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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WORK AND THOUGHT OF

EMMANUEL MOUNIER: A STUDY IN IDEOLOGY.

by

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For Jo

## A B S T R A C T

This study sets out to explain the importance of Emmanuel Mounier (1905-1950), taking it to be ideological, that is, operating simultaneously on a social and a conceptual level. It therefore stresses economic, social, political and cultural forces in addition to personal and philosophical ones. It attempts to show the processes involved in the creation of an ideology and an ideologist, and the factors governing their relationship.

Chapter one examines Mounier's formation as a member of the catholic intellectual élite, tracing his early studies, experiences and patrons in Grenoble and Paris.

Chapter two analyses the situation and events which led to the foundation of the review Esprit, which Mounier directed until his death, his first attempts to formulate a political ideology and his response to the political and social crises of the 1930's.

Chapter three traces the philosophical roots and evolution of Mounier's personalism, showing its function as an intellectual matrix and method of analysis.

Chapter four shows Mounier's reactions to the war, his activities under the Vichy régime and his place in the Resistance, emphasising the importance of this period for his later ideological position.

Chapter five studies Mounier's initial aspirations to establish personalism as a major political ideology of liberated France, and traces the erosion and eventual collapse of his hopes to the point where his political position became scarcely tenable.

Chapter six examines Mounier's confrontations with existentialism and Marxism in his attempts to maintain and extend the ideological power of personalism and, with it, catholicism. It also critically assesses Mounier's main post-war philosophical works.

The conclusion analyses the contradictions implicit in Mounier's work and his relative success and failure as an ideologist.

The bibliography includes a full list of Mounier's known works.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The Development of the Work and Thought of  
Emmanuel Mounier: A Study in Ideology.

INTRODUCTION

The respect shown to the memory of Emmanuel Mounier in some circles suggests that he has exercised a considerable influence. The purpose of this study is to show where, how and why this was the case. But first the perspective and terms of the enquiry need explanation.

A central concept in this analysis is 'ideology', which admits a number of meanings. To describe an activity as ideological in a broad sense may mean no more than to distinguish it from productive economic activity; which forms the 'infrastructures' of society. This meaning is too broad to be helpful. In a second sense, ideological activity is the process by which different groups within a society see and interpret their own existence. Such a definition would cover a wide range of social phenomena, many of which belong to social psychology. A third, more specific, meaning of ideology is a coherent formulation of attitudes, ideas, beliefs and values which is adopted by a social group. This is the sense in which the term 'ideology' will be used here, and in this sense Mounier's activity will be described as ideological. A fourth possible use of 'ideology' is to apply it to any coherent system of concepts. In this sense it is generally a pejorative alternative to 'philosophy',

'doctrine' or some such word, and therefore has no place in the present study.

The definition adopted implies two distinguishing criteria. On the one hand, its coherent formulation distinguishes ideology from social psychology. On the other hand, its social insertion distinguishes it from philosophy. Much of the analysis which follows will be concerned with the area on either side of the borderline between ideology and philosophy. Philosophy could be considered as an ideological activity which has no significant effect on the consciousness of a social group, or which is considered in isolation from its social implications. Hence any philosophy may potentially become an ideology in the sense indicated, and any ideology may have philosophical aspects.

There are many kinds of ideology in a society, and they need not be mutually exclusive, since any group or person may simultaneously subscribe to several of them or several groups to the same one. It is not always easy to draw boundaries between different ideologies, since they tend to overlap, subdivide and coalesce. It is, however, possible to analyse ideologies by reference to the ways in which they vary. Six main factors of variation can be distinguished: the specific attitudes, ideas, beliefs and values expressed in the ideology, the coherence of its formulation, the extent of its social implantation, the range of human activities to which it refers, the degree of its autonomy in relation to other ideologies, and its historical development.

These six factors are not exhaustive, but they constitute a useful instrument for distinguishing between ideologies. The examination of Mounier will take account of all six, although particular factors will predominate at different times.

Although ideologies are generated by social groups, they are articulated by individuals, singly or in combination. Often the ideologist may derive the form and content of his ideology from material produced by himself and other thinkers without any acknowledgement of its social relativity. The determining forces in the creation may be economic and social, but they must operate through political, cultural and ideological mediations. These mediating structures have their own internal characteristics which affect their own development and may even affect the economic and social forces operating on them. An ideology is therefore created by a network of interactions between economic, social, political, cultural, ideological and individual forces.

The life and work of Emmanuel Mounier offers an accessible example of these processes. The twenty-five years from 1925, when he was twenty years of age, to his death in 1950 saw the gestation, establishment and decline of personalism as an ideology. Mounier belonged to the same social group that adopted his personalism; in many ways he was a typical product of that group and was affected by most of the forces that affected the rest of his group. In some ways he was different from his fellows, but the differences

were such as to explain why he was a leader, rather than a follower, in the group. His personal qualities and the privileged attention he was accorded as a result helped to distinguish, though not to isolate him.

Mounier is described throughout this study as belonging to the 'catholic intellectual élite'. The term is used to describe, not to judge, Mounier's activity. 'Catholic' designates a commitment by conviction or by social tradition to the doctrines and institutions of the Roman Catholic Church; 'intellectual' denotes the activities involved in the creation, transmission and criticism of ideas; an 'élite' is a minority group defined by its privileged access to some area of human activity, and therefore not necessarily socially homogeneous or cohesive, nor exclusive of other social groupings.

While Mounier held the action of élites to be valuable, and considered himself to be a member of an élite, he never considered himself as an ideologist, nor did he consider personalism as an ideology. A close colleague of his has recently even suggested that personalism is an anti-ideology<sup>1</sup>. Both Mounier and his colleague refuse to regard personalism as ideological because they believe in an absolute truth existing independently of human activity. They consider this to provide a point of reference outside man which makes

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1. Jean Lacroix, Le personalisme comme anti-idéologie, Paris, 1972.

thought autonomous from its social and historical context. In so far as ideology is a philosophy with a sociological extension, Mounier would not have denied the ideological function of his own thought, though he would have denied that it was only ideological, and certainly preferred the use of a different expression. His refusal to be described as an ideologist was also based on a degree of ambiguity in Mounier's intentions for personalism. At different times in his career he formulated his ambitions differently, so that it was not always clear how extensive their scope was in relation to his social insertion or to the other ideologies of the period. Nevertheless, the same aim was implicit throughout, whether expressed in terms of a spiritual transformation, a personalist and communitarian revolution or an awakening of the sense of man: he aimed to formulate a specific set of concepts and values and to propagate them as widely as possible. In the terms here defined, this constitutes an ideological activity.

The structure of this investigation is determined by a decision to study a particular ideologist, although there are other perspectives through which ideology could well be studied. The first chapter studies Mounier's formation in the social and ideological context of the 1920's. His career is then considered in three main parts; before, during and after the Second World War. This division corresponds to three distinct and entirely different historical situations,

each decisive in the development of Mounier's position. At every stage it will be seen how personalism was generated and developed, how Mounier understood the process, how he reacted on the basis of that understanding and what effect his action had. This perspective clearly implies a principle of selection in the aspects of Mounier's work to be studied and the importance given to each. In the event, little of his work is irrelevant in this context, but its ideological significance is not always in proportion to its size nor to the importance Mounier attached to it. This study cannot hope to be exhaustive, but it seeks to offer a detailed explanation of Mounier's importance for so many people, and to demonstrate some of the mechanisms and processes which govern the production and communication of ideologies.

## C H A P T E R   O N E

### THE FORMATION OF A LEADER (1905-1931)

#### I. GRENOBLE:

- a) Childhood and youth
- b) Chevalier
- c) Bergson
- d) Descartes
- e) Social and political context

#### II. PARIS:

- a) The University
- b) Professional training
- c) Maritain
- d) Péguy:
  - i. Introductory
  - ii. Life and truth
  - iii. Thought and structure
  - iv. Spirit and Matter
  - v. Time and misery
  - vi. Hope and salvation
  - vii. Impact
- e) Conclusion

C H A P T E R   O N E

THE FORMATION OF A LEADER.

I. GRENOBLE

a) Childhood and Youth

Emmanuel Mounier was born on 1st April 1905, the second child of a Grenoble pharmaceutical chemist<sup>1</sup>. His family came of rural artisanal and farming stock, and enjoyed a comfortable, though not affluent standard of living. His education was founded on the traditional piety of the provincial catholic petty bourgeoisie to which he belonged. The Great War left no apparent mark on his childhood, but a series of misfortunes rendered him totally deaf in one ear and virtually blind in one eye at an early age. At school he was a conscientious and methodical pupil, and having lost a year's schooling for reasons of health, came to dominate his fellows both in ability and maturity<sup>2</sup>.

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1. There is no standard biography of Mounier. The major source of information is the anthology of letters and notebooks edited by his widow Mme Paulette Mounier as Mounier et sa génération (Paris, 1956), reprinted, with alterations, in E. Mounier, Oeuvres, IV (Paris, 1963), p.407-831. This material is incomplete, however, and is partly complemented by the special number of Esprit devoted to Mounier (décembre 1950, no.174, 721-1080) particularly the article compiled by Albert Béguin as "Une vie", ibid, 923-1060. Additional information can be gleaned from the twice-yearly Bulletin des amis d'Emmanuel Mounier which contains much otherwise unpublished material. Unless otherwise stated, biographical details used in this study are taken from these sources. Many of Mounier's personal writings remain unpublished by the wish of his widow, and a definitive biography will not be possible until this material becomes available.

2. Cf. Esprit décembre 1950, p. 937-938, particularly the remarks of M. Jean Tavernier.

Although his final year at the 'Lycée Champollion' in Grenoble revealed his substantial gifts in philosophy, his attention had been directed largely towards the sciences, and on leaving school in June 1923 he was encouraged by his parents to study medicine. A conflict immediately arose between his taste and competence for more contemplative activities and his family's desire that he should make his career as a country doctor, a course he half persuaded himself to embrace. The confusion and uncertainty led to a state of psychological crisis. He later described this period as 'ma première souffrance' and recalled a feeling of 'désespoir, jusau'aux goûts de suicide'<sup>3</sup>. In March 1924 he attended his first religious retreat, during which he became convinced of the need to abandon medicine for philosophy. At the same time he underwent what he regarded as a religious conversion. It took the form of a new enthusiasm and earnestness in his christian faith, and he felt it to be 'le passage d'un piétisme traditionnaliste et bourgeois à la vie véritablement chrétienne'<sup>4</sup>. As a result of this experience, his father decided to entrust him to a young philosophy teacher at the University of Grenoble, Jacques Chevalier<sup>5</sup>, with whom the Mounier family were dis-

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3. E. Mounier, Oeuvres, 4 vols, (Paris 1961-1963), IV, p.417. (Hereafter referred to simply as Oeuvres with volume number.)

4. Esprit décembre 1950, p.940, in a letter to his sister dated 19 décembre 1925.

5. See below, Section I.b.

tantly acquainted. The intention was that Emmanuel should 'faire de la philosophie en vue de l'apostolat'<sup>6</sup>. Chevalier agreed to become Mounier's mentor and take charge of his intellectual and spiritual formation.

With this meeting, Mounier took his first step in the direction which was largely to determine his future development. The importance of Chevalier's influence is hard to overestimate. His teaching was in complete harmony with what Mounier had been brought up to believe; Mounier's normally timid character was in an extremely impressionable condition since his recent upheaval<sup>7</sup>; and in a provincial university where mediocrity was often the rule, Chevalier's reputation and ability made him a great man by local standards, and an object of admiration for his students.

b) Chevalier

Jacques Chevalier, who was born in 1882,<sup>8</sup> had followed a successful academic career, in which after three years at

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6. Esprit décembre 1950, p.941.

7. Oeuvres, IV, p.417, in a letter dated 25 août 1933 he described himself as having been 'souple comme un agneau'.

8. This information is drawn from: Jacques Chevalier, Etat des services, publication et projet d'enseignement (Montluçon, 1929); Alain Guy, Métaphysique et intuition: le message de Jacques Chevalier (Paris, 1940); Jeanne Dubois, Pour reconstruire la France, deux architectes, Frédéric Mistral et Jacques Chevalier (Avignon, 1941); Emmanuel Mounier, 'Un penseur français', La vie catholique, 3 avril 1926, p.1-2; Emmanuel Mounier, 'Méditations dans la forêt', La vie catholique, 5 juillet 1930, p.11-12, signed "Jacques Mersennes". During the Second World War Chevalier was briefly Minister of Education in the Vichy régime, pursuing an extreme clericalism. Afterwards he returned to philosophy and produced his four volume Histoire de la pensée (1955-1966). He died in 1962.

the 'Ecole Normale Supérieure' and second place in the philosophy agrégation of 1903, he held grants and taught both in England and in France, leading to a highly praised doctorate in 1914 on necessity in Aristotle and Plato. Since his arrival in Grenoble in 1919, not only had he established a high reputation as a teacher,<sup>9</sup> but he had also published a number of books on major thinkers, and many articles on religious and philosophical questions.<sup>10</sup> He was also a close friend of the eminent philosopher Henri Bergson, which added lustre to his name. His thought was inspired by orthodox catholicism and combined with conservative political and social views. He was particularly opposed to liberal individualism,<sup>11</sup> which he saw as springing from the Renaissance, enthroned by the French Revolution of 1789, and leading to the ruin of the family by pernicious laws on divorce and the distribution of property. Doctrines and institutions were equally undermined by individualism, he argued. The only remedy was for the individual to renounce his own interests and submit to the higher interests of religion, society, law and order. The moral implications of this position

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9. See E. Mounier, 'Un penseur français...', and Oeuvres, IV, p.420-421, in a letter to Francisque Gay dated 8 février 1926.

10. His reputation as a philosopher rested mainly on his two major works, Descartes (Paris, 1921), and Pascal (Paris, 1922). For a complete list to 1929, see his Etat des services....

11. This is expressed particularly in his pamphlet, L'individu, souverain maître de la vie (Lyon, 1923).

remained constant in Mounier's own thought, though he was not long in abandoning the social and political consequences. Beyond the attack on individualism, which had a marked effect on Mounier's later personalism, Chevalier's views were influential in a more general way. His teaching during Mounier's three years with him covered a wide range, but from what can be gleaned it fell into three rough categories: the history of ideas, religious questions and Bergson<sup>12</sup>.

Chevalier dealt at some length with Plato, to a lesser extent with Aristotle, allowed some time for selected philosophers of the 17th and 18th centuries, but above all dwelt on catholic thinkers, in particular, Pascal, St. Thomas and Maine de Biran. It is easy to judge him harshly for his omissions: German philosophy, including Kant, was almost entirely ignored and even British thinkers of the status of Hobbes, Locke, Hume and Berkeley were presented as little more than caricatures. On the other hand his treatment of Greek, Latin and French thinkers appears to have been thorough. Two names tower above the others in importance: Plato and Pascal. Plato was one of Chevalier's special interests and an early enthusiasm of Mounier, who belonged to and, for a time, ran, special study groups in which Plato was examined at length.<sup>13</sup> It is important to

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12. Cf; Esprit décembre 1950, p.941-948.

13. Cf. Esprit décembre 1950, p.946.

remember that Chevalier taught from an uncompromisingly catholic point of view. Plato was approved in so far as he illuminated and prefigured christian doctrine, and although Mounier was exposed to other approaches, he made Chevalier's view his own. The precise effect Plato had on his own thought is hard to assess, but a whole series of parallels can be suggested. Plato's preoccupation with moral education, <sup>for example,</sup> expressed in the Republic, was at the centre of Mounier's work; Plato's criticism of forms of society certainly found a strong echo; Platonic psychology was closely paralleled by the description of the 'personne'; and the theory of Forms was influential in Mounier's conception of values and value-hierarchies. A detailed demonstration of any of these points would be long and of limited interest, but it is clear that perceptible Platonic overtones remained characteristic of Mounier's writing.

The other thinker who dominated his student days and exercised a profound influence on him throughout his life, was Pascal. This name occurred regularly in letters to his sister and something of his affection for him can be gleaned from the recollection of one of his early pupils at Saint-Omer:

Je regrette que Mounier nous ait interdit de prendre des notes lorsqu'il nous commentait Pascal. Il nous avait confié que les Pensées était son livre de chevet et qu'il y puisait toujours des forces neuves. 'L'homme n'est ce qu'il est que lorsqu'il se dépasse' (notes de morale). Et il nous répétait souvent: 'On ne possède que ce qu'on donne'.<sup>14</sup>

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14. Esprit décembre 1950, p.956. Témoignage de Mme Duhomeaux.

These last two sayings are typical of the short Pascalian quotations that Mounier never tired of repeating in his writing, and represent Pascal's immediately visible contribution to his thought. Why Pascal was so important is hard to explain, although it is interesting to note that in the early 1920's considerable attention was paid to him, and important writings appeared by Brunschvicg, Chevalier, Bremond, Blondel and Unamuno among others.<sup>15</sup> It was less as a result of enthusiastic teaching than of his own prolonged study and meditation that Mounier came to regard Pascal as a constant point of reference, so that although it is of some interest to consult Chevalier's writings, the only means of discovering what Mounier took from Pascal is by general inference from his later writings, particularly noticeable in those concerned with existentialism.

Of the other thinkers he studied, St. Thomas Aquinas was perhaps the most useful. Mounier had little textual knowledge of him, and was far removed from the neo-Thomism, which he was later to meet in Maritain.<sup>16</sup> Nonetheless his studies fostered a facility for theological discussion and provided a foundation of theological orthodoxy which informed many of his later analyses.<sup>17</sup> He also developed an affection for Maine de Biran which was revealed in his second article,

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15. A large amount of work was done on Pascal during this period, much of it in connection with the celebration in 1923 of the 300th anniversary of Pascal's birth.

16. See below Chapter One, II.c). His understanding of St. Thomas was considerably strengthened by his contact with Père Ponget; see below, Chapter One II.a).

17. Particularly evident in his studies on anarchism, property and the problem of war and peace.

written before leaving Grenoble.<sup>18</sup> He admired him for the way he unified his life and thought, and for his insistence that 'la religion résout tous les problèmes que la philosophie pose',<sup>19</sup> particularly as regards personal identity, of which he saw God as the ultimate basis. It would be futile, however, to seek any tangible line of influence. Blondel was in like case;<sup>20</sup> Mounier had certainly read at least some of L'Action, and occasionally mentioned it in his writings, but it is doubtful whether this reading bore any more substantial fruit, since he never sought to explore Blondel's work or thought in any detail. To these thinkers must be added Descartes and Bergson, who call for separate study.<sup>21</sup>

The second main category of Jacques Chevalier's teaching centered on religious questions. While much of the discussion stemmed readily from the thinkers studied, lectures and seminars were also devoted to topics of doctrinal interest in themselves. The immortality of the soul,

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18. E. Mounier, 'A propos d'une thèse sur Maine de Biran. La leçon d'une vie', La vie catholique, 3 septembre 1927, p.9. Maine de Biran (1756-1824), a moderate royalist politician at the time of the Revolution, expressed his catholicism in philosophical and psychological treatises which were strongly influenced by the idéologues.

19. Ibid;

20. Maurice Blondel (1861-1949), a catholic academic philosopher in the tradition of Ollé-Laprune and Boutroux, was most noted for his treatise entitled L'Action which sought to elucidate the spiritual roots of human activity in the broadest sense. He touched on many of the themes of existentialism and personalism, but generally left them undeveloped.

21. See below, Chapter One I.c) and d).

miracles, the power of truth, God and morality, sin and grace, these and many other subjects which are not reported, occupied much of Mounier's philosophical studies.<sup>22</sup> To describe in any greater detail the content and manner of his religious education would require a study by itself, but it is important to realise that this part of his training seemed to Mounier to be the most vital, the bed-rock of his life, which he held in common with the entire catholic community, and to which all else was ancilliary. It is, however, with this ancilliary aspect that the present work is largely concerned, for it is in so far as he was distinguished from a host of others that he became significant as an ideologist. He had frequent discussions with the local priests on matters of faith. One of them was Father Emile Guerry, who later rose to prominence,<sup>23</sup> and although it is impossible to assess their influence, they certainly encouraged him in his meditations on christian doctrine along an orthodox path. The bulk of his education being directed towards confirming the traditional catholic orthodoxy of his youth, it is not surprising that he left Grenoble already equipped with an extensive understanding and deep faith in the Church. His faith, with the possible

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22. Esprit décembre 1950, p.442-443.

23. Emile Guerry (born 1891), an A.C.J.F. organiser and a founder of the Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne, rose to hold several high offices in the Church hierarchy, including that of Secretary to the 'Assemblée des Cardinaux et Archevêques de France', and at the time of writing had held the archbishopric of Octava since 1966.

exception of one moment,<sup>24</sup> remained unshaken to the end of his life, and his understanding grew constantly, though not always along the path of undisputed orthodoxy.

c) Bergson

The third part of Chevalier's teaching was decisive in Mounier's development. His knowledge in the fields of philosophy and religion would probably have been substantially the same with most other teachers, but the giant shadow of Bergson which fell over his thought, and the specifically christian interpretation of him, was a direct and important result of Jacques Chevalier's influence. During the Spring of 1924, Chevalier gave a series of lectures on Bergson. Since the latter was already considered a great man, since Chevalier enjoyed a high reputation in Grenoble, and since the two men were known to be friends, the lectures drew large audiences.<sup>25</sup> In consequence, he was asked to make a book of them. By this time Mounier was on intimate terms with him and considered as a sort of secretary. In early 1926 Mounier wrote, from his own notes, and had published, an account of Chevalier's university lectures on Bergson,<sup>26</sup> and was helping him to prepare an

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24. At the moment of the death of his closest friend, Georges Barthélemy in January 1928.

25. Cf. E. Mounier, 'Un penseur français...'

26. The summaries, all initialled E.M., appeared between March and July 1926 in the Revue des cours et conférences, no.8 1926 ,p.673-681; no.9 1926 ,p.18-26; no.10 1926 ,p.142-148; no.11 1926 ,p.193-202; no.13 1926 ,p.408-417; no.14 1926 ,p.552-560; no.15 1926 ,p.596-607.

edition of Descartes' Discours de la méthode.<sup>27</sup> Now he assisted in the preparation of the book on Bergson. The extent of his participation can be gathered from the fact that Chevalier gave him a presentation copy numbered 2, and from the dedication he wrote in it:

A mon très cher élève et ami, Emmanuel Mounier, en reconnaissance de tout ce que je lui dois pour la réalisation de ce livre, et pour qu'il se souvienne toujours qu'une seule chose ici-bas mérite notre amour: la vérité.<sup>28</sup>

The extent to which Mounier assimilated Bergson is attested by the whole of his writing, explicitly in his early articles, and implicitly, but equally clearly, in his later work. It is therefore appropriate and instructive to examine at some length the work in question.

The first chapter bore the title 'Le milieu et l'époque, anthropocentrisme et théocentrisme', the terms of which were later taken by Mounier and applied to Descartes. In it Chevalier insisted on the relation of thought to thinker and thinker to his time:

avant d'étudier la doctrine, nous devons étudier l'homme, et avant d'étudier l'homme, nous devons étudier son temps.<sup>29</sup>

What he meant by 'his time' was not the historical situation, but specifically the philosophical context in which the thinker wrote. So he undertook a broad sweep of philo-

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27. Published Aux éditions de la Chronique des Lettres Françaises (Paris, 1927).

28. Jacques Chevalier, Bergson (Paris, 1926). The fly-leaf is signed 'Jacques Chevalier' and dated 22-1-27; the copy, numbered 2 printed on pur fil Lafuma, is conserved in the Bibliothèque Mounier at Châtenay-Malabry.

29. Ibid., p.2.

sophy since 1870, interesting because his judgements tended to be Mounier's automatic reactions at least for some years to come. Mill and Spencer were condemned out of hand for their "rigid determinism" and their "exclusion of human problems"; Fichte and Schelling likewise for their "pantheism" and their "deification of man"; Renan and Taine for their "scientism" and "false mysticism". Claude Bernard and Comte were only approved in so far as they recognised the limitations of the intellect; Renouvier and Cournot in so far as they returned to human and mystical questions. All these thinkers were classed as anthropocentric and opposed to a second class of theocentric thinkers. Thus Maine de Biran, Ravaisson,<sup>30</sup> Lachelier<sup>31</sup> and Boutroux<sup>32</sup> were lauded for their emphasis on more spiritual problems, leading to the discovery of God, and taking their inspiration from Plato and Pascal. Chevalier spent some time examining them and did not hide his sympathy. The important point,

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30. Félix Ravaisson (full name Jean Gaspard Félix Ravaisson-Mollien) (1813-1900), an academic philosopher, who came at an early stage under the influence of Schelling and Cousin. Usually regarded as a spiritualist thinker, he is best known for his Rapport sur la philosophie en France au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle (1867) and the attack on eclecticism and positivism it contains.

31. Jules Lachelier (1832-1921), a university teacher and inspector he professed an idealist philosophy and founded the neo-spiritualist school in France.

32. Emile Boutroux (1845-1921), an academic, latterly director of the Fondation Thiers, he was one of the leaders of the spiritualist reaction against the prevailing scientism of the late 19th century, and was particularly concerned to reconcile science and religion.

however, was that Bergson refused to fall into the extremes of either materialism or idealism and attempted to find a new synthesis which would account for the problems raised by both. This method of situating Bergson's thought between and beyond two extreme schools anticipated Mounier's method of situating his own thought between and beyond two opposed half-truths, be they spiritualism and materialism, individualism and collectivism, or Marxism and existentialism.<sup>33</sup> The opposition between anthropo- and theo-centrism was not one he insisted on in his later writings, but it remained a personal preoccupation and in his thesis on Descartes he took it as the central problem. After presenting Bergson, **the man**, Chevalier wondered about the future development of his thought, but concluded that he would have to wait for the truth to emerge. Not that he had any doubts about "the truth": for him it was the revealed truth of catholicism. Any implied doubt was purely bogus, the answer was in the back of the book, and the only question was whether, when and how Bergson would arrive at it. Thus when, in 1932, Bergson seemed to have come near to christianity, Chevalier was ecstatic at the apparent vindication of his faith, and

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33. See Gérard Lurol, 'Pour une genèse de la thématique de la personne chez Emmanuel Mounier' (unpublished mémoire de maîtrise de Philosophie, Sorbonne, Faculté des Lettres, octobre 1970) esp. p.12ff. Lurol analyses this methodological approach in some detail.

Mounier felt a similar exaltation.<sup>34</sup> This attitude to "the truth", and the tacit condescension implied in it, remained with Mounier to the last.

Passing on to consider Bergson's treatment of the intuitive method, Chevalier quoted him on the concept of the self:

...il y a une réalité au moins que nous saisissons tous du dedans, par intuition et non par simple analyse. C'est notre propre personne dans son écoulement à travers le temps. C'est notre moi qui dure.<sup>35</sup>

How, he asked, can we define this self? The answer was that no analysis or other intellectual operation could do more than manipulate symbols or fragments of it and that the self could be grasped in its totality only by an act of simple intuition. This conception was reflected strikingly in Mounier's eventual development of the person and his constant refusal to accept that it could be definable. It also provided him with further authority for Scheler's answer to doubters, that the person must be intuitively experienced, and if it is not, then the intuition of the doubter is defective.<sup>36</sup> The conception of intuition as a privileged form of knowledge set up a model of philosophy to which Mounier's 'réalisme spirituel' owed a great deal.<sup>37</sup>

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34. Cf. Esprit décembre 1950, p. 956. The occasion was the publication of Bergson's book Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion, of which Mounier received an advance copy.

35. Henri Bergson, 'Introduction à la métaphysique', Revue de métaphysique et morale, janvier 1903, p.4. Quoted in J. Chevalier, Bergson, p.87.

36. Scheler's influence is discussed below, Chapter Three.

37. Cf; particularly the latter part of 'Refaire la Renaissance', Oeuvres I, p.166-174.

Chevalier asserted that the dimension of transcendence in man's nature dictated the area in which a metaphysic was possible, and that the ideal of a simple intuition encompassing a complex network of rational enquiry dictated the method by which it must be established. Much of Mounier's early writing must be understood in this perspective.

Chevalier also elaborated the Bergsonian concepts of duration and human freedom at some length. Mounier never developed them in detail, but he assumed, for example, that la durée was undoubtedly part of experience, that men acquired a personal history which accumulated with their development, that human freedom was compatible with natural science and was to be conceived as the expression of the person in action rather than as a separable quality. 'Tout acte qui porte la marque de notre personne est véritablement libre',<sup>38</sup> the phrase was Chevalier's but could equally have been Bergson's or Mounier's. It was the basis of Mounier's concept of 'liberté sous conditions', which proposed to accept all discoverable determinisms but asserted freedom as an experience and as a reality which drew its substance from being inserted in a framework of determinations.

Bergson's treatment of the thought/matter duality was largely concerned with problems which Mounier did not take up, but he situated the human consciousness in terms of a 'réalisme spiritualiste', of which Chevalier said:

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38. Chevalier, Bergson, p.125.

il se place au point de contact entre les choses et nous, dans la donnée immédiate où se joignent et agissent ensemble la perception et le souvenir, la matière et l'esprit, le présent et le passé.<sup>39</sup>

This, divested of its Bergsonian jargon, was closely similar to Mounier's eventual description of the person's point of insertion in reality and anticipated the image of the person as a crossroad where all dimensions meet.

Bergson's Evolution créatrice, as seen by Chevalier, offered an important critique of the intellect. It left its mark on Mounier in the form of a deep-seated suspicion of all philosophical enterprises based wholly or largely on rational argument, especially where they aspired to be systematic. He tended instinctively to equate them with atheistic materialism and a consequent denial of the values of spirituality. Everywhere, the argument ran, there is movement, invention, creation and unpredictability, in a word, life; the intellect can only satisfactorily deal with matter, so is continually tempted to reduce everything else to matter, in order to give an impression of totality; the resulting system is therefore radically false in that it omits the non-material part of reality. This is one reason why Mounier resisted the demand to define or systematise, and insisted on the basic values of unpredictability, spontaneity and creativity which would not fit into a rational system.

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39. Ibid., p.163.

In the final chapter of his book, Chevalier indulged in a lengthy meditation on the purpose of philosophy in general, with the intention of demonstrating that Bergson's was everything a philosophy should be. In so doing he gave a valuable indication of the viewpoint he passed on to Mounier, who never entirely renounced it:

La philosophie n'est rien si elle n'est ... cet effort toujours renouvelé pour remonter la pente où nous entraînent la matérialité, le mécanisme, le figé, la mort. (...) La philosophie ne vaut que dans la mesure où elle réfléchit notre destinée d'homme et nous aide à la réaliser.<sup>40</sup>

The theme of fighting all that is mechanical, habitual and atrophied constantly recurred in all Mounier's writing, particularly in his study of Péguy.<sup>41</sup> Consequently he held that philosophy should be an activity which enhanced the quality and richness of life. It should contribute to the spiritual development of the person, he thought, specifically in so far as it revealed the creative potential inherent in every man. This corresponds in Mounier's vocabulary to developing the vocation of the person, or 'l'épanouissement spirituel de l'homme'. Chevalier saw it as the preparation for a religious experience, and he saw philosophy as nourished by the spiritual life to the extent that in the final analysis, 'philosopher, c'est faire retour à Dieu'.<sup>42</sup> Therefore Bergson's development towards the acceptance of God was for him the model of all philosophy,

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40. Ibid., p.242.

41. See below, Chapter One, II d).

42. Chevalier, Bergson, p.242.

and in the end the criterion for judging any thought was its apprehension of God.

Without God he argued, all was inexplicable, and only when God was acknowledged did the world take on a meaning. Mounier accepted this as true for himself, but gradually came to realise that such a point of view could not unilaterally be imposed on others. It will emerge how complex and ambiguous the relationship sometimes was between his thought and his faith, but much of it referred back to Chevalier's conception of philosophy.

Later in the chapter, examining the problem of spiritual or moral liberty, Chevalier noted in the natural world a conflict between the drives of individuation and association, and remarked:

Chez l'homme, ce conflit prend un sens plus haut, et, s'il se retrouve, c'est transposé à un plan supérieur: car l'individu ici est devenu personne; il n'est plus seulement comme le corps organisé, un système isolé et clos par la nature; il est un être libre, soumis à un idéal moral, c'est-à-dire à quelque chose qui, sans doute est 'immédiat', et qui est immédiatement donné à sa conscience la plus intime, mais qui, en même temps, dépasse toute nature, et sa nature même, étant la loi qui la régit et à laquelle elle aspire.<sup>43</sup>

This passage contained the embryonic forms of some of Mounier's most basic philosophical preoccupations. The tension between the individual and the collective was a constant theme in Mounier, though by no means a new one.

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43. Ibid.; p.279 (his italics).

The opposition between the individual and the person became a central focus of personalism, and although Chevalier did not develop the point, he already suggested that the distinction was a moral one, and hinted at the themes of openness, communication and transcendence. The notion of the person as oriented towards a moral ideal, both within and beyond the person, led directly to Mounier's treatment of the dimension of vocation. This was not entirely surprising because these notions are relatively commonplace in catholic thought and can be traced back in one form or another to antiquity. It was, however, in this specifically Bergsonian formulation that Mounier met them, and dealt with them throughout his work. His debt to Bergson was deep. Few intellectuals of his generation were unmarked by Bergsonian philosophy, but in addition he received a strong current of Bergsonism through his reading of Péguy and through his own contact with Bergson and his books. He was in correspondence with the great man regarding Chevalier's book, and although he never met him, his accounts of his visits to the Bergson home were little short of ecstatic.<sup>44</sup> When the master sent him a dedicated advance copy of Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion in 1932 his delight was unbounded, to the extent that one pupil could describe him as having 'un culte pour Bergson'.<sup>45</sup> But if he continued

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44. Oeuvres, IV, p.433 and p.447.

