure, emphasized the Pétain cult, and were conformist regarding Vichy. Paxton emphasizes that they "were not a clandestine force for a return to war with the Allies but an instrument of indoctrination. Despite their high suspicions, the Germans could find nothing out of line at the Chantiers."[358]

Esprit was extremely popular with the Chantiers, and Mounier noted in August of 1941 that they were subscribing in packages of ten or fifteen for each of their groups. He was particularly pleased at this point to note that in seeking a political theory they were choosing between only two: Action Française and Esprit.[359] Although these two groups had always been the greatest of enemies and were situated at opposite ends of the political spectrum, it is not difficult to see why both should be influential with the Chantiers. Each provided answers to the youth group's search for an ideology, an explanation of the modern world. Undoubtedly, it was this total character of Personalism, its ability to place all problems within one perspective, that made it appealing to disillusioned youth. This was especially true for the Chantiers, most of whose members were Catholic.[360]

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[358] Paxton, p. 164.

[359] Mounier, "Entretiens XII, August 11, 1941," OM, IV, p. 712.

[360] The immediate political results of Personalism's impact on the Chantiers are impossible to determine. Many members of the group went to Germany to work under the

Mounier's goal had always been to change society by changing men and especially by developing an activist elite committed to a new set of values. This was also the goal of the Vichy Ecole des Cadres d'Uriage which attracted Mounier. The school was designed to provide a systematic program for personal formation within a serious intellectual atmosphere. Mounier was to find his greatest satisfaction of the entire wartime period in his work there.

"Uriage" was established in the Fall of 1940 in a large, forbidding chateau not far from Grenoble. Its founder was Pierre Dunoyer de Segonzac who hoped that situating the school in the town of Uriage would keep it free from the politics and intrigue of Vichy. Dunoyer de Segonzac was an Army captain who strongly opposed collaboration with Germany but at the same time maintained complete confidence in Marshal Pétain.[361] He had a strong belief in the social role of the officer and had been influenced by the Social Catholicism of Albert de Mun, a nineteenth-century French aristocrat and army officer who was one of the founders of French Social Catholicism. The staff at Uriage included a substantial number of Catholic intellectuals. Teaching there were Paul

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Service du Travail Obligatoire. On the other hand, many joined the Resistance when the group was disbanded in 1943 after too few were willing to go to Germany. Cf., Duquesne, Les Catholiques sous l'occupation, p. 200.

[361] Cf., R. Josse, "L'École des Cadres d'Uriage, 1940-1942," Témoignage Chrétien (August 11, 1966).

Claudel; Monsignor Bruno de Solages; Henri de Lubac, author of the work on Proudhon; and a number of Mounier's associates, including Jean Lacroix; the historian, H. I. Marrou; Jean-Marie Domenach; and Hubert Beuve-Méry.[362] Their aim was to train the future leaders of France, and their students came from all of the Vichy institutions and were usually between the ages of twenty and thirty.

The main work at Uriage was the development of a "new type of man" whose values and goals would be very different than those of bourgeois, secular man. A new "exigence intérieure" was necessary for the creation of a "nouvelle façon de vivre." Only then could a new civilization be constructed according to a new set of values. Each person would simultaneously develop his own interior life and his social consciousness. A spiritual revolution was necessary to renew society, but it could not come about without a corresponding economic and political revolution.[363] In the opinion of Domenach, Dunoyer de Segonzac was the true revolutionary because he understood the need for this double revolution.[364]

The program at Uriage was a spartan one with an emphasis on discipline; but it also was characterized by a strong,

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[362]Cf., Pierre Dunoyer de Segonzac, Le Vieux chef: memoires et pages choisies (Paris: Seuil, 1971), p. 94 and Rauch, Politics and Belief in Contemporary France, p. 223.

[363]For a more thorough treatment of the purpose of Uriage according to its staff and students see Gilbert Gadoffre (ed.), and l'équipe d'Uriage, Vers le style du XX^e siècle (Paris: Seuil, 1945), pp. 80-91, 207-210; R. Josse, "L'École des cadres d'Uriage 1940-1942," Revue d'histoire de la Deuxieme Guerre Mondiale, LXI (January, 1966), p. 58; and Pierre Dunoyer de Segonzac, Le vieux chef, pp. 85-98.

[364]Dunoyer de Segonzac, Le vieux chef, p. 244.

friendly relationship between faculty and students. The latter came for sessions of six months. This period was divided to include a study of the "crisis of man" that France's defeat in the war represented, as well as a thorough consideration of the need for political and economic revolution and "a more virile Christianity." The whole doctrine was exactly that of Mounier and Esprit, as one might expect of a staff which included many of his friends. The Uriage instructors condemned capitalism and liberal democracy and argued for the creation of a "third way" distinct from both fascism and communism. Their political inspirations were Proudhon and Péguy. Their analysis was similar to that of the National Revolution, but they differed with the latter in the means they wished to employ. Specifically, they opposed a strong central government and especially the "virus maurassien" that infected Vichy.[365]

Although not an official member of the Uriage staff, Mounier appeared there frequently to lecture. His presentations included "Fin du bourgeois français," "Positions actuelles du personnalisme," "Notre Révolution culturelle," and "Le sens chrétien de la communauté."[366] Dunoyer de Segonzac described him as a "difficult lecturer, often abstract but profoundly inspired. ...in addition, the man

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[365]This is the opinion of Jean-Marie Domenach as expressed in Dunoyer de Segonzac, Le vieu chef, p. 232. According to R. Josse, however, Maurras was also studied at Uriage. Cf., Josse, "L'École des cadres...," p. 63.

[366]Mounier, "Entretiens XI, February 17, 1941," OM, IV, p. 693.

himself was very appealing. Uriage owes him much...."[367] Raymond Josse has evaluated Mounier's role as follows: "One influence, among others, played a great role in the teaching of Uriage: this was that of Emmanuel Mounier and the review Esprit.... Personalism became the most referred to doctrine at Uriage."[368]

The authorities at the Vichy Ministry of Youth cared little, however, for Mounier's independence of mind and lack of enthusiasm for the government. In the summer of 1941 he was finally banned from lecturing there by his old enemy, Henri Massis, then a Vichy official. It was at this time that Esprit was also suppressed by a Vichy decree for its "general tendencies." Gradually the Uriage team grew more disillusioned with Vichy and became more oriented toward the Resistance. With the return of Laval to power in 1942, Dunoyer de Segonzac was pressured to conform more closely to the Vichy line.[369] This and the new presence of the Germans in the free zone caused him to disband the school. Along with Domenach and a few others, he set up a clandestine school where members of the maquis were trained until the group was discovered by the authorities and forced to flee.

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[367] Dunoyer de Segonzac, Le vieux chef, p. 94.

[368] R. Josse, "L'École des cadres d'Uriage, 1940-1942," p. 60.

[369] Winock points out that Henri Frenay, the founder of the Combat Resistance organization, was frequently given shelter at Uriage by Segonzac. See Winock, pp. 221-222.

The Resistance

Mounier's willingness to associate himself with Vichy institutions indicates that he was not concerned with the political distinctions of the wartime period. This was dramatized by the fact that while working with the Vichy organizations he was also assisting members of the Resistance.

Very early during the occupation period Mounier was in contact with many men who would later become leaders in the Resistance. This began in Lyons in November, 1940, when he organized a group to discuss political events and what attitude ought to be taken toward Vichy. Most of the participants had recently come into the free zone and a majority of them were Catholic intellectuals and journalists.[370] Although they represented a wide variety of perspectives, they all felt a "suffocation in the conformism of the times, in the 'mea culpaism,' in the resigned acceptance of defeat, the same sentiments that the Lyons bourgeoisie had made their own."[371]

A few months later Mounier was contacted in Lyons by Henri Frenay, one of the founders of the Combat movement. Frenay asked Mounier to set up a clandestine "bureau d'études" that would help formulate a literature for the movement and a set of plans for the future constitution. Mounier agreed to do so, seeing in the study group a convenient way of reviving

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[370] Mounier, "Entretiens X, November 30, 1940," OM, IV, p. 680.

[371] Duquesne, Les Catholiques sous l'occupation, p. 144.

the old amis groups which had dissolved with the beginning of the war and the interdiction of Esprit.[372]

The first project that Mounier and his colleagues at the studies center worked on was a "Declaration of the Rights of the Person," which Frenay hoped would serve as a basis for a postwar constitution. Mounier was also interested in the idea since he had long wanted to draw up such a manifesto. Also, it would be an opportunity for a recapitulation of the ten years of Esprit.[373]

The first draft of the "Declaration" was found among the papers of a young Combat member in January, 1942, and Mounier was immediately arrested. He was held in three different Vichy jails until his trial in October of the same year when he was accused, among other things, of being a regional leader of Combat. He was genuinely amazed at the charge and explained to his lawyer that "my activity has never been of a political nature, but spiritual and cultural."[374] Again Mounier refused to recognize the political implications of his work, just as he had done with his Vichy activity.

After Mounier's acquittal and release from prison, he retired to the little village of Dieulefit in the Drôme to

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[372]Mounier, "Lettre à Jérôme Martinaggi, February, 1945," OM, IV, p. 725 and editorial note, OM, IV, p. 721. Mounier's name appears a number of times in Frenay's recent book on the Resistance. It is evident from Frenay's remarks that he considered Mounier to be a member of his team. Henri Frenay, The Night Will End (New York: Macmillan, 1976). See especially p. 144.

[373]Duquesne, Les Catholiques sous l'occupation, p. 144.

[374]Mounier, "Lettre à M. Gounot, May 7, 1942," OM, IV, p. 740.

devote himself to study and writing. His health had been bad in prison, and he was brought near the point of death by a hunger strike he undertook during the latter part of his time there to protest Vichy's delay in giving himself and some other Resistance prisoners a trial. According to Duquesne, the hunger strike received considerable attention through Free French radio and was a constructive "scandal" to many French Catholics who had unthinkingly accepted Vichy as legitimate.[375] Again, it was "witness" of this sort that Mounier felt to be his particular form of action.

While in Dieulefit he continued his relationship with many of his friends from 1940 and 1941 in Lyons. Most of these had now become leaders in the Mouvements unis de la Résistance (M.U.R.) and the Conseil National de la Résistance (C.N.R.). To prepare for the new, post-war France, Jean Moulin, head of the C.N.R., had set up a Comité général d'études (C.G.E.) which was an expanded version of the old clandestine center of Combat. From his residence in the Drôme, Mounier contributed several articles to Les cahiers politiques, the publication of the C.G.E.[376] Mounier had long since rejected Vichy because of its atmosphere of defeatism and conformity, as well as its racism and monolithic approach to the youth movements. The institution of the

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[375] Duquesne, Les Catholiques sous l'occupation, p. 57. For Mounier's explanation of his hunger strike see his "Journal d'un acte fragile (grève de la faim)," in "Emmanuel Mounier, 1905-1950," Esprit XIX (December, 1950), pp. 731-764.

[376] For a list of the articles attributed to Mounier see editorial note in OM, IV, p. 863.

S.T.O. in 1943, which sent Frenchmen to work in Germany, only intensified this rejection. For Mounier the Resistance was now clearly the expression of those who acted from conscience and who desired a new political order that would be superior to the Third Republic.[377] Finally, it was the Resistance that was now interested in Personalism.

While in Dieulefit, Mounier travelled through the south of France to visit members of the old amis groups in the area to discuss the post-war Esprit and forms of action that might be carried out in conjunction with it. Hoping as well to set out the principles for the new politics which would follow the Liberation, he held a number of small, clandestine meetings of the Esprit groups at his residence. Among those who attended was a young student, Gilbert Dru, who had long been impressed with Esprit and the personal example of Mounier and who founded what would eventually become the Mouvement Républicain Populaire (M.R.P.), a major party in the first years of post-war France.

Dru was a member of the Jeunesse étudiante chrétienne of the Action Catholique and a classmate and close personal friend of Jean-Marie Domenach at the University of Lyons. His political formation had been very much in the Christian Democratic tradition and religiously he was of the "progressive Christian" cast, regularly reading Sept, Temps présent, and Esprit. After a membership in the Chantiers de jeunesse,

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[377] Frenay states that this commitment to a new type of politics in the post-war period was very common among members of the Resistance.

he left the group because of its complacency and joined with Albert Gortais to help found the Cahiers de notre jeunesse, whose title was meant to evoke the memory of Charles Péguy. Péguy's ideas on the value of the human person and the necessity of revolution were emulated by both men. When the Cahiers were suppressed by Vichy, Dru became active in a number of Resistance organizations and slowly came to the belief that political action and the Resistance were the same thing; that all future political activity had to be patterned on the spirit of the Resistance.[378]

It was at this point that Dru came to Dieulefit to see Mounier in order further to shape his ideas. "Esprit and Personalism were the essential base, the point of departure finally taken. He [Dru] directly adopted its fundamental postulates and essential views which he simply refined and reformulated in a manner better suited to his own thought."[379] Dru believed with Mounier that a revolution was necessary against both the values and the political forms of the pre-war era.[380] It was the Christian's vocation to be a présence

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[378]This summary is from Rauch, Politics and Belief in Contemporary France, p. 241.

[379]Jean-Marie Domenach, Gilbert Dru: celui qui croyait au ciel (Paris: Editions duliore française, 1947), pp. 94-95. The subtitle is taken from the poem by Louis Aragon on the deaths of Dru and a Communist member of the Resistance in Lyons in 1944.

[380]See Gilbert Dru, "Déclaration" and also "Notre jeunesse vers la politique, introduction à une action politique des jeunes Français," both of which are reprinted in Domenach, Gilbert Dru. Dru's criticism of parliamentary politics, "la puissance d'argent" of capitalism and the values of the bourgeoisie, is the same as Mounier's.

in a world that Christians had heretofore deserted. Christians had to abandon the dull form of humanism that had caused them to be neutral and assume an attitude of involvement. Political action would not, however, mean the "compromises" and "impasses" which characterized the Popular Front. The word "politique" would have to be taken from the old politicians by the new generation who would give it "valeur" and "noblesse" and make it essentially "le service de la cité."

Although Dru obviously shared the aspirations of Mounier, he also criticized Mounier's notion of engagement as being "too theoretical, too intellectual," and lacking a "confrontation with reality." Having been actively involved in actual Resistance work and not simply in the formulation of ideas, Dru had developed a genuine political consciousness and envisioned a mouvement which would develop political power as well as existing as a moral force. Like Mounier, he envisioned a regrouping of traditional political forces in post-war France which would include the traditional forces on the Right--minus the Action Française--and the Communists on the Left. Between the two would be a vast revolutionary republican rassemblement which would cooperate with the other two groups in a renovation of French political life and institutions.[381]

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[381] See Mounier, "The Structures of Liberation," Commonweal XLIII (May 18, 1945). Mounier's ideas on the post-war period will be discussed in the following chapter which will deal primarily with his relationship to the French Communists.

Before his arrest and execution in August of 1943, Dru did a great deal of organizing for his movement among various Action Catholique groups and convinced many of the feasibility of his idea. During this period he met first of all with Andre Mandouze of Témoignage chrétien and later with Maurice Guérin, Marc Sangnier, Francisque Gay, and Father Jean Danielou. Finally he was received by Georges Bidault, the president of the Conseil National de la Résistance and future leader of the M.R.P. Bidault accepted his plan and sent him to André Colin who would later become the secretary general of the M.R.P. He had just been given the responsibility by Bidault of forming an organizational structure for the new "Mouvement." From this point on Dru's organization became the future M.R.P., although minus much of its revolutionary ardor.[382] Mounier had warned Dru that his attempt to create a political organization would make him dependent on the generally conservative Catholic populace, and the movement would lose its original spirit. This is precisely what happened as the M.R.P. eventually took on many of the characteristics of the older Christian Democratic parties.

Conclusion

It remains to settle the question raised by Mounier's critics and admirers: was he a collaborator or a "résistant?" This is an important question, not simply in its own right,

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[382] The rest of this story has already been chronicled in the various histories of Christian Democracy and the M.R.P. It is succinctly set out in Rauch's Politics and Belief in Contemporary France, pp. 244-252.

but also because it reveals Mounier's deficiencies as a political thinker.

Mounier's widow has stated that he was at no time sympathetic to the government and "always maintained his prudence regarding Vichy."[383] Jean Lacroix, a colleague of Mounier who was especially close to him during the wartime period in Lyons, has described the "absolute opposition to Vichy" that characterized Mounier, "the fundamental opposition, clean and clear, without any reserve..." that he held toward the regime.[384] Nevertheless, the youth organizations in which Mounier participated and the school at Uriage where he lectured were founded by and affiliated with Vichy. Associating himself with them was to associate himself with Vichy. In this sense at least Mounier was a collaborator.

In his own mind, of course, Mounier did not see himself as connected with Vichy. His concerns were not political but spiritual; they were not related to the acquisition of power but to the development of the person. Since the youth movements had been founded for the same end that Mounier wished to accomplish, working within them could not constitute

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[383] Interview with Mme. Paulette Mounier at Châtenay-Malabry, France, June, 1972. As further proof of her contention Mme. Mounier showed this writer a letter she had just then received from Gérard Lurol, a student who has written an excellent philosophy dissertation on Mounier. In his letter Lurol describes a visit he had just made to the École Robin in Vienne where Mounier had taught in late 1940 and early 1941. A teacher at the school who had also been there with Mounier told Lurol that Mounier had "anti-Pétain, anti-Vichy sentiments from the beginning" and that there had been some difficulty with pro-Vichyite parents who did not want Mounier in the school.

[384] Jean Lacroix in Le Monde, March 28, 1970.

collaboration with the enemy. One is justified, Mounier seemed to think, by one's intentions rather than by one's actions.

The emphasis on intentions implies that there were only personal moral questions involved; it ignores the political questions raised by Mounier's actions. By working with Vichy-affiliated institutions he was, if only indirectly, indicating support for the regime. He was telling the youth whom he taught and the public that was aware of his activity that it was not necessary to be totally opposed to the Vichy regime. This was to legitimize the regime even if his intentions were to the contrary.

Mounier could argue, of course, that his work ultimately subverted the regime since some members of the Vichy youth groups and the Uriage school later became involved in Resistance activity. Although this may be true, it is an "after-the-fact" argument. Mounier did not preach against the regime while working within its institutions. His Personalism was tolerated because, like Vichy ideology, it condemned individualism, liberalism, and capitalism. Personalism was, in effect, Mounier's own version of the National Revolution.[385]

On the other hand, Mounier's expulsion from the Vichy groups indicates that he was not willing to accept the direction of the government. More important, his work for the Resistance indicates a willingness to oppose Vichy. His

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[385]Paxton has stated that when the Uriage school went underground it was "no less committed to its version of the National Revolution." (Paxton, p. 165.) I am arguing above that this description is appropriate to Mounier as well.

Resistance activity was especially significant in this respect since it began as early as 1941 with Henri Frenay's Combat group.[386]

The dates of Mounier's Vichy work and his Resistance activity overlap, indicating that for a period of time at least, Mounier found no contradiction in doing both. This was so because his motivation in working for these basically political organizations was moral rather than political. In effect, he ignored the existence of the political order, of that realm where people are united as citizens and not simply as moral individuals. This was not really compatible with Thomistic theory which emphasizes the importance of the political to man's total development as a spiritual being.

In Mounier's defense it might be argued that his wartime activity was designed with the ultimate goal of a new political order based on a new set of values. This is also the basis of "witness" activity, the goal of which is the moral education of society. However, unless those concerned with this essentially pedagogical activity are also willing to take political stands, they cannot be considered to be truly political. During the 1930's Mounier's Esprit had taken such stands on all the important political questions facing France. This was especially true of the last half of the decade after

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[386]Mounier's hunger strike, while in a Vichy prison, was also an important anti-Vichy activity. According to Duquesne this received great publicity and had a considerable impact on Catholic opinion. See Duquesne, p. 57. For Mounier's explanation of his hunger strike see his "Journal d'un acte fragile (grève de la faim)," in "Emmanuel Mounier, 1905-1950," Esprit XIX (December, 1950), pp. 731-764.

his encounter with phenomenology. Mounier's actions during the war, however, were essentially ambiguous and in this sense constituted a political failure.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

MARXISM--COMMUNISM

The present chapter attempts to analyze Mounier's relationship with Marxism and Communism. The first section explains Mounier's attraction to the Communist movement during the immediate postwar period. Mounier's theory of progress is considered in this section. The second part of the chapter is concerned with Mounier's understanding of the relationship between Marxist theory and Christianity. The responses of his critics are also presented as well as Mounier's rejoinders. Mounier's later rejection of Communism and his affirmation of liberal principles is the subject of the third section. Finally, a conclusion attempts to evaluate the significance for Catholic thought of Mounier's positions on Marxism and Communism.

The Communist Attraction

The Liberation from the Nazis in 1944 was a euphoric event for Frenchmen. It concluded the long struggle of the Resistance and reinstated the freedom of the French. The Liberation also carried another meaning, one that was essentially political. This was the realization that the freedom of France had been achieved through a great common effort that included such otherwise disparate groups as the Communists and the Christian Democrats. To many this meant that a new political climate now existed. It would now be possible to create a new type of politics based on the cooperation that had been the essence of the Resistance rather than on the old ideological distinctions. "The very simplification of the issues," states Charles Micaud in describing this

optimism, "was a relief; it announced a clear-cut political life in the future: on the one hand, the people of good will, no longer separated by absurd divisions, and on the other, 'les salauds.'"[387]

The chief beneficiaries of this era of goodwill were the Communists who dominated the immediate postwar scene. They had made a great contribution to the Resistance and this impressed Mounier who believed that the Communists had now become "citizens," i.e., loyal to France rather than to an international movement directed from Moscow. The example of the French Communist "résistants" and the Soviet effort against the Nazis convinced Mounier that one could work with the Communists, the new "revolutionaries," to create a Personalist order in France.[388] Jean-Marie Domenach, a colleague of Mounier, describes their feeling at the time:

> The Communist Party appeared to us under a new light: we had seen its militants display their courage and their discipline. How these fraternal men, self-sacrificing, who everywhere had escaped from the Gestapo and the prisons of Spain to renew the fight, how could they be the providers of a new totalitarianism? How could one conceive, at the end of the Nazi horror, that an analogous horror could exist and among the Russian people whose heroism had just contributed so much to our liberation. 389

The French Communist Party had been extremely successful at recruiting younger intellectuals during the Resistance, a

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[387] Charles Micaud, Communism and the French Left (New York: Praeger, 1963), p. 61.

[388] Jean Lacroix, private interview held in Lyons, France, June 22, 1972.

[389] Jean-Marie Domenach, Emmanuel Mounier (Paris: Seuil, 1972), p. 152.

fact of which Mounier was acutely aware. These conversions were often less the result of intellectual considerations than the effect of "the emotional shock of revelation."[390] To these intellectuals the Party was the only political force that enjoyed the confidence of the workers. It offered the possibility of a "collective adventure" and a "virile fraternity" in the cause of social justice.[391] Mounier was deeply effected by the comradeship and revolutionary order of the Communists. For Mounier the wartime Communists had manifested those moral qualities he had committed himself to.

The Communists, it seemed to Mounier, were the only group that was not preoccupied with the despair that seemed to be gripping Europeans, the feeling of meaninglessness in the face of almost a half-century of war. Christians would be of little help in dispelling this despair because of their narcissistic piety and basically ghetto outlook. In the tradition of Ozanam and Sangnier, Mounier had always wanted to train an elite that would be able to organize the workers into a force of great political and moral power. The postwar Communists seemed to be the embodiment of this concept:

> We are now on the site of a new undertaking, we are no longer in a phase of far-off preparation as before, and one can say that the mobilization for the revolution is made. Now we need no longer look to people far from us in order to transform

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[390] Micaud, p. 64.

[391] Ibid., p. 58. See also David Caute, Communism and the French Intellectuals (New York: Macmillan, 1964), p. 154. Caute sees these conversions as similar in content to that of André Malraux in the 1930's.

> them. The revolutionaries are on the scene. Since they are present it is with them that we must work. We can no longer permit ourselves a work carrying on for fifty or a hundred years. 392

Mounier hoped to work within the Party to develop a spiritual understanding of man that would add another dimension to the Party's political principles and save it from its authoritarian tendencies.[393] Mounier was now convinced that the slow, educative work of "witness" was no longer the first duty. The moral qualities demonstrated by the "résistants" and the new Communists convinced him that contemporary man was capable of transcending egotism, of going out of himself for the sake of others in a selfless cause. A new moral era was now at hand; the Esprit "équipe" stood ready to cooperate with it.

Impressed by the Communists, Mounier began his first serious study of Marx while in Dieulefit in 1944. He became convinced that Marxism was far better suited to the task of reorganizing society than Anarchism. Only Marxism was appropriate for a mass industrial society. It alone explained industrialism and its social impact while also providing a moral response to the system it analyzed.