45. Esprit décembre 1950, p.956.

to study Bergson after his years in Grenoble, it is apparent that the decisive impulse and the particular interpretation came from Chevalier. The indelible impression of Bergsonism on Mounier is evident in all his work; it is the lines of this influence that I have been concerned to show.

Mounier's precise debt to Chevalier is less easy to situate. The philosophers towards whom he was directed remained constant references for him, as did the spiritual values and the faith which he was taught. Chevalier can be reckoned to have acted as an intermediary, passing on the thought of others, but this ignores Mounier's attitude of humble discipleship, which is best revealed in the article he devoted to his teacher,<sup>46</sup> and in his correspondence on the subject. Describing Chevalier as 'l'image vivante d'une force dans sa maturité',<sup>47</sup> he recounted how the admiring crowds flocked to his lectures to hear 'une oeuvre de génie bien française par son réalisme et sa clarté'.<sup>48</sup> For the bulk of the article he linked together sayings of Chevalier with eulogistic commentary extolling the virtues of truth and humility which, he claimed, Chevalier both taught and embodied. It was a piece of uncritical adulation which accurately reflected his state of mind whilst with Chevalier. A little later, he wrote to a friend:

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46. E. Mounier, 'Un penseur français...'

47. Ibid., p.1.

48. Ibid.

Heureusement, pour me soutenir et m'élever, ai-je auprès de moi l'inépuisable gratuité d'une lumière et d'une affection. Je découvre chaque jour M. Chevalier, et je vous assure que mon article de Pâques me paraît bien pauvre en comparaison de ce que j'en sais maintenant.<sup>49</sup>

Chevalier was gratified by the effect he had on this bright pupil and returned the affection offered.<sup>50</sup> For three years he had almost complete control of Mounier's development, and found him anxious to think and be everything his master taught him. The relationship between the two was not accidental or unusual, however. It offers a good example of the way in which a lay élite was formed within the catholic church. No formal arrangement existed, but a certain number of catholic intellectuals undertook to supervise, with special personal care, gifted young men who came under their tutelage. This mechanism of élite-creation is not confined to the Church, but the kind of spiritual patronage involved was particularly highly developed in the French Church between the wars. Chevalier was the first, but not the only, patron to guide Mounier's steps. Equally, Mounier was not Chevalier's only protégé.<sup>51</sup> When Mounier left Grenoble the spell slowly faded. His own strong and independent character began to assert itself, and within a year he was able to suggest to his mentor that the period had

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49. Esprit décembre 1950, p.942. The article referred to is 'Un penseur français...'

50. Ibid., p.943-945.

51. Mounier's other patrons, most notably Jacques Maritain, are discussed later. Chevalier was also patron to some extent to Jean Guittou, with whom he put Mounier in contact. None of his other protégés attained positions of eminence comparable to these two. Mounier himself became in turn a patron after the Second World War. His relationship with Jean-Marie Domenach, who took over Esprit as director in 1957, was in many ways one of patron-protégé.

been 'trois années de convalescence et de bonheur trop calmes'.<sup>52</sup> Despite the undeniable mark he left, Chevalier also had the effect of a cocoon, which, having outlived its usefulness, was left behind.

d) Descartes

Mounier's most substantial work of this period was the dissertation he wrote for the 'Diplôme des Etudes Supérieures', entitled 'Le conflit de l'anthropocentrisme et du théocentrisme dans la philosophie de Descartes', which he presented on 23 June 1927.<sup>53</sup> Initially he was to have included Descartes, Pascal and Malebranche in his subject, but the two latter were eventually omitted through lack of time. He regarded himself as dealing with a concrete rather than an abstract problem; Chevalier had taught him to view philosophy as more than an intellectual parlour-game, with the result that he always sought to relate thought to important human problems. Although his subject appears abstract, it corresponded to a problem which Mounier felt to be important. It is impossible to penetrate the preoccupations of his vie intérieure beyond the vague suggestions already noted, but his choice of subject reflects a more general concern. Chevalier undoubtedly suggested the idea, the first chapter of his Bergson divided philosophy into two

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52. Oeuvres, IV, p.422-423.

53. Only one copy survives, kept in the Bibliothèque Mounier at Châtenay-Malabry.

currents of anthropocentrism and theocentrism, and Mounier certainly took something of the impulse from Bremond's Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France.<sup>54</sup>

At the same time, an attempt may be discerned among catholics to reconstitute their humanism without displacing God. With the decline of scientism, it was becoming increasingly possible to discuss human problems in the full light of scientific discovery without incurring suspicion of irreligion. Therefore, while far from becoming humanists, many catholics now foresook the intransigent spiritualism of their forefathers.<sup>55</sup>

Mounier began with the premiss that 'il n'y a que deux règles pour mesurer les choses: l'homme et Dieu',<sup>56</sup> and launched an attack on anthropocentrism, particularly as it appears in the flamboyant humanism of the Renaissance. Taking up a Thomist distinction which recurred in his later works, he accused it of glorifying the materially determined individuality at the expense of the whole spiritual personality, in a word, of exalting man against God. It led, he

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54. Published Paris, 1916-1933, 12 vols. Henri Bremond (1865-1933), a Jesuit priest and journalist, left the order after an involvement on the fringe of the Modernist movement. His chief work, the Histoire littéraire..., is concerned with conceptions of spirituality in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and examines the major themes and figures in devotional literature during that period. Only the first six volumes had appeared by 1927.

55. Cf. A Dansette, Histoire religieuse de la France contemporaine (Paris, 1965), esp. p.750-751.

56. Mounier, 'Le conflit...', p.5.

argued, to pure selfishness, and its principle was mortal pride. Theocentrism, on the other hand, stressed the total submission of the creature to God and could, he suggested, lead to such extreme positions as the anti-humanism of Luther. Between the two extremes, he found christian humanism, which, faced with the new Renaissance paganism, strove to define a balanced relationship between man and God. In this attempt, it saw the true self, not in the individual glorified by the anthropocentrists, but in,

le sanctuaire silencieux où la fine pointe de l'âme touche les réalités et s'unit à elles, le domaine de l'inquiétude sacrée d'où jaillit l'inspiration si nous savons l'y accueillir en faisant taire nos sens et notre intelligence, en un mot c'est l'âme indivisible qui veut, sent et connaît par un même acte, qui n'est épuisée par aucune de ses manifestations, dont elle sent toujours l'inadéquation avec les richesses infinies qu'elle mûrit.<sup>57</sup>

This was the first statement of what with eventual modifications of terminology and emphasis, remained the basis of Mounier's conception of the human person. He equated it with the christian notion of the soul, perceived in meditation and manifested diversely in action. In a footnote<sup>58</sup>, he referred to its different expressions in the thought of Plôtinus, Saint Augustine, Saint Theresa, Saint Thomas Aquinas and Pascal, references which he continually took up in the later expositions of his personalism. With its directing principle of christian charity, he explained, the true self was in direct relation with God in whose image it

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57. Mounier, 'Le conflit...', p.9.

58. Ibid., p.9.

was made. The conception of a balanced christian humanism, which Mounier found largely in the abbé Bremond's account, seemed to him, despite the wound of original sin, essentially an optimism, and dictated the pattern which his own humanism strove to attain.

Coming to his subject, Mounier suggested that it was illegitimate to separate Descartes' metaphysics from his life and his other theoretical writings, concluding:

Toute l'activité philosophique de Descartes nous semble donc orientée vers<sup>59</sup> l'épanouissement en tous sens, de la vie humaine.

Descartes was concerned, he explained, that all his theoretical reflections should lead to an improved understanding of the practical and moral sciences with the intention of founding practical advances which would benefit all humanity; such a project seemed to Descartes vain unless it had a firm metaphysical foundation. Mounier took the sincerity of Descartes' christianity as an established fact, and added:

Si Dieu est au centre du système, il est un centre d'impulsion, d'où tout part, et non pas un centre d'attraction, où tout converge, un principe, et non une fin.<sup>60</sup>

Descartes' concern was to establish certainty on which a valid synthesis could be based, his first aim must therefore be to establish God metaphysically. While Mounier found this acceptable in itself, the limiting of God's role to that of a first principle to the exclusion of his place

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59. Ibid., p.17.

60. Ibid., p.22.

as a final end, seemed to him a regrettable error of perspective. Following the operation of methodic doubt, Descartes came to the intuitive consciousness of himself as a thinking subject, within which he found the idea of God, inseparable from, but greater than his thinking self. To Mounier Descartes appeared to have discovered God as within and fundamental to man. This discovery set him apart from the Renaissance anthropocentrism which Mounier condemned and qualified his thought as 'le couronnement des efforts de la Renaissance chrétienne pour relier l'homme à Dieu par le dedans'.<sup>61</sup> Descartes, thus saved, was assimilated to the school of christian humanists whose balanced philosophy had already been praised, and took his place as one of Mounier's points of reference in the pre-history of personalism. At the same time, God was established as the causal and creative principle without which there could be no metaphysics or natural science. The effect of this demonstration was merely to corroborate an unshakeable conviction which underpinned the argument of Mounier's own early writings. Certainly there is no sense of discovery in the analysis, and his approach is close to that expounded by Maritain in his Trois réformateurs,<sup>62</sup> a book Mounier read and quoted in his thesis.

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61. Ibid., p.35-36.

62. Jacques Maritain, Trois réformateurs (Paris, 1925).

He then went on to examine two major problems of Descartes' account of man. How could God's infinity be reconciled with the reality and freedom of the individual? And how, in view of Descartes' theory of substances, could the mind be reconciled with the body? In neither case, he argued, could Descartes give a satisfactory rational explanation. The discussion is too detailed to recount here, but Mounier's main point was that both these questions arose from the inadequacy of an essentially rational account when it is brought into conflict with reality. Both God's provision for human freedom and the unity of mind and body were irreducible facts, he asserted; all Descartes could do was affirm them and admit them to be mysteries which transcended his rational comprehension. The conception of God and the human person as obscure but fertile mysteries was a constant theme in Mounier, and one of the reasons he consistently refused to define either. Both were for him the object of immediate experience and the source of continual reflexion. Their reality could never be exhausted by definitions, he insisted, and was more often falsified by them; because they were crucial terms in his thought he refused to elaborate a systematic philosophy.

An important point on which Mounier criticised Descartes was his attitude to the natural world. It was an attitude, he said, in which everything which was inaccessible to reason was ignored as being part of God's incomprehensible omnipotence, and science was left to account for the rest

as though God did not exist. This step was unacceptable to Mounier, who felt that an element of mystery pervaded all the created world. He saw Descartes' radical separation of God from the world as an impoverishment which left the way open for mechanistic rationalism, and which denied the mysterious workings of God in things and events. An equally pernicious tendency which Mounier perceived in Descartes was the assertion of the human will, enlightened by reason, as the practical arbiter of moral behaviour. In Mounier's view this led to the exclusion of God, since he was an unknowable absolute, and the introduction of a cold, inhuman ethic with no practical point of reference other than the individual self. Although he gave God all the honours on a theoretical level, Mounier emphasised, the practical result was that Descartes relegated him to a realm where he was completely excluded from contact with human reality, leaving man as the master of all he surveyed. Mounier constantly strove to reestablish the link between man and God as a crucial dimension of the human person, thereby precluding a repetition of Descartes' error.

In the concluding chapter Mounier tried to summarise his criticism of Descartes. He admitted his undoubted religious convictions but emphasised how much responsibility he must bear for his annexation by two centuries of rationalism and materialism. His God was omnipotent and transcendent, but he was not the God of Charity, Mounier argued,

and he remained aloof from his creation. In contrast with Pascal, who had the experience of a personal God, and lived with an anguished and insatiable thirst for the infinite, Descartes appeared to Mounier to have the idea of a distant God, which allowed him to occupy himself in tranquility with the finite. Mounier agreed with Pascal and argued that Descartes was neglecting the experience of God's relation with man, and creating an antinomy which eventually opened the way to misinterpretation and abuse:

La philosophie de Descartes est un anthropocentrisme parce qu'elle est un théocentrisme, et dans la mesure où ce théocentrisme est excessif... encore, le théocentrisme de Descartes est solidaire de son anthropocentrisme et il en est l'indispensable contre-poids.<sup>63</sup>

Because God was so absolute, man could only give himself meaning by putting him in brackets, Mounier pointed out, but since God was for Descartes the fundamental principle of all things, and neither man nor anything else could have meaning without him, the system, from Descartes' point of view, was neatly balanced and fell into a satisfying dialectic.

Mounier admitted this to be a major strength, but pointed out that the introduction of an internal principle of division entailed the risk of engendering successors who, with scant regard for the coherence of the original system, would not hesitate to base their thought on the suppression of one of the terms. In Mounier's eyes, he was therefore responsible for those who regarded him as the father of rationalism and the founder of scientific humanism.

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63. Mounier, 'Le conflit...', p.90.

Mounier took Descartes' error to be at the base of the aberration he saw, along with Maritain, in the Renaissance; to correct it was one of the first preoccupations of his own thought. The terminology changed, but the driving inspiration of his early writings was the attempt to re-establish a synthesis in which theocentrism and anthropocentrism would be inseparable and mutually implicit.

e) Social and political context

If his thesis on Descartes marked the climax of his intellectual formation in Grenoble, Mounier's social and political development had followed quite a different course. His home town had been relatively cushioned from the effects of the Great War and he was in any case only thirteen when it ended.<sup>64</sup> His adolescence passed under the conservative Bloc national government, during whose time France recovered from the effects of the war. Despite financial instability in government, agriculture was progressively modernised and industrialisation accelerated to the point where production soon exceeded pre-war levels. This was achieved with considerable inflation and indirect taxation which meant an increased prosperity for the urban middle classes and for small farmers, accompanied by rising militancy in the industrial and agricultural working-class faced with worse problems of poverty and working conditions than before. Politi-

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64. The historical material presented here is taken from numerous sources, and is generally to be found in most accounts of the period. The works most heavily drawn on are Alfred Cobban, A History of Modern France, vol.III (London, 1965); and D.W. Brogan, The French Nation 1814-1940 (London, 1957).

cally, the ruling class bolstered its position with an intensified nationalism, directed mainly against defeated Germany and bolshevik Russia, opposed by a divided Left, newly split into communist and socialist parties, but sympathetic to the working class movements in Russia and Germany. Between Right-wing nationalism and Left-wing socialism lay a cluster of groups who for various reasons resisted both. They were composed of middle-class interests but anxious to reduce political and sectarian polarisations. This 'moderate' group was strengthened by the emergence of the French communist party in 1920 which gradually asserted itself as the 'extreme Left' and drove many socialists towards the centre. It was strengthened on the other flank by the Church's disavowal in 1926 of Action française and by the succeeding polemic which impelled many catholics to reconsider their traditional nationalism. The 'moderate' parties effectively occupied power from the collapse in 1926 of the Cartel des Gauches until the Front populaire ten years later.

Grenoble was typical of provincial France.<sup>65</sup> It participated in the economic expansion as a local capital and as an industrial city in its own right; socially it experienced the creation of working-class ghettos, swelled by Italian and North African immigrant labour, and it saw the increasing growth of the more prosperous central and suburban areas. Ideologically it also reflected the same

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65. A detailed examination of Grenoble is contained in P. Barral, Le département de l'Isère sous le Troisième République 1870-1940 (Paris, 1962).

divisions as the rest of the country, situated in an area of varying religious and political commitment.<sup>66</sup> Of the ideological groups, the most firmly established was the catholic Church, to which group Mounier belonged. Since the war, a new generation of catholics had begun to emerge, who felt themselves to have a legitimate role to play in the national development, who had not known the violent sectarian divisions of before the war, and who felt more affinity with Marc Sangnier<sup>67</sup> than with Charles Maurras.<sup>68</sup> Entering republican politics for the first time they found an early expression in christian democracy, which was consolidated into a modest political party, the Parti Démocrate Populaire, in 1924.<sup>69</sup> Mounier was not actively involved in

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66. A study of the ideological composition of Grenoble can be found in Gabriel Le Bras, Etudes de sociologie religieuse (Paris, 1955), vol.1, esp. p.145-148.

67. Marc Sangnier (1873-1950) led a popular movement of young catholics, le Sillon, at the beginning of the century. One of the earliest attempts to encourage catholic participation in republican democracy, it was disavowed by papal intervention in 1910. Although it went into voluntary liquidation it remained influential, and Sangnier himself was always seen as a father of later christian democracy.

68. Charles Maurras (1868-1952), journalist and politician, was the intellectual leader of the nationalist Right for the first half of the century. Although an atheist, he commanded a wide support among catholics through his paper Action française which proclaimed a "nationalisme intégral". When placed on the Index in 1926 the paper refused to submit to papal authority and thereafter steadily lost support. Maurras spent the last eight years of his life in prison for his collaborationist activities during the occupation.

69. For a detailed examination of christian democracy and Mounier's relation to it, see R.W. Rauch, Politics and belief in contemporary France (The Hague, 1972).

politics at this stage, but he did belong to an organisation which was closely connected with this movement: the Association Catholique de la Jeunesse Française.<sup>70</sup> Almost entirely a middle-class, and largely student-based organisation, the A.C.J.F. sought to awaken social and civic awareness among its members, with the more specific aim of forming catholic students to take leading roles in social organisations and public life. Several of Mounier's contemporaries in it became leading members of the post-war M.R.P., which succeeded the P.D.P., and held government posts. Much of its work consisted in study groups and discussions, and there is no doubt that Mounier received his early political formation in this context. It is worth noting also that his first two published articles were in the christian democrat newspaper, La vie catholique, though neither article was political in intention.

Sharing some of the social concerns of christian democracy was the Société Saint Vincent de Paul,<sup>71</sup> an organisation of more traditional stamp which had flourished in the previous century under Frédéric Ozanam.<sup>72</sup> Mounier belonged to the Grenoble conférence, as the local branches were called. It aimed at uniting catholics of all classes, and reconciling social antagonisms. To this end it undertook charitable

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70. See R. Kothen, La pensée et l'action sociale des catholiques, 1789-1944 (Louvain, 1945), p.238-239, also A. Dansette, Histoire religieuse, p.647-649 and p.746.

71. For a detailed study of the Society, its foundation, aims and development, see J.-B. Duroselle, Les débuts du catholicisme social en France (Paris, 1951), p.154-197.

72. Frédéric Ozanam (1813-1852), a leader of the Society from its foundation in 1833, devoted his energies to furthering its aims. Although he avoided political activity, he rallied to the Republic in 1848, while remaining a staunch catholic.

works in poor quarters, home-visiting, providing hostel accommodation, improving housing for the workers, christian education for the young, Sunday schools and the like. Although it was generally middle-class, conservative and paternalistic, it did have contact with some poorer sections of the population. It gave Mounier first-hand experience of poverty in the working-class areas of Grenoble, and helped him to understand the intolerable social conditions in which much of the working-class lived.

This was the political and social climate in which Mounier grew to manhood. In many ways his experience was similar to that of young catholics throughout the country; nothing significantly differentiated his environment from the pattern which prevailed all over France, and for that reason he found so much in common with his contemporaries in the early 1930's. He was singled out in his late teens for an intellectual training which was not accessible to all of his generation, but most of his later associates had been through a comparable process to become the new catholic élite. Having reached the highest intellectual level Grenoble could accommodate, Mounier's next step was to graduate from his provincial cradle to the intellectual crucible of the capital.

## II. PARIS

### a) The University

On 29 October 1927 at the age of twenty-two, Mounier arrived in Paris to prepare the agrégation. The bewilderment and insecurity he felt at the change was compounded with his first real experience of suffering with the death in early January 1928 of his only close friend, Georges Barthélemy. This event first provoked religious doubts, but he soon eliminated them and threw himself into preparing the examination. It has also been suggested that his resulting loneliness drove him to an energetic search for human contact, from which his future role at Esprit arose.<sup>73</sup>

He spent the academic year 1927-1928 studying on his own and attending lectures at the 'Ecole Normale Supérieure'. He seems to have been little attracted by the teaching but this did not prevent him from being placed second to Raymond Aron<sup>74</sup> in the final classifications of the philosophy agrégation. It is interesting to note that Jean-Paul Sartre took the examination for the first time in the same year, and, against all expectations, failed. Mounier mentioned him in a letter, but it is unlikely they ever came into contact at this time.<sup>75</sup> The main result of this year seems to have been

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73. Cf. Albert Béguin, 'Une vie', Esprit décembre 1950, p.952.

74. Raymond Aron, an almost exact contemporary of Mounier's, went through the Ecole Normale Supérieure and after his agrégation pursued an academic career. A staunch Gaullist since the Occupation, he is now a prominent journalist and political thinker.

75. Cf. Oeuvres, IV, p.435, in a letter dated 20 juillet 1928.

to instil into Mounier an implacable loathing for all that the Sorbonne represented, and for the academics he met there:

Les esprits limités, les gens assis en chaire, à la tribune, dans leur fauteuil, les gens satisfaits, les intelligents, les u-n-i-v-e-r-s-i-t-a-i-r-e-s.<sup>76</sup>

This reaction, one he shared with Péguy, was directed against the sophistication, the hypocrisy, the superficiality, and the decadence which seemed to him to distinguish Paris from the provinces. He never abandoned this attitude, and, despite his own position as an intellectual and philosophy teacher, was always hostile to the values he associated with the university. At the root of his hostility were probably the cultural shock, the domination of the most prestigious intellectual circles by non-catholics, and his own position somewhat on the periphery of the parisian educational structure, which made him feel intimidated and excluded. Nonetheless, his success in distinguishing himself at the academic exercise which most typified the Sorbonne assured him of considerable advantages in whatever he chose to do. He saw it as the first step in a traditional academic career, for which he had no inclination, but he was also aware that it opened many other doors. In effect he was given a certificate of entry into an intellectual élite, and although he refused a university career, he did not scorn to use his qualification in other ways, whether to obtain a scholarship or a teaching post, or to establish himself as an intellectual journalist.

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76. Oeuvres, IV, p.430.

His links with Grenoble were still strong, not only did he maintain a copious correspondance with Chevalier, and his own family, but he also struck up a friendship with an old pupil of Chevalier's, Jean Guitton,<sup>77</sup> a near contemporary whom he had first met in 1924, but who now helped him to settle to Paris life. More influential was le père Pouget to whom Chevalier sent Mounier at the beginning of his stay and with whom Mounier had a close relationship until the old man's death. Guillaume Pouget,<sup>78</sup> a Lazarist priest of peasant origin, was gifted with an extraordinary knowledge of scripture and an unusual talent for biblical exegesis. He took upon himself the rôle of teacher, and in his old age taught a number of young catholics, many of whom became well-known, and among whom parti-

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77. Jean Guitton (b.1901) after studying in his native St. Etienne, where he met Chevalier, and in Paris, acquired both the agrégation and a doctorate of Letters. Making his career as a teacher and writer, he was elected to the 'Académie Française' in 1961 and was one of the few laymen to attend the first sessions of the Second Vatican Council. His writings are mostly of a religious and hagiographical nature.

78. Guillaume Pouget (1847-1933) spent his youth as a shepherd in the Cantal region, before becoming a Lazarist priest. As a teacher in Evreux and Paris, he acquired a high reputation as a biblical exegete, despite his failing eyesight, which he lost altogether in about 1908, and despite his early involvement in the Modernist movement. Widely revered for his simplicity and wisdom, he is reputed to have known the scriptures by heart. See 'Numéro spécial sur le P. Pouget', Mission et charité (janvier 1962); Jean Guitton, Portrait de M. Pouget (Paris, 1941).

cularly figure Jean Guitton and Jean Lacroix,<sup>79</sup> both of whom were life-long friends of Mounier.<sup>80</sup> Though he wrote little, he impressed many who knew him with his wisdom and saintliness. His most notable achievement was the part he played in bringing Bergson to accept catholicism; which bears witness to the force of his personality.<sup>81</sup> When Mounier met him in November 1927, Pouget was in his eightieth year and had been blind for twenty years. Mounier was immediately impressed and felt moved to write to Chevalier, 'quand je me trouve en sa présence, il me semble que je suis en face de la vérité'.<sup>82</sup> For nearly five years he worked privately with Pouget two afternoons a week and amassed a considerable documentation on a wide variety of subjects, principally the Bible, religious history, mystic saints (notably the two saints Theresa and St. John of the Cross) and themes of meditation and action.<sup>83</sup> It is hard to assess quite what influence Pouget had on Mounier, though both his widow and Jacques Chevalier have suggested it was

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79. JeanLacroix (b.1900) after studying in his native Lyon and in Paris, leading to the agrégation in philosophy, became and remained a lycée teacher, whilst establishing himself as a man of letters. A regular contributor to Esprit since its inception, he is one of the foremost catholic intellectuals in France, and since 1944 has held the philosophy column in Le Monde.

80. Pouget also taught several other prominent catholic intellectuals, among whom the best-known are Henri Lorin, Henri Gouhier, Gabriel Madinier and Pierre Lachièze-Rey.

81. The details were recounted by J. Chevalier, who witnessed the crucial conversation, in his Bergson et le père Pouget (Paris, 1954).

82. Oeuvres, IV, p: 428, dated novembre 1927.

83. Cf. Oeuvres, IV, p.428-429 - in an extended footnote.

considerable.<sup>84</sup> Certainly his work in helping to form a catholic élite seems to have borne fruit in Mounier. There is no evidence to suggest that he made any attempt to pass on to his pupil any distinctive doctrines of his own, but he offered a rigorous theological training which undoubtedly contributed to giving Mounier a knowledge and self-assurance in questions of catholic faith and dogma which allowed him to step boldly but never too far in questions where traditional catholic reactions allowed less advanced positions than did the precise teaching of the Church.<sup>85</sup> More intangible, but also important, are the values which Pouget embodied and with which he continued to inspire Mounier long after his death. His humility, simplicity, poverty and wisdom were all recorded at length by Jean Guitton,<sup>86</sup> and when, as often happened, Mounier expounded these virtues, it is likely that the concrete example he had in mind was Guillaume Pouget.

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84. For example, Chevalier suggested Mounier's great debt in the copy of his Bergson et le P. Pouget which he dedicated to Mme. Paulette Mounier, and which can be consulted in the Bibliothèque Mounier. She in turn remarked in a letter, 'je sais l'influence énorme que le Père Pouget a eue sur lui', in 'Lettre au P. Dodin', dated 17 novembre 1961, quoted in Mission et charité (janvier 1962), p.68.

85. This assessment of Pouget's role is suggested, in part, by Albert Béguin in 'Une vie', Esprit décembre 1950, p.958-959.

86. J. Guitton, Portrait de M. Pouget.

After his agrégation, Mounier was awarded a three-year grant to prepare a doctoral thesis, but being uncertain of his choice of subject, he spent much of his time discussing different topics with various Sorbonne philosophy tutors, who advised him on subjects ranging from Greek stoicism through Spanish mysticism and eighteenth century moralists to Nietzsche.<sup>87</sup> At the end of his first year he decided to concentrate his efforts on the Spanish mystic, Juan de los Angeles, and with him in mind spent three weeks in the spring of 1930 visiting a number of Spanish cities.<sup>88</sup> When for the second time he applied for a place at the 'Fondation Thiers', he submitted a tentative plan of research setting out his preoccupations.<sup>89</sup> His ultimate ambition was unequivocal:

...collaborer à l'édification d'une morale dont l'absence est vivement ressentie à la fois par les philosophes et par les hommes d'action.<sup>90</sup>

Because he saw morality as having undergone a continuous decline since the middle of the nineteenth century, Mounier was anxious to contribute to a moral renewal. He suggested

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87. Among them were the professors Bréhier, Bremond, Baruzi, Delacroix and Laporte. Mounier appears to have had no extended contact with any of them.

88. Cf. Esprit décembre 1950, p.954.

89. Oeuvres, IV, p.463-467. The advantage of acceptance into the 'Fondation Thiers' was that it offered research facilities, supervision and living conditions more conducive to successful study than could be found elsewhere. It also conferred prestige on those who were accepted. Although the director was unwilling to consider philosophy students, Mounier was placed second on a waiting list: there were, however, no unexpected vacancies.

90. Oeuvres, IV, p.464.

that a first step was to define the limits of the moral order by examining the points at which it merged with the biological and the religious orders. Specifically he was concerned with the frontier between morals and religion. The first example he cited was the problem of the moral person as distinguished from the hermetic individual and the sociological unit. His studies therefore aimed at a major thesis which would deal with personality from a biological, juridical, theological, psychological and moral point of view, with the origins and theory of individualism, and with the role of the individual in mystical experience. A complementary thesis was to deal with these problems as embodied in the life and thought of Juan de los Angeles. It is difficult to trace the details of Mounier's evolution up to this point, for the necessary documents are not available, but it is significant that at this stage his thought was tending to crystallise around an area which pre-figured his later personalism. He wrote:

Je suis amené à étudier de toutes parts le contact et les réactions réciproques, du point de vue de la moralité, entre l'individu et le milieu: à définir une harmonie qui ne soit pas conformisme, une autonomie qui ne soit pas séparation.<sup>91</sup>

This in brief was the essence of his doctrine of the personne as it later appeared. Although he did not yet direct his thought consistently to the problem, this statement is an indication of how he came to centre his philosophy on the

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91. Oeuvres, IV, p.466.

human person. It also provides support for the contention that the personne was a moral concept, developed to solve the important moral problem of the relation between man and the universe.

How seriously he pursued his doctoral studies can only be a matter of speculation, since positive evidence is not available. He discussed them with his professors and with Maritain, but it is likely that his interest was less than whole-hearted. He had never felt part of the Sorbonne, and his rejection for the second time by the 'Fondation Thiers' reinforced his feeling of alienation, which was further increased by the conflicting advice of different tutors as to which direction he should take. Though he detested the traditional university system, he recognised its intellectual superiority with a confused mixture of admiration and mistrust. He felt no commitment to the institution and felt only half-hearted about pursuing his research in isolation. Gradually he came to realise that he would not be able to complete his doctorate, and that he was academically lost. But if he was floundering in the world of the university, which he was soon to leave, the three years of his doctorate grant proved both fruitful and decisive on another level. During this time he began his career as a writer, as a journalist and as a teacher, and made important friends.

b) Professional training.

From late 1929 until the end of 1931, Mounier contributed forty book-reviews to La Quinzaine critique,<sup>92</sup> a new fortnightly which undertook to review new publications. His regular appraisals of philosophical works were largely devoted to uninteresting original works and editions of well-known texts, since Jacques Chevalier, the other philosophical reviewer, was given the choice of all major works. Apart from three of Chevalier's works, Mounier saw little of interest though he was occasionally able to draw from this reading for his other writings. The staff of the review also included Gabriel Marcel and Jean Bruller, who later won fame as 'Vercors', but since the context afforded him little contact with either, he drew little benefit from this work other than a little money and a lot of experience in book-reviewing.

A more fruitful experience, on which he had embarked earlier, was his contribution to a review entitled Après ma classe, revue de culture générale.<sup>93</sup> Published in the Gard region, it was founded in January 1929 for the benefit of young primary school teachers, with the intention of contributing to their personal education and development, particularly since they often found themselves teaching in isolated surroundings. Although as an agrégé, Mounier's own teaching posts were at a much higher level, he was

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92. His first review appeared in the second issue of the magazine, dated 25 novembre 1929, and his last in that dated 10 décembre 1931.

93. From October 1930 the magazine was known simply as Revue de culture générale. The magazine was aimed at an audience roughly half of whom were Catholic, and reached a circulation of about 2,500.

interested in all aspects of education and felt able to help in the project. His first contribution appeared with the signature un ami in the first monthly number, under the rubric Causerie philosophique.<sup>94</sup> It was a confused attempt to explain how laws of causality must be regarded as insufficient if they excluded God as a universal presence and continual cause. It also showed a degree of self-satisfaction and pious condescension which initially surprises the reader. The following month he published a second, more coherent article<sup>95</sup> on the nature of opposites and the golden mean, in which the note of condescension was much less oppressive. In the third article,<sup>96</sup> a longer, subtler treatment of the irrational, signed in his own name, the condescension was almost absent, all that remained was a tendency to moralise, which in a diminished form he never lost, and a self assurance which was henceforth his constant characteristic. As the titles suggest, all these articles were strongly marked by the kind of catholic Bergsonism he had inherited from Chevalier, and there is little in these or the succeeding essays which adds to the picture already traced. During the course of these pieces, he did, however, develop a range of interests and a maturity which prepared his later career, and while some of the subjects he treated were of passing interest, many also anticipated or reflected

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94. 'Cause et condition', Après ma classe, janvier 1929, p.14-17.

95. 'Contraires et contradictoires, ou, de la discorde', Après ma classe, février 1929, p.63-65.

96. 'L'idée d'irrationnel', Après ma classe, mars 1929, p. 110-115.

his own serious preoccupations.<sup>97</sup> Thus, articles on an obscure contemporary theory of language,<sup>98</sup> on how to treat Einstein sceptically,<sup>99</sup> or on recent views of American civilisation,<sup>100</sup> were interspersed with ones on Pascal<sup>101</sup> and Bergson,<sup>102</sup> and more general ones on, for example, teaching philosophy.<sup>103</sup> They increased in length and scope with a long series on Péguy<sup>104</sup> at the time his book was due to appear, but perhaps the most revealing series was that entitled L'action intellectuelle ou de l'influence.<sup>105</sup> In it he analysed how one mind can bring another mind to modify itself, and began to develop his view of influence as a form of presence in the world and dialogue with others. Attacking Julien Benda,<sup>106</sup> he called for a return to the

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97. The Bibliothèque Nationale annexe at Versailles possesses only numbers 1-3 of the magazine. The only accessible source for the other articles Mounier published in it is the set of typed duplicates kept in the Bibliothèque Mounier. Some of the articles have also been posthumously reprinted elsewhere. See also n.105 below.

98. Après ma classe, mars and avril 1930. The theory was that advanced by le père Marcel Jousse, whose work he had dealt with in a book review.