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[392] Mounier, "Les cinq étapes d'Esprit," p. 22.

[393] As if to indicate that Mounier's intentions were realizable, the Party once again tried "la main tendue" to Catholics. Louis Aragon, the Communist poet and writer, saluted the martyrdom of Gilbert Dru, originator of the M.R.P. Roger Garaudy distinguished between the Church hierarchy and the Catholic multitudes, and promised that the Party would never deprive France of its "spiritual dimensions." Both Aragon and Garaudy emphasized their love of family life and pointed to the respectable personal lives of their colleagues. (See David Caute, pp. 163-164.)

The superiority of the Marxist analysis of modern society was particularly important to Mounier because he believed that industrial and technological progress was a genuinely providential development. The Incarnation had dramatized the divine importance of the material world and all of man's activity within it. Christ's redemptive act assured man the power to gradually wipe out the effects of original sin and create a new order where men would be able to integrate the supernatural and the natural: "The new (Christian) man is therefore called upon to make a new earth and the world of the body is asked to put forth its strength, not merely to declare the glory of God, but also to create it."[394] In short, the effort to bring about material progress was part of the "opus divinum" of developing the earth, a continuation of the "work of the Redemption."[395]

In light of the above, Christians shared with Marxists the enormous value of practical activity and everything, e.g., technology, which played a role in that activity. The historical significance of the Communists was therefore twofold: not only did their personal qualities indicate that they were representatives of a new moral order but their Marxist analysis also showed that they were the best informed group regarding the modern organization of the material order.

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[394] Mounier, BNA, p. 98.

[395] Ibid., p. 100. In subsequent pages Mounier indicated that he developed this theme as an antidote to the pervasive despair of the time. This was not the time, he said, for the stark, internal Christianity of Kierkegaard, Pascal or Bloy.

Mounier's theology presumes a belief in historical progress. History is the expression of a spiritual, creative force which was being itself. History was not merely chaos and disorder but a movement toward a final evolutionary point. Mounier's perspective was essentially the same as that of Teilhard de Chardin who, in a letter to Mounier, described this view of history:

> In the world, such as it appears to us today, every element (although limited in its individual trajectory on a brief segment of history) is in reality coextensive (in its preparation, its setting, and its achievement) with the totality of a Time-Space which it is impossible to see in our experience... 396

Both men also understood this process in theological terms although both ordinarily preferred to speak in philosophical concepts. In his Feu la chrétienité, published posthumously, Mounier set out his position in both sets of terms. He credited to the "'dynamic philosophies' of the turn of the century" his belief in the sense of the eternal in matter and the unfinished, continually active nature of creation. All events were part of an evolutionary process toward what Chardin called an "ordre de plus en plus élevé."[397] Theologically this meant that Christ's revelation, far from

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[396] Teilhard de Chardin, "Lettre à Emmanuel Mounier, November 1, 1947," reprinted in Bulletin des amis d'Emmanuel Mounier, XXVII (January, 1966), p. 32. Underlining is that of Chardin. On the relationship between the thought of Chardin and Mounier see also the appendix on this topic in Madeleine Barthélemy-Madaule, La Personne et le drame humain chez Teilhard de Chardin (Paris: Seuil, 1970).

[397] Teilhard de Chardin, "Lettre à Emmanuel Mounier, November 1, 1947," p. 32. See also Mounier, FC, p. 578.

being limited to an historical moment, was gradually revealing its full meaning through events in time. God was thus becoming progressively more immanent until that final moment when earthly life would become fully united with divine life.[398]

However, Mounier took pains to separate his understanding of historical progress from that of Condorcet and the eighteenth-century rationalists. His, he said, was an attitude of "tragic optimism."[399] It included a faith in the idea that history was definitely a progressive movement coupled with the recognition that its progress was in no way consistent or predictable. Although final triumph was assured, evil was also present to sidetrack the movement and give history an ambiguous character. Mounier explained his view of history by the Gospel parable of the grain of wheat and its struggle for growth:

> An accursed harvest springs up throughout the years to make all human Utopias ineffectual...such is the role of 'Christian pessimism.' But growing tirelessly amidst these unhallowed fields is the Kingdom of God, named and unnamed, with slow, irresistible force. If the Book of Revelation gives any indication as to the future of the world, it is in the perspective of

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[398] See FC, pp. 578-579. Mounier here relies on the theology of Henry de Lubac and Cardinal Newman's idea of development to express his Christian understanding of this evolutionary concept.

[399] This phrase originated in Mounier's reaction to the position of the followers of Karl Barth who adhered to what they called his "active pessimism." Mounier, who did not share the more severe, eschatalogical approach of Barth, wished to accentuate the positive capabilities of man while simultaneously indicating an awareness of his flawed nature. Hence, the term "tragic optimism."

> millenia, a long, secret phase interwoven in history, where the new law takes shape progressively within the collective institutions of humanity. [400]

There are two important principles in this perspective and both shaped Mounier's view of Communism. First, the total meaning of history, and therefore of each event in history, would be known only at the end of history. All things somehow work together in the divine plan, but it is impossible to know the relationship of each particular event to this plan. Consequently, one cannot readily judge historical forces be they political movements, military actions, or whatever. The real role that they play in the drama of history cannot be learned from their superficial qualities. Thus, one can only hold to a strong faith in the final good of all events and avoid the "Christian catastrophism" that sees contemporary events as "a fatal downward curve, plunging from one decadence to another...."[401] An immediate condemnation of Communism is therefore unacceptable.

Secondly, the ambiguity of history prohibits the automatic linking of the spiritual with politically "moderate" solutions. This, argued Mounier, is what the Christian Democrats and Catholics in general always managed to do. The Christian must remain open to history, to "le sens de la durée," and this requires that he avoid the tendency to make a priori judgements on events. Mounier argued that that which comes

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[400] Mounier, BNA, p. 12.

[401] Ibid., p. 11.

from the values of the people has as much worth as that which results from decrees. The implication was that Communism, coming as he claimed it did from the working class and the heroic Marxist Resistance fighters, deserved more than a reflex judgement based on abstract principles.[402]

Mounier's understanding of the relationship between Communism and history seems extremely uncritical. As sympathetic an observer as Jean-Marie Domenach considers Mounier to have been "deceived" during this period and to have understood Communism only in the most "utopian" sense.[403] This willingness to believe that Communism was somehow the work of "historical Reason itself" was common to many intellectuals of the period."[404] They saw the Party as "the predestined executor of history's purpose" and were willing to tolerate its excesses and aberrations for that reason.[405] A willing belief in the intentions of the Communist Party was substituted for reasoned analysis of political and economic questions.

Mounier's willingness to invest the Communist Party with a special role may also have been very much influenced by then recent Catholic studies of the working class. In 1943

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[402]Mounier, "Les cinq étapes d'Esprit, p. 25.

[403]Jean-Marie Domenach, private interview held at Châtenay-Malabry, France, June 10, 1972.

[404]Raymond Aron, Marxism and the Existentialists (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), p. 9. See also Aron's The Opium of the Intellectuals (New York: Norton, 1962).

[405]George Lichtheim, Marxism in Modern France (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), p. 74.

Godin and Daniel published La France: pays de mission which had an enormous impact on religious thought in France. The authors demonstrated that the working class, predominantly Communist, had gradually left the Church en masse.[406] Mounier wished to inculcate in the workers his progressive Christian values. This, he undoubtedly realized, would be impossible if it were undertaken apart from or in opposition to the Communist Party as the legitimate spokesman of the workers' interests. It became vitally important therefore to demonstrate the basic compatibility of Christianity and Marxism.

Christianity and Communism

Mounier's Argument

Mounier's attitude toward Marxism was not always as positive as it was during the post-war period. In A Personalist Manifesto (1936) he stated that, "Marxism is basically a negation of the spiritual as an autonomous, primary, and creative reality."[407] In an earlier work, Révolution personnaliste et communautaire, he stated that Marxism is "a totalitarian philosophy making of all spiritual activity a reflection of economic circumstances, neglecting or denying

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[406] In addition to La France: pays de mission, numerous other studies on this topic were also published. They have been described in Adrien Dansette's Destin du catholicisme français, 1926-1956 (Paris: Flammarion, 1957). See also the last chapter of René Rémond, Histoire du catholicisme français, vol. III: La periode contemporaine (Paris: Spes, 1962).

[407] Mounier, PM, p. 52.

the mysteries of man and of being...."[408] Marxism's rejection of the spiritual meant the denial of eternal truths and the refusal to accept values as transcending the individual, time or space. Spiritual reality was only a series of "'ideological reflections'" to Marx.

The denial of the spiritual prevented Marx from distinguishing between materialism and realism. In his justifiable rejection of disembodied spiritualism, Marx failed to recognize the possibility of an "integral spiritual realism" which fully appreciated the intimate bond between the spiritual and physical in man. Consequently, Marx, according to Mounier, understood man's highest vocation to be the domination of nature and this Mounier rejected because of its relegation of the spiritual to a subordinate position.

The person was all but obliterated in this materialism. Mounier identified with Marx's dedication to the liberation of the oppressed but criticized him for not seeing the person as the "primary existential reality." This was the "fundamental problem" with Marxism.[409] It was basically an optimism of collective man, the mass, and not of the person. Indeed, the person received his training from the mass whose version of truth was ideology. In the end this amounted to a profound pessimism regarding the person and his subjection to the "spiritual imperialism of collective man."[410]

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[408] Mounier, RPC, p. 231.

[409] Mounier, PM, p. 47.

[410] Ibid., p. 65.

In the years immediately following the war, however, collectivism suddenly ceased to be a problem. On the contrary, it now held positive potentialities. Collectivism, Mounier now argued, was a reminder that "we are men amongst men, existing...through other men as much and often more than through solitary self-communion. We should not leave the beautiful concept of a common destiny in the hands of Fascists."[411] Mounier believed, furthermore, that "...in the objective course of history the trend towards the emergence of ever vaster communities is linked with the movement towards personalization."[412] "We are too hasty," he said, "in believing that 'the person' is endangered by new forms of life and human relationships which offend the individualistic survivals in our sentiments."[413] Nevertheless, Mounier wanted a collectivism that would not terminate all personal liberties. The collectivism he envisioned was to be one of "free and responsible persons.... We do not cherish the Utopia of a revolution through good will. But we wish to safeguard the spirit without which necessary disciplines will engender tyrants."[414] His goal was still a "humanist socialism, a liberal communism.... We want socialism to save

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[411] Mounier, BNA, p. 127.

[412] Ibid., p. 167.

[413] Ibid., p. 151.

[414] Mounier, BNA, p. 169.

man."[415] This, he hoped, would ultimately develop in the Soviet Union.[416]

This optimism, however, appears to have been based on an ignorance of the realities of Soviet life. Like other intellectuals of the Left Mounier did not seriously concern himself at this period with the climate of constant fear and accusation and the continual purges that characterized Soviet collectivism under Stalin.[417] Mounier had never been an admirer of the Soviet Union and remained convinced, as many others did, that it would be possible to build a French Communism that would indeed be "humanist" and "liberal" because these were the basic values of French society.

If Mounier's initial interest in Communism was the result of his encounter with wartime Communists, his intellectual defense of Marxism was based primarily on the phenomenology of Max Scheler and Gabriel Marcel. In Marxism, Mounier saw a militant version of Marcel's principle that man is a "situated" being whose understanding of life is shaped by his surroundings and the people he encounters. Man is a "being-in-the-world" who cannot be comprehended apart from his incarnation in matter. "There is not, therefore,...a life of the soul separated from the life of the body, no

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[415] Mounier, "Les cinq étapes d'Esprit," p. 24.

[416] Mounier, BNA, p. 165.

[417] On the widespread failure of left-wing intellectuals to examine critically political life in the Soviet Union see David Caute, The Fellow-Travellers: A Postscript to the Enlightenment (New York: Macmillan, 1973).

moral reform without technical adaptation, no spiritual revolution without material revolution. The great merit of Marxism lies in demonstrating this solidarity and analyzing it in its modern reality."[418]

Marxism is correct in "de-spiritualizing, de-moralizing, dis-abstracting" social and political problems from the formulas assigned to them by spiritually-oriented minds. It is as much of a distortion to speak of the "primacy of the spiritual" as it is to claim primacy for the economic. "There is no linear causality between these two abstractions, body and spirit. They are one through the other or, better, one in the other. If it is really necessary to speak of causality, it would be better to speak of a circular causality or, as the Marxists sometimes say themselves, of dialectic causality: they are the reciprocal expressions of levels of reality."[419]

Thus Marxism's contribution was its vigorous reaction against what Mounier saw as a decadent spiritualism. Marxism provided, to borrow Nietzsche's phrase, "a sense of the earth." Although existentialist philosophies might give a fuller perspective on man, they are "not able to lay hold of him in the raw material of sociology, on the level of the disorders which affect everyday life, and thus connect clarity of thought with the effectiveness of transformation."[420]

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[418] Mounier, BNA, p. 160.

[419] Ibid.

[420] Ibid., p. 154.

Mounier argued that the materialist emphasis of Marxism was basically a healthy development for Christianity. During the medieval period, Christian philosophy had defended the necessity of passing through the knowledge and handling of matter in order finally to discover God. In the modern age Christianity, under the influence of philosophic idealism, had taken a spiritualist turn. Christian piety had become concerned in the extreme with the individual's "interior life" and emotional states. The Marxist ethic preached a self-sacrificing commitment to social justice and thus reminded the Christian of his duty to selflessly respond to the needs of his neighbor.[421] According to Mounier the Christian, like the Marxist, should realize that he was inextricably a part of the material world and could fulfill himself only by actively involving himself in it. This was the real meaning of Christian liberty.[422]

The religious value of Marx's materialism was especially evident in the concept of the sociology of knowledge. This aspect of Marx's thought provided Mounier with a more systematic basis for his argument that the values of liberal democracy acted as a justification for the acquisitive activities of capitalists and that an economic revolution was necessary if religious, political, and cultural institutions were to be purged of their bourgeois values. This was the first time that Mounier directly linked religious reform to

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[421] Mounier, CD, p. 619.

[422] Ibid., p. 618.

economic revolution. Marx's concept explained the gradual and relentless development of "bourgeois Christianity" which had come to replace the radical doctrine that was early Christianity.

In Mounier's mind, Marx's sociology of knowledge corroborated Péguy's understanding of the decline of all values, of the degeneration of all "mystiques" into "politiques." The forms which spiritual values took were always imperfect reflections of spiritual reality, the result of their infraction by materiality. "In descending into history," explained Mounier, values "begin with a period of youthfulness and flexibility. Then, little by little, they harden, crystalizing themselves in formulas and these formulas eventually come to be dead.... Their words are dead, even the best and most just words."[423] It is the duty of spiritual men not simply to defend but to renew spiritual forms in an effort to respond to the "durée," the constant flux, of history.[424]

Obviously, Mounier is making use of Marx's materialism without accepting the totality of his theory. As one might expect of a disciple of Scheler and Marcel as well as of Bergson, Mounier refused to accept the argument that all values were ultimately expressions of the means of production.

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[423] Mounier, "Les cinq étapes d'Esprit," p. 23.

[424] It is interesting to note that in its Second Vatican Council the Catholic Church endorsed this understanding of change in using it to explain the need for a restatement of dogma and for the profound changes in liturgical practice, essentially a realm of value and symbol. This was in marked contrast to the Church's earlier positions which had always identified a possession of the truth with a freedom from the effects of historical change.

The sociology of knowledge was a limited truth: values were strongly influenced and shaped by material forces. Renewal could take place only when this truth was recognized.

Although he understood the completely materialistic character of Marxism, Mounier repeatedly called for an "open" Marxism as opposed to the "scholastic" version which adamantly refused to acknowledge a fundamental spiritual function in man. The doctrine of alienation and the general concerns of the "early Marx" indicated to Mounier the possibility of creating a fuller Marxism or, in the phrase of the period, of getting "beyond Marxism."[425] In this way he felt justified in using Marxism to highlight the corrupting influence of bourgeois attitudes on Christianity and the consequent necessity of radical socioeconomic change to liberate religious values.

According to Mounier the relationship of the Communists to Western civilization was comparable to that of the barbarian tribes to the fourth and fifth century church. When the barbarians destroyed the Roman Empire and many of its institutions the Fathers of the Church might have been excused if they had believed that the Church was being destroyed along with these structures. It would have been natural to bind the Church to the ancient world whose institutions had

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[425] Twice in "What Is Personalism?" Mounier castigates those who talk of "transcending" or getting "beyond" Marxism without really understanding Marxism itself. In both places, however, he adds that Marxists should not really object to this since man is a spiritual being. Cf., BNA, pp. 157, 172. Mounier makes the same point in "Personnalisme et socialisme," Cité-Soir (August 4, 1945) as reprinted in Bulletin des amis d'Emmanuel Mounier, XXIX (March, 1967), p. 32.

allowed it to grow. However, they had the "audacious courage" to reject this and to catechize the barbarians who were to become the new Church. "Today we have an analagous situation." Concerning spiritual values, Mounier continued, "our role is to rediscover them under new appearances and perhaps it will be necessary that we be very open to that which appears to us as barbaric, to uncultivated men of little right and little knowledge if these men carry within them a richness of dedication of action, and of future."[426] The reference, Mounier made clear was to the Communists and to active cooperation with them.

With the zeal of a new convert Mounier preached the message of commitment to the revolution while de-emphasizing the "spiritual techniques" of the past.[427] The postwar period might be the last real opportunity for revolution.[428] At such a time efforts "to define a moral politics, a spiritual revolution..., if they did have a significant influence on the general atmosphere of public life, [would result] politically in ineffectiveness or confusion."[429]

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[426] Mounier, "Les cinq étapes d'Esprit, pp. 23-24.

[427] Perhaps the best indication that Mounier had become preoccupied with political activity at the cost of simple "témoignage" was his failure to revive the Journal Intérieur and the activist organizations of the Esprit groups of prewar period. There is no indication in his writings or correspondence that he considered such activities to be of primary importance after the war. These were primarily pedagogical techniques and their absence shows Mounier's change of direction.

[428] Mounier, CD, p. 619.

[429] Mounier, "Morale et révolution," Cité-Soir (October 22, 1945), reprinted in Bulletin des amis d'Emmanuel Mounier, XXIX (March, 1967), p. 34. Underlining is Mounier's.

The clearest indication of Mounier's turn toward Communism and away from his earlier positions was his intense rejection of those who argued that no matter how laudable the end, the means chosen to accomplish it had to be "pure" of any oppression. Having once held this position himself Mounier was now unmerciful in his criticism of it: "The delirium of absolute purity, a mania for perfection, and extravagant idealism are common symptoms of psychosis and simple neurosis. They are not the hallmarks of an elite, but a degeneration of the psyche.... They are to be found in persons whose most marked characteristic is a flight from reality."[430] Furthermore, the emphasis on purity was frequently an unconscious concern to avoid disturbing one's own tranquility and material integrity when it was not simply the result of political innocence.[431]

Mounier associated the "purity of means" position with those who continually argued that it was necessary to oppose the Communists in order to defend the cultural and the spiritual. Mounier rejected this as defeatist. Such a position wrongly accepted the revolution as a _fait accompli_, as something that had been formed once and for all and could not be altered. The revolution was something to be continually created and spiritual people ought to humanize it rather than formulate unequivocal positions against it. The humanist component of the revolution could only be genuine if it

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[430] Mounier, _BNA_, p. 119.

[431] _Ibid._, p. 122.

developed from within the revolutionary movement. Spiritual people would only know what was required by immersing themselves in the situation itself. "For the truth of human things does not rise ready-made from the axis of two coordinates; it is born of a community of destiny, from the cares, the problems, even the errors of those whose fate we share; it emerges from the comradeship of the road rather than from the diagrams of the workshop."[432]

Since Mounier already believed that the working class represented the destiny of man at that point and that the Communist Party was, at least for the present, the representative of the working class, the goal was to make the Communist revolution serve the "total man," to "save it for human ends."[433] Personalism must not divide the revolutionary forces by an insistence on its own program. Rather, the revolution should be humanized from within by those who understood its ultimate goals.[434] "Personalism would only adopt a minimum of outward form within a revolutionary movement into which it would endeavor to infuse its own energy."[435] Mounier summed up this new goal by contrasting it with his intention during the first years of Esprit. Whereas the ideal during the 1930's had been to "revolutionize spiritual people," i.e., develop a radical political consciousness in them, the work

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[432] Ibid., p. 181.

[433] Mounier, "Morale et révolution," p. 34.

[434] Mounier, CD, p. 619.

[435] Mounier, BNA, p. 131.

of the present, when revolution was immanent, was to "spiritualize the revolutionaries," to sensitize the Communist movement to the needs of the person and thereby create a humanist socialism.

While supporting the revolutionary movement, Mounier denounced "the barbarity of success at any price." Politics was not just the acquisition of power but "the service of the total man."[436] In this respect Mounier's new program was not so different from his pre-war "engagement." In 1935 he had written that "if the destiny of man requires that man's attention and energies be momentarily monopolized by a political act, this act ought to be guided by its end and its implications concerning personal man and not by the game of political activity."[437] This was the meaning of his Péguyste ideal that, "la révolution sera morale ou elle ne sera pas," and it was also in keeping with Aquinas' teaching on politics.

The difference between Mounier's early and later period rested in the means chosen to bring politics into harmony with man's ultimate end, and in this regard his active support of the revolution represents nearly a one-hundred-eighty degree turnabout. During Esprit's first two years, 1932-1934, Mounier and his colleagues had been content to separate higher values from compromising alliances with the political order. However, as the review became politically involved under the influence of Landsberg, the amis activist groups were

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[436]Mounier, "Morale et révolution," p. 34.

[437]Mounier, Journal Intérieur, I, (November, 1935), p. 9.

instructed to extend their "witness" in society through the organizational means offered by cultural, professional, religious groups, etc. When, for personalist reasons, Mounier finally decided to work with the revolution being led by the Communists, he was, in effect, making an alliance between spiritual values and the political order even if he did not make it an official one. He was gambling, as he admitted, that the Communist revolution could be combined with moral ends.[438]

Criticism and Rejoinders

Mounier's critics, particularly those within the Christian community, were quick to respond to his move to the Left and especially to his philosophical and theological justifications for it. The criticism most frequently made against him was that he had identified material progress with spiritual progress, that material progress was somehow an instrument of the Redemption.[439] Jacques Ellul, for example, argued that Mounier saw Christianity as capable of incorporating all that is good.[440] Christianity is called to become a sum of

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[438] Mounier, BNA, p. 196.

[439] Pierre Debray, "Les origines intellectual du progressisme chrétien," L'Ordre français, (November, 1960), p. 64. This criticism of Mounier has been made in a variety of ways by other writers as well. See, for example, Pierre Boisdeffre, "Le drame d'Esprit," Liberté de l'Esprit, (March, 1949) as reprinted in Boisdeffre, Des vivants et des morts (Paris: Éditions universitaires, 1954), p. 14; Gaston Fessard, "Lettre à Emmanuel Mounier," Études, (January, 1949) as reprinted in Fessard, De l'actualité historique, (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1960), p. 421 and Robert Rouquette, "French Catholicism Confronts Communism," Thought (Autumn, 1953), p. 367.

[440] Jacques Ellul, "Pourquoi je me suis séparé de Mounier," Réforme (April 15, 1950).

everything which man accomplishes on earth. All that is authentically human is man's achievements is cause for a further deepening or "developing" of Christianity as it gradually reveals its full meaning and thereby continues the process of Revelation.

If Mounier's theology of the Incarnation is an unusual one, it is by no means outside of Christian tradition. This point is emphasized by Frederick Copleston, the British historian of philosophy and Catholic critic of Mounier. While disagreeing with Mounier's vision, Copleston points out that it is "acceptable and fits in with Christian teaching about the purpose of creation and of human history."[441] Copleston notes that Mounier, while insisting on the theological significance of material progress, denies neither the existence of original sin nor the need of grace in overcoming its effects.[442] Similar points have been made by Mounier's defenders.[443]

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[441] Frederick Copleston, S.J., "Mounier, Marxism and Man," The Month (October, 1951), p. 204.

[442] As chapter two of this study has pointed out Mounier's understanding of man, especially regarding the question of original sin, is clearly within the Catholic tradition. Thus the remarks of Leslie Paul and Jacques Ellul that Mounier essentially lacked a sense of original sin and was "almost a Pelagian," are not accurate. See Leslie Paul, "Forward," BNA, p. XX and Ellul, "Pourquoi..."