99. Ibid., janvier 1930.

100. Ibid., octobre 1930. He was particularly concerned with the views of Georges Duhamel, who had recently written of his visit to America.

101. Ibid., avril 1929.

102. Ibid., juillet 1929.

103. Ibid., octobre, novembre and décembre 1929.

104. Ibid., novembre and décembre 1929, janvier, mars and mai 1930.

105. Revue de culture générale, from octobre 1931 to mai 1932, it is reproduced in the Bulletin des amis d'E.Mounier, no.4 janvier 1954, 2-16.

106. Benda in his Trahison des clercs, had decreed that the role of an intellectual was incompatible with involvement in the world, and specifically in politics.

philosopher's forgotten role as teacher and guide, and for the re-establishment of contemplation as a value through the renewal of intellectual action. Though dominated by the figures of Péguy and Maritain, Mounier was clearly grappling with the questions rising from the preparation of Esprit, and working towards a first statement of what was to be his life's work. While these articles undoubtedly allowed him to define his thought and to increase his powers of expression, they also obliged him to adjust to a partly non-catholic audience, a new experience for him and one which proved valuable in the establishment of Esprit as a non-sectarian review. On a personal level, it is evident from the tone of his early articles that Mounier was acutely aware of his role as a member of the intellectual élite, and that his newly acquired status had gone to his head. Though he did not reduce the implied assessment of his own importance, he rapidly learned a more seemly modesty, less likely to antagonise those whom he felt called to instruct. This was a simple but important stage in adapting to the position of spiritual leader which he already saw as his vocation.

At Easter 1929, he was introduced by Jean Guitton to another movement among primary school teachers. Based in Aix-en-Provence, the Davidées<sup>107</sup> were a group of catholic teachers in state schools, who, as well as forming a circle of friendship, held devotional and intellectual retreats,

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107. For full details on the movement, see Jean Guitton, Les Davidées (Paris, 1967). Named after the heroine of René Bazin's novel Davidée Birot, these institutrices had formed a group to sustain each other in their religious beliefs and to explore ways of putting their beliefs into legitimate forms of action within their professional lives. In this they received considerable support from the clergy.

and published a monthly bulletin entitled Aux Davidées. Their aim was to enrich their intellectual and spiritual lives, and to come to terms with teaching in secular schools. The initiator and inspiration of the movement was Mlle Marie Silve,<sup>108</sup> a teacher whose spirituality made an immediate impression on Mounier, and whose simplicity and serenity led him to return several times to the movement's meetings: Not only did he find peace, however, he also saw there a first tentative solution to the problem of action. Until this time he had seen two possibilities - either to remain a sedentary intellectual, with unsullied integrity but without effective influence, or to commit himself to effective action and accept the accompanying party discipline, lies and erosion of spiritual life. With the Davidées he saw a pure, discreet, but apparently effective form of action based on spiritual values and carried out through personal contact.<sup>109</sup>

He was so enthusiastic that he offered to write a regular column in the monthly bulletin. The offer was gratefully accepted, and from November 1929 under the heading 'Lettres philosophiques', he contributed a series of articles some five or six pages long, intended to provide the reader with a means of approaching philosophical sub-

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108. Marie Silve, born in the 1890's, had entered the traditionally secular 'Ecole Normale' system and from 1913 taught in primary schools in the region of Aix-en-Provence. In 1916 she founded the Davidées group with a few other institutrices, and continued to direct it with increasing success, while remaining a teacher.

109. Oeuvres, IV, p.444.

jects, usually in the form of an edifying discourse expressed in simple language. Written under the pseudonym of Jean Sylvestre, they are of no great interest outside their immediate context, but reflected the preoccupations he was also expressing elsewhere. Descartes and themes of meditation were gradually replaced by Péguy, Maritain and themes of action, but since his contributions were all aimed at a devout catholic audience, they tended to fall too easily into pious homily. More than with Après ma classe, Mounier was aware of his prestigious position and conceived himself as an intermediary between the people and the truth, adopting the full status of clerc which the French intellectual élite felt entitled to claim.<sup>110</sup>

At the same time as Mounier was writing for them, the group came under attack from one of the leading defenders of secular education, M. Marceau Pivert, who in a speech to the conference of the Ligue de l'enseignement<sup>111</sup> accused them of subverting the laicity of public education. They were, he said, a secret society intent on infiltrating among and converting primary school teachers with the active support of the catholic hierarchy and its various organi-

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110. The propensity for French writers to consider themselves as a kind of lay clergy was implicit in many of the debates between the wars, though it was by no means unique to the period. Benda's book Le trahison des clercs (Paris, 1927) is a characteristic example. Sartre, as he described himself in Les Mots (Paris, 1964) also had a similar conception.

111. The speech, delivered on 7 June 1930, was reprinted under the title 'Une entreprise de "noyautage" de l'enseignement public - les Davidées', in L'Ecole Libératrice, 28 juin 1930, p.553-554.

sations. This was not the first time that suspicion had fallen on catholics in national education: laïcité had always been a sensitive issue. Although he exaggerated the strength of the Davidées and overestimated their effect, Pivert's interpretation of their action as 'une entreprise de noyautage' was quite compatible with the facts. Amid the controversy that raged for some months afterwards, Mounier wrote an article in their defence.<sup>112</sup> Speaking under a pseudonym, he held that their action was valuable from a catholic point of view, entirely consistent with the principle of secular education and protected by the constitutional right of freedom of thought. This long, closely documented and argued article was reproduced separately and distributed in some quantity. It may have helped the movement to weather the crisis, and certainly won Mounier friends among catholic teachers, many of whom later helped to form the hard core of Esprit subscribers. The substance of his defence was to reject Pivert's suspicions as implying an unreasonable degree of Machiavellian intention on the teachers' part. The posture of wounded innocence was, however, too ingenuous to be plausible, and although he was probably right in asserting that the letter of the law had not been transgressed, he could not convincingly argue that the Davidées were observing the spirit of secularity in education. Although no more details of his involvement are

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112. 'Une amitié spirituelle: Les Davidées', La vie spirituelle, no.139 (avril-juin 1931), p.66-91, signed "François Chauvières".

available, Mounier drew from this affair a new experience of public controversy and was for the first time seriously embattled on an important issue. It was excellent training for the future.

c) Maritain.

Perhaps the most important meeting of this period was with Jacques Maritain, who held the key to an important section of the catholic intellectual milieu in Paris, as well as part of the provincial intelligentsia. Their first meeting was some time in late 1928.<sup>113</sup> Maritain, born in 1882 of a protestant family, had been converted, with his wife, to catholicism in 1906. During his successful career as a scholar and philosopher, he had acquired a high esteem in catholic circles, and contributed much to the Thomist revival in France. As was the case with many catholic

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113. Albert Béguin, in 'Une vie', Esprit, décembre 1950, p. 966, suggested that the meeting was in the autumn. The first mention in Mounier's notebooks is dated 17 décembre 1928 (Oeuvres, IV, p.442). The reasons for their first meeting are not clear. Mme. Mounier suggested that it was in connexion with his book on Péguy (in a footnote in Oeuvres; IV, p.442). This seems unlikely, however, since his rediscovery of Péguy dates from Christmas 1928. It would hardly have been in connexion with his thesis, since he was only beginning to look for a subject with his official tutors at that time, and in any case there is no mention of such a motivation in his letters or papers. Chevalier would hardly have introduced his favourite pupil to a virulent anti-Bergsonian whom he did not like. Even Jacques Petit in his edition of their correspondence (Maritain-Mounier 1929-1939 (Paris 1973)) leaves the question undecided (*ibid.*, p.17). It would be interesting to discover by what process Mounier's next step into the catholic intellectual élite was initiated, but it must remain undecided until further information becomes available. It is reasonably certain that the first important contact was when Mounier attended a meeting between catholic and orthodox intellectuals at Maritain's home on 17 December 1928 (Oeuvres, IV, p.442), though he may have been to earlier ones which were not recorded.

intellectuals, he became associated with the Right-wing Action française movement, which was publicly condemned by Rome in 1926. When Mounier met him he was groping for a new political philosophy compatible with his catholic faith, and had set down his first conclusions in a book, Primauté du spirituel,<sup>114</sup> which had a great influence on young catholics and in particular on Mounier. His argument was directly inspired by the lessons of 1926. On the one hand the Church, he said, having jurisdiction in all ethical and spiritual matters, was superior to politics in the hierarchy of values. In so far as moral and metaphysical questions were involved in politics, he went on, the Church had an indirect power over temporal affairs, and furthermore had the right to define the extent of its own intervention. On the other hand, he insisted, the Church must never be subordinated to, or annexed by any political party or ideology, Right-wing or Left-wing, for the temporal had no jurisdiction in spiritual matters. The Church in its wisdom left it to the conscience of the individual to choose his political preferences, he argued, though it had the right to condemn those it saw as incompatible with the faith. Calling for a return to the principles (though not the institutions) of the Middle Ages, he declared that the spiritual force which guided history led to a universalism which must be sought through God alone, and called for a spiritual crusade to restore the primacy of contemplation

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114. Jacques Maritain, Primauté du spirituel (Paris, 1927).

and revealed truth, which must be fought for, even though its triumph might not be certain. Much of this was repeated in Mounier's own writings, and although he soon developed a more Left-wing political position than Maritain, he was always adamant that no temporal movement should try to annexe the Church. He also accepted Maritain's distinction between action en chrétien and action en tant que chrétien, which meant that a particular political commitment could be inspired by but not necessitated by christian principles. In many respects Maritain's political philosophy was an articulation of the currents of thought underlying the A.C.J.F., and later it was taken widely to offer a theoretical basis for christian democracy. At the time Primauté du spirituel appeared, Mounier had made no real attempt to formulate his own political ideas, so that Maritain's ideas, cogently expressed and in harmony with Mounier's ideological background, made a strong impression on him. Their effect was further increased by personal contact and by Maritain's assuming the rôle of mentor to Mounier.

On a philosophical level, Maritain's influence on Mounier was less apparent. The teaching of Chevalier ensured that Mounier was not responsive to the kind of post-Kantian neo-Thomism which Maritain offered: he was too much of a Bergsonian to find it attractive. One important concept, however, was that of the person as opposed to the individual. Though it was a common-place of catholic theology, particularly in connexion with the three persons of God, its formu-

lation by Maritain was influential in the development of Mounier's thought. Maritain defined the person as 'une subsistance individuelle complète de nature intellectuelle et maîtresse de ses actions',<sup>115</sup> which was only found in its perfect form in saints, because its ultimate centre was God. The individual was, for him, a material entity, isolated and egocentric because matter was the principle of individuation and division.<sup>116</sup> As a result of these two being confused by both the Renaissance and the Reformation, individualism had been able to establish its pernicious reign, he held, and the only remedy to the situation was the re-establishment of a christian state which would be 'aussi fondamentalement anti-individualiste que foncièrement personnaliste'.<sup>117</sup> Though his vocabulary was fresh, the distinction was old, and Maritain did not dwell on it, though he may justly claim to have contributed to the upsurge of interest in the concept of the person in the early 1930's. Its importance as a focal point in Mounier's thought will become amply evident.

While Maritain's most important rôle in Mounier's development was partly in the founding of Esprit, which will be examined in a later chapter, he also provided Mounier with access to a large part of the Parisian christian intelligentsia. The monthly gatherings at the Maritains' home

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115. J. Maritain, Trois réformateurs (Paris, 1925), p.27.

116. Ibid., p.28.

117. Ibid., p.32.

in Meudon were centres of debate and information which attracted a wide variety of thinkers and artists. As well as meeting many of his own contemporaries, Mounier there met writers of the stature of Gabriel Marcel,<sup>118</sup> Charles du Bos,<sup>119</sup> Marcel Arland,<sup>120</sup> and Nicolas Berdyaev.<sup>121</sup> In this way he had an early and privileged introduction to the most energetic and influential of the catholic laymen and quickly established a network of sympathy and support which stood him in good stead during the rest of his life. Once again, the mechanisms of catholic élite-formation operated efficiently, and Maritain, the last of Mounier's living mentors, proved to be his most useful patron.

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118. Gabriel Marcel (b.1889) after long studies in philosophy became a catholic in 1929. He combined writing plays and literary criticism with philosophical articles and established himself as an independent thinker who has often been described as existentialist. Politically conservative, he was one of France's most eminent christian philosophers.

119. Charles Du Bos (1882-1939), art historian, literary critic and essayist, was early associated with Gide and the Nouvelle Revue Française. He became interested in christian mysticism, and his catholicism inspired his literary analyses, which were highly influential during his lifetime.

120. Marcel Arland (b.1899), after an early association with the dadaist movement, joined the Nouvelle Revue Française, which he directed from 1953. His main reputation lay in his work as a novelist and as a journalist, and he was on close terms with many of the intellectual leaders of the 1920's and 30's.

121. Nicolas Aleksandrovitich Berdyaev (1874-1948), after an active participation in the Russian socialist movement before and during the Revolution of 1917, became preoccupied with a transcendental mysticism which led to his expulsion from Russia in 1922 as an Idealist. He settled in Paris in 1925 where he wrote the larger part of his work. He was considered a major figure in christian existentialist thought, and his analyses of Soviet Russia were widely received. He was an early contributor to Esprit.

d) Péguy.

(i) Introductory.

In the spring of 1929 Mounier re-read some of the works of Charles Péguy,<sup>122</sup> and was immediately filled with enthusiasm for him. He had been asked to give a lecture on Péguy and in preparing it, he developed the notion of writing a book on him.<sup>123</sup> Maritain encouraged him in this. He was responsible for editing a series of philosophical and religious books for the Roseau d'Or collection, and asked Mounier, along with two other young men, Marcel Péguy<sup>124</sup> and Georges Izard,<sup>125</sup> to prepare manuscripts on Péguy for him. Mounier went to work with enthusiasm and by March 1930 had finished his allotted section. His colleagues were less swift and less prolific. When La pensée de Charles Péguy<sup>126</sup>

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122. Charles Péguy (1873-1914), poet and journalist, moved from an early socialism to a highly individual form of catholicism. A leading dreyfusard and a staunch republican, his main work was published in his Cahiers de la Quinzaine. He was killed in action in the Battle of the Marne. The fullest study is Jean Delaporte, Connaissance de Péguy (Paris, 1944), 2 vols., (revised edition 1959).

123. Of. Oeuvres, IV, p.445-446, 452-453.

124. Marcel Péguy, son of Charles, a near contemporary of Mounier's whose only apparent claim to celebrity is a series of books, articles and anthologies on his late father. He also edited the 'Pléiade' edition of his works.

125. Georges Izard, two years older than Mounier, had studied at the Sorbonne, and was forging a successful career as a lawyer. Extremely active in the early years of Esprit (see Chap.2), he was a député in the Front populaire and went on to participate in the socialist party and plead in several important cases. He was elected to Massis' chair in the 'Académie Française' in 1971.

126. E. Mounier, G. Izard, M. Péguy, La pensée de Charles Péguy (Paris, 1931). Mounier's contribution is reprinted in Oeuvres, I, p.13-109.

finally appeared in early 1931, it contained, apart from Mounier's contribution, a section by Marcel Péguy entitled 'La pensée politique et sociale', some 90 pages long, and 110 pages from Georges Izard entitled 'La pensée religieuse'. The bulk of the volume was occupied by Mounier's 200 page-long 'Vision des hommes et du monde', and his eight page preface. In addition he had some thirty pages of bibliography, which were printed elsewhere.<sup>127</sup>

To understand the importance of Mounier's work, and its context, it is instructive to look briefly at the state of studies on Péguy when it appeared. There was as yet no complete edition of his works, although the Nouvelle Revue Française was in process of producing one, a substantial part of which had already been published. Most of his works were otherwise unobtainable. A dozen books had been written mostly by Péguy's associates,<sup>128</sup> and numerous articles had appeared, among whose authors, Maurice Barrès<sup>129</sup> and Henri Massis,<sup>130</sup> Robert Garric<sup>131</sup> and Maurice de Gandil-

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127. In Documents de la vie intellectuelle, 20 janvier 1931, 147-176.

128. These were mostly anecdotal or hagiographic, or else literary appreciations. The most bulky and most recent was by Jérôme & Jean Tharaud, Notre cher Péguy (Paris, 1925), 2 vols. Mounier was in contact with the circle of Péguy's family and associates.

129. Maurice Barrès (1862-1923) spent an active political and literary career which made him a prominent figure of the catholic, nationalist Right-wing.

130. Henri Massis (1886-1970), a writer and journalist, was a close associate of Charles Maurras' at Action française. He was a virulent polemist and a recurrent adversary of Mounier's.

131. Robert Garric, a socially concerned catholic journalist, had organised the 'Equipes sociales' to alleviate some of the worst effects of urban poverty. He was a conservative in the christian democratic tradition, and editor of a catholic youth magazine, Revue des Jeunes. Mounier was involved in a polemic with him in 1933 (see Chapter 2).

lac<sup>132</sup> were the most prominent and prolific.<sup>133</sup> A distinct polarisation is immediately visible. The two former names were closely associated with Action française, the two latter were identified with the liberal, more socially conscious elements of the catholic intelligentsia. The same polarisation is reflected in the two periodicals which had devoted special numbers to Péguy. Le Mail of Orléans<sup>134</sup> had assembled an impressive list of friends and admirers to contribute articles with a largely poetic and social emphasis. Published in Péguy's birthplace with the encouragement of his family, the issue contained a broad spectrum of reputable catholic writers mostly of a liberal and intellectual tinge, though it did find room for Montherlant. The other periodical to devote itself to Péguy was Les

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132. Maurice de Gandillac, philosopher and journalist, was a near contemporary of Mounier's. Though an academic philosopher, he was open to progressive political ideas and contributed later to Esprit. He remained a friend of Mounier's.

133. This is gauged by the quantity of articles noted in Mounier's bibliography of works on Péguy.

134. Le Mail, no.XII (Printemps 1929), 1-103, special number entitled 'Charles Péguy, poète de Jeanne d'Arc'. It consisted mainly of reminiscences in the form of letters to the compilers, often quite short, interspersed with unpublished texts by Péguy. Contributions came from Marcel Abraham, Charles Lucas de Pesloüan, Henri Roy, Stanislas Fumet, Roland Dorgelès, Henri de Montherlant, Maurice Genevoix, Jacques Copeau, Julien Benda, Philippe Guiberteau, Robert Garric, Marcel Péguy, Roger Secrétain.

cahiers 1930,<sup>135</sup> an organ of the Jeune Droite.<sup>136</sup> It stressed the nationalistic and religious aspects of his writings and tended to assimilate him to its own refurbished Maurassism, under the sympathetic guidance of Henri Massis. Many, though not all, of the contributors were themselves prominent in the attempts to rejuvenate the political Right. This division among those who felt themselves to be sympathisers, if not followers, of Péguy stems from the ambiguities and frequently the contradictions, which coexisted within his thought, laying it open to conflicting interpretations. Péguy was alternately annexed by nationalists and by democrats with apparent ease, and it seemed that almost any shade of political opinion could find support in his writings. It was with this situation in mind that Mounier expressed, in his avant-propos, the wish to paint Péguy, 'warts and all', without introducing distortions which might have given his subject more partisan appeal. How far he expected to satisfy both sides is a

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135. Les Cahiers 1930, no.6 (février 1930), special number entitled 'Porche à l'oeuvre de Charles Péguy', it consisted of a series of 'billets' from Péguy to Henri Massis, followed by a series of commentaries on various of his texts. Contributors were Jean-Pierre Maxence, Marcel Péguy, Jean Godmé, Elie Rabourdin, André Charlier, H.-R. de Simony, Jean Chauvy, Augustin Fransque, Bernard Guyon, Jacques de Grix, René Pintard, Robert Francis.

136. A term loosely employed to designate the various magazines and organisations which formed the current of men who had come of age since the war, were inspired by Charles Maurras, and since the condemnation of 1926 had at least nominally been independent of Action Française.

matter of speculation, for he did not propose a purely descriptive essay. In referring to 'les erreurs, les injustices involontaires de ce juste', and his 'grandeur hérissée de défauts',<sup>137</sup> he admitted, at least implicitly, to proposing a number of value-judgements which in turn implied a point of view, which he knew to be at variance with other current interpretations. His object, however, was less to convince those familiar with Péguy, than to introduce and recommend him to those who knew little or nothing of him, 'd'éveiller l'intérêt et d'ouvrir les voies à une lecture directe'.<sup>138</sup> Having been greatly inspired by Péguy, he was anxious to communicate his inspiration to others with the further, but unstated, aim of continuing what he saw as Péguy's mission. This is why he could declare 'Péguy n'est pas mort, il est inachevé'.<sup>139</sup> The point was left undeveloped, but its significance emerges unmistakably in retrospect.

While acknowledging the intrinsic interest of the book, the intention of this study is to examine it for the light it throws on Mounier's development. It is a platitude of studies on Mounier to apply his statements about Péguy to himself: he speaks for instance of Péguy's thought as:

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137. Oeuvres, I, p.13.

138. *Ibid.*, p.14.

139. *Ibid.*, p.14.

quelque chose comme les visions d'un prophète, ces idées multiples, serrées, fécondes, inépuisables à l'usage, qui apparaissent d'abord en foule bigarrée, et peu à peu révèlent leur plus profonde parenté.<sup>140</sup>

Something in this description, when divested of the linguistic extravagance, is true of Mounier. There are, however, a number of objections to the simple transference of this and other remarks. Mounier was not writing even indirectly about himself, and such remarks could not conceivably have been applied to him either as he was when he wrote, or as he saw his future at that time. His comments were often made in imprecise, emotive and unverifiable terms which with a little imagination, may be applied to many thinkers. The fact that he was writing of a man he admired intensely, and that consciously or unconsciously he modelled his own life in many ways on Péguy's, is not sufficient ground for arguing that his assessment of Péguy is an accurate assessment of himself, however similar the two men were. With these reservations in mind, Monnier's account of Péguy still affords substantial evidence of his own preoccupations and aspirations.

(ii) Life and truth.

The first major topic to appear was the inseparable union of thought and action in Péguy's life. Péguy's position, according to Mounier, was that man was initially

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140. Oeuvres, I, p.14-15.

a whole, his thought and action expressing in different ways the same indivisible reality, and that they only became separated by an artificial distinction based on a spurious rationalism. Péguy held that the authentic source of this original wholeness and the highest inspiration of thought was to be sought in the common people, Mounier went on; they alone were equipped to guide the philosopher in his search for a truth which expresses all human reality. Because Péguy's writings always sprang from historical events, Mounier argued, and because his concepts referred directly to specific people, his thought was highly concrete, and if at times this led to oddities in his vocabulary, it was because he was so firmly entrenched in his time. In this analysis Mounier was visibly working towards the key concept of incarnation, which later became a central point of his thought. What is noteworthy is that he conceived thought as being given an incarnation, as against Péguy who in his earlier writings appeared to suggest the reverse: thought, or ideology, being generated by a social group, the people, and formulated by the thinker or ideologist.

Next he considered truth, which he took to be Péguy's overriding aim. For him, Mounier argued, the philosopher was the man for whom no sacrifice was so great as to prevent him seeking and speaking the truth. On this point Péguy's teaching seemed entirely at one with Jacques Chevalier's.

Le culte de la vérité est le plus scrupuleux des cultes. Elle est précieuse en soi parce qu'elle est divine. Seule une âme grossière se satisfait à distinguer de grandes vérités ... et le menu fretin des petites vérités. Ce sont les petits mensonges et les petites injustices, lentement infiltrés, qui pourrissent un pays et nécessitent une révolution.<sup>141</sup>

Although Mounier might not be certain of its precise content, he at all times held truth to be an absolute value, particularly in his early writings. As the thirties progressed the corollary became prominent: the war on lies, which this passage clearly suggests, and which became an increasing aspect of Esprit's work. The mention of revolution evokes an important future development, particularly suggesting the task of self-purification which every personalist revolutionary had to undertake if the revolution was to be the victory of truth and justice.

The final section of Mounier's introductory chapter was devoted to the structure of Péguy's thought, and his assimilation of Bergson. Non-systematic and at first sight disorderly, his writings reflected, in Mounier's view, the concern to express reality rather than to impose an order on it. He thought Péguy's early contact with Bergson had given him not a systematic doctrine, but an awareness of the youth and vitality which philosophy could have, along with a collection of concepts and a language with which to elucidate his own thought. Mounier felt that it would be erroneous to regard Péguy as a mere disciple of Bergson's, since his thought was no mere repetition of the master's

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141. Oeuvres, I, p.25.

word. To support this view, Mounier pointed<sup>to</sup> the striking difference of style. As against Bergson's method of building up his argument in a rational development, he pointed out that Péguy's writing was not neatly ordered because life was not neatly ordered, and the acceptance, which Bergson reached by reason, of an order beyond any rational system, was the premiss on which Péguy's work was based. Mounier's own much-repeated refusal of systematic philosophy was firmly rooted in the same considerations.

(iii) Thought and structure.

The next chapter of the book, entitled 'La dénonciation de la pensée toute faite', presented Péguy as a declared adversary of what was misleadingly called intellectualisme. This did not mean that he was against intelligence, Mounier explained, quite the contrary, what he attacked was its restriction to a rigid and mechanical operation.

Une logique raide peut laisser échapper les replis de l'erreur.... C'est une logique souple...qui poursuit, qui atteint, qui dessine les sinuosités des fautes et des déficiences.... La raideur est essentiellement infidèle et c'est la souplesse qui est fidèle.<sup>142</sup>

This passage from Péguy sums up the argument. Truth was, for Péguy, complex and often unpredictable, Mounier argued, therefore the philosophical apparatus used to transcribe it in conceptual terms had to be sufficiently flexible without

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142. Oeuvres, I, p.31. The quotation is from Péguy's 'Casse-cou'; see C. Péguy, Oeuvres en prose, I (Paris, 1959), p.311. The omissions are Mounier's.

being imprecise. The criterion used in the defence of the flexible intellect was fidelity, specifically fidelity to reality or truth. But for both Péguy and Mounier the terms reality and truth seem interchangeable and were not defined, except in terms of their opposites. The opposite of the flexible intellect, 'la pensée toute faite', was the subject of some of Péguy's most vehement attacks, for, as Mounier explained, a ready-made coat is easier to buy but less likely to fit the wearer than one made to measure, so it is easier to think in ready-made categories with little chance of accurately understanding reality, than to create new and appropriate ways of thinking. He argued that Péguy condemned the kind of abstract thought that refused to accept the teaching of experience, since it could not, except by accident, correspond to reality. Instead, he continued, Péguy felt that thought should spring from and reflect experience of the real world, resisting the temptations of mental sloth or the easy brilliance which dazzled without enlightening. He was sure that such a procedure was the only way to avoid rigidity and therefore error. He made it clear that Péguy was not trying to construct a monism which would tend to suppress or ignore differences in thought or between people. This, he stressed, would be confusing and dishonest, and since lucidity and honesty were the only effective ways to conduct intellectual enquiry or personal relationships, Péguy was rather arguing

for a kind of pluralism, such as he tried to practice at his Cahiers de la Quinzaine. In exploring Péguy's ideological pluralism, Mounier was dealing with a concrete problem, since he was already nurturing plans for founding his own review.<sup>143</sup> Pluralism required harmony between unlike people, or dissimilar modes of thought, he went on, and Péguy was convinced that many of what appeared to be contradictions could be resolved by considering them as merely different ways of looking at things, equally valid and even complementary. In the history of philosophy, for example, Péguy saw different systems as running parallel, he said, and to set them in opposition was to misunderstand their true aim. He pointed out that, following Bergson, Péguy saw every philosophy as consisting of a central intuition of reality, which was its particular contribution, and a more or less systematic form, which was expendable, the apparent contradictions springing from the forms and leaving the essences intact. He explained that Péguy's early writings presented these essences as part of a universal harmony, while in later works they appeared as markers on the path to wisdom, and finally as a christian convert, Péguy had adopted a more modest view of each thinker elucidating in his own way one of the infinite aspects of eternal truth. This last view prepared Mounier's own later insistence that personalism, his own chosen philosophy, was

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143. Mounier had been thinking of the project for some time, and the conversation during which the decision was made took place on 6 December 1930. His Péguy was published in January 1931 after some delay.

capable of virtually as many different varieties as there were personalists, without necessarily entailing contradiction. Mounier was, however, aware of the criticism that such an attitude could lead to the toleration of carelessness and excess in the expression of a doctrine, and was quick to defend Péguy against the charge. Apparent excesses, he argued, should be viewed in the total context of the work concerned, particularly since Péguy was often engaged in vigorous polemic, and frequently omitted to counterbalance his statements with the necessary reservations. Mounier conceded that Péguy's thought on the point was a little confused and demonstrably false if taken to mean that all philosophies were in essence mutually compatible. Learning from Péguy's mistakes, Mounier later tried always to make explicit reservations where he felt they were called for, though in the heat of polemic he felt he was allowed a certain licence.

One important value which Mounier took from Péguy was the belief that it was more important to witness disinterestedly for the truth than to establish the correctness of a particular point of view.

Nous n'avons pas mission de faire triompher la vérité, disait Pascal, mais seulement de combattre pour elle. C'est l'enseignement même de Péguy.<sup>144</sup>

For Mounier this entailed that, since God was the final judge and victor, it was less important to win than to fight well. Victory held dangerous temptations, he warned,

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144. Oeuvres, I, p.51.

leading to mortal pride and possible ossification, in any case it was a gift from God which did not depend on our merit. This conception of philosophy was Mounier's own view. The aim of witnessing to the truth as opposed to ensuring practical success was at the crux of his early writings. He only gradually began to recognise the importance of efficacy. Even then, the concern to be un témoin was scarcely eroded. In Mounier's judgement, Péguy's teaching was so pure as to render insignificant and unjust the criticisms aimed at him, specifically by Julien Benda,<sup>145</sup> on the grounds of his inconsistency, his tendency to equate persons and concepts, or the limitation of his mental world to France. Benda's reproach that he betrayed the intellect by commitment in the world he regarded as irrelevant in view of the inseparability of thought and action. Mounier passed rapidly over the accusation of idolising heroism, which he admitted, was a value for Péguy, though not the highest, and properly defined was another way of expressing intellectual courage and 'l'impulsion que donne la soif de justice et de vérité'.<sup>146</sup> If he seemed to praise war, Mounier suggested, it was war in a just and noble cause, honorably fought, that he praised. Mounier thus refuted the exaggerated charges brought by Benda and thereafter felt no need to defend Péguy on these issues. He went on to point out the remarkable justice Péguy displayed even in the heat of argument.

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145. Benda, Trahison des clercs (Paris, 1927), and Fin de l'éternel (Paris, 1929).

146. Oeuvres, I, p.52.

Dans sa polémique même, nulle violence pour la violence, nul grossissement, nulle insinuation, nulle offense biaisée, nul trait pour faire mal à l'adversaire parce qu'il est adversaire. La plus dure riposte est la plus exacte d'intention.<sup>147</sup>

This estimate of Péguy was the model which Mounier himself tried, not always with success, to follow in his own writings, though his account of Péguy's qualities in this respect was rather overstated. But while he was insufficiently critical, his analysis was strongly supported by the evidence he adduced, and he gave a strong statement of the case on Péguy's behalf.

(iv) Spirit and matter.

In the following chapter Mounier examined Péguy's analysis of habit as the enemy of authentic existence, assimilable to the mechanical as opposed to the creative side of life. He pointed to Péguy's affirmation of the value of creative living in the dimension of la durée, as against the encroaching sterility of the mechanical and habitual. To Péguy's mind, he said, past events could be retained either by living memory or by inscription in history, memory implying that the person had been creatively immersed in the events, and was therefore able to recreate them, history implying that, not having been involved in the events, he could only recount them in a detached and objective manner, thereby robbing them of their reality. For Péguy, the past possessed less reality than the present, he argued, though as part of la durée it retained a level

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147. Oeuvres, I, p.54.

of reality which could be communicated by someone who was prepared fully to experience it. Similarly, he said, works of art or literature tended to lose the freshness of their first creation, but Péguy thought that the receptive reader or spectator could restore life to the work by a creative response which overcame the ravages of habit. The same conflict between creation and habit, he suggested, underlay Péguy's account of private and public life. He explained that Péguy held public virtue to spring from private virtue, and private intimacy, where la durée was most intensely experienced, to be the source of creativity and life. It followed, he argued, that Péguy saw publicity as parasitic on truth and creativity, turning its authentic and private raw material into simplified, distorted forms of facility and habit. Although Mounier was not long in abandoning Péguy's vocabulary, his own thought had roots in this analysis. His suspicion of public language and the lies accompanying large-scale projects was an obvious case. In a more general sense, Mounier's later action was based on meeting persons, directly or indirectly, in their own privacy, entering their homes and their meditations in order to communicate honestly. Although the practice was less thorough than the theory, Mounier succeeded in surrounding Esprit with an atmosphere of intimacy and human warmth which few intellectual movements achieved. Its recurrent emphasis on the analysis of private experience as a vital

part of the review's work can be traced, in some measure, to his study of Péguy. Perhaps also Péguy's denunciation of academic historical work strengthened Mounier's resolution to reject the tempting path which led to a Chair at the Sorbonne. There is also an echo of this in his preference at Esprit for publishing eye-witness accounts rather than more thorough but more detached analyses, particularly in the case of international events.