[443] An excellent theological defense of Mounier's optimistic understanding of secular progress such as technological change is presented by Patrick Hill in "Emmanuel Mounier: Total Christianity and Practical Marxism," Cross Currents, XVIII (Winter, 1968). Paul Ricoeur makes the important point that Mounier's optimism regarding technology and Marxism must be read in conjunction with The Spoil of the Violent (SV) in which Mounier emphasizes the transcendence of God and man's reliance on God in achieving his goals. See Ricoeur, "Une philosophe personnaliste," Esprit, XIX (December, 1950), p. 876.

Those who have condemned Mounier's position have shown a particularly narrow perspective on the Christian tradition. Christianity, as Raymond Aron has pointed out, has generally oscillated between two poles on the question of material progress and economic justice.[444] The "quietist" position devalues such temporal concerns as insignificant compared to the salvation of the soul. The "revolutionary" position, on the other hand, requires that Christians take whatever political action is necessary, including revolution, to establish a society in which all persons will be able to develop themselves fully both naturally and supernaturally. Mounier's critics have, in effect, disqualified this position as a plausible Christian alternative.

However, there are important weaknesses in Mounier's understanding of the relationship between Christianity and secular events. According to Marcel Clément, Mounier's expansive version of Christianity has made its permanent principles irrelevant. In his attempt to accept the real, Mounier has refused any social doctrine based on abstract principles. The Christian does indeed accept events, argues Clément, but he does so from a perspective of Christian doctrine.[445] Although God is indeed the final judge of all history, the Christian must necessarily judge events according to Christian principles and this means the condemnation of various ideas

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[444]Raymond Aron, Marxism and the Existentialists (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), p. 104.

[445]Marcel Clément, "Emmanuel Mounier," Itineraires (July-August, 1959), pp. 70-72.

and movements which are opposed to those principles. God's purpose in revealing Himself through the Old Testament prophets and Christ was to make such judgments possible. Mounier has placed these principles in suspension while judging by his own lights.

A similar criticism was presented by the Jesuit theologian, Gaston Fessard, who argued that although God's judgment of history does indeed occur at the end of time, it is dès maintenant. The word of God, through scripture and the Church, reveals God's norms for judgment. The Christian makes use of them in taking responsibility for his own actions despite his inability to read the total message of history. Having based their perspective on man as an engaged, participative being, Personalists should be the last to counsel a non-judgmental approach to historical events which shape the person's situation.[446]

The criticisms of Clément and Fessard point out an important weakness in Mounier's approach. If Mounier accepted the position that Christianity meant radical social change, that position did not require him to accept all of the means employed for that purpose. Perhaps the most striking aspect of Mounier's treatment of Communism is his failure, prior to 1948, to judge the atrocities that took place in the Soviet Union during Stalin's reign. The philosophy of history that Mounier shared with Bergson and Teilhard de Chardin did not

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[446]Gaston Fessard, "Lettre à Emmanuel Mounier," Études (January, 1949) as reprinted in Fessard, De l'actualité historique (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1960), pp. 421-424.

require this abstentionist attitude. The belief that history was moving toward a point of higher human development did not mean that each institution should be received uncritically or draped in the mantle of divine providence.[447] Indeed, this had been the very point of Mounier's "tragic optimism" and he had based his career on the need to evaluate critically all human structures. Mounier's intense desire for social justice focused all his hope on Communism and prevented him from analyzing this system rigorously.[448]

Fessard also accused Mounier of being one of the "Chrétiens Progressistes," whose basic principle was that to be Christian at that historical moment meant also to be Communist.[449] The term "Chrétien Progressiste" was a loose one used to describe some of the members of the worker-priest movement, most of Père Montuclard's "Jeunesse de l'Église," and the Union des Chrétiens Progressistes itself. Common to all was a social criticism identical with that of Mounier whose ideas had been influential on many of the members, particularly Père Montuclard. Like Mounier, all of the Progressistes were searching for a more vigorous and communitarian

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[447] Michel Mourre, "Mounier: prophète, charitable et sanglant," Aspects de la France et du Monde (October 5, 1971).

[448] Raymond Aron effectively relates this theme to left-wing intellectuals in general regarding their relationship to the Communist Party. See The Opium of the Intellectuals (New York: Norton, 1962), especially pp. 119-120.

[449] Fessard was a Hegelian who had come to his understanding of Marx by way of Kojève's interpretation of Hegel. For a description of Fessard's perspective on Marx see George Lichtheim, Marxism in Modern France (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), pp. 104-107.

brand of Christianity. They were in agreement with the editor of Esprit on the necessity of revolutionary engagement which would not be limited to the efforts of Catholic groups but would cooperate with all those who shared their views. All were intensely opposed to capitalism.

Many of this group, which was not significant numerically, had worked in the Resistance and had been particularly impressed with the intense and selfless dedication of the Communists in that movement. Having shared with the latter a passion for radical social change, they felt betrayed when the revolutionary platform of the M.R.P. turned out to be little more than a collection of slogans. Refusing to accept a post-Liberation political order which once again placed the Communists in the opposition, they elected a number of their own members to the Assembly and worked among left-wing Catholics to convince them of the need for a Marxist economic order.

Mounier had a number of good friends among the Chrétiens Progressistes including Montuclard whose movement for a communitarian Catholicism he had assisted in the very early 1940's. Mounier was also acquainted with the generally acknowledged leader of the Progressistes, André Mandouze, and was an especially close friend of one of the worker-priests in the movement, Abbé André Dépierre, who, only a few years later, would celebrate the funeral mass for Mounier. At the beginning of the movement Mounier had contributed articles to the Progressistes' journal and throughout this period opened the pages of Esprit to Progressiste authors. Hence, Fessard's

accusation was hardly surprising if in essence it was untrue.

To accuse Mounier of being a Chrétien Progressiste was to assert that he agreed with the basic principle of the movement that to be a Christian also meant to be Marxist. Despite his favorable turn toward Marxism and Communism during the first few years of the post-war era he had rigorously avoided claiming that Christianity implied either. Although there could have been no doubt in the minds of Esprit readers that Mounier identified with much of Marxism, was more favorably disposed toward the Communists than any other political groups and believed that the collectivist revolution was "in the sense of history," he had never connected being a Christian with being a member of the Communist Party.

Mounier's first objection to such an alliance was the same one he had directed against the Christian Democrats and against the political forces of the Right: religion and politics were of fundamentally different spheres and although religious values should inspire politics the latter could never be linked with the former because the two were of distinct metaphysical orders. The divergent claims of Christian Monarchists, Christian Democrats, and Christian Marxists showed clearly enough, he said at this time, that "if Christianity does require a spirit in politics, it does not require a politics in itself."[450]

If Mounier had consistently opposed the alliance of Christianity with any specific political form, he had not

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[450] Mounier, "Les chrétiens progressistes," in FC, OM, III, p. 634.

been impartial in his rejection of all such alliances. Étienne Borne, a leading Christian Democratic theorist and a friend of Mounier, pointed out that Mounier was far more vitriolic in his opposition to the M.R.P. than he was to the Chrétiens Progressistes although both groups were presumably guilty of the same error.[451] The explanation, of course, rests in Mounier's rejection of capitalism and liberal democracy. The Christian Democrats supported these institutions of the "established disorder."

Fessard's accusation is especially important because it forced Mounier to state clearly his philosophical differences with Marxism. The Chrétien Progressiste, Mounier argued in replying to Fessard, had to be both genuinely Christian and genuinely Progressive. He could not arrive at the latter position by blurring the meaning of the former. There were fundamental principles of materialistic Communism that a Christian could not accept.[452] Collaboration was possible on the level of politics but not, ultimately, on the level of metaphysics.[453] In this respect Mounier clearly rejected the Marxist appeal to "l'homme total."

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[451] See Borne's book, Mounier (Paris: Seghers, 1972).

[452] Mounier, "Les chrétiens progressistes," p. 633. On this point see Donald Wolf, "Emmanuel Mounier: A Catholic of the Left," Review of Politics, XXII (July, 1960), p. 333.

[453] In 1949 a Vatican decree prohibited Catholics from joining the Communist Party or from aiding in the establishment of a "materialist and atheist regime." Although this ended any possibility of an overt alliance between Mounier and the Communists it did not, he argued, rule out Esprit's position of cooperation with them.

Most important among the "fundamental principles" that concerned Mounier was the relationship between the supernatural and the temporal order. André Mandouze, the Progressiste leader, had succinctly described the Progressiste interpretation of this relationship: the spiritual belonged to Christianity and the political to Marxism.[454] Fessard insisted that Mounier supported this position which was essentially heretical since the Church, although recognizing with Aquinas a properly political sphere, had always taught that politics had to be understood in the perspective of man's final end. In this sense the temporal realm belonged to Christianity as well as the supernatural. Throughout his life it had been Mounier's goal to bring politics more in harmony with this final end. Indeed, all of his engagé activities including his interest in Marxism had been directed toward this goal.

Mounier responded to Fessard by explaining his understanding of the inherent unity of human nature which would prohibit his ever adhering to the position of Mandouze and the Progressistes: "... The natural and supernatural, although distinct, are organically united in human conduct.... If Marxism explains an important part of this conduct and gives us through this explanation an indication of significant solutions, by the very fact that it ignores sacred history and the supernatural part of man it cannot lay claim, in the eyes of the Christian, to the exclusive or even primordial

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[454] André Mandouze, "Prendre la main tendue," in Henri Guillemin, Les Chrétiens et la politique (Paris: Éditions du temps present, 1948).

empire of the temporal. This is the position that I have a hundred times affirmed."[455] It was precisely this error, the idea of "politique d'abord," he continued, that was at the heart of the Action française and which had caused him and his friends in the 1930's to overreact by creating a vague amalgam of politics and morality.[456]

Mounier also rejected the Progressiste claim that Communism was the only acceptable political way because it alone enjoyed the overwhelming loyalty of the workers. In replying to Fessard he stated that, "not Communism which we agree raises other problems, but the socialist and proletarian movements of the last hundred years,...they go in the sense of history."[457] The point, he said, is "that there is in Communism something which, insofar as it is simply a part of socialism, responds to the actual demands of profane history ..."[458] It was unnecessary, therefore, to subscribe to all aspects of Communism or all positions of the Party. "The editor of Esprit and his friends," states George Lichtheim, "shared with the heretical Chrétiens Progressistes only the rejection of capitalism.... This, however, was balanced by a repudiation of Communist collectivism and materialism, so

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[455] Mounier, "Lettre à Père Fessard, January 22, 1949," OM, IV, p. 647.

[456] Ibid.

[457] Ibid., p. 642.

[458] Ibid., p. 641.

that, unlike the Progressistes, the circle around Mounier always maintained its essential independence."[459]

In actual fact Mounier did maintain this independence throughout his career[460] although he definitely de-emphasized it during the immediate post-war period, i.e., 1944-1947. By 1948, however, with the increased evidence of Communist repression in Eastern Europe, Mounier's independence became emphatically clear again.[461] Events in Eastern Europe would lead to Mounier's official break with the Party and to his arrival at a final position on political and economic change.

Disillusionment and a Final Position

Mounier's new critical approach toward postwar Communism began with a commentary on the political trial and execution of a Bulgarian party functionary named Petkov. In Mounier's opinion the Petkov case demonstrated the oppressive nature of Communist parties. Although they began by inviting all disparate groups to express their views in a fraternal dialogue, these parties ended by completely suppressing all opinions but their own and by executing their most successful opponents. "That which causes us anguish is not that a government

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[459] Lichtheim, p. 104.

[460] This position is demonstrated by Henri Marrou, "L'action politique d'Emmanuel Mounier," Les Cahiers de la République, II (1956) and Jean Lacroix, "Un témoin et un guide: Emmanuel Mounier," Vie et verité, serie LI, #402 (1960-1961).

[461] This two-part division of Mounier's post-war period is the interpretation of Jean-Marie Domenach and was communicated to this writer during an interview on June 10, 1972. Mounier's writings clearly corroborate this view.

acts rigorously and leads the ship of state against hostile forces; it is the feeling of an inexorable machine which, once set in motion, functions blindly and risks devouring the socialist revolution along with its adversaries."[462]

Although he tried to give the Communists more than the benefit of the doubt in the Prague coup of 1948, this event provoked in him much the same response as the execution of Petkov in Bulgaria. The Prague coup, Mounier began, could not be legitimately criticized by Western intellectuals because they had accepted Franco's rule in Spain and American imperialism in Greece. Nor did French anti-Communists have any right to criticize since they had helped bring about the betrayal of the politics of the Liberation by isolating the Communist Party. Again he insisted that he understood the need for unity in a revolution, even a forced unity, in order to protect the revolution from reactionary forces which sought to destroy it.