Next, Mounier looked at the best-known of Péguy's antinomies - mystique against politique. Mystique was the positive pole, corresponding to the creative intuition within la durée, it was the unspoilt essence of any doctrine, and while its formulation came late in Péguy's development, Mounier argued, it was implicit in all that went before. Initially he had held a secular view of it, Mounier thought, but in his later life had come to regard it as an expression of the divine inspiration in human activity. In an individual possessing it, the mystique in Péguy's account, was a force for liberty and justice, Mounier went on, and since the mystique participated in the spiritual reality of the world, all pure mystiques were compatible with all others. At the other end of Péguy's polarity, Mounier continued, the politique was parasitic on the mystique, just as the truth, initially held as an intuitive experience, gradually deteriorated into logic, with the life drained away, inert and false. Péguy saw the politique, Mounier explained, as based on laziness and facility, unwillingness to face the insecurity of continually question-

ing acquired beliefs, and a readiness to rest on ageing laurels. He added that it only subsisted by encroaching on sources of power from outside itself: first taking pure temporal power, second acquiring intellectual prestige and third usurping spiritual authority. The last two temptations were particular to the intellectual, he said, and entailed the ultimate treason of confusing the temporal and eternal orders, which must at all costs be kept distinct. For Péguy, he suggested, mystique and politique were in permanent opposition: a mystique, belonging to the eternal order, was in harmony with all other mystiques and hostile to all politiques; a politique, in the temporal order, was not only hostile to all mystiques but also to all other politiques. He explained that Péguy's well-known dictum, 'tout commence en mystique et finit en politique'<sup>148</sup> expressed the inevitability of decay, since time was on the side of the politique, since the greatest vigilance was needed to arrest the process, and since continual renewals were needed to eliminate the dead wood of habit. The implications of this analysis for Mounier were very clear. They were at the root of the problem of ends and means which bedevilled him throughout his life. Péguy's uncompromising spirituality was always instinctively attractive to him and he felt ill at ease with anything less than complete spiritual purity of means. Throughout the thirties

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148. Oeuvres, I, p.77, quoted from Péguy's 'Notre jeunesse', see C. Péguy, Oeuvres en prose, II (Paris, 1961), p.516.

he was heavily inhibited in his actions as a result, and although he never really overcame it, he did come to realise that such purity led in practice to ineffectiveness. His distaste for politics can also be traced to Péguy's teachings, and although he tried to adopt a 'balanced' attitude, he always tended to think of problems as existing on a primarily spiritual level, with the political ramifications being mere embodiments of them. The metaphysical nature of the mystique served to reinforce his conception of the world as governed by mind, spirit or ideas: a conception he never abandoned although he was forced to modify it considerably.

The polarity in Péguy's thought continued into the field of morality, and the analysis of rigid and flexible thought could almost be transcribed to apply to it, Mounier explained, since rigidity was not, in Péguy's opinion, a criterion of moral worth, and could not take account of the complexity of moral issues, nor of the effects of suffering or grace. Mounier showed the rigid morality as representing for Péguy a petty-bourgeois ethic of calculation, security and tranquillity, excluding creative and heroic virtues. It seemed to Mounier, as it had seemed to Péguy, that this was the opposite of the true christian life, and neither man could ever find words harsh enough to denounce the abomination.

Mounier found one phenomenon which Péguy hated even more: money, the all-powerful master of the modern world, which represented for Péguy the temporal in its pure state, without even the most tenuous link with the spiritual. He said Péguy thought that, elevated to the level of a value itself, it had come to replace God in many lives, and represented the apotheosis of quantitative materialism, in which the entire moral framework was caricatured in reverse, deadly sins becoming the virtues of finance, virtues becoming commercial folly as money degraded and perverted all that was good, the Savings Book replacing the Prayer Book. The same denunciations constantly recurred under the pen of Mounier, despite slightly more sophisticated economic considerations, and, like Péguy, he tried, as far as possible, to base his life on the principles of poverty despite his opportunities of wealth and the assumptions of his petit-bourgeois upbringing.

(v) Time and misery.

Mounier next looked more closely at Péguy's doctrine of time, which, taking much of Bergson's analysis, saw the dead weight of the past and its determinations meeting and being enriched by the free and creative being of man in the instantaneous present. On this view duration was an irreversible process, he explained, and everything temporal inevitably decayed, thereby excluding material progress, and suggesting that true progress could only be spiritual.

Since the human form of decay was ageing, Mounier went on, Péguy was led to associate spirituality with youth and innocence rather than age and experience. Although it is a commonplace theme, Péguy and Mounier both held youth to be an important value, and the continual efforts to rejuvenate their respective reviews, along with the repeated manifestos dwelling on the virtues of youth clearly show that the concern was real rather than conventional.

Mounier also saw Péguy as concerned about the effect of temporal decay on the eternal. Because the two were inseparably linked, he argued, the soul participated in the body's decay. This involved an important principle of Mounier's later thought, which he established in a short digression: that the spiritual, though essentially distinct, was incarnated in the temporal. Underlying this notion was the incarnation of Christ, necessary because in this perspective the eternal could only communicate to man by taking temporal form. Both Mounier and Péguy insisted that the spirit was distinct from the world, but was not separate from it. It was a difficult point to make and, as both men's careers demonstrate, easily led to misinterpretation; but both considered it to be a basic principle of their action.

Returning to the main line of his argument, Mounier examined Péguy's concept of la misère, which in one sense corresponded to a kind of metaphysical destitution such as

Pascal described, but in another sense contained something of Baudelaire's ennui. It was, Mounier said, an all-pervading misery, entirely negative, without any of the salutary qualities often attributed to sufferings, and therefore unrelieved evil, unconditionally to be eradicated. Because he could not conceive the situation with any optimism on a temporal level, Mounier suggested, Péguy eventually abandoned his socialism, and even as a christian he could not reconcile himself to accepting misery, particularly economic misery, but was struck by feelings of powerlessness in face of its enormity. His pessimism led, Mounier said, to his sometimes claiming that evil was stronger than good, and, despite everything, would always win. Péguy, on this occasion found no echo in Mounier's own optimistic view, but Mounier felt that he needed to understand this near-despair in order to offer an acceptable remedy.

(vi) Hope and salvation.

In the last chapter of the book, Mounier sought to show how Péguy avoided the final step of despair, and found 'le salut par l'espérance'. Having painted a black picture, he put it into perspective, referring to it as 'une première opération, une opération de désentrave'.<sup>149</sup> He asserted that Péguy's temperament would not allow him to be satisfied with such a barren philosophy as he had just outlined, but that Péguy had learned that misère, although it

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149. Oeuvres, I, p.109.

must be endured, could be transfigured by faith in salvation. Mounier explained that this meant man was more than a physical being governed by the law of matter, and insofar as he was eternal, and therefore exempt from that law, he could hope for salvation. Mounier considered that Péguy had been too much of a socialist to accept the logical consequences of this view, and had tried to include the temporal in the process of salvation on the principle of 'aide-toi, le ciel t'aidera'.<sup>150</sup> Ultimately, he insisted, Péguy knew that God decided the outcome of the struggle, but thought that man must use all his energies in the appropriate direction; mystique would still deteriorate into politique, but, with the aid of the eternal, it could constantly be renewed and recreated. According to Mounier, although Péguy thought misery sterile in itself, he conceded it the virtue of breaking down the shell of self sufficiency and thought moral misery, or sin, to be an essential part of salvation: the sinner and the saint being poles of the axis on which christianity turned. Where habit and hardness of heart had taken over, Mounier said, Péguy argued that divine grace could not penetrate, and sin was a fissure through which grace could enter. Consequently, he thought, it was better, in Péguy's terms, to sin, than to adhere to a rigorous but mechanical morality, since the perspective thus opened up was a basis for the virtue of hope, which was at the source of all spiritual vigour, creation and liberty. Mounier felt that Péguy's notion of hope, as a constant fidelity to something better despite the contrary

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150. Oeuvres, I, p.112.

evidence and despite powerful mechanisms in the world, offered a vision of christianity centring on a perpetual revolution. He examined Péguy's view of revolution as a moral transformation which consisted of a gradual purification of the temporal by the eternal, rather than as a sudden and material upheaval. There was no calculation involved, he stressed, because hoping was a non-directed, confident and care-free abandonment, implying a faith in the eternal for the outcome. Mounier saw Péguy's revolution as a spreading of the christian values and virtues which would, by some spiritual agency, or, in Péguy's later thought, by the action of freely given grace, automatically entail the material and intellectual changes which the word revolution usually evoked.

At this point, Mounier touched most closely on spiritual aspects, and showed how Péguy's attitudes and his interpretation of Bergson led necessarily to christian belief. Mounier did not hide his own perspective; his account was highly selective and directed to a culmination in orthodox catholicism. Nonetheless, Péguy's thought contained themes which derived from his early socialism and were later modified by the introduction of christian and Bergsonian concepts. These themes, channelled through the ethos to which Mounier was most receptive, formed Péguy's particular contribution to his thought. The concern with the concrete and the refusal to abandon the temporal was

a lesson which Mounier learned from Péguy, but which he spent the rest of his life learning to implement. Perhaps the most significant borrowing was the concept of the spiritual revolution. From 1930 onwards it was a problem which increasingly occupied Mounier's thoughts. Péguy's slogan 'la révolution sera morale ou elle ne sera pas'<sup>151</sup> was often on his lips, emphasising that spirituality came before revolution. But beyond these obvious borrowings there was a far greater debt. By his training and inclination, Mounier was disposed to welcome much of Péguy's thought, as did many catholics of his generation. Péguy combined an imaginative interpretation of Bergson with a clear development towards catholicism, and thereby found an immediate response in the young Mounier, imbued as he was with Chevalier's teaching. He greatly admired Péguy as a person, for he seemed to embody the heroic and spiritual virtues of catholicism and focus all that Mounier held valuable into a striking and attractive model. This deep affinity emboldened him to explore the dangerous paths which led away from the traditional conservatism of provincial piety, without feeling that he was betraying the essence of his faith. The political dimensions of Péguy's writing, his utopian socialism and his republican dreyfusisme translated twenty years later into revolutionary

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151. It recurs throughout Mounier's work, but most strikingly at the head of his 'Refaire la Renaissance', Oeuvres, I, p.137.

personalism and antifascism without too much difficulty. The terms had changed, but the same spirit presided. Mounier was permanently marked by his encounter with Péguy. Consciously and unconsciously he followed his example on innumerable occasions. As time passed Péguy's domination of his thoughts decreased, but it was powerful during the most formative years of Mounier's intellectual development and more than any of his living patrons, Péguy can be considered as Mounier's mentor.

(vi) Impact.

The book, La pensée de Charles Péguy, appeared after some delay, in January 1931. Despite the economic slump, which was affecting book-sales, it was bought in good numbers, and the critics received it favourably.<sup>152</sup> In the Nouvelle Revue Française, Albert Thibaudet paid Mounier the compliment of taking it as the starting point for an article on Péguy and Bergson.<sup>153</sup> The following month in the same journal, Gabriel Marcel enthusiastically reviewed

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152. The reviews it received are too numerous to list here in detail. Those mentioned are the more substantial articles, taken from serious and representative periodicals. N.R.F. was probably the leading literary journal; Etudes was a highly respected catholic journal; La revue universelle was a long-established journal of the Right. Mounier subscribed to an agency which collected cuttings referring to himself and later to Esprit. These are collected and available in the Bibliothèque Mounier. The collection includes a number of articles and reviews on his Péguy.

153. A. Thibaudet, 'Réflexions - Péguy et Bergson', Nouvelle Revue Française, no.211 (avril 1931), p.580-592.

the book,<sup>154</sup> regretting that Mounier had not written all three sections, and praising him for his accurate understanding of 'l'architecture secrète de la pensée de Péguy'.<sup>155</sup> In the Jesuit journal, Etudes, Mounier's contribution was seen as an 'étude importante' and given a long, warm reception.<sup>156</sup> More revealing, though, was the article from Henri Massis,<sup>157</sup> who was to become Mounier's constant opponent. Scornfully referring to Mounier throughout as 'l'Agrégé', never once mentioning his name, he denounced the book as a betrayal of all Péguy ever was. Recounting the intervention by Mounier at a lecture on Péguy by J.-P. Maxence<sup>158</sup> of the Jeune Droite, he fulminated against Mounier's approach as an intellectual manipulation which distorted both the spirit and the tone. Having accused him of the 'pensée toute faite', which Péguy so abhorred, and which Gabriel Marcel had complimented him on avoiding, he concluded:

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154. Gabriel Marcel, 'Compte rendu', Nouvelle Revue Française, no.212 mai 1931, p.747-750.

155. Ibid., p.747.

156. P. Defrennes, 'Chefs de file', Etudes, tome 208 20 juillet 1931, p.169-188, (p.183-188).

157. H. Massis, 'Charles Péguy et l'Agrégé', Revue universelle, tome XLIV, no.24 (15 mars 1931), p.742-747.

158. Jean-Pierre Maxence (1906-1956), founder of the review Cahiers and one of the foremost of the editors and journalists of the catholic Right during the 1930's, was also a powerful political orator. He collaborated during the Occupation and died in exile in Geneva. At the time of the incident with Mounier he had just finished a book on Péguy (J.-P. Maxence & N. Gorodetzky, Péguy (Paris, 1931)).

Décidément, il va sans dire que l'Agrégé n'entendra jamais rien à Péguy; mais tout de même il valait mieux que cela fût dit.<sup>159</sup>

Mounier in reply wrote a polite, though sharp letter published the following month.<sup>160</sup> Requesting exemption from the opprobrium Massis had heaped upon the Sorbonne, he reproached him for his dishonest quotations and underhand polemic, concluding:

L'avenir discernera ceux qui continuent l'esprit de Péguy et ceux qui en parlent.<sup>161</sup>

In a heavily sarcastic commentary on the letter, Massis recounted how, after the *lecture* in question, he had approached Mounier to discuss the matter, and on hearing him defend himself by appealing to the texts, had been moved to 'le renvoyer à sa boîte à fiches'.<sup>162</sup> This series of exchanges is doubtless at the origin of the enmity in which the two men always held each other over the years, an enmity which was amply fuelled by events. It also marks the first of Mounier's real conflicts with the Right-wing catholic groups, and furnishes ample evidence of his commitment to follow the example of Péguy, as he interpreted it. There is no other published record of this encounter, or its consequences, but it is significant that a fortnight after the

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159. Massis, 'Charles Péguy et l'Agrégé', p.747.

160. Printed in H. Massis, 'Péguy et l'Agrégé (suite)', Revue universelle, tome XLV no.2 [15 avril 1931], p. 227-230.

161. Ibid., p.228.

162. Ibid., p.229.

second article, Mounier wrote to Chevalier suggesting that Massis was an unsuitable person to participate in the planned review.<sup>163</sup>

(e) Conclusion.

The spring of 1931 is an appropriate time to pause and assess Mounier's development, since in many ways it marked the end of his apprenticeship. At the age of twenty-six he was approaching the end of his formal studies, having decided not to pursue his doctorate. He had published his first book and a large number of articles; he was having his first taste of public controversy, with Massis and the Davidées affair; and he was already laying firm plans for founding a new review.

His sheltered upbringing in a pious, petit-bourgeois, provincial home led easily to a narrow but intensive philosophical training. He was a talented and serious student, receptive to the friendly guidance of a philosophy professor for whom he felt a strong intellectual and personal attraction, but who could only offer him limited intellectual nourishment. Mounier was taught the great classics, a handful of nineteenth century catholic thinkers and Bergson. He was virtually ignorant of recent movements within France and of most non-French thought. Apart from peripheral involvement in student organisations with a limited social

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163. Oeuvres, IV, p.486. Only an extract of the letter is printed, and it is unclear what the precise context was. It is unlikely that Mounier had ever considered asking Massis to contribute, and Chevalier may have suggested asking him.

orientation, his world was virtually restricted to philosophy and religion. Political events and social movements, in or out of France, made no noticeable impact on him: he was cushioned by a comfortable social position in a period of relative prosperity, by the provincial insularity of Grenoble, and by his choice of contemplative pursuits.

Leaving home, he found Paris a foreign, hostile place. Naturally he sought out people who would sympathise with the ways of his home environment and for two or three years he lived protected by a strong defensive mechanism which excluded many ideas and experiences which were now offered to him. During this time he acquired a basic training in the skills of a writer, journalist and intellectual; he met and was accepted by a small intellectual circle; he consolidated his ideas without significantly enlarging them; and he began to grope towards some idea of what he was going to do with his life. He hated the university, though his own experience was largely drawn from books, and a narrow range of them. Though he disliked intellectuals, he was by the spring of 1931 a fully-fledged catholic intellectual, supported by experienced patrons who were anxious to groom him and smooth his way to establishing himself as a member of their elite. All he lacked was experience. But already he was taking the first steps in his public existence as an intellectual and was becoming aware of a wider range of problems than he had previously known.

C H A P T E R   T W O

TOWARDS A POLITICAL IDEOLOGY (1931-1938)

I. ESTABLISHING THE MEDIUM:

- a) The political environment
- b) The emergence of Esprit
- c) The doctrines of spiritual revolution
- d) Early clarifications

II. TAKING POSITIONS:

- a) Debates and polemic
- b) The Front Populaire
- c) Relations with the Church
- d) The personalist manifesto
- e) International affairs
- f) Conclusion

C H A P T E R   T W O

TOWARDS A POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

I. ESTABLISHING THE MEDIUM.

a) The political environment.

If Mounier entered the 1930's with an unusually narrow experience of contemporary problems, events were not lacking to broaden his view. It was a historical situation in which comfortable solutions were violently challenged.<sup>1</sup> Emerging from the relative tranquility of post-war recovery, France was gradually feeling the effects of the international economic crisis. The Wall Street Crash of 1929 had shaken the structures of international trade and finance, and had initiated the Great Depression, but France was cushioned from its immediate effects and only seriously began to suffer two years later. The resulting social disruption affected all aspects of French life, and no one, from the year 1931 onwards, thought to deny that there was a crisis, however they interpreted it. The repercussions soon became visible in political life and thought, with a growth in the strength of movements which undertook to bring radical and, if necessary, violent remedies to the major social and economic problems. The increasing polarisation between the

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1. The historical material is drawn from many sources, particularly A. Cobban, A History of Modern France (London, 1965) and D.W. Brogan, The French Nation 1814-1940 (London, 1957).

extremes of Left and Right threw the more moderate traditional parties into disarray, obliging them to seek new solutions if they could.

The political divisions within France at this period were complex, but a pattern is still visible.<sup>2</sup> The traditional Right, grouped around the extreme monarchist newspaper and movement, Action française, was expanding into a number of small but related leagues. They were fiercely nationalistic and often modelled on a military pattern. Increasingly they were looking to Italy and Germany, where impressive fascist movements were already attracting international attention. The Marxist Left had split into two after 1920: the communist party had committed itself to the Russian-led Third International and professed a strict Marxist-Leninism; the socialist party had kept its independence and claimed to follow the established traditions of French socialism. The communists had increasingly won the support of the urban working-class and looked to the Bolshevik Revolution for their inspiration, whereas the socialists were driven to a lower-middle-class and rural base, and offered a more moderate programme for political change. Between Marxism and Maurassism were all the centrist currents which had developed from the successive controversies of the Third Republic. Largely conservative and pragmatic in their

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2. The political analysis of France in the early 1930's is drawn from D. Thomson, Democracy in France (London, 1946), and from Roy Pierce, Contemporary French Political Thought, (London, 1966).

attitude, they found their most characteristic expression in the post-Enlightenment liberalism of Alain,<sup>3</sup> which particularly animated the 'radical' parties. Within this broad, complex body of political attitudes was a small christian democratic current. It grouped many catholics who accepted the Republic but could not cooperate with the major Republican parties, which tended to keep to the anti-clericalism of their origins.

The Church had, from the earliest days of the Republic, been identified with the anti-Republican, monarchist, nationalist Right. There was no theoretical obligation on catholics to take this position, but in practice the majority had done so. At the turn of the century an evolution had begun away from this identification,<sup>4</sup> taking some impetus from Leo XIII's encyclical Rerum novarum<sup>5</sup>. Although the same pope had warned against the dangers of christian democracy in his encyclical Graves de communi,<sup>6</sup> there was a

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3. Alain (1868-1951), whose real name was Emile Chartier, philosopher and journalist, was a philosophy teacher in Rouen and Paris, whose best known works were his Propos, short, aphoristic pieces on a wide variety of subjects. He was an influential liberal theorist, concerned with limiting the power of the state, but did not construct any systematic political philosophy.

5. Published on March 15th 1891, Rerum novarum was devoted to the condition of labour, the first major statement from the Church on the position of workers in modern industrial societies.

4. The analysis of the Church's social and political doctrines is drawn from R.L. Camp, The Papal Ideology of Social Reform (Leiden, 1969), which studies its historical development from 1878-1967; Anne Freemantle (ed.), The Social Teachings of the Church (New York, 1963), which publishes substantial extracts from the declarations of popes and catholic hierarchies from Leo XIII to John XXIII; and A. Dansette, Destin du catholicisme français 1926-1956 (Paris, 1957).

6. Published on January 18th 1901.

genuine attempt on the part of the Church to understand the modern problems of democracy and social justice. The way was left open for catholics to explore political positions other than the traditional Right. The decision in 1926 to place Action française on the Index of prohibited books made it more urgent for catholics to look elsewhere for solutions to the problems posed by the post-war state of society. In the Spring of 1931, in the middle of the economic and social crisis, Pius XI issued the encyclical Quadragesimo anno<sup>7</sup> which spoke out sharply against the evils and abuses of the capitalist system and attempted to lay down structures for a solution to some of the problems, strongly inspired by corporatist theory. Despite its shortcomings, the encyclical had the effect of calling catholics to a reappraisal of their social thought, and although it continued to anathematise socialism and communism, it did imply a measure of political reform.

To Mounier, a young catholic in the Spring of 1931, it was difficult to avoid feeling the need to participate in the search for new political and social solutions. His participation was solicited from many sides. Maritain encouraged him to join in the rethinking, which he himself was undertaking independently. Maritain also put him into contact with a number of young men who were already engaged in similar work, for Mounier was something of a late-comer

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7. Published on May 15th 1931.

to political and social thought. Since the condemnation of Action française, and since the setting up, about the same time, of specialised catholic youth organisations,<sup>8</sup> there had been attempts by young catholics to instigate spiritual and political renewals.<sup>9</sup> These became increasingly urgent as the crisis worsened, and from 1929 onwards there was an explosion in the number of new periodical reviews appearing in France, not restricted to catholics, and most of them under the impulse of men and women who had been too young to fight in the Great War, and who now had reached adulthood. This was Mounier's generation.

Seeing the energy that was being expended by these young people in working out new positions, the Nouvelle Revue Française approached one of the most active of them, Denis de Rougemont,<sup>10</sup> to collect declarations from the various groups. This collection appeared in the N.R.F. of

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8. Cf. A. Dansette, Destin..., Chapter II

9. These attempts from the late 1920's are studied in great detail by J.-L. Loubet del Bayle, Les non-conformistes des années 30 (Paris, 1969). Loubet includes Esprit in his analysis and argues that Esprit, Ordre Nouveau, and the Jeune Droite shared a substantial degree of agreement in 1932 and 1933. See also J. Touchard, 'L'Esprit des années trente', in Tendances politiques dans la vie française depuis 1789 (Paris, 1960).

10. Denis de Rougemont, born 1906 into a Swiss protestant family, was close to both Esprit and Ordre nouveau, and wrote several theoretical works, of which l'Amour et l'Occident (Paris, 1939) is the best known. After various journalistic activities throughout Europe, he spent the war in the U.S. helping, among other things, to broadcast to occupied France, and since 1947 has been prominent in the European federalist movement.

December 1932 as a Cahier de Revendications,<sup>11</sup> whose aim was to list the themes of the different movements, presenting them as far as possible as a coherent whole. The first two, Henri Lefèbvre<sup>12</sup> and Paul Nizan,<sup>13</sup> were rather out of place, since both were committed communists, who denounced contemporary capitalism and the bourgeois values and institutions associated with it, pointing to the communist party and a communist revolution as the only solution. Their views were entirely out of harmony with the rest and Nizan was not slow to dissociate himself from them when the issue

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11. 'Cahiers de Revendications', Nouvelle revue française, décembre 1932, p.801-845, edited by Denis de Rougemont, contributions: Henri Lefèbvre, 'Du culte de "l'esprit" au matérialisme dialectique', p;802-5; Paul Nizan, 'Les conséquences du refus', p.806-811; Philippe Lamour, 'La révolution et la jeunesse', p.812-814; Jean Sylveire, 'Un', p.815-816; Thierry Maulnier, 'La révolution totale', p.817-820; Arnaud Dandieu & Claude Chevalley, 'L'intelligence épée', p.821-823; Emmanuel Mounier, 'Ce ne sont pas ceux qui disent: Esprit, esprit', p.824-826. (Mounier's article is reprinted in his Oeuvres, I, p.847-849.); Georges Izard, 'Un instinct sec et rude', p. 827-830; René Dupuis & Alexandre Marc, 'De la patrie au fédéralisme révolutionnaire', p.831-833; Robert Aron, 'Questions posées', p.834-837; Denis de Rougemont, 'A prendre ou à tuer', p.838-845.

12. Henri Lefèbvre, born 1905, a leading young Marxist thinker, became well known as one of the French communist party's leading theoreticians, but who was also prepared to assert his intellectual independence.

13. Paul Nizan (1905-1940), Marxist journalist and novelist, who was a close friend of Sartre's. Strongly opposed to any compromise of his revolutionary purity, he eventually left the communist party in protest against the Hitler-Stalin pact. He was killed in action during the British retreat from Dunkirk. His best known work is the novel La Conspiration (Paris, 1938).

appeared.<sup>14</sup> The only other non-christian in the collection, Philippe Lamour<sup>15</sup> was also a Marxist, but he spoke of the revolution as a form of humanism which could create new values, and therefore clashed less violently with the remainder, while lacking their spiritual interests. The remaining eight articles could be classed together as representative of the critique of society advanced by the young catholic movements. Izard and Mounier each contributed a short piece repeating their main themes as set down in the first issue of Esprit.<sup>16</sup> They were the furthest to the left of the catholic contributors, though the question of concrete goals and actions was in all cases left vague. At the other end of the political spectrum, Thierry Maulnier<sup>17</sup>

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14. 'Sur un certain front unique', Europe, January 1933, p. 137-146. In this article Nizan dissociated himself from any sort of solidarity with the rest, seeing them as a refurbished form of the old bourgeois intelligentsia, anti-Marxist and probably in some cases crypto-fascist.

15. Philippe Lamour, born 1903, trained as a lawyer, was first tempted by fascism, but abandoned this very quickly for revolutionary Marxism. He was from 1931 editor of the technocratic review Plans, and in 1936 stood as a Front populaire candidate but was defeated. After several journalistic posts, he has been since the war a government advisor on agriculture.

16. See below, Chapter 2, I.c.

17. Thierry Maulnier (b.1909) whose real name was Jacques Talagrand, was a journalist for various Right-wing reviews, while making a reputation for himself as a literary critic. He contributed to Action française from 1936 and throughout the war. Co-founder of the Table ronde, he has contributed to many reviews and papers, most notably Le Figaro, and has been since 1964 an académicien.

asserted the necessity of violent revolution, since spiritual means were ineffective, but refused a Marxist or collectivist revolution. He was the only representative of the Jeune Droite, and was a close friend and collaborator of both Jean-Pierre Maxence and Jean de Fabrègues,<sup>18</sup> the leading figures of the movement. Though his views derived mainly from Charles Maurras, he was concerned to escape from the narrow orthodoxy of Action Française, and to this extent deserved inclusion in the cahier.

Although Denis de Rougemont invented a group, Combat, to hide their predominance, the majority of the contributors came from the group known as Ordre nouveau.<sup>19</sup> Catering for apolitical and independent young intellectuals, it sought, under the inspiration of Arnaud Dandieu,<sup>20</sup> to build an original philosophy, cutting across the old divisions and making friends from the communists to the monarchists. Many of its major themes were close to those of Esprit, to which

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18. Jean de Fabrègues, born 1906, journalist at Action française, and subsequently director/founder of several Right-wing reviews. Leaving politics for more intellectual pursuits, he was not compromised under Vichy, and since the Liberation has been editor/director of La France catholique, and written various studies in the history of ideas.

19. Ordre nouveau is fully analysed and documented in J.-L. Loubet del Bayle, op.cit. It should not be confused with the post-war fascist group of the same name.

20. Arnaud Dandieu (1897-1933), trained as a lawyer, became a librarian at the Bibliothèque nationale. The most original and prolific thinker of the Ordre nouveau group, his premature death left a gap which was never filled; even Mounier, who did not like him personally, admired his intellectual gifts.

it contributed and which it considerably influenced, though its sympathy for the Right wing, its ivory-tower intellectualism and its piecemeal technocratic reformism sharply distinguished it from Esprit as time passed. Jean Sylveire,<sup>21</sup> in his article, asserted the primacy of être over faire, and, echoing Mounier, declared: 'il n'existe d'autre force révolutionnaire que celle de la vérité'.<sup>22</sup> Dandieu and Chevalley<sup>23</sup> proposed a conception of the intelligence as a sword, both aggressive and adventurous. Dupuis<sup>24</sup> and Marc<sup>25</sup> suggested a revolutionary federalism aiming at 'une société fondée sur le primat de la personne humaine'.<sup>26</sup> Robert

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21. Jean Sylveire, a young catholic journalist, member of Ordre nouveau, was attracted to Esprit, for whom he wrote several articles before disappearing from public view.

22. 'Cahier de revendications', p.816.

23. Claude Chevalley, born 1909, worked for nine years with the Ordre nouveau group before devoting himself to the scientific research for which he had trained. Spending the war in the U.S., he was from 1954 a teacher at the Paris Faculté des Sciences.

24. René Dupuis, born 1905, journalist and specialist in Eastern European affairs, he collaborated with Alex. Marc in Ordre nouveau, before devoting himself to the study of international law. Since the war he has given himself to literary studies.

25. Alexandre Marc, born 1904, of émigré Russian jewish origin, was one of the founders of the Ordre nouveau group. Converted to catholicism in 1933, he was an energetic contributor to Sept and Temps présent. Active in the Resistance, he remained a regular contributor to Témoignage chrétien until devoting himself to the European federalist movement.

26. 'Cahiers de revendications', p.832.

Aron<sup>27</sup> analysed the political implications of Ordre nouveau's call for a non-violent revolution:

Nous ne sommes ni droite ni gauche, mais s'il faut absolument nous situer en termes parlementaires, nous répéterons que nous sommes à mi-chemin entre l'extrême-droite et l'extrême-gauche, par derrière le président, tournant le dos à l'assemblée.<sup>28</sup>

This statement summarised the common refusal to participate in any of the established political categories; the formula ni droite ni gauche was an often repeated slogan, which even Esprit adopted for a short time. The cahier was both edited and summed up by Denis de Rougemont, who, while ostensibly trying to establish a measure of common agreement, in fact reiterated the Ordre nouveau creed. Attacking the désordre établi,<sup>29</sup> he refused to be classed as Left or Right, and demanded a revolution, neither materialist nor collectivist, but based on the decisive value of the human person, under the patronage of Proudhon and Kierkegaard as opposed to Marx and Hegel. Although Rougemont's summary took little account of Nizan, Lefèbvre or Lamour, his remarks did reflect a measure of agreement between the christian contributors and suggested the directions in which they were

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27. Robert Aron, born 1898, began his career in publishing, took up political journalism, and after an excursion into the theatre became one of the leading figures of Ordre nouveau. Arrested by the Vichy government, he escaped to Algiers to work successively for Giraud and de Gaulle. Active in the federalist movement, he has since earned considerable respect as a historian, most notably for his Histoire de Vichy 1940-1944 (Paris, 1954).

28. 'Cahier de revendications', p.837.

29. 'Cahier de revendications', p.844.

seeking their new solutions. What all had in common was a refusal of the visible evils of capitalism, a desire for radical social and spiritual transformations, a refusal of traditional political positions, a desire to elaborate an intellectual blueprint for the new world, and a total lack of practical experience in applying their abstract conceptualisations.

Mounier's position was at first sight hard to distinguish from what appeared to be the common ideology of the young catholic élite; but for all the passion expressed in the cahier, a careful study of the texts reveals that the points of agreement were in what all the writers attacked, not in what they recommended. Not all were catholics, but the ideology which provided their main point of reference was catholic, and their vocabulary was drawn from this common inheritance. Politically, they were relatively innocent and had not yet been forced by events to define their positions in practice, but already the three groups were distinguishable. The Jeune Droite did not hide the political tradition to which it felt closest, and the names of its characteristic reviews, Réaction and La revue française, clearly marked it out as 'reactionary' and nationalistic. Ordre nouveau was aggressively apolitical and primarily concerned with doctrinal originality, a common sign of political conservatism. Esprit, on the other hand, while refusing the traditional political options, seemed to intend

its revolution to involve practical political action, even if it did not make it clear what form this would take, or with whom it would co-operate. None of the three groups appeared to offer a distinct political theory which might form the basis of a political ideology. The future of the Jeune Droite was a complete assimilation into the traditional Right, the future of Ordre nouveau was an increasingly irrelevant abstraction, leading to a brief flirtation with fascism and an early dissolution. The future of Esprit was longer and more complex, as will be seen.

b) The emergence of 'Esprit'.

It is difficult to establish precisely how and when the notion of founding a review arose. Certainly it occurred in the circle surrounding Jacques Maritain, and appears to have simmered for some time in the regular gatherings at Meudon, which were increasingly attended by the rising generation of young men in their middle twenties.<sup>30</sup> By early 1930, Mounier had come into contact with Georges Izard, a young lawyer who had agreed to contribute a section to the projected book on Péguy.<sup>31</sup> Maritain has suggested, and an examination of the book confirms the impression, that the two young men 'entendaient bien que le livre sur Péguy ne restât pas une manifestation sans lende-

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30. Accounts of these meetings can be found in J. Petit, (ed.), Maritain-Mounier 1929-1939 (Paris, 1973), passim; H. Iswolsky, Light before dusk (New York, 1942), esp. p.70-87; Raïssa Maritain, Les grandes amitiés (Paris, 1962), passim.

31. See Chapter One.

main'.<sup>32</sup> By the winter of the same year, André Déléage,<sup>33</sup> a librarian at the Sorbonne, had joined them at Maritain's discussions, which gradually turned away from purely doctrinal matters to take into their sweep questions of more temporal concern,<sup>34</sup> albeit the point of view was always catholic and spiritual. Independently, Mounier on the one hand and Izard and Déléage on the other, were contemplating ways of giving their thought a practical expression which might influence not particularly events but the spiritual fabric of modern civilisation. All three thought, possibly under the influence of Péguy's example, that a new review might provide the solution. So, when on the night of December 7th 1930, Izard asked Mounier to direct the review he and Déléage had decided to found, Mounier had no hesitation in agreeing to abandon his teaching career to take on the task.<sup>35</sup> Once this decision had been taken, a hundred questions immediately raised themselves. First the

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32. Esprit, décembre 1950, p.974.

33. André Déléage, born 1904, after studies at the Ecole normale supérieure, became a librarian at the Sorbonne, and later in Toulouse. A close collaborator from the first of both Izard and Mounier, he was a chief organiser of the Troisième Force until its fusion with the Front commun at which point he retired from politics to follow a university career in history. After serving in the Resistance, he was killed in action against the German army at the end of the war.

34. On November 30th 1930, for example, Mounier recorded a discussion of the Soviet Union, which touched sympathetically on the possible acceptance by christians of revolution. See Oeuvres, IV, p.473-474.

35. The circumstances of the foundation of the review were the subject of an acrimonious exchange between Izard and the director of Esprit on the occasion of Izard's election to Massis' chair in the Académie Française (Esprit, avril 1971, p.928 and Esprit, juin 1971, p.1311-2). The account offered here is consistent with Esprit, décembre 1950, p.972-975, with Oeuvres, IV, p.477, and with G. Izard, 'La fondation d'Esprit', Express, 29 mars 1960, p.30-31.

aims and form of the review had to be established in more detail, and something approaching a philosophy, or at least a statement of principles, had to be drawn up. At this point all was vague, and the project appeared to different people in different lights, as Mounier cast about for support. The intention on his part at least was to subject all aspects of culture and civilisation to a searching examination in accordance with a spiritual orientation - an ambition imprecise enough to command approval from a broad front of catholic intellectuals. In a letter to Izard, he suggested that it be based on, though not confined to, a catholic readership. This would permit him to 'accrocher cette rénovation humaine et plus particulièrement catholique, à quoi visait Péguy'.<sup>36</sup> Maritain could not fail to agree when told of this, but immediately raised the question of who should be included, who excluded. The germ of future dissent is visible in Mounier's diary:

Le problème de l'aile gauche: nous voudrions la laisser très ouverte, Maritain pense que malgré tout nous aurions à préciser les limites dès le départ. J'accepterais Jouhandeau, Malraux, etc., Maritain hésite.<sup>37</sup>

While on a political level he was anxious to permit as broad a spectrum as possible, within the catholic camp he was anxious to eliminate those who in the public mind had a compromised past. Maritain, dubious of the first part, wholeheartedly agreed with the second, and thought that those with established ideologies could only damage

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36. Oeuvres, IV, p.486.

37. Oeuvres, IV, p.486.

the review.<sup>38</sup> For several months Mounier and Izard fought an attempt to assimilate them to the Revue des jeunes, a flagging magazine directed by Robert Garric<sup>39</sup> with the aim of encouraging traditional Christian charity to combat social misery. At the same time, Mounier was trying to justify to Jacques Chevalier his refusal to accept Massis, Laberthonnière<sup>40</sup> and Le Roy,<sup>41</sup> whom he considered as compromised.<sup>42</sup> To the accusation that he was constituting a chapelle, he replied that it was the last thing he wanted, but that he had to establish a sufficiently integrated team to undertake the tasks facing them.<sup>43</sup>

Progress was slow in establishing contacts and raising money, but through Maritain, Mounier had access to a large

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38. Cf. J. Petit, op.cit., p.32.

39. Garric initially thought to use the energy and initiative of Mounier, Izard and their team to rejuvenate his ailing magazine. The negotiations took place between February 1931 and January 1932. They were largely promoted by the publishers, Desclée de Brouwer, who preferred to subsidise a joint enterprise rather than two separate reviews.

40. Le père Laberthonnière was one of the leading Modernist theologians whose work had been put on the Index in 1906.

41. Edouard Le Roy, an associate of Laberthonnière and Loisy (the major Modernist) had had work put on the Index in 1907 for his Modernist views.

42. See the letter to J. Chevalier of 29th April 1931, Oeuvres, IV, p.486.

43. Oeuvres, IV, p.487.

sector of the catholic intelligentsia, and found there an important pool of goodwill. By the end of 1931 he had promises of aid from Nicolas Berdyaev, Maurice Blondel, Paul Archambault,<sup>44</sup> Etienne Gilson,<sup>45</sup> Henri Bremond, René Le Senne<sup>46</sup> and Louis Lavelle.<sup>47</sup> It is likely that they had little concrete notion of what was planned, but Mounier, Izard, Déléage, joined by Louis-Emile Galey,<sup>48</sup> all felt the need for a review to fill the vacuum left by the Nouvelle Revue Française, which no longer met the needs of the rising generation. The review had also by this time acquired its eventual title Esprit, probably Mounier's suggestion,<sup>49</sup> and a solid determination to extend its scope to non-catho-

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44. Paul Archambault, twenty years Mounier's senior, was a leading philosopher and journalist of the christian democratic movement. He directed the review Cahiers de la Nouvelle Journée.

45. Etienne Gilson, a contemporary of Archambault, was a prominent Thomist philosopher and historian of philosophy, particularly medieval. He later was elected to the Académie française.

46. René Le Senne (1882-1954), a philosophy teacher, defended what he saw as the cartesian French tradition in the philosophy of mind.

47. Louis Lavelle (1883-1951), professor at the Sorbonne, professed a spiritualistic variety of existentialism, and directed, with Le Senne, the collection Philosophie de l'Esprit.

48. Louis-Emile Galey (b.1904), a student of architecture, joined the group and became a leading member of the Troisième Force. After joining the editorial board of La Flèche, he joined the socialist party. Leaving politics in 1940, he made a successful career in cinema design and administration.

49. See Esprit, décembre 1950, p.973.

lics. Worked out under Maritain's watchful gaze, the principles of this risky step were established. Mounier noted:

J'affirme mon intention énergique d'assurer l'indépendance des catholiques comme de nos autres collaborateurs, et je les vois venir avec l'intégralité de leur bagage catholique. Etablir entre eux et les autres un plus petit commun multiple serait les diminuer... sans les faire mieux accepter.<sup>50</sup>

From the beginning he was anxious to escape a narrow sectarianism and to face others' beliefs honestly in a spirit of cooperation without losing sight of his own total catholicism. For this, he did not intend to foster an aggressive proselytizing but rather a constant awareness that every action implicitly expressed the underlying faith.

The material problems faced by the team were considerable,<sup>51</sup> and it required lengthy, strenuous negotiations before a publisher could be found to support the venture. Eventually Desclée de Brouwer agreed to publish the review, after first trying to arrange a merger with the Revue des jeunes, which they already published. Maritain was energetic in promoting Esprit, which may well never have appeared without his efforts, in finding subscribers, contributors, publishers and printers. In view of the economic crisis Desclée could only offer to print, not to subsidise, the

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50. Oeuvres, IV, p.487, the remark is from his notebook, dated 3rd January 1932.

51. The details can be gleaned from J. Petit, op.cit., p. 31-47; Oeuvres, IV, p.485-514; Esprit, décembre 1950, p. 971-977.

review. Mounier and Maritain urged all their friends, acquaintances and contacts to contribute to the initial subscription to raise the capital necessary for the first few issues. This was an operation based on trust, but Maritain's name was a firm guarantee. After the prospectus<sup>52</sup> of February 1932, Mounier began to receive subscriptions to the magazine, which was initially planned to appear the following Easter. Sufficient money was raised to cover the costs of the first few issues, but there was little margin of security. Throughout Mounier's editorship the finances were a constant source of anxiety, though with the aid of donations and a system of supplementary subscriptions<sup>53</sup> he was never forced to interrupt publication through financial pressure. The catholic communication network, lay and clerical, was a valuable instrument in making contacts, enlarging the mailing list and soliciting support. Once it was generally known that the project was considered important by respected intellectuals and church men, there was a vital fund of goodwill and energy made available.<sup>54</sup>

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52. See below, in this section.

53. It was possible to subscribe at a number of different rates, some of which carried extra privileges (better quality paper, honorific mention, more intensive mailing list facilities, etc.) and subscribers were asked to pay the highest rate they could afford.

54. This system is studied below, Chapter 5.

In February 1932, the first circular appeared announcing Esprit's imminent publication, and setting out its main positions. It was the first coherent statement of principles, and described its attitude as 'en révolution permanente contre les tyrannies de cette époque'.<sup>55</sup> The tyrannies in question were science, which was utilitarian and irresponsible; philosophy, which was removed from life; society, which was run like a business; economics, which adapted man to the machine; private life, which had become dislocated and unstable; literature, which was remote and over-sophisticated; and technology, which was destroying the world. All these forces contributed to the servitude of man, it declared, but could be countered by making man more aware of his own nature. Therefore, the manifesto continued, 'notre tâche capitale est de retrouver la vraie notion de l'homme'.<sup>56</sup> The true nature of man was spiritual, it stated, and it followed that his first preoccupation should be to defend the 'spirit' without feeling bound to defend its temporal manifestations for their own sakes. It was admitted that some members of the review's team placed this in a religious context, but otherwise the terms remained undefined. On a political level the prospectus declared its hostility to capitalism, Marxism and nationalism. Capitalism, based on a money-orientated materialism,

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55. It is reprinted, in part, in Oeuvres, IV, p.489-491.

56. Oeuvres, IV, p.490.

was castigated for creating misery and servitude. Marxism, granted that it contained a degree of justice and heroism, was nonetheless rejected as leading to the tyranny of the materialism on which it was based. Nationalism, perverting the permissible love for one's country, was condemned for erecting a narrow and aggressive creed on the basest of human instincts. As a more positive step, Esprit pledged itself to examine progressive and constructive possibilities in social structures, international affairs, private life, art and thought. The terms of the document were extremely vague, and the overriding impression was of an enthusiastic idealism which had yet to come to grips with the harsher realities of life. Politically it had no direction, and despite the lack of specific acknowledgement, it was clear that the inspiration was catholic. It reflected accurately the scope of Esprit as it was planned and as it was presented at least in the early months of its existence, the strong emphasis on a spiritualist philosophy subsisting uncomfortably with the thoroughly critical social and cultural analysis.

The organisation of the review began to feel the strain of maintaining its dual aspiration. It had been agreed from an early date that the review should not be just another theoretical magazine, but that it should be coordinated with a movement and eventually, possibly, a political party. Déléage and Izard had originally intended the

review to be a doctrinal organ for the movement, whereas Mounier, encouraged by Maritain, was primarily concerned with establishing a review which would inspire a movement founded on its principles. In the Autumn of 1931 a number of study groups were set up, from which there grew two tendencies. The one, centred on Mounier, was concerned with creating a new doctrine; the other, centred on Déléage, was concerned to initiate action, Iazard providing the liaison between the two. Throughout the early months of 1932 the debate simmered, Mounier and Déléage both intransigent in trying to impose their conflicting visions. The struggle, however, was unequal, for Mounier had powerful support from Maritain, who told him:

Mes amis et moi, c'est à vous que nous donnons notre confiance, et non pas à un mouvement anonyme qui vous enverrait des ukases de province. Il faut absolument qu'on assure votre permanence et vos droits.<sup>57</sup>

Interested though he was in the plans of the others, Maritain felt he could trust only Mounier to put sufficient emphasis on spiritual and theoretical questions. It was therefore Déléage who, through Iazard's diplomacy, yielded. It was agreed that the review should be independent of the movement, but that the movement should remain faithful to the doctrines elaborated by the review, except in so far

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57. J. Petit, op.cit., p.49. The remark was noted in Mounier's notebook, dated 17 July 1932. The ukases de province refer to the sharp letters Mounier was receiving from Déléage in Toulouse.

as the tactical demands of concrete action prevented their strict application. It was implicit that the Mounier-Izard combination would keep both sections together: Izard being a member of Mounier's editorial board, Mounier being a member of Izard's central committee.

Throughout the first half of 1932 the preparations continued, publication which had first been planned for late 1931, then for Easter 1932, was fixed for October 1932. The delay, while provoking some frustration, gave time for the financial situation to improve, but, perhaps more important, allowed Mounier the leisure to collect a substantial fund of material and promised contributions to choose from in his first issue. Helpful though Maritain was, he tended to suggest mainly writers of his own generation whose reputation was already established. Mounier did not wish to be burdened by too many older men who might tend to turn his review into a pale reflection of existing periodicals. His main problem was to discover writers of his own age group of sufficient calibre to maintain high literary and intellectual standards while offering fresh and adventurous analyses which would distinguish the review from its respected, but staid predecessors. In the time at his disposal he was able to gather around him an impressive team of young intellectuals. Apart from Izard, Déléage and Galey, Mounier also had the cooperation, in various capacities, of Jean Daniélou,<sup>58</sup> Jean Lacroix,

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58. Jean Daniélou (b.1905) was at this time studying in a Jesuit seminary prior to being ordained as a priest in that order. He established himself as a theologian of international repute, combining teaching with an editorial post at Etudes. He was present as an expert at Vatican II and having been made a Cardinal, died in 1974.

Denis de Rougemont and most of his colleagues of Ordre nouveau, André Ulmann,<sup>59</sup> and Edmond Humeau.<sup>60</sup>

By the summer of 1932, groups had been set up, contacts established, contributors assembled all over France and in various European cities. The material needs had been sufficiently met, and publication was due in the Autumn. Before this, however, a score of the group leaders and the major participants in both review and movement came together in mid-August for a week's conference at Font-Romeu.<sup>61</sup> This turbulent though inspiring meeting soon passed into Esprit's private mythology as the decisive moment in determining the nature of the project. From the beginning the tension between Mounier and Déléage continually erupted into heated exchanges. Mounier refused to abandon any of his independence as director of the review, and noted:

Je suis moi-même fort embarrassé; comment faire comprendre qu'en défendant apparemment ma personne, je défende une fidélité plus haute aux droits de la vérité.<sup>62</sup>

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59. André Ulmann (1912-1971), the youngest member of the team, became secretary to the review and commented on political and economic affairs. He was the most Left-wing of the editorial board and contributed to many journals and campaigns. A Resistance leader during the war, he edited La Tribune des nations until his death.

60. Edmond Humeau (b.1907), best known as a poet, came to Esprit as a literary critic. Politically active in the Troisième Force, he also held a government administrative function. Active in the Resistance, he abandoned politics after the war, winning the Prix Max Jacob for poetry in 1956.

61. See Oeuvres, IV, p.499-501. The congress lasted from 17th-22nd August 1932.

62. Oeuvres, IV, p.499-500.

He strongly felt that he was entrusted with a spiritual mission, and was prepared to go to any lengths rather than compromise it. Maritain had written encouraging him in this path:

Je suis persuadé que les ruptures les plus graves valent mieux que de laisser Esprit devenir "l'organe" d'un mouvement politique. Ce serait le monde renversé, c'est l'esprit qui se sert d'organes, en bonne philosophie!... En ce qui me concerne, je parlerais aussi de 'rupture' si la conception de Toulouse devait triompher, et je ne suis pas le seul,<sup>63</sup>

Whether Mounier ever invoked the threat of losing Maritain's support is not discoverable, but the challenge of Délégé was effectively defeated on the crucial issue by Iazard's support of an apparent compromise which left Mounier's position intact. The danger of a split was avoided at the same time by insisting that no resolution be accepted unless there was unanimous agreement, a tactic which obliged dissidents to change their minds rather than keep to their original positions. Three papers were read out - Mounier on the spiritual directions of the movement, Iazard on the social question and Délégé on private life.<sup>64</sup> All of them provoked criticism, not least Mounier's, but with appropriate re-wording, they were accepted as corresponding closely to the common beliefs of those present. Two con-

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63. J. Petit, op.cit., p.51. Maritain added that he authorised Mounier to convey his feelings to the others if Mounier thought it useful. The conception de Toulouse was a reference to Délégé who held a librarian's post in Toulouse.

64. Only Mounier's paper was published in Esprit. It is discussed below in section I.c ; the original version is reprinted in Bulletin des Amis d'E. Mounier, no.13-14, March 1959, p.1-48.

crete results ensued. First, a political movement was constituted under the name Troisième Force, to provide a radical alternative to capitalism and communism. It was intended that it should work closely within the doctrinal limits laid down at Font-Romeu, and that it should seek new and effective means of implementing spiritual principles in a temporal context. Second, the review was launched with its first issue settled for the following October.

As a result of this congress, Mounier's position at the head of the movement was immeasurably strengthened. Control of a substantial intellectual undertaking was in his hands, and since the Troisième Force only had a public existence initially through the review, he could expect to exercise a considerable influence on its development, even though it was nominally independent. In addition, this crucial victory had conferred on him a measure of authority both in his own eyes, and in the eyes of the entire group.<sup>65</sup> In addition to being master in his own house, he had largely through Maritain's good offices, acquired widespread support and sympathy in a large section of the French catholic intelligentsia. He was trusted for his strict orthodoxy, for his sound intellectual formation, for his undeniable personal gifts, and for his sincere youthful enthusiasm tempered by prudent moderation. The previous chapter has shown that in many ways he was the characteristic product of a traditional catholic education. This

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65. See Jacques Madaule's remarks in Esprit, décembre 1950, p.975, 'Après la fondation d'"Esprit", je m'étonnai de la jeune autorité que je lui vis déployer'.

combined with his specific training and allied with a certain boldness and zeal, prepared him to lead a spiritual movement little different from the catholic revival to which his elders looked back with nostalgia.<sup>66</sup> The extent to which his own conceptions invited such expectations is evident in a letter he wrote to his mentor, Jacques Chevalier, at this time.

Le travail de constante révision et rigueur intérieure que vous m'avez enseigné m'a conduit peu à peu à épurer sur bien des points ma conception de la défense spirituelle. Nous ne sauverons l'esprit, dans les modestes moyens qui nous sont donnés à chacun, qu'en le séparant courageusement de multiples alliances historiques où il ne fait que compromettre sa pureté. C'est ainsi que je sens de plus en plus profondément l'opposition essentielle qu'il y a entre les conceptions sociales et humaines, les mœurs spirituelles même de beaucoup de chrétiens, et les principes dont ils se réclament. Nous allons, je crois, vers une seconde Renaissance, qui doit être précédée par un écrasement de l'individu et la restauration de la personne dans le service et le don qu'elle doit au monde.<sup>67</sup>

Although it is possible, in retrospect, to see the germs of Mounier's socialism in this letter, there was also everything necessary to suggest a more traditional interpretation. The defence of the spiritual, the search for purity from temporal corruption, the recalling of christian people to their principles, the new Renaissance and the elimination of selfish individualism, all these themes were in perfect harmony with the anticipation of a christian renewal and in

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66. They particularly looked back to the early years of the century when a succession of prominent intellectuals and writers were converted to catholicism, including Maritain and Péguy.

67. Oeuvres, IV, p.503. The letter is dated 20th September 1932, between Font-Romeu and the first issue of Esprit.

a purely spiritual sense no sincere catholic could help applauding. Mounier was therefore fitted to play the rôle of active but ultimately docile member of the catholic élite to which Maritain and Chevalier belonged, and which they hoped to see perpetuated in their own image. Playing an active rôle, Mounier well repaid their expectations, but he was not long in demonstrating his lack of docility and his willingness to transform the image of the catholic élite.

c) The doctrines of spiritual revolution.

The first number of Esprit appeared in early October 1932,<sup>68</sup> bearing the subtitle 'revue internationale'. The subtitle in itself was sufficient to worry some catholics who would immediately associate it with communism. Inside, after a few explanatory notes on the layout and organisation of the publication, appeared a lengthy article, entitled 'Refaire la Renaissance', and signed by Emmanuel Mounier.<sup>69</sup> This was substantially the text admitted at Font-Romeu as defining the spiritual directions of Esprit, though it had been considerably re-worked to improve the quality of the writing, and in a few cases to modify the ideas expressed. The importance of the article as a statement of principles calls for a detailed examination. It was divided into two

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68. This number contained articles also by Izard, Déléage, Berdiaev, Jean Sylveire, Jean Lacroix, Denis de Rougemont, André Ulmann, Louis-Emile Galey, Marcelle Girardot-Magdinier, André Bridoux, Dr. René Biot, Jacques de Monléon, Pierre Vérité and Gilbert de Véricour.

69. Esprit, no.1, octobre 1932, p.5-51, reprinted with subtitles and later alterations in Oeuvres, I, p.137-174.

major sections: the second, more philosophical part will be examined in the next chapter. No subtitles had yet been added, but the title and the motto 'la révolution sera morale ou elle ne sera pas' borrowed from Péguy, were adequate announcement of the content.<sup>70</sup> The suggestion that the Renaissance was a regrettable development was a commonplace among catholics, Maritain and Chevalier freely assumed it, as did many of their contemporaries. It was seen as the beginning of an individualism which wantonly destroyed the medieval catholic order and undermined both the Church and spiritual life. The project of remaking the Renaissance also situated Mounier's concerns in the broadest possible field, not merely philosophical, nor political, nor religious, but encompassing the movement of an entire civilisation. The slogan from Péguy was an even more precise indication. The name instantly evoked the Cahiers de la Quinzaine and the social awareness which he combined with a robust catholic faith. The quotation itself was both an affirmation and a reservation - affirming the expectation of a social and political revolution, reserving the right to withdraw support unless it was accompanied by a moral or spiritual transformation.

The first lines of the article reversed this affirmation and reservation to give a different perspective.

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70. Oeuvres, I, p.137.

Mounier affirmed his adherence to Maritain's dictum 'primauté du spirituel',<sup>71</sup> but immediately stated his refusal to interpret this in the traditional way as a good excuse for indifference to the material needs of the oppressed. He made clear his belief that l'esprit or le spirituel was the fundamental motive principle of the world, but did not stop to define these terms, crucial though they were to his thought. It would be inappropriate to seek a new theory of reality in his analysis, for he understood himself to be using a vocabulary which would command easy recognition and a ready acceptance in the predominantly catholic milieu to which he was addressing himself. Far from having a precise metaphysical content, his use of the spirituel recalls Péguy's in that it could refer at the same time to the Bergsonian concept of the spirit, to the christian notion of spiritual forces, to the Church in its temporal manifestations, to the values of mind and intelligence, and to the intelligentsia in general, be it religious or secular.

The present crisis, he continued, was provoked by material factors, and while that crisis was real enough, it was only the visible sign of a profound disorder in the spiritual world - a disorder which had subsisted even in apparently tranquil times:

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71. Ibid., p.137. Primauté du spirituel was the title of a book by Maritain. See Chapter I above.

Ce désordre des périodes étales, le plus pernicieux parce qu'inapparent, le plus odieux parce que masqué, voilà l'ennemi héréditaire. Quand ils ne se posent pas, c'est alors qu'il est beau de poser les problèmes. Et de montrer les hommes d'ordre perpétuant le désordre quand l'apparente violence des révolutions porte en avant la raison.<sup>72</sup>

Material order thus served to mask a deeper spiritual dislocation, he argued, which, though less apparent, was more far-reaching, and which made it constantly necessary to denounce those who, while promoting order in a material sense actually perpetuated the deeper evil. At this point the question of politics arose. Mounier made it clear that his main battle was not to be fought in the political arena, nor were his goals primarily political; but since politics and spirituality were historically linked, he felt he could not evade the problem. He suggested first that the traditional identification of the spiritual and the reactionary had to be destroyed, but that the spiritual should be saved from falling into the contrary and equally erroneous identification. It would be unjust to suspect Mounier of disingenuity on this question, particularly in the light of his later dispute with the M.R.P.<sup>73</sup> and the progressistes,<sup>74</sup> but there is no doubt that his attack was

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72. Oeuvres, I. p.139.

73. The Mouvement Républicain Populaire, a post-war christian democrat party, was continually criticised by Mounier for identifying spiritual integrity with its own centre-left politics.

74. The progressistes, extreme left-wing catholics, were criticised by Mounier for holding that their revolutionary politics derived necessarily from their faith.

aimed at undermining the Right by denying it the extensive support of French catholics, which it had until recently enjoyed. This solidarity had already been shaken, as has been seen, but six years after the condemnation of Action Française, there was still much to do in exploring the possibilities opened up. Mounier regretted that the opposition between Left and Right had arisen, particularly since it was a misleading oversimplification, but he appreciated that it had to be taken into account, even though it had eventually to be dissolved. He saw his task as two-fold: on the one hand to wean the spiritual community away from the Right; on the other to wean the Left away from its aggressive anti-spiritualism.

At this point he had to face the Marxist critique. He admitted that those who traditionally defended spiritual values had too often sought to avoid their temporal responsibilities, and by their default had left the world to its material mechanisms. Marxism seemed to him 'la physique de notre faute',<sup>75</sup> an accurate account of the world as it had been allowed to become, though this primacy of materialism was 'un désordre métaphysique et moral',<sup>76</sup> which did not refute the fundamental spirituality of reality:

L'esprit seul est cause de tout ordre et de tout désordre, par son initiative ou son abandonnement.<sup>77</sup>

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75. Oeuvres, I, p.145.

76. Ibid., p.145.

77. Ibid., p.145.

Materialism only saw the surface workings of things, he claimed, whereas reality could only be adequately understood by accepting that there was a spiritual principle which was far more basic. His uncritical assumption that Marxism was an accurate account of the material forces operating in the world is a little surprising, but reflected Mounier's almost complete ignorance of it and his early tendency to regard as irrelevant any non-spiritual agencies. This was adequately demonstrated when he went on to consider the question of what action was to be undertaken to change the degenerate world.

A spiritual crisis, he argued, demanded spiritual action. This consisted essentially in the elucidation of truth; for truth, he had always believed, was the purest and most potent of spiritual forces:

Il faut oser croire, d'abord, que la vérité agit par sa seule présence, que la méditation d'un seul ou la souffrance d'un peuple peuvent ébranler plus efficacement l'humanité que ne le font des architectures de réformes.<sup>78</sup>

The accent was that of Chevalier's disciple, but the perspective was changing, for his faith in the power of truth was tempered by the realisation that it has to be translated into a readily communicable formulation, and propagated. What was required, he thought, was 'une transformation dans la masse de toutes nos valeurs',<sup>79</sup> in other words a spiritual revolution which would realign everyone

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78. Oeuvres, I, p.146.

79. Ibid., p.148.

into harmony with eternal truth. The way to achieve that, in his view, was through a pure spiritual action which, by personal example and patient teaching, would win adherents to the truth: 'la sainteté est désormais la seule politique valable'.<sup>80</sup> Even without enquiring further into the notion of truth, which Mounier took as an absolute, it is possible to see here the culmination of all his training. The only effective form of political action he recognised was a campaign by aspiring saints to transform everyone else into saints. This conclusion was entirely consistent with his belief that the fundamental principles of reality were spiritual, but it is clear that he was not entirely satisfied with the practical implications, for he stated his dilemma in concrete terms:

Des amis intrépides nous opposent qu'on ne s'inquiète pas des degrés de l'être quand les hommes tombent de faim, quand les avions de la civilisation bombardent des villages en Indo-Chine.

La question est de savoir si la reconnaissance des degrés de l'être n'eût pas détourné ces malheurs. Tout de même, devant les dérobades de la pensée<sup>81</sup> soyons sensibles à l'accent de cette protestation.

This passage indicates the uneasiness Mounier was feeling even at this stage, with his concern for purity. He was aware that pure spirituality did not remove urgent temporal problems, but he was more concerned that spiritual values should not be compromised and subverted in the impurity of

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80. Ibid., p.150.

81. Ibid., p.150. The mention of Indo-China is a reference to France's brutal colonial policy there in the face of the independence struggles.

action. Though he was conscious of the need for action, he understated it, probably because he knew that the rest of the issue of Esprit would compensate, and looked to the Troisième Force to grapple with the problem. His own view of action owed something to Blondel.<sup>82</sup> He argued that 'nous agirons par ce que nous sommes autant et plus que parce que nous ferons et dirons'.<sup>83</sup> Action for him was a spiritual process, the conjunction of a man radiating truth and a man being changed by the truth radiated. His efforts were therefore to be directed at changing men's minds, and his commitment to revolution took appropriate account of this:

On veut que la révolution ce soit cet éblouissement rouge et flammes<sup>[sic]</sup> Non, la révolution c'est un tumulte bien plus profond. ΜΕΤΑΝΟΗΤΕ: changez le coeur de votre coeur. Et dans le monde, tout ce qu'il a contaminé.<sup>84</sup>

This formulation, which constantly recurred in Mounier's writings, sums up the revolution he sought as a transformation in men's hearts. His concept of revolution evolved considerably but this was always the essence of it. For this reason the career he built was not political, though it developed increasingly political ramifications. He aimed first at a spiritual change, then at a cultural transformation, and only thirdly at political action. In appro-

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82. Blondel had advanced a complex view which founded action on participation in the divine presence.

83. Oeuvres, I, p.153.

84. Ibid., p.148.

priating Péguy's moral revolution he was, theoretically, even further removed than Péguy from advocating social or institutional revolution, though he assumed it would naturally follow from the other.

The overall effect of Mounier's analysis was to seem an abstract remanipulation of well-established catholic principles. The visible influences were thinkers well known and generally acceptable to catholic thinking: Bergson was present, though not dominant, Blondel was implied, Péguy and Maritain were more specifically invoked. The main principles established were already commonplace: the notion that spiritual forces govern the world was fundamental to christian thinking; the revolutionary power of truth, understood as a spiritual absolute, was long established in many forms, varying from a belief in the creative power of 'the Word' to the slogan 'the truth will make us free'; the political force of saintliness was another principle the Church had taught since antiquity; the interpretation of genuine revolution as being a basic change in men's hearts was equally hallowed by christian tradition, going back at least to Saint Augustine. Two points were less familiar. The first was Mounier's firm determination to end the situation in which Right wing politicians were parasitic on catholicism, and to open the way for catholics to choose a political commitment elsewhere in the political spectrum. The second point was his almost incidental acceptance that Marxism provided an accurate account of the world as it had been allowed to become in the absence of a firm action

by spiritual forces. Both these points led to considerable controversy, and the obligation to define his thought in these areas was one of the motive forces in Mounier's political development.

The most important of the other articles in the first number of Esprit was certainly Berdyaev's Vérité et mensonge du communisme.<sup>85</sup> Briefly, its major point was that communism was a religion which set itself to replace the christian religion. Owing its success to the failure of christians, Berdyaev suggested, it proposed a messianic appeal to the soul of the masses, and an ethic of devotion. Philosophically, he argued, it was based on rigid economic determinism, denying the importance of ideological, spiritual or cultural activities and offering a secular equivalent for all the powerful 'myths' of christianity. The truth of Marxism lay, he said, in its critique of the exploiting capitalist system, of formal democracy, of nationalism, and in its determination to ally theory and practice to build a new world. The lie which outweighed these truths, he insisted, was the denial of God and therefore of man, the deification of society and the proletariat in particular, in short, its materialist collectivism. Berdyaev held that the strength of communism

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85. N. Berdiaeff, 'Vérité et mensonge du communisme', Esprit no.1, Octobre 1932, p.104-128.

lay in the fact that it contained truths mixed with error. The best tactic, therefore, he argued, would be to admit the true parts while rejecting the errors, rather than merely attacking the whole of it. The effect of Berdyaev's analysis on Mounier and on the political stance of Esprit is hard to overstate. Berdyaev's Russian background, his involvement in the early years of the bolshevik Revolution, his evident spirituality, his intellectual prestige, and his keen interest in the launching of Esprit, all conferred on his words an authority few could rival.<sup>86</sup> His assessment of communism was authoritative, and the fruit of mature reflection and experience. The article in Esprit's first number rapidly attained the status of a classic statement of the review's position, and was assimilated into the corpus of its credo. In later articles, Mounier often quoted the basic arguments outlined by Berdyaev, taking them for granted as established interpretations, to the extent that he scarcely felt obliged to elucidate his own position any further.

The practical political implications of Esprit were made explicit in the manifesto of the Troisième Force.<sup>87</sup>

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86. Berdyaev described his contact with Esprit in his autobiographical essay, Dream and reality (London, 1950), p.273-275. He said he felt a great affinity with the group, and felt a new spirit blowing in it. He claimed to have been at the meeting at which Esprit was founded. By this, he probably meant the first formal meeting of editors and sponsors, 24 June 1931. Certainly, he was always in close contact with the early developments.