In Prague, however, the Communists had demonstrated once again that they were incapable of cooperating with others to create a "rassemblement" of revolutionary socialist forces characterized by a "creative diversity."[463] This was a "capital fault" for European socialism because it automatically precluded a truly democratic and evolutionary socialism and substituted instead an authoritarian structure that would make all but a few into subordinates. "That which we dread is

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[462]Mounier, "Petkov en nous," CD, OM, IV, p. 149.

[463]Mounier, "Prague," CD, OM, IV, p. 154.

not order and socialist discipline. It is the process in which this order becomes tyranny, where this discipline supports paralysis, where the police generalize fear, the degradation and corruption of consciences.... A socialist revolution is a real, honest, and efficacious organization of democracy."[464] The one in Prague, however, had quickly passed from discipline to oppression.

To Mounier it was essential that people not become fearful and immobilized in the face of revolution since this would mean the end of real democracy. Because the socialist revolutions in Eastern Europe failed in this task, Mounier asked in 1948 if it were not possible that the socialist revolution was premature. If a Leninist type of revolution did not find a substantial number of citizens to receive it, did this not mean that other, more gradual methods were needed to prepare the political community for socialism?

Mounier answered an immediate "yes" to the above questions. The overriding necessity was to assist the growth of socialism by "constructing the socialist world cell by cell: in labor unions, in business enterprises, in the youth organizations, in the institutions of culture, everywhere, we must help the people to make themselves a people. Because the revolution that we want will be the work of a living people, not the administrative task of a State...."[465] The task of the "Personalist Centers" would be to animate a

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[464] Ibid., p. 155.

[465] Ibid., p. 159.

people to reflect and to dare to think of socialist alternatives. Those who worked in these centers would neither close themselves off to any political group nor attack any but would attempt to build "cell by cell, conscience by conscience, the tissue of our country." The result, it was hoped, would be "a more courageous man, a less confused idea, the death of a lie, a convergent progress and an institutionalization, if possible, of the collective spirit and good individual conduct."[466]

Mounier's new approach to socialism was essentially a return to the means he had used in the prewar period to render operational his Proudhonian doctrines. In both cases he wanted "socialism to save man." Although Communism still deserved first consideration because of its organizational capacities and the loyalty that it enjoyed among the workers, in the final analysis it too had to provide first for the development of the person or be rejected as a failure. When the Communist regimes revealed their totalitarian character, Mounier sadly and reluctantly forsook the movement and returned to the earlier means of political education believing, as he always had, that if the truth can only be made known to men they will accept it. In 1949 he began an article on the Hungarian situation with the statement: "The most painful question of our time: that of the research and communication of the truth."[467]

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[466] *Ibid.*, p. 160.

[467] Mounier, "Le procès du Cardinal Mindzenty," CD, OM, IV, p. 161.

At the Communist Congress of Montreuil in April of 1949, Maurice Thorez acknowledged the numerous positions that Mounier and the Party held in common and he publicly offered the "main tendue" to him to join the Party. In light of the above, however, it was not surprising that Mounier declined. He replied to Thorez that the Party, like the Church at times, had developed a "bonne conscience" and could not recognize the conflicts in its actions. While claiming to liberate man, it regimented all who wished to work with it. No only did it refuse any ideological deviation but Communist regimes resorted to brainwashing to induce conformity. He would not join the Party and remain faithful to his Personalist principles, as he explained to Thorez in a response entitled, "Do Not Ask Us Not to Be Ourselves."[468]

Communist Party intellectuals were quick to respond to Mounier's shift to a principled opposition to Marxism and to the Communist regimes. Jean Kanapa, editor of the Marxist La nouvelle critique, attacked Mounier's metaphysical concerns. In time of national emergency, Kanapa argued, one had no right to worry about differences in metaphysics and theology. This had been true for the Resistance, and Kanapa wished to apply it to the postwar scene and "American imperialism" implying that only the Communists could successfully counter the latter. "That God exists or does not exist does not count. Today what counts is the dangers which menace the independence of France and the urgent necessity, infinitely

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[468] Mounier, "Ne nous demandez pas de ne pas être nous-mêmes," CD, OM, IV, pp. 172-176.

urgent, of realizing a solid front uniting all French democrats whatever their beliefs or doctrines.[469] At heart Mounier's purpose was not to help the forces of Communism, said Kanapa, but simply to increase his popularity among young Christian intellectuals. By his seeming independence of the Church, he had attracted many of these youthful thinkers and, to keep their allegiance, he had to "do his part" regarding Marxism.

Roger Garaudy, the Party's leading intellectual at the time, replied to Mounier with a vitriolic attack which dealt with Mounier's questions in an even more self-righteous manner than Kanapa's. Garaudy accused Mounier of using socialism to undermine the socialist revolution. By emphasizing the ideas of the early Marx, he was trying to sabotage Leninist and Stalinist Marxism which represented the development of Marx's doctrine. By defending the deviations of Tito's Yugoslavia on the grounds of freedom, he encouraged the forces of reaction in Communist countries.

The core of Garaudy's position, however, was an attack on Mounier's defense of personal freedom and the spiritual prerogatives of the person. The Communist ideologist did not deal with these objections in themselves but found it sufficient to associate them with the forces of anti-communism:

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[469] Jean Kanapa, "Avec les Catholiques le dialogue est possible...mais il faut une vigilance réciproque," Cahiers du communisme, XXV (August, 1948), p. 823. Underlining is Kanapa's.

> The actors and the decor have changed but the same refrains are repeated: the 'human person' against the robot, the dogmatic bureaucracy of the Cominform against dignity, the people of the spirit against Stalinism, all the angels of the paradise of Esprit against the demons of the hell of materialism, in brief, all the clichés that were repeated from Blum to Churchill, from de Gaulle to Truman, from Franco to Pétain, under the title of humanism or personalism, of 'occidental and Christian civilization' or the 'national revolution.' 470

Marxism is the philosophy of the working class and all criticisms of it, no matter what their nature, are essentially attacks on the working class, "your revisionism like all the others."[471] L'Humanité pronounced the same verdict on Mounier a few months later on the occasion of his death.[472] Ultimately, said Garaudy quoting Kanapa, Mounier's Marxism was only the expression of his desire to hold the loyalty of young intellectuals of the Left.

Mounier replied at length to Garaudy's charges just a few weeks before he died in March of 1950. This response, along with the last editorial he wrote for Esprit, represent a clear statement of Mounier's final position on Communism as well as his ultimate understanding of the process of social change and his role in it. In sentiments similar to those of Ozanam he explained that his mission was to the

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[470] Roger Garaudy, "Lettre à Emmanuel Mounier," (Paris: La Nouvelle Critique, 1950), p. 4.

[471] Ibid., p. 14.

[472] L'Humanité, March 23, 1950.

industrial poor and always would be.[473] This meant that his attitude toward Communism could never be one of complete and total rejection because Communism was still a sign of hope to many of this class. Viewed by workers who lived in suburbs like Montreuil, Communism "is the armor of the rejected, the only one which counts in their eyes, the only hope of their days. Montreuil is not infallible but Montreuil is at the heart of the problem: we refuse the abstraction which omits the point of view of Montreuil. Many of those who discourse on Communism have had no contact with the men of this suburb which is called red but which is more nearly gray, so gray that the color of the days seems forever fixed."[474]

If, as Jean-Marie Domenach has admitted, Mounier's working-class fervor was "a little sentimental," it never varied from his earliest writings. Out of loyalty to the workers, he refused to join the ranks of the anti-Communists although at the same time he refused to allow the Party to determine his relationship to them. He would not try to separate them from the Party but would help them to assert their liberty and creativity in order that they might speak through their own free voice. Only in this manner could the workers contribute to the creation of a truly French "popular democracy."[475]

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[473]Mounier, "L'avilissement ne rend pas," CD, OM, IV, p. 181.

[474]Mounier, "Fidélité," CD, OM, IV, pp. 17-18.

[475]Ibid., p. 20 and "L'avilissement...," p. 188.

The Communist Party was incapable of helping to realize this ideal because of its totalitarian character. "It tolerated only itself and created an idolatrous worship of the USSR. It lied and covered its lies; it imposed obedience without recourse on its cadres; it has become a Leviathan."[476] However, the reforms Mounier urged on the Party, corresponding to the "open" rather than "scholastic" Marxism he desired, were meant to achieve more than institutional political ends. The Party had to respond to "facts" rather than "ideology;" it had to open itself to free discussion because only through these means would truth be achieved. When Garaudy had complained about Mounier's repetitious concern for the truth, Mounier replied that "it is not of our virtue that we speak but that of socialism."[477] And in his last Esprit editorial: "We will content ourselves with the war for the truth."[478]

Socialism, Mounier argued, was not a set of principles revealed for all time but a body of thought that was constantly developing. Socialism could not be claimed by one group as its own possession nor would its cause be promoted by the conformist repetition of old dogmas. Mounier saw himself as a member of the socialist camp, as opposed to the "established disorder" of capitalism and liberal democracy. His role would be to "protect the moveable boundaries" of this camp for those who wished a socialism that would not destroy the generations of the present for those of the future.

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[476]Mounier, "Fidélité," p. 18.

[477]Mounier, "L'avilissement...," p. 184.

[478]Mounier, "Fidélité," p. 19.

Mounier had thus come full circle in his relationship to politics. He had all but returned to the "neither Right nor Left" position of the early Esprit after having become more politically involved and almost a member of the Communist Party.[479] In his last editorial, fittingly called "Fidélité," he called for a return to "the revolt when we were twenty years old, the denunciations when we were twenty-five."[480] He set out a three-point program of action that must have been strikingly familiar to his earliest associates: 1) to defend everything that supports the dignity of man, e.g., material security, social dignity,...civic courage, intellectual honesty, spiritual liberty...; 2) to search out all aspects of dehumanization in the doctrines, techniques, and activities of revolutionary forces; 3) to avoid at all costs a break between Communism and the rest of the nation lest the Party become even more closed in upon itself.[481] These were also the main themes, along with a more philosophic exposition of the "person," of Personalism, Mounier's last book.

Conclusion

Raymond Aron, as noted above, sees two basic Christian approaches to temporal affairs: the "quietist" and the "revolutionary." In Marxism and the Existentialists he attempts to relate these two perspectives:

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[479] "It is hard not to be Communist; it is harder still to be one," Mounier said toward the end of his life.

[480] Mounier, "Fidélité," p. 21.

[481] Ibid., p. 19.

> Perhaps the most profoundly Christian citizen would be one who experienced at every moment the tension between these two exigencies. He would never have the sense of having done enough for human justice, and yet he would feel that the results of this tireless effort were negligible and must appear as such in comparison with the only thing really at stake. He would be neither resigned to human misery nor forgetful of sin. [482]

This is very much the position of Mounier and, indeed, Mounier's life was a continual effort to live according to both "exigencies."[483] His relationship to Marxism and the Communist Party and especially the changes in his position are the changes in his expression of his effort to maintain this "tension" in Christianity. Mounier believed, however, that Catholicism had long neglected the "revolutionary" pole of Christianity while emphasizing the "quietist" concern with individual salvation. His dialogue with Marxism was important for Catholicism and Catholic political thinking because it helped to restore this essential balance.

Mounier had always described his purposes in terms of separating Christian values from a compromising relationship with the status quo. It was the alliance of Christianity

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[482] Aron, Marxism and the Existentialists, p. 105.

[483] In SV, p. 16, Mounier states that, "the duty of the incarnation, if we were faithful to the meaning of the word, would oblige us to maintain simultaneously at each moment of time, the most completely contradictory-to-good-sense positions; to die to the world, even while we committed ourselves to it; to deny the every day, and to save it; to sorrow over our sins, and to rejoice in the new man; to reckon of value only what is inward, but to spread ourselves abroad throughout nature in order to conquer the whole of life for inwardness; to recognize in ourselves the dependence of a nothing and the liberty of a king; and above all never to regard any of these divided situations as substantially contradictory, nor as finally resolvable in the experience of man."

with the political and economic institutions as well as the cultural values of society that had always restricted the "revolutionary" element of Christianity. Marx's doctrine of the sociology of knowledge, although not entirely acceptable, was an important explanation of this phenomenon. Christians would now be required, Mounier pointed out, to explain the uses to which their political values were put. The "primacy of the spiritual" and the concern for social order, both traditional principles of Catholic political thought, had been all too readily loaned to the forces of anti-Communism who defended the interests of the middle and upper classes at the cost of those of the workers. Catholicism had become identified with these values while the concern for social justice, also a constitutive part of Catholic political thought, had been largely ignored. Catholics had to confront this inconsistency, one which Marx's theory had been particularly effective in demonstrating.

Mounier's examination of Marxist values allowed him to restate emphatically the Catholic commitment to social justice and material welfare. The social implications of the Incarnation were not, from the perspective of some trends in modern theological thought, in conflict with the Marxist goal of a workers' society based on justice. Although one could never argue that the theology of the Incarnation required such a development, it could provide a theoretical basis for it. Catholicism therefore was not the natural enemy of Marxism. It could share with the latter the radical vision of a

new earthly order liberated from the injustices that had always characterized it.

In light of the above, Catholicism hardly required the rote anti-Communism that was identified with it. If there were important differences between Catholicism and Marxism, there was also a fundamental agreement that was equally important. Indeed, the personal commitment of many Communists to a new and just society was an important reminder to Catholics that Christianity, having identified itself with the poor, had more recently lost sight of this purpose and abandoned the new industrial poor. Rather than oppose Communism in principle, therefore, Catholics should look for areas of cooperation with all groups who shared this vision.

If Mounier's dialogue with Marxism was important to a renewal of Catholic social thought, it also had its weaknesses. Especially obvious are the various changes in his thought on this subject. In large measure this can be attributed to his failure to accept the reality of Marxism and the Communist regimes. His hope for an "open" Marxism was, in effect, a call for Marxists to drop the materialist component of their dogma. This was hardly realistic nor was it entirely appropriate since Mounier was not willing to deny principles that he considered fundamental to Catholic dogma. The "open" Marxism also asked Communists to allow for approaches other than their own to the goal of a socialist world. Again this was hardly realistic since, as Mounier admitted in the 1948-1950 period of his thought, the Communist parties of Europe tolerated neither dissent nor alternative structures.

Mounier's fluctuations on Communism were also very much related to political repression in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. He tended to avoid this reality for a prolonged period. In this respect Mounier was clearly biased since he had shown no such mercy to democrats and capitalists when evaluating their institutions. This prejudice demonstrates the inherent weakness of the "engagé" approach to politics. Mounier, at least for the period 1944-1947, allowed his commitment to revolution to limit his analysis of Communism; his moral aspirations restricted his political criticism.

Mounier's shortcomings, important as they are, do not, however, invalidate his use of Marxism to demonstrate the potential radicalism inherent in Catholic thought. Mounier's weakness was primarily in the area of political events: in understanding and judging Communist regimes and politics. His strength, although not an unqualified one, was in the province of ideas: relating some of the major values of Catholicism and Marxism.

CHAPTER EIGHT:

CONCLUSION

The foregoing chapters have attempted to demonstrate the thesis of this study: that Mounier extended the boundaries of Christian Democratic thought to include socialism. While sharing the basic philosophical values of Christian Democracy, Mounier insisted that this movement could only realize its goals of political equality and social justice through a form of democratic socialism. In making this argument he successfully used Catholic thought to criticize modern capitalism and its relationship to parliamentary democracy. In addition, Mounier provided Catholic support for the Left's cultural critique of modern liberal society. Finally, he argued effectively that Catholics should leave their own parochial institutions in order to join with all men of good will in constructing the new society. In sum, Mounier created an approach to politics that was both Catholic and radical. The first part of this concluding chapter will briefly review these points. The second section will consider some of Mounier's political shortcomings.

Part I

Mounier's position was the first real alternative for those Catholics who identified with the politics of the Left but who also wished to remain Catholic. Charles Micaud has emphasized this point:

> Thanks to Mounier, Catholics could keep scolding the enemies of the Church--rationalism, liberalism, individualism--yet be more to the Left than most Leftists, since they refused any sordid anti-Communism. Reformism, slow and prosaic, could still be held in contempt. For the

> door to the house of the Left had been opened by Péguy, not by Rousseau; the path that had led to it had been the romanticizing of revolutionary action, and not rationalism or Jacobinism. Catholics could now be Leftists without betraying their past; they only had to reject the traditional pessimism of the Church and believe in the necessary virtue of the Revolution. 484

The Catholic character of Mounier's radicalism was especially apparent in his approach to capitalism. Whereas secular radicals frequently based their anti-capitalism on Marxism, Mounier, while making use of Marxist thought, relied on the Catholic tradition. He argued that the Church's early prohibition of usury was based on an understanding of economic life that was still relevant. The traditional opposition to money as an end in itself, instead of a means of exchange, became, in Mounier's approach, an argument for the primacy of work. The economy should be based on a direct connection between work and the acquisition of wealth. Capitalism, he argued, had weakened, if not destroyed, this vital relationship between labor and money.

Mounier also argued that modern capitalism failed the Catholic test of the common good. Businessmen acted as if ownership gave them absolute power over their property without regard for the general welfare. The great inequality that existed alongside capitalism was simply not compatible, Mounier insisted, with the Catholic principle that private appropriation must also provide for the social good.

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484 Charles Micaud, Communism and the French Left (New York: Praeger, 1963), p. 68.

Moreover, Mounier's use of Catholic principles showed that the Church had never really considered the fact that the simplistic model of capitalism, on which its teachings were based, bore little resemblance to the practices and structures of modern corporate capitalism. The latter, he argued, did not conform to Catholic social teaching.

Finally, Mounier reminded Catholics that the Church's approval of capitalism had always presumed the existence of political institutions capable of reconciling the many private interests of capitalist society and providing for social justice. Indeed, this is the basic principle of Catholic teaching. However, it was at least questionable, Mounier argued, that liberal democracy had ever achieved this common good or would ever be capable of doing so. Modern democracies, having allowed too much freedom to private economic interests, were incapable of pursuing a truly public interest. In sum, Mounier used traditional Catholic thought to make an argument for socialism.

The major themes of Mounier's critique of capitalism have appeared in the most recent teachings of the Catholic Church. Pope John XXIII, in his encyclicals, Mater et Magistra and Pacem in Terris, raised serious questions about the performance of modern economic and political institutions and employed the same concepts as Mounier in doing so. Pope John's encyclicals also indicate a Catholic willingness to consider some socialist institutions. The social teachings of the Second Vatican Council, especially the centrally important "Constitution of the Church and the Modern World,"

bear the stamp of Mounier whose thought is considered to have been particularly influential on its formulation.[485]

In developing a Catholic basis for socialism Mounier also established a Catholic foundation for the cultural criticism that is usually associated with the Left. In this respect Mounier's thought represents a Catholic progression "from the familiar (and tiresome) clerical moralizing to principled rejection of liberal economics and bourgeois property relations."[486] Mounier's work shows that Catholicism, relatively free from the individualism that has characterized Protestantism, could provide a critique of bourgeois society.

Mounier's radicalism differed from that of radicals who argued that selfish individualism and materialism were created by capitalism and would disappear with it. While intensely aware of the impact of capitalism Mounier also shared the Catholic view that these values had deeper roots in man's nature. Mounier's purpose was to remind men of their higher capacities by restating the Catholic understanding of human nature in more contemporary terms.

Mounier attacked individualism and materialism by using some of the basic concepts of phenomenology. Man must not be explained as an individual but rather as "being with," i.e., as a being who always exists <u>in relation</u> to others and who

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[485]This point was made to the author in a letter from Gregory Baum, an official advisor at the Second Vatican Council and a leading North American theologian.

[486]George Lichtheim, <u>Marxism and Modern France</u> (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), p. 109.

finds his fulfillment only with and through them. Community is therefore fundamental to man; the notion of "I" is only logically antecedent to "we." The traditional Catholic idea of man as naturally political is supported by this doctrine.

Mounier also used phenomenological concepts to restate the Catholic idea of man's spiritual nature. He cited Gabriel Marcel's distinction between "being" and "having" to argue that possession usually renders man possessed by his own possessions and thereby closed to the spiritual capacities within himself. When he assigns a preeminent place to his possessions man also shuts himself off from a deep concern for others and the society in which all must live. The real purpose of the material order, i.e., to lead men back to God, is then lost. This statement of man's spiritual and communal nature, while essentially Catholic, supported the Left's attack on bourgeois life.

In defending socialism and the cultural criticism often associated with it Mounier also urged Catholics toward a greater commitment to secular life. Because he existed in relation to others, man is responsible for the creation of a society that would be conducive to the full human development of all. The great task is to harness the forces of industrialism and technology--indeed, the whole process of modernization itself--for man's personal development. Individual Christians, Mounier argued in foreshadowing Pope John's admonition in Pacem in Terris, must develop the professional competence to contribute to this humanist effort.

Mounier's call was for a Catholic commitment to society and not simply to the Church. Catholics, he argued, generally limited themselves to participation in specifically Catholic organizations which all too frequently emphasized the interior life of the members instead of the welfare of all men. These organizations, even when genuinely apostolic, tended to foster a concern for the spread of consciously Catholic values and doctrine. Mounier asked Catholics to go beyond the boundaries of these structures and join with all men of good will for real social change.

For Mounier the limitations of Catholic organizations were dramatized in the Christian Democratic parties. While espousing progressive ideals, these parties did little more than represent the interests of middle-class Catholics. Christian Democrats developed a good conscience in defending the prerogatives of Catholic schools while simultaneously avoiding the larger questions of economic redistribution. The "timid leftism" of Christian Democracy was not really a serious commitment to the needs of the poor.

Ultimately it was not simply political differences which separated Mounier from the Christian Democrats. The fundamental question was the role of the Christian in temporal affairs. In Mounier's opinion the Christian Democrats functioned as the protectors of "the Christian World," i.e., of the political interests of French Catholics. By their very nature therefore Christian Democratic parties were incapable of abandoning their sectarianism and status quo politics. They would never be genuine forces of social change. By

extending Catholic values to include socialism and the cultural critique of the Left, Mounier offered a Catholic alternative to the more conventional liberalism of Christian Democratic thought.

Mounier's examination of anarchism and Marxism made it possible for other Catholics to consider these doctrines seriously. In anarchism Mounier discovered values that were also part of Catholic teaching: worker participation in management, decentralization, reduction of the role of the state and the primacy of moral concerns in social thought. Since the Church, particularly through Pope Leo XIII's Rerum Novarum, had already liberated its teaching from a dependence on traditionalist social structures and monarchial government, Catholic anarchism was at least conceivable. If Mounier did not succeed in creating such a system, his examination of anarchism demonstrated the support that a Catholic could give to this doctrine.

Mounier also showed Catholics that there were important similarities between their tradition and Marxism. The social implications of Christianity were not in conflict, Mounier argued, with the Marxist goal of a worker's society based on justice. Although it could not be argued that such a society was required by Catholicism, Catholic teaching could provide a theoretical basis for it. Therefore Catholicism was not the natural enemy of Marxism and Catholics, instead of opposing Communism in toto, should look for ways of cooperating with it to build a just and human society.

Mounier's attempt to respond to Communism in a new Catholic manner foreshadowed the efforts of the Catholic Church under John XXIII to take a more open attitude toward Communist states. However, even before this development Mounier's ideas made it possible for many Catholics to reexamine their relationship to Marxism and Communism from a new and more flexible perspective. In Poland, for example, where Catholics are obliged to reach a modus vivendi with Communism, Mounier's thought has been especially popular.[487] The same has been true in Latin America where young Catholics, rejecting the injustices of an unreformed capitalism, have found it necessary to make alliances with left-wing and revolutionary movements.[488] For these Catholics traditionalism and liberal democracy are no longer the only acceptable alternatives.

Part II

Despite his interest in Marxism and his sympathy with Communism Mounier rejected Eastern European Stalinism and formally broke with the French Communist Party over this issue. Previously, Mounier had rejected anarchism and,

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[487] On this point see M. H. Kelly, "The Fate of Emmanuel Mounier," Journal of European Studies (1972), 2, p. 265 and Andrzej Bukowski, "L'actualité de la pensée de Mounier en Pologne," Bulletin des Amis d'Emmanuel Mounier (December, 1963).