87. Published unsigned as 'Chronique du mouvement', Esprit, no.1, octobre 1932, p.129-136.

It reiterated the spiritualist doctrine Mounier had outlined, and went on to define itself as an alternative to both capitalism and communism. It particularly launched a strong attack on the evils of the capitalist system, predicting its imminent collapse, presaged by the current crisis. It called for a revolution to set up a just economic and political order, suggesting such steps as the socialisation of credit, workers' control of their workplaces and the decentralisation of political power and economic production. At the same time it was careful to point out what it considered as the failure of the Soviet Russian Revolution and to distinguish itself from communism. The manifesto was a strange blend of abstractions on a spiritualist theme and radical political intention. Whereas its theory clearly came from catholicism, its practical aims were decidedly socialist and even trotskyist in affinity. The difficulties involved in sustaining this uneasy synthesis emerged slowly in the following months.

d) Early clarifications

The position of Esprit, and of Mounier himself, contained a number of ambiguities. These were the result partly of the team's own unresolved divisions, partly of a lack of experience in conveying ideas, partly of a deliberate vagueness. The deliberate vagueness was intended to avoid limiting the review's audience to catholics by the appearance of too strict a religious obedience. This

was important since part of the original intention was to appeal to a wide non-catholic audience, while keeping the contents of the review firmly in harmony with catholic doctrine. Mounier saw the importance of not restricting his audience from the beginning, but Maritain was anxious that the review be unambiguously established as catholic, excluding non-believers and limiting the contribution of protestants. The second number of the review seemed to him to confirm his suspicions that Mounier was allowing himself to be led into a position in which a belief in the revolution was becoming more important than the proclamation of the catholic faith.<sup>88</sup> Cut to the quick by such a suggestion, Mounier restated his position to Maritain.<sup>89</sup> He told Maritain that he would not publish anything which recommended or implied atheism, nor would he consider any article attacking the Church, or even in clear opposition to a papal encyclical. At the same time he would not give space to interdenominational squabbles. Maritain was impatient to read an unambiguous statement to the effect that the review was inspired by catholic principles, but he had to wait until the sixth issue before Mounier stated clearly that he was a catholic. Maritain was over-sensitive on this question, however, because the news had circulated long before its appearance that Esprit was a catholic undertaking. The title of the review was a further indication.

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88. J. Petit, op.cit., p.59-60.

89. Ibid., p.64-65.

Although it could be translated as either 'mind' or 'spirit', the resonances of spirituality were too strong to leave much doubt as to which was intended. Certainly those who subscribed to and bought Esprit were predominantly catholic,<sup>90</sup> and there is no evidence to suppose that the editorial ambiguity led to much confusion over its doctrinal allegiance.

The question of revolution and its relation to spirituality was a further ambiguity which the first issue had left unresolved. In the third issue Mounier tried to clarify his conception of the revolution.<sup>91</sup> Restating his earlier position he emphasised that his commitment was primarily spiritual; 'nous sommes du parti de l'esprit avant d'être du parti de la révolution'.<sup>92</sup> But he also

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90. No figures or sociological analyses are available to confirm this assertion. It is based on the overwhelming opinion (or more usually assumptions) of those who have spoken or written about Esprit. The early subscribers were mainly catholic since they were recruited through catholic circles, and the presence of the names of catholic intellectuals and occasionally clerics among the published lists of subscribers would soon reveal the fact to an observant reader. Moreover, it is unlikely that anyone would subscribe to or buy regularly a review whose orientation he did not know. Esprit's public was not all catholic by any means. Many non-catholics, Gide, for example, read it with interest (cf. A. Gide, Journal, vol.1,(Paris (Pléiade) 1951), p.1154), but they remained a minority.

91. E. Mounier, "Programme pour 1933", Esprit, no.3, décembre 1932, p.363-369.

92. Ibid., p.365.

made it clear that he believed in the inevitability of a social, political and cultural upheaval usually designated by the word 'revolution': 'la situation révolutionnaire existe: nous n'avons pas à la souhaiter ni à la déplorer, mais à lui faire face'.<sup>93</sup> In a following issue he examined the implications of this on the nature of the force which a spiritual revolutionary might exercise.<sup>94</sup> He emphasised that the highest form of strength was moral or spiritual, but he pointed out that since only saints were capable of it in its full purity, lesser men must be prepared to exert force in its more imperfect physical form: 'si possible: la force de la justice, sinon: la force avec la justice'.<sup>95</sup> Although there was little originality in these positions, it represented an evolution in Mounier's thought since he now admitted that political revolution was a likely and legitimate activity. But he was still unwilling to be more specific.

The most serious ambiguity, however, arose from the contradictions within Esprit between the doctrinal and the militant wings. This difficulty arose from the incipient conflicts which had been papered over at Font-Romeu. Now that the political movement had acquired a certain autonomy and a substantial membership, it began to grow away

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93. E. Mounier, 'Programme pour 1933', Esprit, no.3; décembre 1932, p.365.

94. E. Mounier, 'Eloge de la force', Esprit, no.5, février 1933, p.819-826. Reprinted in Oeuvres, I, p.307-313.

95. Oeuvres, I, p.310.

from the review.<sup>96</sup> Mounier felt unable to accept the impurity which concrete action involved, and by early 1933 he was already beginning to feel the strain of associating with a movement so foreign to his temperament.<sup>97</sup> In the spring of the same year the contradictions had become intolerable, and Mounier strongly resented the friendly derision with which the members of the Troisième Force treated his continual insistence on spiritual and meditative values.<sup>98</sup> Their lack of respect for the doctrinal pronouncements of Esprit, and in many cases their ignorance of it, were paralleled by Mounier's basic lack of interest in political action, and the outright suspicion in which the movement was held by many of his editorial team. In a long letter to Izard,<sup>99</sup> Mounier tried to patch up the original relationship, restating the line he had adopted at Font-Romeu. He realised that Izard was his only link with the movement and felt their friendship disintegrating. For a short while matters improved; among other things the right-wing elements were discreetly ejected,

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96. The Troisième force had acquired a headquarters, organisational structures and soon an organ of its own. Its activities were largely confined to Paris, particularly the Latin Quarter, where it engaged in various forms of combat with Right-wing groups. At its height its numbers were probably 8-9,000. (Cf. G. Izard, in 'Qu'as-tu fait de ta jeunesse', Arts, no.561, 28 March 1956.)

97. Cf. Oeuvres, IV, p.516-518.

98. Cf. Oeuvres, IV, p.524-525.

99. Letter dated 11 April 1933, Oeuvres, IV, p.526-527.

which removed any remaining doubt as to the political affinities of both review and movement. Ideally, Mounier wished the movement to invent an entirely new form of political expression, independent of the old Left-Right opposition. The movement, however, was moving distinctly to the Left and felt antagonised by Mounier's attempts to limit its field of action. It had by now come to accept the possibility of cooperating with the communists in undertaking a collectivist revolution, after which it would initiate a further revolution on behalf of human and personal values.<sup>100</sup> Up to this moment, Maritain had been urging Mounier to distance himself from what he considered to be the hot-heads of the Troisième Force<sup>101</sup> and had even threatened to withdraw his support unless their excessively violent declarations were rectified.<sup>102</sup> Now that the Troisième Force had publicly declared its willingness to cooperate in a communist revolution, Maritain was outraged and threatened to dissociate himself publicly from the

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100. This was expressed in the 'Chronique de la Troisième Force', Esprit, no.8, mai 1933, p.291-292.

101. In his letter of 10 November 1932 he had feared that valuable and reliable catholic writers might be discouraged by the presence of 'excités' at Esprit. (See J. Petit, op.cit., p.67.)

102. See J. Petit, op.cit., p.59-69. Maritain insisted on withholding an article he had planned to publish in Esprit because he was not confident that the rest of the material was of sufficient orthodoxy to provide a suitable context for his own piece.

review, a damaging step, unless Mounier separated Esprit definitively from what was now no more than a Force II-bis.<sup>103</sup> Maritain's criticism struck a deep chord in Mounier, and served to add to his own misgivings. He held disillusioned negotiations with Izard, and within a few days they agreed that the movement and the review should separate definitively. The July number of Esprit carried a joint declaration to this effect,<sup>104</sup> insisting that the reasons were doctrinal, giving the impression that a separation had been the original intention, and adding that there was no 'dessous' to the affair. This last claim must be seen as a tactical dishonesty, aimed at doing the least possible damage to either side. Though Mounier continued for some time to be on close terms with Izard, and though he continued to follow the Troisième Force's progress with active sympathy,<sup>105</sup> this dissolution marked the end of his

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103. See J. Petit, op.cit., p.78-96. Maritain wrote a letter to be published in Esprit, in which he dissociated himself from the 'demagogy' of the Force. In the event, the letter was not published on this occasion. It is reprinted in J. Petit, op.cit., p.81-82. The sense of Force-II-bis was to imply that it was now a mere adjunct of communism.

104. 'Avertissement', Esprit, no.10, juillet 1933, p.454-456 signed by both Izard and Mounier. It is reprinted in J. Petit, op.cit., p.95-96.

105. Mounier continued to attend meetings of the movement, but felt it had died finally when in the autumn of 1934 it merged with another movement, Gaston Bergery's Front commun to form a united Front social party which played a part in the formation of the Front populaire.

first attempt to solve the besetting problem of his life: how to translate thought into action without relinquishing its purity. The problem could equally be expressed as that of reconciling mystique and politique, and though Mounier had abandoned Péguy's vocabulary, much of the substance had remained.<sup>106</sup>

The separation from the movement finally confirmed Mounier's mastery of Esprit. He was probably helped in the affair by what he considered as a providential improvement in the review's financial position. The shortages which had accompanied the review from the beginning became more acute in the spring of 1933 and provoked a more than usually insistent appeal for funds in his editorial.<sup>107</sup>

In addition to a flood of letters and donations, he received a visit from an industrialist, Georges Zérapha<sup>108</sup> who had a deep sympathy for the review, and was alarmed to hear of its difficulties. He undertook to raise the necessary capital, and, a few days later, to provide office facilities when Esprit was asked to leave Desclée de Brouwer's premises. This event put Mounier in a relatively sound financial position, though he was careful not to allow his readers to feel any complacency as a result.

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106. Maritain, in a letter, had analysed Mounier's disagreement with Délégation as 'la vieille querelle du "mystique" et du "politique"' (3 August 1932, J. Petit, op.cit., p.51).

107. See 'Vers notre seconde journée', Esprit, no.7, avril 1933, p.4-5.

108. Georges Zérapha, the director of a small business, was attracted to Esprit from the beginning. He wrote numerous articles and provided much material aid for Esprit. Mounier was pleased to publish one of his articles under Vichy, particularly since Zérapha was Jewish. His assistance with Esprit's finances is recounted in Oeuvres, IV, p.529-533, covering the period of 10 May to 30 June 1933.

At the same time as Mounier was warding off the challenge from inside Esprit, he was also forced to defend himself against attacks from outside. The Right-wing had made no mistake in sensing a hostile force. Action française smelt Bolshevism and particularly took Berdyaev to task for his neo-Stalinism,<sup>109</sup> while La revue française derided 'ces tentatives spirituelles si équivoques, si ambiguës, si vagues que nous propose une équipe révolutionnaire ivre d'abstractions internationales'.<sup>110</sup> François Mauriac<sup>111</sup> issued a sharp reprimand, warning the deluded men of Esprit that after they had facilitated the revolution they would be ruthlessly suppressed because they were Catholics, and that they should therefore have no truck with revolution.<sup>112</sup> The Christian Democrats, while less hostile, offered serious criticisms.<sup>113</sup> Paul Archambault criticised Esprit for its vagueness and for its failure to produce a

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109. Anonymous, 'Communisme et Communion', Action française, 1 décembre 1932.

110. Anonymous, 'Sous le signe d'Esprit', La revue française, 25 décembre 1932.

111. François Mauriac (1885-1970), novelist, académicien since 1933, Nobel prize winner (1952), and political commentator, had been associated with the Catholic Right, particularly Action française, but since 1926 had begun a slow evolution towards a moderate conservatism, which protected him from total support for Franco or the Vichy government.

112. François Mauriac, 'Les jeunes bourgeois révolutionnaires', Echo de Paris, 25 mars 1933, p.1. The Echo was one of the leading Right-wing nationalist daily newspapers, with a large Catholic readership.

113. For a detailed account of Mounier's relations with the Christian Democrats, see R.W. Rauch, Politics and belief in contemporary France, (The Hague, 1972).

constructive alternative to the many things it refused. He felt that their hearts were in the right place but regretted that they did not tell him who he should vote for.<sup>114</sup> Robert Garric was worried that Esprit's pessimism as to the present state of society was unwarranted and that the young team was wasting its time preparing for a revolution which was never going to materialise.<sup>115</sup> The Left-wing, although generally indifferent to what it regarded as nothing new, did offer one or two criticisms. A reviewer in L'étudiant socialiste regretted the obvious antipathy shown towards Marxism, but did not altogether dismiss Esprit, hoping that a closer contact with the proletariat might save it from 'un socialisme aristocratique d'intellectuels'.<sup>116</sup> Paul Nizan, who had already declared his hostility to the writers of the N.R.F.'s 'Cahier de revendications',<sup>117</sup> took up Mauriac's point to reassure him that Esprit was no danger to the bourgeoisie, since it only sought to reintroduce the traditional bourgeois values in a new disguise.<sup>118</sup>

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114. Paul Archambault, 'Esprit', Politique, novembre 1932, p.1034-1036.

115. Robert Garric, 'Pourquoi nous acceptons', La revue des jeunes, 15 février 1933, p.159-173.

116. Pierre Boivin, 'Esprit', L'étudiant socialiste, janvier 1933.

117. See above, Section I.a).

118. Paul Nizan, 'Les enfants de la lumière', Commune, octobre 1933, reprinted in P. Nizan, Intellectuel communiste (Paris, 1967), p.219-225.

These reactions were largely to be expected in view of the position Esprit had chosen to adopt, and indicated the approximate area of sympathy Mounier could hope for. He could afford to ignore the objections of the socialists and communists, for, as yet, he did not feel that there was any use in opening a debate with them. He knew his audience to be drawn from catholic circles and therefore practically absent from either party, and any political controversy had to be based on an area of common interest if it was to have any ideological impact. In the case of the extreme Right, from whom Mounier wanted above all to be dissociated, there was no use in opening a debate which he wished to remain closed to avoid any confusion. Mauriac, though conservative, was a respected literary figure; Garric and the christian democrats were the closest among the catholics to Esprit's position. Mounier therefore replied in an article to both Mauriac and Garric.<sup>119</sup> To Garric he replied that his apparent pessimism about the state of the world was justified, and that revolution was a spiritual duty which should not be shirked under the pretext that it may not succeed. He restated his belief in the importance of bearing witness:

Même si demain le vieux monde devait trouver l'herbe magique pour prolonger d'un siècle son agonie ... nous n'aurions pas perdu notre oeuvre, car pour qui ne réussit pas, il reste de témoigner. Une vie n'est pas brisée qui a porté un grand témoignage.<sup>120</sup>

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119. E. Mounier, 'Certitude de notre jeunesse', Esprit, no. 8, mai 1933, p.228-234. Reprinted in Oeuvres, I, p.301-306.

120. Oeuvres, I, p.306.

In so doing he rebutted the christian democrats' reformism in the name of a more spiritual consideration than material improvements in living conditions. To Mauriac, Mounier replied refusing to accept his reasoned defence of the bourgeoisie, and refusing to abandon the word revolution because of its associations with the miserable and the oppressed. At the same time he refused to be branded as neo-Marxist, insisting that he did not want to destroy the values of christian civilisation, but to renew them. Although he spoke harsh words to both Mauriac and the christian democrats he made it clear that he felt himself part of the same christian family and wanted only to bring the others to a sharper awareness of their spiritual obligations. By appealing to values which were common to all of them, Mounier was situating his ideological aims firmly in a catholic context.

Shortly after this skirmish, ominous probings began to emanate from the catholic hierarchy. The Cardinal Archbishop of Paris asked for a report on the review,<sup>121</sup> showing some concern over its relations with the Troisième Force, the Church and non-catholics. Thanks to the influence of Maritain and the judicious intervention of friendly clerics, Mounier was able to reassure the Archbishop and the Comité de Vigilance as to the value of Esprit. He

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121. See Esprit, décembre 1950, p.982, and J. Petit, op.cit., p.83-89 covering the period 16-26 May 1933.

was able to report the separation from the Troisième Force, but he strongly asserted his independence from the Church hierarchy. Welcoming the close contact and advice of the Church, he made it clear that catholic contributors would not truncate their faith but that he was not prepared to require other christians to renounce or hide their differences from Rome. For the time being, the danger of official censure was averted. Mounier was aware that such censure would put an end to any influence he might hope to wield, and one effect of the incident was to make him conscious of the fragility of his position and of the need to avoid dangerous excesses in his material, unless they were accompanied by a firm editorial corrective.

By the end of its first year, the review had won itself a wide following among catholics,<sup>122</sup> and established itself as genuinely committed to a social and political revolution as well as a spiritual renewal. The number for March 1933 is a good example of the material with which it was making its impact. Entitled 'Rupture entre l'ordre chrétien et le désordre établi', it included major articles by Jacques Maritain, Nicolas Berdyaev,

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122. No reliable figures are available for circulation, all records having been lost during the war. It is not certain how many copies of any issue were sold, though numbers certainly varied from month to month. On 13 January 1933, Mounier reported the 500th subscriber (Oeuvres, IV, p.519), and numbers increased steadily throughout the year. Approximately 80 people failed to renew their subscription at the end of the first year (ibid., p.540), but by this time subscriptions were increasing in numbers at a rate of around four per day. Figures can only be approximate, but the review reported 1101 subscribers in July 1934, a figure which probably rose near to 2,000 during the course of the 1930's. (This last figure was suggested by J.M. Domenach in conversation.) Sales were probably three to four times more.

Denis de Rougemont and André Philip<sup>123</sup> among others.<sup>124</sup> Mounier's own liminary article set the tone.<sup>125</sup> Pointing out the massive desertion of spiritual values by christian people, he denounced the extent to which the Church had compromised itself with the temporal forces of the world. The worst treason, he said, was its close identification with the most reactionary elements of the bourgeoisie, its alliance with power and money. Catholic doctrine, he continued, required obedience to temporal powers only so long as they did not constitute a tyranny; western capitalism did constitute a tyranny. He pointed out that the same doctrine set five conditions on the right of revolution, and only the danger of a worse, communist tyranny, prevented them from being entirely fulfilled beyond doubt. The enemy was the bourgeois, which he saw as a moral rather than an economic category. Bereft of love or a sense of true existence, the bourgeois, he said, sought the order and tranquility necessary to procure a mediocre contentment based

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123. André Philip, a Protestant and an early contributor to Esprit, joined the socialist party and was elected to parliament in 1936, he was an active Resistance worker, and after the Liberation held ministerial posts.

124. Other contributors to this issue of Esprit included Charles Dulot, Edmond Humeau, Alex. Marc, Jean Plaquevent, Etienne Borne, Pierre Courthion, F.D. Vindelle, A. Savoy, Olivier Lacombe, René Schwob, Georges Duveau, André Ulmann, Georges Izard and Pierre Traval.

125. E. Mounier, 'Confession pour nous autres chrétiens', Esprit, no.6, mars 1933, p.873-896, reprinted in Oeuvres, I, p.373-393.

on possessions. Mounier considered him 'une forme bonhomme de l'Antéchrist',<sup>126</sup> and thought it imperative that he should be driven from his association with christianity. In the spirit of these principles, the remainder of this issue of Esprit was devoted to drawing a firm line between christian values and their misappropriation in defence of modern bourgeois capitalism. Protestant, catholic and orthodox churches were represented and the whole issue was an impressive contribution to christian reflexion on the rôle of christianity in the world. It also marked the moment at which any confusion about the seriousness of the review's commitment was dispelled, and in many ways became a model for its future development. It was a constant point of reference for Mounier and of all the early numbers of the review, the one by which Esprit was most often judged. Important special numbers of the review followed at regular intervals, dealing with education, work, money, property, art, fascism, communism and other burning issues, but all took their pattern from this one.

Now that Esprit had been established as a viable medium, Mounier, firmly in control of it, had to look for a new form of action to replace the Troisième Force. In July 1933 he announced the setting up of the Amis d'Esprit,<sup>127</sup>

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126. Oeuvres, I, p.390.

127. 'Constitution des Amis d'Esprit' (unsigned), Esprit, no.10, juillet 1933, p.457-462.

which was to be a network of groups of friends forming spiritual communities and study groups throughout France. On a practical level they were to safeguard the material conditions for the review's continuation, and eventually try to implement its judgements, though this latter point was not developed. Throughout the autumn Mounier let the project lie fallow, but in the first issue of 1934 he asked his readers, particularly the groups, to undertake a serious investigation into what he termed 'une technique des moyens spirituels', aimed at 'la recherche simultanée de la pureté et de l'efficacité'.<sup>128</sup> This revealed an abiding preoccupation, and it seems that he was beginning to feel that his declared commitment might ring hollow without some more concrete expression than the review. Soon after this a young Belgian catholic, Raymond de Becker,<sup>129</sup> interested him in a movement he was planning to found based on a secularised version of religious communities. Mounier was enthusiastic, and the movement, soon entitled Communauté, aroused in him high hopes that he might at last have found the form of action to which he could unreservedly commit himself. The project, however, lost momentum and

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128. 'Deux enquêtes', (unsigned), Esprit, no.16, janvier 1934, p.525-532. The other enquiry concerned attitudes to the problem of war.

129. Raymond de Becker, an eccentric monk-like figure, was attempting to found a series of communities based on the principles of poverty and austerity among young French, Belgian and German intellectuals. His authoritarianism and intransigence was, however, too demanding for his colleagues to bear for any length of time, and he never retained much support. He resented Mounier's abandoning him and later (1942) attacked him for his sterility and empty speculation.

by the time it had drawn up a constitution, Mounier knew that he had been over-optimistic, and turned back to Esprit as his best hope of achieving efficacy.<sup>130</sup> The groups were slowly spreading, and in addition to regional gatherings, Mounier set up specific study groups to establish considered positions on various questions, with the ultimate purpose of preparing articles for the review. No doubt Mounier was thinking back to his experience with the Davidées when he conceived the Amis d'Esprit. It was a much larger scale of operation, aimed at organising the evident support enjoyed by the review, particularly in the provinces, which provided a strong base for Esprit. Using the groups, Mounier expected to ensure an effective agency for the propagation of Esprit's ideology. In this expectation he was not mistaken. By carefully selecting correspondants and organisers in the provinces and in the French-speaking areas of Switzerland, Belgium and North Africa, by publicising them regularly in the back pages of Esprit, and by the frequent visits he and other leading figures of the editorial staff made to these areas, he was able to build up an efficient network of groups. In January 1934, Esprit reported groups in twenty French towns,<sup>131</sup> seven

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130. Cf. Esprit, décembre 1950, p.991, and Oeuvres, IV, p.546-575 passim.

131. The first twenty towns named were: Agen, Angers, Avignon, Besançon, Dijon, Grenoble, Laon, Lorient, Maubeuge, Mazamet, Montauban, Nantes, Obernal, Poitiers, Rennes, Rochefort-sur-Mer, Rouen, St. Quentin, Toulouse, Tours.

Swiss groups (Basle, Berne, Fribourg, Lausanne, Leysin, Neufchâtel, Zürich), three Belgian groups (Brussels, Liège, Ghent), as well as groups in Madrid, London, Glasgow, Amsterdam, Casablanca and the Argentine. By September of the same year twelve more French towns had been added,<sup>132</sup> as well as Louvain, Oxford, the Hague, Nijmegen, and Utrecht. Each town <sup>had</sup> at least one correspondent whose name and address was printed in the review.<sup>133</sup> In the first list of French correspondents, from twenty names, at least five were teachers, though more may have been, and another worked in a school, reflecting the extent to which Esprit depended on those in various levels of education as 'cadres' of the movement. The number of groups expanded to a peak of over sixty in France alone by the late 1930's, but before then it had become clear that the nature of the groups was corresponding less and less to Mounier's hopes. Originally conceived as the militant, active wing of a spiritual revolution led by Esprit, the groups, once formed, tended to lose momentum, and after a first rush of enthusiasm settled into a pattern of study groups and friendly gatherings. The groups in their final form were far short

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132. They were Bordeaux, Bourg, Bourges, Charleville, Châteauroux, Lille, Lons-le-Saunier, Marseille, Montluçon, Roubaix, Strasbourg, Vannes.

133. Though most of the correspondents in the provinces were otherwise unknown local enthusiasts, several figures were known on a national level (for example, Pierre-Henri Simon, Roger Secretain, Jacques Ellul, Max-Pol Fouchet, Jean Lacroix, Maurice de Gandillac); the most distinguished was Maurice Merleau-Ponty, the correspondent for Chartres in 1935-1936.

of Mounier's ambition, but they were still a valuable assistance to Esprit, then and later, on a material and an ideological level, forming a stable, loyal and reliable clientèle.

In the meantime, his enquiry into spiritual means of action was maturing, and at the end of 1934 he synthesised its results into a series of articles.<sup>134</sup> Refusing both impotent purism and cynical realism as dangerous and inadequate responses, he suggested the elaboration of a range of non-violent action which would only be replaced by violence under the strictest of conditions. He declared that the militants of the revolution must submit to a strict self-discipline and self-examination to ensure that they were as pure as possible in all their actions and that their commitment included dedication to spiritual values before material success. Rejecting political action as impure, and institutional changes as ineffective, he outlined the nature of the actions which he encouraged as long as the choice remained open. These entailed publicly exposing and denouncing the oppression and injustices of the established disorder; refusing to participate, even indirectly, in it; passive disobedience by boycotting and obstructing its operations. It was essentially a personal ethic, intended to bear witness to a daily refusal of com-

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134. E. Mounier, 'Pour une technique des moyens spirituels', Esprit, nos. 26, 27, 29, novembre & décembre 1934, février 1935. Reprinted in Oeuvres, I, p.314-360.

plicity. It called for a thorough and long-term dépouille-  
ment, but was not to be understood as replacing the more  
specific responses required by the development of events.  
Up to this time, as he later admitted,<sup>135</sup> his conception  
of action had been abstract and removed from direct con-  
tact with reality, but already events were prompting the  
emergence of a more concrete political commitment. He  
never disavowed the concept of spiritual revolution ela-  
borated during these first months, nor did he renounce his  
search for a purely spiritual form of action. They remained  
basic to his political philosophy. But for the philosophy  
to become an effective ideology it was necessary for them  
to be completed by a practical response to the historical  
situation. In the event, the second half of the 1930's  
left Mounier and everyone else with little alternative  
but to take specific political positions.

## II. TAKING POSITIONS.

### a) Debates and polemic.

The first signs of real turbulence in France came to  
a crisis with the events of February 1934.<sup>136</sup> On the even-  
ing of the sixth, a large demonstration on the Place de la  
Concorde, consisting mostly of royalists and members of

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135. E. Mounier, 'Les cinq étapes d'Esprit', Dieu vivant,  
no.16, 1950, p.37-53. Reprinted in Bulletin des Amis d'E.  
Mounier, no.29, mars 1967, p.9-24.

136. The circumstances of these events are described and  
analysed in great detail in A. Werth, France in Ferment  
(London, 1934). Mr. Werth was the Paris correspondant of  
the Manchester Guardian at the time.

the various fascist leagues, turned into an anti-parliamentary riot in which several demonstrators were killed by police gun-fire. Though the action failed to achieve more than a change at the head of the government, it was a severe shock to the Left, and prompted massive counter-demonstrations by both communists and socialists. Mounier's reaction to this sudden intensification of political activity was to shy away in horror.<sup>137</sup> He saw it as caused by and as proliferating lies, particularly in their most pernicious embodiment: the myth. He went on to enumerate and denounce the myths erected on both Left and Right to simplify and falsify judgements. If this was the condition of revolution, he said, then he felt obliged to abstain, and to prepare a more long-term spiritual revolution free from unacceptable impurities. He was anxious not to be drawn into party politics, since he saw that it offered little better than a choice between fascism and communism.

Mounier's position regarding fascism was first stated in early 1934,<sup>138</sup> when, admitting its dynamism, he accused it of being founded on the distorted caricatures of genuine values and rejected it as an easy, but pernicious option: 'la plus dangereuse démission qui nous soit aujourd'hui proposée.'<sup>139</sup> He even delivered a harsh reprimand to

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137. E. Mounier, 'Les leçons de l'émeute, ou la révolution contre les mythes', Esprit, no.18, mars, 1934, p.905-915. Reprinted in Oeuvres, I, p.361-369.

138. E. Mounier, 'Les pseudo-valeurs spirituelles fascistes', Esprit, no.16, janvier 1934, p.533-540. Reprinted in Oeuvres, I, p.223-228.

139. Oeuvres, I, p.225.

Ordre nouveau for failing to appreciate the distinction between fascist pseudo-values and authentic values,<sup>140</sup> an act which led directly to the dissociation of that movement from Esprit.<sup>141</sup> This refusal of fascism never varied, though he consented, the following year, along with other young intellectuals, to attend an explanatory conference in Rome on the corporate state.<sup>142</sup> Making every effort to give his sympathetic understanding to the complexities of Italian ideology, he re-stated his objections and added that the major theoretical obstacles were its acceptance of the state as the primary value, its belief that all persons could be assimilated spontaneously into a harmonious uniformity within it, and its consequent identification of the leader with the true state.<sup>143</sup> After allowing some

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140. Oeuvres, I, p.228.

141. E. Mounier, 'Réponse à Ordre nouveau', Esprit, no.19, avril 1934, p.199-203. The separation confirmed a difference which had always been implicit (see above Chapter 2, I.a). In this article Mounier denounced their aggressive and violent notion of the human person, their doctrinaire technocracy, and their nascent Right-wing attitudes. Mounier explained that if he were forced to choose, he would count himself as Left-wing. The separation was never total, and some Ordre nouveau writers still wrote for Esprit afterwards - notably Denis de Rougemont and Alexandre Marc. Ordre nouveau were not badly damaged by it, but had already begun their own monthly review.

142. Others were: Ulmann, Galey, Robert Aron, Dupuis, Chevalley, Roditi, Paul Marion, Ganivet, Fabrègues, see Oeuvres, IV, p.570-572. The transcript of the conversations is available at the Bibliothèque Mounier.

143. Cf. E. Mounier, 'Esprit au congrès franco-italien sur la corporation', Esprit, no.33, juin 1935, p.474-480.

debate in Esprit notably with the theorist Georges de Santillana, Mounier brought the question to a definitive end, baldly refusing all moral complicity with the aims and the path of fascism.<sup>144</sup> Henceforth the review was unambiguously anti-fascist and the fact was not thought worth repeating until the rise <sup>of fascism</sup> in France in the months preceeding the war. In taking this position, Mounier was allying himself with almost the entire French Left, who began increasingly to insist on their common task of anti-fascism in face of the rising wave of fascism in Europe.

Mounier's stance regarding communism, on the other hand, was less straightforward, and probably the single most important dialogue of his career. It was governed by one unpleasant, but unavoidable fact: the communist party was the single and consistent effective defender of the working class in France. Without this Mounier would doubtless have been even more peremptory than with fascism. In June 1934 he restated the position Berdyaev had already established, showing some enthusiasm for Marxism as a method of enquiry, but refusing the totalitarian expression of it in Soviet Russia.<sup>145</sup> He denied that communism was necessarily inseparable from the defence of the working class, and denied that criticism of it was therefore reactionary. Consequently, he said, he felt free to oppose

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144. E. Mounier & G. de Santillana, 'Dialogue sur l'Etat Fasciste', Esprit, no.35-6, septembre 1935, p.725-751.

145. E. Mounier, 'Tentation du communisme, pour un certain sang-froid spirituel', Esprit, no.21, juin 1934, p.416-425. Reprinted in Oeuvres, I, p.229-235.

its implicit materialism, but only because he also opposed the oppression of the working class. Mounier's determined resistance to communism was in no way surprising. It had long been anathematised by the Church and any cooperation with it was unthinkable. Berdyaev was already considered daring in conceding communism any virtues whatsoever.

At approximately the same time Mounier was anxious to counter the latest development of the Troisième Force. In the autumn of 1934 Izard was considering a proposal by Gaston Bergery<sup>146</sup> to merge with his own Front commun party. This involved a certain acceptance of the usual party political conventions, including action on the masses. Mounier warned him of the folly of this course:

Ce ne sont pas les masses qui font l'histoire,  
mais les valeurs qui agissent sur elles à partir  
de minorités inébranlables dans leur foi.<sup>147</sup>

It was his unshakeable belief that the only worthwhile change was that brought about by a militant minority who would inject their values, in all their purity into the impure mass, by a process of rayonnement based on personal conversion. The view of history implied was entirely con-

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146. Gaston Bergery (b.1892), a lawyer, after the first world war held various public posts, becoming a député for one of the 'radical' parties in 1928, was dissatisfied with traditional politics and formed a more Left-wing ginger group, the Front commun, which was one of the groups at the origin of the Front populaire. Député from 1936, he agreed to serve in the Vichy government, and held various ambassadorial offices, though he was acquitted of collaboration at the Liberation, since which time he has restricted himself to Law.

147. Oeuvres, IV, p.538, dated 16 October 1934.

sistent with the spiritualism of 'Refaire la Renaissance', but this was the first time Mounier had expressed his élitist view of politics in a clear way. This is the context in which the Amis d'Esprit were conceived, and the basis for all Mounier's active political work. In November 1934 the merger was nonetheless voted. Mounier instantly resigned from the new Front social in deep disappointment. This formation was one of the bases on which the Front populaire was founded, but Mounier continued to feel that the measure of compromise involved was unacceptable, and that the movement was now open to assimilation by the communists with their unified and intransigent ideology. In practice, his fear of communism at this stage was such as to prevent any contact with them. The communists in their turn continued to ignore the development of Esprit, considering it as irrelevant to the social and political struggles in which they were engaged.

Nonetheless, Mounier began to feel something of the impulse towards constructive action that was now running through the Left, characterised by the mooting of a unified campaign against the increasingly bankrupt Right-wing government. He was more than ever conscious of the degree to which catholics were identified with the Right,<sup>148</sup> and

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148. To take two examples, in Esprit no.25, octobre 1934, p.142-156, Mounier's article 'Par delà les équivoques du spiritualisme', a review of several recent books, took the defence of Gide's criticisms of the Church in its deafness to the social and political aspirations of the working class, concluding that it was not too late for the Church to renew itself. The following month (Esprit no.26, novembre 1934, p.283-7), in an article 'Colonialisme et christianisme', he replied to the Jesuit journal Etudes which had thought it unpatriotic to denounce colonial abuses. He reminded them that the missionary service should not be equated with colonialism, and felt that the Church had too often acted as though it should.

it was his determination to dissolve the combination that led him to become gradually more involved in active politics. The crucial point was the spring of 1935 when he became involved in a vigorous polemic. The ageing leader of the Fédération Nationale Catholique, General de Castelnau,<sup>149</sup> had been urging in the Echo de Paris that the period of conscription be raised from one to two years, that young catholics be encouraged to enrol in the army, and that re-armament should be introduced as a major priority of government. Outraged by this war-mongering, Mounier wrote in Esprit reminding him of the pope's condemnation of war and, referring to his three sons killed in the Great War, asked, 'Général, trois fils, n'est-ce pas assez?'.<sup>150</sup> The general was indignant and wrote a vehement attack in the Echo de Paris and an insulting letter to Esprit.<sup>151</sup> The conservative catholic press, shocked and angry, accused Mounier of pride, vulgarity and brutality, while he insis-

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149. General Edouard de Castelnau (1851-1943) after a long and eminent military career, entered politics as a député in 1919, but after defeat by the Cartel des Gauches in 1924 founded and presided over the Fédération Nationale Catholique which had some success in opposing the Cartel's anti-clerical legislation. He used the organisation as a platform for his monarchist views and also campaigned against the Republic particularly in the Echo de Paris.

150. E. Mounier, 'Les catholiques et la défense nationale', Esprit, no.31, avril 1935, p.133-134.

151. The texts and a commentary on them can be found in René Rémond, Les catholiques, le communisme et les crises 1929-1939 (Paris, 1960), p.79-83.

ted that his words were prompted by sincere charity and generous concern.<sup>152</sup> However that may be, the affair came as a rude awakening to those who still saw Esprit as an anodyne, abstract though occasionally extravagant publication. It also gave a considerable jolt to Mounier himself who became aware of his tendency to indulge in 'des méditations trop sereines, trop cosmiques, trop lisses',<sup>153</sup> and resolved to express himself with more vigour in matters of controversial political import.

Within the space of a few days, the opportunity came to implement this resolve. Parliamentary elections were being held in an overwhelmingly catholic quarter of Paris, and the only candidate to stand was Jean Chiappe,<sup>154</sup> a monarchist sympathiser who had been dismissed as prefect of the police for corrupt and anti-democratic practices. Determined not to let him pass unopposed, Mounier and a number of his associates organised a last-minute campaign

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152. E. Mounier, 'Un polémique', Esprit, no.32, mai 1935, p.316-320.

153. Oeuvres, IV, p.568 in his notebook for 17 May 1935.

154. Jean Chiappe, Corsican-born monarchist sympathiser who by a blend of ruthless ambition and corruption rose to be Prefect of Police in Paris, was suspected of collusion in the preparation of the attempted fascist coup of 6 February 1934, and of involvement in the affaire Stavisky, a seamy financial scandal.

to elect Jacques Madaule,<sup>155</sup> one of their number. Supported by a selection of respectable catholic intellectuals they did all they could to expose Chiappe's misdeeds and appeal to the community to reject his candidature as an insult. Hindered by his late arrival and by the total silence of the public media regarding his campaign, Madaule lost heavily.<sup>156</sup> Mounier was disappointed, but in the face of palpable failure, he appreciated how much needed to be done before his mission bore substantial fruit. It had also come as something of a shock to him to see the power of the press and of even a corrupt politician like Chiappe over the minds of those who professed to stand for spiritual values. All the vigour and probity of a spiritually-based action had been fruitless, and Mounier came one step nearer to realising the conflict between two desirable ends, purity and efficacy.

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155. Jacques Madaule (born 1898), historian and critic, became interested in politics in the early thirties. He was a regular contributor to Esprit, and participated in the later founding of the christian democrat M.R.P. party, for which he was a député after the war. He has more recently become known as a political commentator in Le Monde, and as a Claudel scholar.

156. See A. Ulmann, 'La candidature Chiappe, scandale public', Esprit, no.30, avril 1935, p.126-128; E. Mounier, 'Contre Chiappe', Esprit, no.32, mai 1935, p.331-333; E. Mounier, 'Leçons d'une campagne', Esprit, no.33, juin 1935, p.457-460; and Oeuvres, IV, p.569, in his notebook dated 17 May 1935.

b) The Front Populaire.

During this time, events were moving rapidly with the unprecedented agreement by the communist and socialist parties to present a joint programme at the following elections of spring 1936.<sup>157</sup> They were joined by a number of smaller groups, including the Front social. Even the traditionally centrist radical party expressed a guarded willingness to co-operate. The Castelnau and Chiappe affairs had made Mounier feel a greater sympathy and openness towards the forces at work in the construction of a Left-wing alliance. Significantly, in the heat of combat he felt himself nearer to Péguy, his spiritual mentor,<sup>158</sup> and by implication closer to finding his best means of expression. In June of the same year, he participated in a number of meetings<sup>159</sup> which had arisen from the recent decision to establish close cooperation between various left-wing organisations with a view to forming a Popular Front movement. In his contact with many of the leading intellectual figures of the Left, Mounier was initially dismayed by the artificiality of their welcome and felt that political

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157. The events of the preparation and period of office of the Front are well described and documented in G. Lefranc, Le Front Populaire (Paris 1965), and L. Bodin & J. Touchard, Front Populaire (Paris 1961).

158. For example, he referred to the period as a 'quinzaine péguyste' (Oeuvres, IV, p.567 & 569).

159. See Oeuvres, IV, p.572-574. Mounier here recorded his mixed reactions to two meetings in the space of ten days during June 1935 in which he felt wooed by the left-wing intellectuals, including Nizan, Aragon, Marc Bloch and Malraux, all of whom had previously shown nothing but hostility.

expediency was destroying their integrity. But it can be taken as a sign of Mounier's success in establishing himself as recognisably 'of the Left', that he should be regarded as a useful ally. Though he was bewildered and mistrustful of the sudden change, Mounier found in their unity an important and hopeful sign, particularly since the rigid dogmatism of the communists had now given way to a readiness to listen to and tolerate contrary views. In Esprit he published articles by André Ulmann,<sup>160</sup> the political and economic correspondent, who expressed a cautious optimism about the Front Populaire, despite misgivings about the differences glossed over in the name of unity.

Over the summer of 1935, Mounier's position underwent a slight regression. The question of political action had been discussed at the second Esprit conference in July and the collective statement, drawn up as a result, declared that since no party fully satisfied its conditions, Esprit would work for the long-term constitution of a third force, independent of the Front populaire - as of the right-wing Front national - neither Marxist nor fascist.<sup>161</sup> It had harsh words about the Popular front, which, it said:

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160. Cf. A. Ulmann, 'Lettre à un camarade de province sur le Front populaire', Esprit, no.34, juillet 1935, p.635-639; A. Ulmann, 'Vers l'année décisive?', Esprit, no.35-6, septembre 1935, p.821-824.

161. 'Notre humanisme (déclaration collective)', Esprit, no.37, octobre 1935, p.1-24<sup>4</sup>. Although the document was the result of a collective reflection, there can be no doubt that Mounier was prominent in its formulation, and anyway fully endorsed its positions. He no longer met with the opposition he had experienced at the first congress at Font-Romeu, partly because, as he wistfully noted, 'il n'y en avait plus un de Font-Romeu' (Oeuvres, IV, p.575). Those who disagreed with him had left.

accapare la terminologie de la justice sociale, souvent autorisé par une fidélité civique incontestable à cette justice, et l'attache à des idéologies que nous repoussons, à des corruptions qui ne méritent pas les causes dont ils se font les représentants.<sup>162</sup>

There was in this no suggestion of an attraction towards the right-wing alternative, rather Mounier was attempting to foster the kind of purification which he had constantly urged on Izard and the Troisième Force. In addition, Esprit was obliged to advance prudently, and any unseemly enthusiasm could easily lead to censure from the Church, an eventuality Mounier wished to avoid. As the Church's volunteer advance guard, he knew that it was imperative not to be cut off from the main body of the army. In the November 1935 issue of Esprit, he explained in greater detail his political evolution,<sup>163</sup> clarifying particularly the notion of a third force:

Dans toute la mesure, et dans l'exacte mesure où le Front populaire correspond à une réalité vivante, et n'est pas machination ou confusion des politiciens, il marque une première conscience par ces masses [ouvrières] de cette troisième voie.<sup>164</sup>

If he had originally seen the Front populaire as an electoral manoeuvre and demanded more, he now accepted that it was more than that, and to that extent gave his sympathy. He emphasised that he would not contemplate a radical attack on a movement or party which represented the working class, though adding that he would not accept the identi-

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162. 'Notre humanisme', p.24<sup>2</sup>.

163. E. Mounier, 'Faisons le point', Esprit, no.38, novembre 1935, p.279-281.

164. Ibid., p.280.

fication or confusion of the oppressed with a particular organisation. Mounier's threat to find a middle-way between the Left and Right was politically unreal, and from the huge demonstrations of 14 July 1935 up until the electoral victory of 3 May 1936, the Rassemblement populaire, as it was officially known, won the support of an increasing number of organisations. Some of these were near to Mounier's own position. Apart from the major parties, communists, S.F.I.O.-socialists, independent socialists, republican socialists, radicals and radical socialists, the Rassemblement also included the christian democratic Jeune République<sup>165</sup> and the Front social of Bergery and Izard; two of the main trades unions supported it, the C.G.T.<sup>166</sup> and the C.G.T.U.<sup>167</sup> Significantly the christian trades union, C.F.T.C.,<sup>168</sup> withheld its support, but there were few bodies in the labour movement or in the political Left and Centre to follow its example. The electoral programme was a series of thoroughgoing reforms based on national and international peace and freedom with social

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165. The Ligue de la Jeune République was founded in 1912 as a result of Marc Sangnier's experience with the Sillon. It was intended to spread a spiritual education in political matters, and had limited electoral aspirations.

166. The communist-led Confédération Générale du Travail was the largest of the labour unions, and the most militant.

167. The socialist-led Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire was the second largest union.

168. The catholic-led Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens was the smallest, most conservative of the major trades unions.

justice and economic growth.<sup>169</sup> To remain consistent with his declared position, Mounier could not disown the Rassemblement, but he was unwilling to be drawn into a movement which contained much to disquiet him, even if it did group the working class and all politically progressive movements in France at that time.

Though Mounier himself was sceptical about the forthcoming elections, he nonetheless reflected in Esprit something of the enthusiasm which they inspired in some of his colleagues. André Ulmann and André Philip in particular expressed great expectations,<sup>170</sup> making it clear that they saw the Popular Front as essentially other than an electoral cartel, and hoped that neither timidity in action, nor neglect of its popular support would vitiate the future government's programme. Surprisingly, perhaps, Mounier gave relatively little space to discussion of the matter, but this can be understood in the light of his dislike and distrust of the French parliamentary system, which he had never tried to hide. Speaking of the election campaign he could, for example, write:

Un grotesque carnaval de trois semaines vient de s'ouvrir sous le prétexte officiel d'un acte de souveraineté respectable: comment passer sans rougir le long de ces panneaux où s'étale une frénésie ridicule de bacchanale.<sup>171</sup>

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169. See G. Lefranc, Le Front Populaire, p.49-54.

170. See André Ulmann, 'Chronique politique', Esprit, no. 40, janvier 1936, p.636-642, and André Philip, 'Et après', Esprit, no.43, avril 1936, p.35-38.

171. E. Mounier, 'Les deux grandeurs', Esprit, n<sup>o</sup>.44, mai 1936, p.152.

This disgust was entirely consistent with his repeated attacks on parliamentary democracy and his insistence that the real revolutionary work took place on a different level. In the June number, however, his attitude was considerably softened, and, as a result of the election victory of the Front populaire, he published a full statement of his position.<sup>172</sup>

Beginning on a restrained note, pointing to the impure elements accompanying any government, he acknowledged the number of men worthy of respect it included. He saw the victory as a 'succès des forces populaires',<sup>173</sup> and admitted to feeling 'une joie venant du fond'.<sup>174</sup> This was already a sufficiently great change of tone, but, more surprisingly, he went on to suggest that the victory was a thorough vindication of his own position and by implication claimed a degree of responsibility for the success:

Elargissez, disions-nous aux révolutionnaires marxistes, la notion de prolétariat et abandonnez votre politique de classe pour un large rassemblement sur des valeurs humaines fondamentales, contre le monde de l'argent; détachez-vous de l'orthodoxie marxiste, intégrez nos revendications communes de justice sociale à ces valeurs humaines qui transcendent l'histoire, même si l'histoire en renouvelle les aspects; détournez-vous d'un sectarisme antireligieux qui n'a trop longtemps été qu'un moyen pour la bourgeoisie radicale d'immobiliser les justes colères populaires; ne rejetez pas la possibilité d'accomplir les révolutions nécessaires par la conquête légale du pouvoir légal, préférable, humainement et tactiquement, à toutes les violences de rues. - Et voilà que

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172. E. Mounier, 'Rassemblement populaire', Esprit, no.45, juin 1936, p.441-449.

173. Ibid., p.442.

174. Ibid., p.445.

nous entendons déclarer jusqu'à l'extrême-gauche communiste: rassemblement de tous les Français contre la minorité qui les opprime; pas de poing fermé contre la religion (Thorez); défense de la famille (Vaillant-Couturier). Voilà finalement que ce rassemblement apaisé, précédé de sa mystique, conquiert, sans effusion de sang, les postes de commande du pouvoir.<sup>175</sup>

There was some justice in Mounier's claim, for the Front populaire met most of the conditions he laid down for a catholic to be able to work within it. The reason for this is clear: intellectually, Mounier stood as far to the Left as it was possible to stand at this period without incurring the censure of the Church. Any Left-wing movement could reasonably regard his conditions as a minimum requirement in order to attract significant catholic support. It is therefore not surprising that all three sectors of the Front populaire should at least pay lip-service to the main human and spiritual values Mounier defended. They could not expect electoral victory without a degree of support from catholics, and even the General Secretary of the communist party, Maurice Thorez, made a speech offering la main tendue to catholics.<sup>176</sup> French catholics did not respond enthusiastically to this, but enough of them were persuaded to give the Popular Front its victory. Mounier could fairly claim to be a representative of the kind of catholic the Front populaire had to win over. There was no direct causal link between Mounier's ideas and those of the new government, though there was sufficient resemblance

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175. E. Mounier, 'Rassemblement populaire', p.443.

176. The appeal, made on 17 April 1936, is examined in R. Rémond, Les catholiques, le communisme et les crises, p.218-228; Rémond describes the effect it had and the issues involved in the question. See also R.W. Rauch, Politics & Belief..., p.169-176.

for him to be excused a little discreet preening.

Working on the principle that firm but fair criticism was likely to be more influential than unconditional support or over-indulgence, Mounier was particularly intransigent towards movements close to his own thought, so in this instance he reserved the right to criticise harshly. The defenders of the oppressed were in power, he argued, and he was therefore excused the scruples which previously led him to attenuate his disagreements. The main target he singled out was the danger of a materialist dictatorship under a new Stalin, a danger all the more acute since orthodox communism was the most cohesive and effective single element of the new dispensation. Consequently, he promised to help and encourage all constructive projects, both at the hub and on the perimeter of the government, not fearing to 'mettre la main à la pâte partout où il le faudra'.<sup>177</sup> At the same time, bearing in mind the undoubted repression in the U.S.S.R., he promised to fight to eliminate any signs of an incipient police or party dictatorship. While the terms of his approval may seem muted, Mounier's scepticism was tempered by a strain of anticipation which reflected something of the exhilaration which the whole French Left felt in the spring of 1936.

In the months that followed, Mounier kept his promise to exercise constructive criticism and published numerous studies in which developments within the Front populaire

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177. E. Mounier, 'Rassemblement populaire', p.447.

were followed with critical sympathy: appreciating Blum's discreet leadership,<sup>178</sup> approving declarations of particular importance, especially ones emanating from that part of the movement led by Bergery and the Front social group,<sup>179</sup>, but equally showing a lucid awareness of the difficulties and failures the government had to face.<sup>180</sup> It came to be accepted that, whatever its failings, the Front populaire was the only means of implementing personalist ideas at the time, and that any criticism had to be so expressed as not to give an advantage to its many opponents.<sup>181</sup> The government's first year was summed up by Roger Labrousse in Esprit as a fruitful one, but he was quick to point out how far short of its declared aims it had fallen, and looked pessimistically ahead to the increasing preponderance of the luke-warm 'radicals'.<sup>182</sup> Touchard echoed him the following month lamenting Blum's departure and the Chautemps cabinet's mediocrity.<sup>183</sup> By November,

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178. See R. Leenhardt, 'Blum et le réalisme politique', Esprit, no.51, décembre 1936, p.448-9.

179. See R. Leenhardt, 'Chronique politique', Esprit, no. 50, novembre 1936, p.361-7, & R. Labrousse, 'En marge de la déclaration frontiste', Esprit, no.51, décembre 1936, p. 518-525.

180. See Georges Duveau, 'Le filet d'argent', Esprit, no. 52, janvier 1937, p.676-682.

181. See R. Leenhardt, 'Le vin nouveau et les vieilles outres', Esprit, no.54, mars 1937, p.981-986, & J. Madaule, 'Chronique politique', Esprit, no.57, juin 1937, p.493-497.

182. R. Labrousse, 'Front populaire, An II', Esprit, no.58, juillet 1937, p.632-637.

183. P.A. Touchard, 'Chronique politique', Esprit, no.59, août 1937, p.669-671.

Madaule was gloomily analysing the Front's incipient failure and calling for a new upsurge of popular pressure to come to the rescue.<sup>184</sup> In February 1938 he announced the death of the original movement.<sup>185</sup> The March number of the review was entitled 'Le Front populaire, Bilan-Avenir', and contained articles judging the unsatisfactory economic, political, social and international state of the nation. By this time events seemed to have confirmed Mounier's more gloomy predictions. The reforming work of the government had been increasingly impeded by pressure from industrialists and property-owners, supported by the more conservative elements in the coalition. The communists had refused to cooperate in administering the compromises introduced into the initial programme, which they had considered as a minimum. The balance of power was shifting to the right, exposing all the contradictions which had gone unchallenged in earlier more enthusiastic days. For the March 1938 issue of Esprit Mounier wrote a long assessment,<sup>186</sup> in which he tried to clear away some of the dead wood of slogans, clichés, and stereotyped attitudes, the mythologies which he considered to falsify and distort the the expression of left-wing politics. Because of the tenacity of these parasitic accretions, he said, he was not

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184. J. Madaule, 'Thermidor', Esprit, no.62, novembre 1937, p.330-333.

185. J. Madaule, 'La mort du rassemblement populaire', Esprit, no.65, février 1938, p.781-785.

186. E. Mounier, 'Court traité de la mythique de gauche', Esprit, no.66, mars 1938, p.873-890. Reprinted in Oeuvres, IV, p.40-75.

prepared to be crudely categorised as a left-winger, but was willing to work in cooperation with, and for the purification of, those forces which did call themselves Left-wing. The failure of the Front populaire, he suggested, could be ascribed to its not having purged itself of its mythologies. As a result, he said, it has been polluted and diluted by both the mediocre liberalism of the 'radical' parties, and the harsh materialism of the communist party, to the point where it combined the worst, rather than the best of all sides. There are many possible explanations for the undoubted failure of the Front populaire. Mounier's was above all an ideological explanation. He accused the government of betraying the mystique which had brought it to power, and of failing to elaborate a coherent ideology which took honest account of differences. The willingness to sacrifice ideological purity for purely material gains, he thought, inevitably led to actions failing. He himself was not willing to make such a sacrifice; he refrained from adding that this position led to no action at all.

c) Relations with the Church.

Apart from Mounier's temperamental obsession with spiritual purity, there was another factor which contributed greatly to the apparent timidity of Esprit's political ideology. Since the brief alarm, already mentioned, of the French hierarchy's early probings, Esprit had been the

object of a campaign by the nationalist Right, which aimed at securing official disapproval of Esprit by Rome. One tactic was to equate Esprit with the openly pro-communist Terre nouvelle<sup>187</sup> in an attempt to discredit the more prudent position of Esprit. Despite his sympathy for many of their aims, Mounier was obliged on several occasions to draw a firm distinction between his own and the other review, and even had specifically to rebut the suggestion that he was less than whole-hearted in his adherence to the pope's ruling against catholic and communist collaboration.<sup>188</sup> At the same time, as will be seen, he had opposed Italian imperialism in Ethiopia, a fact which was used to exert pressure against him in Rome, and had tentatively supported the Spanish Republic against the catholic-backed rebels. His support for the Front populaire was the culmination of a succession of positions which set him on the left wing, and his enemies, mostly in the Action française circle, sought to demonstrate that he had distorted and betrayed the Church's teaching in this. At the end of May 1936, Mounier was shocked to receive a letter from Maritain which, in his own words, warned him:

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187. Terre nouvelle, organ of the Union des communistes spiritualistes, first published May 1935, bore the symbol of the hammer and sickle superimposed on the cross, and described itself as the 'mensuel des chrétiens révolutionnaires'. Its contributors, including Déléage, André Philip and Paul Ricoeur, advocated christian cooperation with the communists in making the revolution. It was first censured in February 1936 and put on the Index in July of the same year.

188. See Mounier's articles, 'Chrétiens dans la cité', Esprit, no.41, février 1936, p.797-800; 'Catholicisme et communisme', Esprit, no.43, avril 1936, p.90-91; 'Terre nouvelle', Esprit, no.45, juin 1936, p.452-453.

Des nouvelles de Rome par une source très sûre.  
La condamnation d'Esprit est donnée comme une chose  
à peu près décidée et imminente. Une campagne de  
dix-huit mois est sur le point d'aboutir.<sup>189</sup>

Mounier was stunned. The official condemnation of Esprit would effectively have wrecked all his work. It soon appeared, however, that the process was not so far advanced as had been feared at first. Maritain spent several days making representations to various members of the Church hierarchy, finally obtaining for Mounier an interview with the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris. In order to prepare this meeting, Mounier was advised to draw up a detailed report on Esprit, which he presented after Maritain had read and modified it.<sup>190</sup> Since Mounier was anxious to cover the whole of the review's work, this report is a useful succinct statement of his achievements and objectives, though certain aspects are emphasised more than usual, the better to win the Cardinal's sympathy.

Refusing to call Esprit a catholic review, he pointed out that most of the contributors were catholics with their

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189. Oeuvres, IV, p.582, in his notebook dated 30 May 1936. The entire episode is narrated in J. Petit, op.cit., p.146-152. Maritain's letter is reproduced there in full (p.146) dated 23 May 1936. The alarm lasted about a month. The impression that a campaign had been organised was accurate. Henri Massis claimed part of the responsibility for this and other campaigns. In an article published recently in Aspects de la France (30 April 1970) he said he had been in May 1935 to see Cardinal Pacelli (later Pope Pius XII), the Vatican's Secretary of State, about the affair. In addition, the Right regularly circulated the Cardinals of the Church with copies of Esprit and commentaries presenting it as a Bolshevik organ (see J. Petit, op.cit., p.146).

190. The substance of this report is reprinted in Oeuvres, IV, p.585-595.

inspiration deriving from the best catholic tradition, rather than from socialist or communist sources. At the same time they would not claim that christian doctrine necessarily entailed their chosen positions. The distinction between acting en chrétien and en tant que chrétien, though extremely fine, was, as always, stressed, and helped to protect him throughout his life from impending censure. With that reservation made clear, he added that Esprit was concerned to explore and confront the positions of non-believers which might differ widely from its own. He accepted that this was a perilous mission, but thought it vital: in any case, he said, the confrontation was not allowed to touch religious questions. He insisted he was not trying to establish a new orthodoxy but rather to provide a context for conversation and debate. This did not exclude, however, the definition of a series of general positions, which he proceeded to outline. These positions, he agreed, may be at variance with those of other catholics, but this was quite permissible, always provided they did not run counter to the Church's teaching. On the key problem of communism, Mounier explicitly rejected the suggestion that his attack on catholic complicity with the established disorder in any way gave communism more ammunition. On the contrary, he argued, it was only in so far as one admitted the valid parts of the communist critique that one could successfully combat its portion of error. But he

took great pains to deny any possible confusion between christianity and socialism or communism in his philosophy. He did not deny that he may have been guilty of some verbal excess, but excused himself on the grounds of his youth and the novelty of his position. So far there was nothing in his report that could not be gathered from an attentive reading of the review, but in the last and most interesting part of the report, Mounier examined Esprit's achievements and its future possibilities. First, he claimed, it had begun to compete with communism on its own ground. By constructing a series of effective techniques for social renewal without a rigid materialistic metaphysic, it had taken some of the force from the communist hold over the oppressed and seriously challenged the necessity for materialism. Second, he explained, Esprit had established links between catholics and non-believers such that the catholics had been brought out of their intellectual and political ghetto, and the non-believers had abandoned some of their suspicion and resistance to catholicism. Third, he claimed, Esprit, now established, was the only major review in the cultural field, dominated by catholics, most of the others being directed by communists. Finally, in view of the rise of the Left all over Europe at this time, he thought it essential that the Church should not be cut off from the progressive movements and particularly from the working class, but that it should be in a position to influence both those in power and their supporters in the

factories. This he thought Esprit could claim to promote.

He added a veiled warning:

Si demain cet espoir était brisé, un grand désarroi secouerait cette génération. En face de son oeuvre, inachevée, le pouvoir établi aurait beau jeu de déclarer qu'aucun mouvement social d'inspiration chrétienne ne peut mener à bien sa tâche. Et sa réaction risquerait d'être terrible. De tout notre coeur nous souhaitons que ces tristes conjonctions ne se produisent pas.<sup>191</sup>

Of the whole report only this last section was significantly new, and calls for comment. There can be little doubt that it contained some overstatement and wishful thinking. The broad terms in which Mounier described the impact of Esprit need clarification. It was read in a limited milieu<sup>192</sup> and certainly did not command an audience in the working class, but it was read by a number of trades union leaders - mostly catholics - and by some of the non-catholic intelligentsia. It could certainly claim to be one of the few

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191. Oeuvres, IV, p.595.

192. See above, section I.d. The social composition of Esprit's readership cannot be established with certainty, since none of the information required is available. The only sources are the published lists of subscribers and correspondants; but since only a few of them can be accurately situated in social terms, they can only give the vaguest of indications. These lists give the impression that the readership was predominantly made up of writers and journalists, teachers, doctors and priests, but this is, at least in part, because these categories are easy to identify (e.g. by title, address or familiarity of the name). Even allowing for other categories such as students, civil servants, lawyers and managerial staff who read it, there is no reason and no evidence to suppose that Esprit had any direct readership in the working class, though it might have had an indirect following through other papers which transmitted its contents or reported on its developments. On the evidence available, admittedly limited, Esprit's audience seems to have been the lower section of the catholic middle-class and a small minority of non-catholic intellectuals.

catholic-dominated reviews to be read at all outside catholic circles, and could also claim to aim at propagating a catholic-inspired social doctrine outside the Church. Its claim to propose a social doctrine which inherently challenged communism is more debateable.

Partly at least because it had not had time, Esprit had by no means established a powerful, effective or original alternative to Marxism, though it certainly intended to. There is little to add to Mounier's analysis of the link established between catholics and non-catholics. The review certainly fostered a more open attitude, but it is arguable that its effects were far more influential on catholics than on non-believers.<sup>193</sup> There can be little doubt that the condemnation of Esprit might have caused an upheaval among progressive catholics, comparable to the censure of the Sillon,<sup>194</sup> and would surely have placed considerable constraints on those who, like Mounier, were attempting to lead catholics out of their traditional right-wing political ghetto. How far Esprit, or any other catholic organ, was influential in government circles, or even in the various left-wing groupings, is difficult to

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193. The contributors to the review were much more ideologically diverse than its readers, and included most of the christian denominations and even some agnostics (e.g. P.-A. Touchard, G. Duveau, P.-L. Landsberg, F. Goguel). Thus the dialogue between believers and non-believers was largely one-way as far as the readership was concerned.

194. The Sillon, an early christian democratic movement led by Marc Sangnier, had a large, enthusiastic following, but was dissolved by pope Pius X in 1910. The movement lost its impetus but its members were influential in the later development of christian democracy. (See A. Dansette, Histoire religieuse..., p.649-666.)

assess,<sup>195</sup> but it is probably fairer to see its action as preparing the future time when catholics would wield effective influence on the Left in power.<sup>196</sup>

Armed with his report, Mounier had an audience with Cardinal Verdier, Archbishop of Paris, who had been briefed on Esprit by clerics sympathetic to it. The Cardinal declared that he was strongly opposed to disciplinary measures being applied to any French catholic group at that time, and that he understood the necessity of Esprit.<sup>197</sup> The friendly tone of the interview did much to reassure Mounier that his action was acceptable to the Church and he felt he had its blessing. At the same time, the incident once more reinforced Mounier's conviction that he must proceed with the greatest caution. Therefore, while Mounier rejoiced in the political and social renewal the Front populaire provided, while he printed enthusiastic articles by others and did what he could to encourage it in achieving its aims, he reserved his own comments on it in Esprit to statements of editorial position with the full range of reservations required by prudence, a role which was in complete harmony with his temperament.

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195. There is no evidence to suggest that Esprit had any influence on the government, which was dominated by three traditionally non-christian parties (communist, socialist, radical), but, as has been pointed out, the government had to take some account of catholic feeling, and Esprit was a convenient spokesman; also Esprit had links, however tenuous, with the small Jeune République and Front social groups.

196. See below, Chapter Five.

197. See J. Petit, op.cit., p.151, a letter from Mounier to Maritain dated 24 June 1936 narrated the interview. A slightly different description went into Mounier's notebook (Oeuvres, IV, p.595) on 26 June 1936, where he described the Cardinal as fraternal; he had used 'paternal' to Maritain. The other group under attack at the same time was the

d) The personalist manifesto.

In the October number of Esprit, Mounier published his weighty summum of all that it had come to represent. This 'Manifeste au service du personnalisme',<sup>198</sup> which summarised and reappraised all the positions which have been shown as emerging during the first four years of Esprit's existence, remained the point of reference governing all Mounier's future commitment. It will only be examined here in brief, particularly to point the distance which his thought had travelled over four years. The development of personalism as a philosophy will be studied in the next chapter, but personalism had by 1936 become synonymous with a political and cultural programme as well as a philosophical doctrine. Most of the detailed proposals had been elaborated through the collaboration of a large number of people working in study groups and action committees throughout France. Mounier and his colleagues directed and coordinated their reflexions, but the final result was a collective effort in which Esprit had laid down the basic principles and the active members of the Amis d'Esprit had worked out the detailed findings. The political ideology which emerged was therefore generated by a large group of people, who felt all the more committed to the conclusions because they had participated in reaching

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197. (cont. from page 167) ... christian democrat paper L'Aube.

198. E. Mounier, 'Manifeste au service du personnalisme', Esprit, no.49, octobre 1936, p.1-216. It was published later the same year in book form, with modifications, and is reprinted in its second form in Oeuvres, I, p.479-649.

them. This group in turn was intended to be an élite working in the community as a whole, bearing the same relation to the community as the review's editors bore to the Amis. When it is remembered that Mounier was firmly in control of the review's direction, it will be noticed that he had established an organisation hierarchically structured in the same way as the catholic church. Though the review's formal relationships were not made explicit, it is possible to draw a direct parallel between Mounier and the Pope, his team and the bishops, the Amis d'Esprit and the parish priests. This parallel should not be overstated, but it is not surprising that in trying to establish an ideology Mounier should reproduce the basic structures of the most effective ideological organisation he knew.

In the Manifeste Mounier wished to give a comprehensive account of personalism as it had become. He began by stating that the scope of his action was the transformation of the whole civilisation. Like Marxism, he saw the impending collapse of liberal and bourgeois capitalism. Unlike Marxism, he believed the spiritual and metaphysical aspects of a civilisation to be more crucial than the economic and social aspects. It was therefore at the spiritual that his ambition of remaking the Renaissance was directed. He examined in turn the three dominant conceptions of civilisation, the bourgeois individualist, the fascist and the Marxist, taking up in each case the critique already developed, then passed on to an exposition of the characteristics of a personalist civilisation. After a discussion of

the underlying philosophy, dealt with in the next chapter, he outlined the main lines of the personalist society. The substance of what followed was in effect a reiteration of the conclusions reached by the various study groups and frequently little more than a reworking of parts of the various special issues of Esprit which had dealt with most major questions.

On the vexed question of education, he called for a 'pluralist' system which would allow schools of all different creeds with a degree of centralised supervision to maintain standards. Within the schools, he argued, it should be accepted that the object of education was to foster the free and creative development of the child, the better to fulfil his vocation as a person. This may appear unremarkable, but the significance appears more clearly when set against the backcloth of the sectarian strife which had accompanied discussion of education in France since the first setting up of a secular Republic. The Third Republic had, since its earliest times, attempted to enforce a thorough-going secularisation of education. This had been bitterly opposed by the catholic church which felt education to be an intrinsic part of its apostolic mission. Both parties had been anxious to instill their ideologies into their pupils. Mounier had attempted by his 'pluralist' and child-centred conception of education to escape the state of conflict.

Turning to the problems of private life, a subject to which Mounier always attached great importance, he attacked the unreflecting mediocrity of bourgeois comfort, pleaded for the recognition of women as persons in their own right, and laid down recommendations for the renewal and enrichment of family life as a free community of persons. Seen in the context of the conservative and authoritarian conception of women and the family traditionally held by the Church, these considerations represented a considerable step towards liberation, though they now seem somewhat tame.

Next, Mounier denounced the stagnation and sterilisation of culture induced by the spread of bourgeois values, and while refusing to admit state control, advocated greater state patronage of the arts. He also reminded artists and intellectuals that they were by no means dispensed from observing the moral and social values which bound other men. These conclusions are particularly interesting, for they anticipate several aspects of the development of artistic and intellectual concern in France, particularly in the matters of state subsidy for art and the rise of popular and committed literature, which was not new, but which particularly marked Mounier's generation.