[488] This point is made by Kelly who points out that there is little published work on this theme. One source is Henrique de Lima Vaz, "La jeunesse chrétienne à l'heure des décisions," Perspectives de Catholicité, Bruxelles, no. 4, 1963, pp. 282-290. Catholic "liberation theology" in Latin America has made use of themes developed by Mounier although it is difficult to trace direct influence. Mounier's influence is referred to by Thomas C. Bruneau in The Political Transformation of the Brazilian Catholic Church (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 95.

earlier still, liberal democracy. Not surprisingly, Mounier has been termed politically inconsistent. He has also been described as apolitical because of his refusal to join a political party. This position has been well put by F. C. Copleston, the British historian of philosophy and critical admirer of Mounier. Although lengthy, the passage deserves to be quoted in its entirety:

> On the one hand, he (Mounier) insisted that Personalism is neither a system of philosophy in general nor a political system in particular. On the other hand, his dislike of any form of Personalism which consists predominantly in asserting the value of personal liberty and the spiritual nature of the person in a more or less purely theoretical way forced him into the political arena, in some sense at least. Here...he was at a disadvantage. On the one hand he rejected the non-Communist parties. On the other hand, while sympathizing strongly with the Marxist 'humanist' aspirations and with their emphasis on scrapping the economic and social order, he rejected Communist totalitarianism and atheistic materialism. Yet he did not offer Personalism as a definite political program or attempt to make it the basis for a distinct political party. No doubt, he did not wish to narrow down Personalism or canalize it, as it were, in the bed of a definite political party. But the combination of his insistence on the need for action and choice with abstention from adherence to any party, save for his reserved and qualified friendliness for the Marxists, left Personalism, as conceived by him, hanging in the air. 489

These two criticisms, that Mounier was inconsistent and that he was ultimately apolitical, are directly related to the Catholic nature of his thought. If Catholicism gave

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489 Frederick Copleston, "Mounier, Marxism and Man," The Month (October, 1951), p. 207.

Mounier his radicalism it also created in him a preoccupation with moral values which tended to separate him from other radicals. His real consistency was in the promotion of a set of moral values and he allowed this task to shape all his political decisions. If Mounier was apolitical it was the result of his overriding concern with these values.

Mounier made it clear at the beginning of Esprit that his purposes were more moral than political. He quoted Péguy's aphorism that, "the revolution will be moral or it will not be." The great task was to promote a new set of values for modern society. Accordingly, Personalists were to realize that their manner of being was as important as any action they might undertake. "One must believe first of all that the truth acts simply by its presence.... It is not force which makes revolutions; it is the light."[490]

Mounier invested the greatest part of his time and energy in establishing groups of amis who would promote Personalist values particularly within the professions and the media. He recognized that this attempt to change the consciousness of men would be a very long-term effort. Civilization was "first of all a metaphysical call, an adventure in the eternal order of things."[491]

Direct political action, Mounier insisted throughout the 1930's, was only of "marginal" importance in changing society.

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[490] Mounier, RPC, OM, I, pp. 146, 149.

[491] Ibid., p. 137.

When some of the amis questioned this attitude, Mounier replied that they were too materialistic; they failed to recognize that lasting change had to be spiritual first. Political life, ultimately an expression of man's moral or spiritual life, could only be given a new foundation by using the means generally associated with moral purposes. Politics by itself contained "impurities which those who affirm spiritual bases cannot assume."[492] This attitude did not substantially change when Mounier moved toward engagement: he essentially exchanged abstract theorizing for a greater interest in contemporary affairs. He did not change his mind on the question of the best means for social change. "Witness" was still the preeminent technique for Personalists.

In light of the above, it is not surprising that when Mounier chose his political philosophy, he did so for reasons that were as much moral or spiritual as they were political. He adopted Proudhon's anarchism because Proudhon, like Catholic thinkers, refused to separate the moral and the political realms. Proudhon had insisted on noting the moral impact of all institutions. He rejected liberal democracy and capitalism not only for their material failings but also because they forced men into relationships that were fundamentally anti-human.

Proudhon's institutions were designed to develop man's moral capacities as well as to regulate his social affairs. He emphasized smallness and localism to allow men to truly

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[492]Mounier, "Lettre à Georges Izard, March 23, 1932," OM, IV, p. 493.

shape their own material circumstances and, in so doing, to shape themselves. It was possible and, indeed, necessary to dispense with government as an independent function because moral men could regulate their society through the more immediate functions of economic life. To create an independent governmental apparatus was to separate social organization from its only viable source: the moral person.

Mounier's early institutional thought, described above in chapter five, was essentially an adaptation of Proudhon's. The amis groups, however, also reflected the spirit of Proudhon. These were always organized on the local level and their members attempted to work through their professions for societal change. The amis were especially attuned to the moral possibilities of their work and Mounier hoped that they would be able to develop a new local leadership among the people themselves. Although not as intensely anti-government as Proudhon, Mounier, during this period, was completely opposed to state socialism. He hoped that the amis and those whom they influenced would develop a broader-based participation in the management of the community.

If moral or spiritual concerns were an underlying factor in Mounier's anarchism, they were also very important in his response to Marxism and Communism. Again, however, political and economic consideration were also present. Mounier rejected Marxism in the thirties for its "negation of the spiritual as an autonomous, primary and creative reality."[493]

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[493]Mounier, PM, p. 52.

It was "a totalitarian philosophy making of spiritual activity a reflection of economic circumstances, neglecting or denying the mysteries of man and of being."[494] At the same time, he also rejected Communist institutions because they did not allow for any appreciable self-government or for any personal initiative in the economic realm.

When Mounier later rejected anarchism in favor of Marxism and Communism, spiritual considerations again played an important role. Mounier was extremely impressed with the moral character of the Communists whom he met in the Resistance. These were fraternal men who were capable of great self-sacrifice. Their Party seemed to offer the possibility of "collective adventure" in pursuit of a truly just and humane society.

The Communist militants were so impressive that Mounier concluded that far-reaching social change would not require a long-term effort to train men in a new set of values. The Communists seemed to share many of these values already. The revolutionaries were now on the scene; it was no longer necessary to create them. The task for Personalism was to develop a spiritual perspective within the Communist Party and make it responsive to man's spiritual needs as well as his material ones. In sum, the work of Personalists was to "spiritualize the revolutionaries" rather than to "revolutionize spiritual people" which had been their pre-war strategy.

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[494] Mounier, RPC, p. 231.

Mounier also believed that Marxism served as an effective antidote to the philosophical idealism that had infected modern Christianity and encouraged its excessive concern with the interior life. By emphasizing the importance of material concerns and their impact on man's entire personality, Marxism helped to rid Christianity of a "decadent spiritualism." Marxism was a reminder of the Incarnation: Christ had shared our material life on earth and Christians were now responsible for that same earth. If most radicals saw Marxism and Communism as strictly political phenomena, Mounier did not. Their first significance, he believed, was moral and he judged them accordingly.

Mounier's decision for Marxism was not based on moral criteria alone, however. He had originally chosen anarchism not only for moral reasons, but for economic and political ones as well. His commitment to Marxism also included these latter concerns. He rejected anarchism, he emphasized, because its institutions were not appropriate to the rapid economic and technological changes occurring in France. Mounier was committed to technology and industrialization, as his later writings make especially clear, because he believed that these developments would ultimately lead to an improvement in the workers' standard of living. Finally, he presumed that postwar Communism would become more democratic allowing a wider participation in all decisions.

Mounier's actions during the Vichy period represent perhaps the clearest and most dramatic example of the predominance of moral considerations in his political choices. He

did not regret the fall of the Third Republic because it symbolized the bourgeois values he abhorred. The Nazis were a purifying agent that would rid France of the bourgeois society that had corrupted it. This was the real meaning of the totalitarian victory. Mounier reacted favorably to Vichy ideology because it supported the traditional values of religion, family and work. Yet his rejection of the regime itself was also based on moral values: the leaders of Vichy were selfish, power-hungry men and therefore unworthy of support.

Mounier ignored political considerations for moral purposes in reestablishing Esprit under Vichy. When his Christian Democratic friends criticized this move Mounier explained that it was necessary in order to keep true moral values before Frenchmen. He was even willing to allow for a similarity between Esprit's ideas and Vichy statements in order to promote his values. The political significance of this was not apparent to him.

Although Mounier refused any official position in the Vichy youth organizations he willingly spent himself working within them. Their goal of creating a new man free of individualism and materialism attracted him. That Personalism was often used in these groups to support Vichy was less important to Mounier than the opportunity to spread his doctrine. Similarly, Mounier was an enthusiastic lecturer at the Uriage school where students were expected to develop a new, spiritual sense of self as well as a social consciousness.

Mounier moved from participation in Vichy-related organizations to a commitment to the Resistance in a startlingly easy manner. Again, it was the predominance of his moral concerns and his general lack of political norms that made this quick transition possible. Mounier was impressed with the character of the Resistance members whom he met after he left the Vichy groups. He undertook a variety of intellectual tasks for the Resistance hoping that it would become a unique political form which would be capable of uniting Frenchmen in the making of a new society.

Mounier's choice of anarchism and then Marxism, as well as his relationship to Vichy, the Resistance and the French Communists, reflect his concern to find a form of social organization that would facilitate man's spiritual growth. In theory, Mounier accepted Maritain's doctrine of the two ends which recognized an independent political realm while also providing for a Christian influence.[495] In practice, however, Mounier ignored the independence of politics and frequently judged political events and institutions according to essentially religious values which were the real purposes of his politics.

The attempt to make politics an agent of moral forces is very much a part of the traditional Catholic approach. However, if Mounier shared this traditional goal he emphatically rejected the institutions used to achieve it, particularly the alliance of Church and State. In short, he often pursued

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[495]This doctrine has been explained in chapter four.

a kind of integralism while condemning integralist means. His "inconsistency," i.e., his political changes, represent his continual search for a "true" politics, one that would combine Catholic purposes with radical institutions.

Mounier would not commit himself to a politics that fell short of this Catholic-radical ideal. In this respect he remained "apolitical" as Copleston has argued. His refusal to take direct political action was also the result of his recognition that politics was ultimately incapable of achieving his purposes. He wanted a moral transformation of modern man and he recognized that politics, while of great importance in this regard, could never be the sole means of bringing it about. Always a Catholic thinker, Mounier did not share the Marxist's faith in the power of economic and political revolution to transform man.

In light of his moral concerns it is not surprising that, after his break with the Communists in 1948, Mounier returned to the "witness" activity he had always favored. Again the task was to construct "cellularly the socialist world: in labor unions, in business enterprises, in youth organizations, in the institutions of culture."[496] Personalists would concentrate on changing the values of people and in so doing would build "cell by cell, conscience by conscience, the tissue of our country."[497] In these years, which immediately preceded his death, Mounier devoted himself to Esprit and to the creation of a "Centre Esprit" near Paris which would

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[496] Mounier, "Prague," CD, OM, IV, p. 159.

[497] Ibid.

serve as a foyer for Personalist ideas and life style.[498] It was this type of work, along with the other forms of witness, which would make it possible to build "a socialism that will save man."

In arriving at an overall judgment of Mounier it is also important to consider the complexity of his situation within French Catholicism. Although Esprit was officially non-religious it was generally regarded as Catholic and its readership was predominantly Catholic. Had Mounier undertaken political action, his only constituency would have been French Catholics whose conservatism was axiomatic in French politics. Well aware of this, Mounier chose instead the role of moraliste pointing out to those Catholics who would listen that their religious values could not be taken as a support for the economic and political status quo much less for that of an earlier period. His work would be to create, within Catholicism, a separate opinion that would articulate what he believed to be the essentially radical message of Christianity.

Through Esprit and his other activities Mounier was successful in creating this perspective among a whole generation of left-wing Catholics. Although their numbers were not large they substantially broadened Catholic opinion. The pluralism that now exists in the French Church and in Catholic politics owes much to them. This is the real legacy of Emmanuel Mounier whose uniqueness was in insisting and demonstrating that it was

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[498]Mounier died of a heart attack in 1950. He was 45.

possible to be a sincere Catholic and a man of the Left, even a revolutionary, at the same time.[499]

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[499]Cf. John Hellman, "The Opening to the Left in French Catholicism: the role of the Personalists," Journal of the History of Ideas, XXXIV (July-September, 1973), pp. 389-390.

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Mounier also wrote less formally in the Journal Intérieur, a newsletter for the Amis which was published from 1935 until the outbreak of World War II. Although these articles are frequently only a few pages in length and often untitled they are

essential to an understanding of Mounier's theory of "witness" as a means of social action. The issues of the Journal Intérieur have been preserved at the Bibliothèque Emmanuel Mounier in Châtenay-Malabry outside of Paris. This small library, operated by Mounier's widow, also contains most of the articles and books written on Mounier as well as all of his works.

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