He saw economics as conditioning, though not determining, human activity. Its practical importance was out of all proportion to its position in the hierarchy of values, he thought, but was such that he devoted much space

to it. Condemning in some detail the complex mechanisms of modern technological capitalism, which alienate and depersonalise, he proposed a 'pluralist' economy in which profit was subordinated to production, production to consumption, and consumption to human needs. The details were not closely elaborated, since that would be futile, but the principles were firmly established, and in effect reversed the order of priorities prevailing in modern capitalism.

Partly deriving from this was his political position. Rejecting the centralised state, he outlined a 'pluralist' and decentralised democracy in which a skeleton state, with constituent powers firmly separated, would accurately represent the will of the people. Again, no firm details were provided, but Mounier suggested that there was much scope for invention within the bounds of his personalist principles, and pointed to the Proudhonist rather than the Marxist tradition as the current from which his state would take its inspiration.<sup>199</sup>

Finally, in the field of international affairs, Mounier condemned a narrow and aggressive nationalism at the

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199. Mounier's debt to Proudhon is difficult to locate. Certainly Mounier had by this time become familiar with his writings, in connexion with his own studies on anarchism and property. Proudhon, the nineteenth century anarchist socialist, had proposed a decentralised syndicalist state, and his influence on the French labour movement and French socialism was considerable, providing the main alternative current to Marxism. His best-known work, Qu'est-ce que la propriété?, held that property was theft, and that the present property-based social order was immoral and should be overturned by violent revolution if necessary. Mounier is reported as claiming to be a proudhonist at this period (Marcel Moré, 'Liminaire', Dieu vivant, no.16, 1950, p.7-15). Certainly his concept of the state was Proudhonist, as was his 'pluralism' generally.

same time as a weak-willed and unrealistic pacifism, but argued that France should strive to become a strong, independent nation without colonial or oppressive ambition, but one which would be able to assert and defend its right to live in peace and cooperation with demilitarised neighbours. Even less than the previous discussions was this section developed in detail. Mounier was not proposing a blueprint for foreign policy, but rather suggesting long-term objectives which ignored the short term measures necessitated by international expediency.

Each of these sections was the fruit of considerable meditation and discussion. Little of what he said there could be found explicitly in the first number of Esprit; experience and contact with other minds had considerably broadened his view. If 'Refaire la Renaissance' was a declaration of intent to change the world, the 'Manifeste' was a declaration of the main lines of that change, and as such analysed in each field both the structures of contemporary society and the structures of the ideal personalist society. The outstanding question remained how to progress from one to the other.

In part four of the book, Mounier broached the question of action once more. The first step, he said, was the purification of the revolutionaries and the establishment of their unconditional commitment to honesty, integrity and generosity. With this accomplished, he thought it would be possible to undertake revolutionary activity pro-

vided it was directed at finding new modes of action consonant with the emergence of a new personalist society. Only as a final resort, when every other means had been tried, did he think it permissible to consider the use of coercive violence, and then only under the strictest of conditions. One last question remained to be answered: who was going to carry out the personalist revolution? Sectarianism was excluded, but at the same time he accepted that the harsh realities had to be faced: there were few people capable of the appropriate dedication, and no success would be possible without the support of the working class. The problem as he saw it was to unite the true spiritual values, so long usurped by the bourgeois establishment, with the rich fund of values preserved intact by the working class, thereby waging a concerted struggle against the totalitarianism which threatened on either side.

The importance of the 'Manifeste' was that it offered a coherent and comprehensive statement of Esprit's position in a way that his Révolution personaliste et communautaire<sup>200</sup> failed to do. Much of the ambiguity of the earlier book was dispelled along with the unevenness inevitable in a composite work. But if his thought gained in clarity, it also lost credibility. As the title suggested, it was

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200. E. Mounier, La révolution personaliste et communautaire (Paris, 1935) was a collection of some of the more important of Mounier's articles published in the first two and a half years of Esprit. It is reprinted in Oeuvres, I; p.128-414.

intended to be a programme for the personalist offensive and was necessarily simplified and uncompromising. If this was the case, a literal interpretation would suggest that it was inadequate in being an abstract elaboration not remotely corresponding to practical reality. However, seen in the context of Mounier's own development, the precarious position he held, and the historical context, a more favourable judgment is possible. He had come a long way since the Autumn of 1932. The outlines for a new society were more concrete than he could then have envisaged, and his attitude to action, while adamant on basic principles, had developed a flexibility which allowed him to condone a greater range of commitments than he himself would ever be prepared to initiate. He clearly situated his own field of action as the 'fécondation organique d'une civilisation nouvelle par cellules discontinues'.<sup>201</sup> This implied that a small number of active and intelligent people must be formed, who by training and dedication would be able so to affect those around them that far-reaching movements of renewal would be set in motion.<sup>202</sup> It was an accurate description of the ambitions of Les Amis d'Esprit, and also a statement of Mounier's mission as the education of a spiritual and cultural élite to provide the initiative and inspiration for the personalist revolution. His

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201. Oeuvres, I, p.646.

202. The resemblance to the principles, though not the practice of Leninism is noticeable. Lenin recommended the formation of a small, effective group of dedicated revolutionaries. Mounier could see this at work in the operations of the communist party and may have drawn to some extent on their example, which in some respects confirmed the methods of the Church.

position was protected from censure by church authorities, since they could not ascribe to him responsibility for free and creative acts of his disciples which might in some cases exceed the limits laid down by orthodox doctrine. Finally, the 'Manifeste' must be placed in its historical context. In the autumn of 1936 the hopes placed in the new government were still green, and it would have been absurd to call for a revolution against a government established and still supported by a greater part of the popular forces. Many of its principles were in harmony with Mounier's and it was a permissible ambition to exercise, by the judicious infiltration of men and ideas, a certain influence over its policies, giving them a more personalist bias. He felt that the government was probably keeping itself informed of developments in catholic thinking, if only from electoral self-interest. If he could command even that limited attention, he thought that the quality of his review's work was high enough to exercise an influence by the power of the truth embodied in it. Successive numbers of Esprit reflected this attitude. Special studies laid down recommendations on trades unions, education, the law, popular culture and political and economic realism among others.<sup>203</sup> These were areas in which Mounier felt able to offer serious analyses which might be listened to.

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203. The main studies were:- Trades unions: July 1936; Education: September 1936, February 1937; Law: September 1936; Popular culture: November 1936; Political and economic realism: December 1936.

The decay of the Front populaire prevented any progressive influence Mounier might have had, as the left-wing coalition was gradually taken over by those interests Mounier was trying to attack. In addition, the political scene was increasingly dominated by the course of international events. Mounier could hardly hope to influence them, but he could try to modify their effects on French attitudes, and it was in this perspective that he addressed himself to the problems of international politics.

e) International Affairs.

Although it called itself a 'revue internationale',<sup>204</sup> Esprit did not pay close attention to foreign affairs during its early years. Its position consisted of denouncing the faults of the treaty of Versailles, suggesting the strengthening of the League of Nations, and lamenting the lack of adequate international response to the rise of Italian fascism and German national socialism. It had called for an end to colonisation and its consequences, exemplified in the war in Indo-China.<sup>205</sup> The first major international issue to attract Mounier's commitment was the Italian invasion of Abyssinia . From April to November 1935, he participated in the controversy which divided catholics first on

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204. This was the review's subtitle from the beginning.

205. These positions occur over a large number of articles, reviews, notes and letters by a wide variety of writers. They were implicit in the 'Manifeste' (see above, Chapter Two, II. d). It is impossible in the space to give a detailed account of all of Esprit's positions.

the ethics of expansion, and later on the interpretation of Pius XI's speech on the subject.<sup>206</sup> Placing himself firmly on the same side as the christian democrats, he condemned Italian imperialism and called for peace initiatives in France such as were being made by the English churches. But he was consistently reluctant to exacerbate the controversy, particularly on the delicate question of sanctions, and sought a solution which would be acceptable to all catholics, without retreating from his demands for justice and peace. He displayed in fact the same mixture of caution and boldness as elsewhere. Nowhere did he show it more, however, than in the most passionately argued international issue of these years: the Spanish Civil War.

The Spanish war, a unique and central issue in its own right, is also worth close scrutiny as a model of Mounier's handling of controversial questions, particularly in foreign affairs. Mounier himself had visited and acquired a deep affection for Spain, and one of his first international correspondants was José Maria de Semprun y Gurrea in Madrid.<sup>207</sup> From late 1933 Semprun contributed

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206. The pope spoke to an audience of catholic medical orderlies on 27 August 1935, condemning war in general, but also placing reservations on the right of expansion, and upholding the right to self-defence. See E. Mounier, 'L'opinion chrétienne et la guerre d'Ethiopie', *Esprit*, no.37, octobre 1935, p.136-138.

207. J.M. de Semprun y Gurrea, a catholic and teacher of law and political science at the University of Madrid, was one of Mounier's first foreign correspondants. On the outbreak of civil war in Spain he sided with the Republic and acted in an advisory capacity to the government.

periodical accounts of political and social developments, and in early 1936 commented on the February elections there, welcoming the overwhelming confidence of the people in the Republican Frente popular government headed by Azaña, but regretting the lack of spiritual leaders as a result of the heavy commitment of the catholic hierarchy to reactionary politics.<sup>208</sup> In May he answered rumours of civil war by defending the government, condemning the violence of the fascist leagues, and drawing attention to the partiality of the French press in reporting on Spain.<sup>209</sup> His position was throughout consistent with Mounier's, particularly in his attempt to separate the Church from the powers of capitalist exploitation, while working for the acceptance of spiritual values by the forces of renewal. The situation in Spain in 1936 was complex.<sup>210</sup> Briefly, the Left-wing Popular Front government, with the support of the communist- and anarchist-dominated labour movement,

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208. J.M. Semprun y Gurrea, 'Espagne, le drame électoral', Esprit, no.41, février 1936, p.839-843, & 'Après les élections en Espagne', Esprit, no.43, avril 1936, p.13-16.

209. J.M. Semprun y Guerra, 'La guerre civile en Espagne, ou l'organisation du mensonge', Esprit, no.44, mai 1936, p.280-282.

210. There are many studies of the Spanish Civil War. Particular use has been made of H. Thomas, The Spanish Civil War (London, 1961), and F. Borkenau, The Spanish Cockpit (London, 1937).

had taken power after legal elections, bringing to an end a long period of conservative, catholic-dominated government, often dictatorship. In its efforts to introduce radical reforms, including widespread nationalisation of land and industry, the government had met bitter opposition from the property-owners, supported by the catholic church. Right-wing para-military leagues were formed modelled on Italian and German fascism. The violence ensuing escalated until a group of catholic generals led a rebellion against the government. These were the nationalists, among whom General Franco emerged as the leader, supported not only by the Church but by Italian and German military aid. For three years the war was fought with a proliferation of brutalities on both sides until eventually the nationalists won. In France catholics were invited to see Franco's action as a holy war, encouraged by stories of Republican violence against churches and priests; whereas the Left generally urged that active support be given to the Republic, and many Frenchmen left to fight for it in the international brigades.

In October 1936, Mounier wrote an editorial on the subject.<sup>211</sup> In the absence of any eye-witness accounts from Spain, he recalled a meeting some three weeks previously with José Bergamin<sup>212</sup> who had explained at length how

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211. E. Mounier, 'Espagne, signe de contradiction', Esprit, no.49, Octobre 1936, p.1-3.

212. José Bergamin, Spanish catholic theologian, whom Mounier described as 'le Maritain espagnol', refused to associate himself with the commitment of his Church to defend the fascist pro-Franco forces against the Republican government.

the Republican cause was at least compatible with the Church's teaching. Mounier mentioned Semprun's similar commitment and described the two men as 'placés entre deux murs de haine',<sup>213</sup> on the one side the rebels with nothing to recommend them but the official support of the Church in Spain, on the other side the government with everything to recommend it but its anticlericalism. Taking no pains to hide the unsavoury part played by the clergy, as described by Bergamin, he acknowledged the terrible dilemma for a catholic and concluded by commenting on Bergamin's choice:

Ceux mêmes qui ne le suivraient pas dans cette assurance s'inclineront devant le courage et la grandeur douloureuse de son choix.<sup>214</sup>

Non-committal though this judgement may sound, Mounier made clear his lack of sympathy for the nationalists, and if he tended to support abstention it was nonetheless apparent which side he would support if compelled to decide. Even this mild-seeming attitude was enough to provoke the indignation of his former teacher Jacques Chevalier, and Mounier was obliged to defend himself, claiming, 'nous penchons tous, aujourd'hui, vers la double abstention', but also condemning 'ces "saints" qui ont osé déclencher une guerre aussi épouvantable dont aucun motif ne pouvait justifier l'horreur'.<sup>215</sup> In the months that followed, while proclaiming neutrality, he printed a number of articles from Spanish sources, particularly from Semprun and

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213. E. Mounier, 'Espagne, signe de contradiction', p.2.

214. Ibid., p.3.

215. Oeuvres, IV, p.597-598, in a letter dated 24 October 1936.

like-minded catholics. He made it clear that he regarded them as courageous and honest witnesses, but was at all times careful to dissociate himself from any suggestion of being bound by their final commitment.<sup>216</sup> This attitude was dictated by intellectual integrity: an honest and intelligent case could conceivably be made for the other side; and by prudence: he could not be certain what position the Church would allow him without considering censure.

In view of the overwhelming support of French catholics for Franco, Mounier's attitude must be regarded as courageous, if cautious. At a time when public opinion was being inflamed by the appearance in the press of exaggerated stories and lurid photographs suggesting devastating atrocities committed gratuitously against churches, priests and catholics by the government, Mounier insisted on presenting the positive aspects of the Republic's achievement and the series of atrocities committed by the rebels.<sup>217</sup> He firmly rebutted the widespread appeal to consider Franco as a crusader fighting a holy war, and constantly reaffirmed his sympathy for the Spanish working class, the Republican basque priests and such gestures as Unamuno's opposition to Franco.<sup>218</sup> In this, he was in a minority among

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216. See E. Mounier, 'Terre libre', Esprit, no.50, novembre 1936, p.286-290.

217. See E; Mounier, 'Review of F. Gay, "Dans les flammes et dans le sang"', Esprit, no.51, décembre 1936, p.529-532.

218. See the collection of articles and documents printed in Esprit, no.52, janvier, 1937, p.593-625.

catholics.<sup>219</sup> The christian democrats were critical of Franco but even less fond of the Republicans, with the result that they tended to take a firmly abstentionist line, which was as near as most catholics came to Mounier's position. Even Mauriac, despite his much-repeated attacks on Franco and the holy war, and Bernanos, despite his denunciation of nationalist atrocities, had little sympathy for the government forces. In this state of isolation it is therefore not surprising that Mounier avoided committing himself to Republicanism, but he did nothing to suppress the pro-Republican views of many of his colleagues.

On 26 April 1937, German aircraft fighting for the nationalists bombed and strafed the basque town of Guernica, systematically destroying it and massacring its inhabitants. More than any other event, this atrocity mobilised international indignation. Mounier felt able for once to give vent to his anger and roundly denounced Franco. There was no longer any question of political option, he argued, the massacre was to be condemned on moral grounds.<sup>220</sup> For the June edition of Esprit, he wrote a detailed account of the reporting of the bombing, revealing the system of lies and contradictions with which the nationalists and the

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219. For detailed accounts of catholic reactions, see: R.W. Rauch, Politics and belief, p.185-193; R. Rémond, Les catholiques, le communisme et les crises, p.175-211; L: Bodin & J. Touchard, Front populaire, p.170-185; A. Coutrot, Sept (Paris, 1961), p.195-217; G. Bernanos, Les grands cimetières sous la lune (Paris, 1938), passim.

220. E. Mounier, 'Guernica', Esprit, no.56, mai 1937, p.37.

press favourable to them had attempted to deny their responsibility, and establishing as far as possible the truth of the matter.<sup>221</sup> This was the kind of exercise which most suited Mounier, for it concerned the denunciation of lies and the reinstatement of truth, as a result of which certain moral and political positions were rendered untenable: in this case, support for Franco as a crusader was thoroughly discredited. So moved was he by Guernica that he agreed to sit on a commission of enquiry into the bombing and on a committee for civil and religious peace in Spain, which also included Mauriac and Maritain. It seems unlikely, however, that either body had more than a protest value, since neither produced any tangible result.

As a result of its attitudes to the Spanish conflict, Esprit was now coming under heavy criticism from the catholic press, particularly the Echo de Paris, which still nursed a grievance from the Castelnau affair, and Action française, under the aegis of Massis. As a result, Mounier had to defend Semprun against scurrilous personal attacks,<sup>222</sup> but most serious was the recurrent charge of encouraging communism, the criticism most often levelled against him, and the one he was always most anxious to refute.<sup>223</sup> In a

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221. E. Mounier, 'Guernica, ou la technique du mensonge', Esprit, no.57, juin 1937, p.449-473.

222. See the note written by Mounier in Esprit, no.57, juin 1937, p.512.

223. The need to be dissociated from communism became even more urgent at this period with the publication on 28 March 1937 of a papal encyclical Divini Redemptoris which reiterated in stronger terms than before the Church's position that communism was intrinsically wrong and that catholics should not under any circumstances cooperate with it.

letter to Chevalier he protested that 'Esprit serait le premier, en Espagne comme ailleurs, à lutter contre une menace communiste'.<sup>224</sup> It was entirely consistent with his continual assertions, and was well demonstrated in his comment on two letters about the divisions within the Republican camp, printed in Esprit:

[Esprit] ne peut pas plus souhaiter la victoire, dans la République espagnole, de l'extrémisme anarchiste que de l'extrémisme communiste.<sup>225</sup>

He went even further, pointing out that he had no confidence in Russian communism, and more specifically, was as radically opposed to Stalinism, which he called 'communist fascism', as he was to Franco's brand of fascism.<sup>226</sup> Perhaps the most thorough and revealing exposé of Esprit's position is Semprun's 'Lettre ouverte à Emmanuel Mounier'<sup>227</sup> and Mounier's reply,<sup>228</sup> both published in the same number. Semprun's letter was an appeal for a sharper awareness and for firm support on the part of Esprit, and, by extension, by French catholics, in the Republic's struggle for survival against the combined force of Franco, Hitler and Mussolini. He left the question of concrete action open,

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224. Oeuvres, IV, p.605, letter dated 26 May 1937.

225. E. Mounier, 'Chronique internationale', Esprit, no. 57, juin 1937, p.503.

226. E. Mounier, 'Contre tous les fascismes', Esprit, no. 58, juillet 1937, p.649-650.

227. J.M. Semprun y Gurrea, 'Lettre ouverte à Emmanuel Mounier', Esprit, no.68, mai 1938, p.235-243.

228. E. Mounier, 'Réponse à Semprun', Esprit, no.68, mai 1938, p.245-251, reprinted in Oeuvres, IV, p.31-39.

but implicitly suggested that pressure be exerted for French intervention on behalf of the legal government. Mounier's highly nuanced reply repeated Esprit's established position, but added:

Nous restons, nous, dans un pays dont la fissure fatale n'a pas encore tranché le destin, qui dans sa majorité repousse encore et la dictature de classe et la dictature d'Etat. Nulle part nos options ne rencontrent l'obstacle du sang versé - ou son respect. Un chemin nous est ouvert - qui vous est fermé.<sup>229</sup>

The force of this was to remind Semprun of the passion and polemic which Spain aroused among French Catholics, and of his duty, so long as there was in France no irreparable division in the Church or state, not to cut himself off from one part of his country or his religion, particularly with the spectre of civil war as a consequence of such an action. This duty seemed to him all the more urgent since, by the inevitable impurity of action, Semprun's position entailed more acceptance of communism and other undesirable elements than Mounier could willingly admit. Mounier admitted that his attitude was for the few:

Certains d'entre nous ont choisi, par une vocation strictement individuelle, qui n'est pas plus généralisable, par exemple, que la vocation monastique, de ne servir aucun parti, mais en tous lieux, comme une sorte de corps franc, la vérité et la justice.<sup>230</sup>

In other words, as long as there was a fence, he personally would sit on it, the better to judge with clarity and jus-

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229. Oeuvres, IV, p.36.

230. Ibid., p.38.

tice, but he accepted that for the majority it was necessary to come down on one side or the other, and his conclusion made it clear that, on this basis, Semprun had his support. The letter is a fine example of Mounier's subtlety, the despair of less patient readers, but indispensable in the context of the many-fronted action he was undertaking. It is hard to fault his scrupulous fairness on a literal level, but the informed reader could not fail to see a clear-cut choice being made. Despite the many reservations it advanced, the effect of the reply was to endorse Semprun, while avoiding the risk of conflict with the Church.

This exchange was the culmination of Esprit's attitude to Spain, and henceforth the position did not vary. The summer of 1938 brought more immediate problems to France, and the Spanish war dropped from the foreground. Before leaving it, however, there are four conclusions to be drawn from the preceding examination. First, the Spanish Civil War was the central international affair of this period, though not the only one, and as such served as an important yardstick for situating any writer or movement in the increasing political polarisation which was imposing itself on France. While he deplored the polarisation and constantly affirmed his adherence to values beyond politics, Mounier nonetheless firmly placed himself on the side of the working class and the non-communist, though not anti-

communist Left. Second, his attitude to Spain provides a pattern for his approach to every other major issue, in that he constantly surrounded his commitment with a full range of reservations which brought it to the point of being compatible with the teaching of the Church. This also renders his writing difficult to approach through a straightforward reading. He had always seen his task as the elucidation of truth in all its complexity, thus automatically excluding a simple stance most of the time. But equally he appreciated that for most purposes, and certainly for the purposes of action, a simpler position was vital. To this end he was always careful to indicate what the lines of such a position were. Third, his own written thought has always to be taken in the context of other expressed positions either within or outside of Esprit. With outsiders, he was usually concerned to redress the balance, tending to emphasise what they omitted. Because of this he sometimes seemed to be in contradiction with himself, whereas his statements were only one half of a dialogue. On the other hand, his use of contributors to Esprit was so conceived as to permit things to be said which he could not himself formulate as director. This resulted in his own statements often appearing far more cautious in isolation than the impression given by the review as a whole. Finally, by taking a position on Spain

which ran counter to the overwhelming tendency of French catholics, Mounier was relying on the ideological influence, or moral authority, which Esprit had established for itself on other grounds. He was not tapping any substantial body of opinion among catholics, but rather adopting an avant-garde position in the attempt to introduce new attitudes into his readership. This was his work of education at its clearest, as he fought to stem the most regrettable effects of an international crisis on the attitudes of catholics. It was a stand which required considerable courage, particularly if there had been any foundation in the widespread fear that the war might spread to France. It is debatable whether Mounier had much success in his efforts in these two or three years, but, though he could not yet know it, it was ideologically important after the Liberation to have been identified as a pro-Republican however many reservations such a designation may conceal.

f) Conclusion.

By the summer of 1938, Mounier had already fulfilled many of the tasks he was beginning to work on in the spring of 1931. On a personal level, he had established himself in the catholic intellectual élite as the leading figure of a respected journal, and as a serious spokesman for those catholics who were open to the political Left.

Although Mounier's own efforts and qualities were responsible for a great deal, his early steps were safely completed thanks to an effective grooming and decisive interventions by Jacques Maritain. Maritain was now no longer his only protector. The two alarms with the catholic hierarchy demonstrated clearly that he could rely on powerful clerical support within the Church, as well as the wide network of lay friends he had built up.

On an ideological level, Mounier had created a medium, Esprit, with a stable and receptive audience, a coherent body of doctrine and a record of outspokenness and integrity. Esprit was an impressive intellectual achievement, but its audience was more limited than its content implied. The influence of the review was mainly felt in middle-class catholic homes and among a small circle of non-catholic intellectuals. Its commitment to action by a dedicated élite took account of this, but on the level of action the élite had proved surprisingly sterile. Its commitment to reflection also took account of its audience, but in the field of political ideology, Esprit found itself parasitic on the practically-oriented ideologies which were being developed independently of it by the main parties of the Front populaire. Its own doctrine was abstract and its detailed political programme irrelevant in the absence of anyone to carry it out. Whereas its political analyses, its special studies and its sometimes courageous state-

ments of principle were generally respected, the fact remained that it was still only interpreting the world, not changing it. The extent to which Mounier had become aware of the need for political and social action was clearly expressed in his report to the July 1938 conference of Esprit at Jouy-en-Josas.<sup>231</sup> In it he abandoned his earlier taste for apolitism and non-conformism, considering that the need was now for concrete and constructive political action.

Il ne s'agit donc pas de relâcher notre réflexion doctrinale. Mais regardons donc à notre influence. Ce sont des actes, comme telle polémique avec le Général de Castelnau, tel reportage colonial, nos prises de position sur l'Espagne qui l'ont assurée au moins autant que nos meilleures études doctrinales.<sup>232</sup>

In this observation, he put his finger on the paradox of his position. He had at first tended to regard politics as a necessary evil, subordinate to the elucidation and promotion of spiritual values. Gradually, however, he had been compelled to recognise the full implications of his determination to influence people and events. This did not mean that a firmly worked out guiding doctrine was rejected, but that he realised it had to be constantly expressed, and if necessary, modified, in action. He recognised that the easy moralism which led to a vague and universal benevolence was a constantly lurking danger which had to be rejected in favour of a firm and virile commitment. In practical terms Mounier felt that Esprit had some influence among

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231. E. Mounier, 'Esprit et l'action politique', Esprit, no.73, octobre 1938, p.34-64.

232. Ibid., p.44.

socialists and christian democrats and in the Front populaire as a whole, but while he thought that it should be exploited, he found it ultimately inadequate because of the imperfections inherent in these organisations. What he foresaw was a series of political flying columns with the immediate object of forming militants and undertaking specific action on important issues. Mounier had come a considerable way from the Amis d'Esprit discussion groups, and there was a sense of urgency about his proposals which only serious pressure from events could produce.

Since the spring Anschluss on Austria, the international situation had rapidly deteriorated. By the early summer of 1938 it was clear that the emergency situation over Czechoslovakia could easily lead to a major European conflict. Esprit was entirely sympathetic to the plight of the Czechoslovakian people and strongly opposed the injustice which was being prepared. The Munich agreement and its aftermath was a turning point for Europe, and Mounier's reaction to it marked a decisive turning point in the development of the review. Munich was a culmination and a beginning; henceforth the question of war and peace dominated everything.

C H A P T E R T H R E E

THE THEORY OF PERSONALISM (1931-1938)

I. TOWARDS A PERSONALIST SYNTHESIS:

- a) A spiritual humanism
- b) From spiritualism to personalism
- c) Communitarian personalism
- d) The uses of personalism

II. PERSONALISM IN OPERATION:

- a) Property
- b) Anarchism
- c) Conclusion

C H A P T E R   T H R E E

THE THEORY OF PERSONALISM (1931-1938)

I. TOWARDS A PERSONALIST SYNTHESIS.

a) A spiritualist humanism.

The economic crisis of the early 1930's sharpened the need for French intellectuals to produce a serious conceptual framework for understanding their times. The old middle-class secular ideologies of liberal individualism were being found inadequate to deal with urgent social problems. Positivist and rationalist methods were incapable of analysing the movements, changes and conflicts of which even intellectuals were becoming increasingly aware. The major alternative secular ideology was an aggressive Marxism which brought new concepts and methods of analysis but was politically revolutionary and socially working-class. The old religious ideology of the catholic church was also under pressure.<sup>1</sup> It had already virtually lost the urban working class to Marxism. An increasing proportion of its members belonged to the middle-classes and were strongly influenced by the liberal individualism there. If the Church was to retain its strength it had to speak to the

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1. The best account of French catholicism during this period is A. Dansette, Destin du catholicisme français 1926-1956 (Paris, 1957), from which much of this analysis is drawn.

working-class, rural and urban, it had to purge itself of the contamination from decaying middle-class ideologies, and it had to address itself to the acute social problems, offering a plausible analysis and general guidelines helpful to all classes.

In his encyclical Quadragesimo anno<sup>2</sup> of May 1931, pope Pius XI restated the Church's rejection of individualism as well as of collectivism. He spoke on issues such as the nature of property relations, the relations between capital and labour, trades unions and the role of the state in social and economic affairs. In each case he tried to make constructive suggestions based on the Church's traditional understanding of the nature of man in society, but also taking into account the extremes of social inequality and injustice which existed in modern societies. As a practical plan, the pope's suggestions were generally ignored; but for catholics of Mounier's generation the encyclical had the effect of asserting the relevance of the Church's social doctrine and of impelling them to reexamine its theoretical foundations.

As a result of this reexamination, Mounier attempted to express the Church's teaching in a new and relevant form that would be attractive and accessible to as wide an

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2. The encyclical, published on 15 May 1931, was heavily based on Leo XIII's encyclical Rerum novarum (15 March 1891). It is reprinted in extracts in A. Freemantle, The Social Teachings of the Church (New York, 1963), p.80-88.

audience as possible, including non-catholics. His project for a review allowed him scope to do this by formulating a conceptual framework in harmony with catholic doctrine but not specifically limited to catholics. The Church's social doctrine was based on a view of man's essential nature;<sup>3</sup> it held that society was made for man and that man was made by God in His own image. It therefore proposed a normative account of man and sought to elaborate the social structures and relationships which would best suit him. Mounier followed the Church's method, basing himself largely on its teaching, with which he was well acquainted, and set himself to elaborate a vision of man, on which to found his social and political theory.

Mounier published the first comprehensive statement of his view of man in the first issue of Esprit as the second part of his article 'Refaire la Renaissance'.<sup>4</sup> His exposition fell into three parts, corresponding to the three essential dimensions of man, material, social and spiritual. He presented man as essentially spiritual, and related to these three dimensions by a spiritual link. Analysing man's relationship with the material world, Mounier felt that medieval christianity had established an

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3. See J.Y. Calvez & J. Perrin, The Church and Social Justice (Chicago, 1961). This is a detailed study by two Jesuits of the social teaching of the popes from Leo XIII to Pius XII. A whole section (Chapter 5, p.101-132) is devoted to the person and society, describing the person as the starting point of the Church's social thought. The book was first published in French as Eglise et la Société économique (Paris, 1959). Although it is quite possible that it reflects something of Mounier's influence, the analysis is based entirely on papal declarations and is here taken as a reliable account of catholic doctrine.

4. E. Mounier, 'Refaire la Renaissance', Esprit, no.1, octobre 1932, p.5-51, reprinted in Oeuvres, I, p.137-174.

intimate link between man and nature, which was shattered during Descartes' lifetime and replaced by a new dualism which encouraged man to regard Nature as an inert and foreign object. Man was then able to manipulate Nature, quantifying it for his own convenience at the expense of denying its essential reality, Mounier argued, and culminating in the invention of money, which was quantity in its purest and most destructive form. The solution, he suggested, was to reaffirm the spirituality of matter, thereby giving the world a soul and a solidity which permitted man to have a genuine and valuable relationship with it.

Examining the social dimension of man, Mounier denounced both individualism and collectivism as half-truths, and stressed that to deny either half of the truth was pernicious, but that the two dominant world-views had done so. The Renaissance, he argued, saw the birth of the individual as the central metaphysical value, cut off from everything, aggressive and entirely self-regarding. This brand of humanism, he went on, now dominated the western world, and had provided the excuse for brutality and oppression by invoking the values of liberalism. The contractual relationship and the politics of laissez-faire legitimised and facilitated the tyranny of the strong, he said, and liberty and toleration were dangerous unless tempered by discipline and justice. More briefly he examined the rise of collectivism since the mid-nineteenth century, with its culmination

in the Marxist subordination of the individual to society, and declared that he would defend the human person against its assimilation into a communist state machine but would not fall into the opposite error of defending liberal individualism.

Working towards a definition which avoided both excesses, Mounier offered the principle that 'on ne possède que ce qu'on donne',<sup>5</sup> and erected generosity into a mode of perception and existence. Man as a free and creative agent, he argued, was vitiated unless his freedom and creativity were directed outwards, so that in a movement of giving he became consistent with, and aware of, his own true nature. Man's interior self was intended as 'un foyer de commencements, une première pente vers le monde',<sup>6</sup> he suggested, and at the other end, his public self was intended as a necessary, but freely chosen and wholehearted participation in the world. Only if both poles of this interplay were full and free did he think a man could be his true self.

Because of his intention to reach a wide audience, the assumptions and implications of his analysis were not all clearly stated; the social and communitarian reality to which the generosity was orientated was left unelaborated, and the existence of a prior model, to which the self ought to conform, was taken for granted. He did, however, draw

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5. Oeuvres, I, p.162.

6. Ibid.

certain provisional conclusions, suggesting that an obligation of contemplation and self-purification was coupled with one of social action and work, that one should also cultivate an openness to other people, particularly strangers, a fresh, youthful vitality, and a liberating spiritual and material poverty.

The third dimension which Mounier attributed to man was spiritual. He dissociated himself from the Idealist tradition which sought to reduce everything to spirit in a comfortable homogeneity. Such a view, he argued, fell into the error of immanence without transcendence and could even be termed materialist in so far as, failing to allow any form of disjuncture within the spiritual world, it eliminated the necessary principle of individuation. Since there could only be contact between distinct beings, he thought it essential to introduce a principle of spiritual distance to establish the possibility of communion without confusion. The basic experience which expressed this principle was the rencontre, he said, where two distinct beings perceived the real presence of each other and came together in a spiritual union without losing their individuality.

This description enclosed both a metaphysic and a theory of knowledge. The metaphysical spiritualism was fundamental to Mounier's thought, but always taken for granted, without any coherent attempt to establish an

ontology. His ontological assumptions were not rendered explicit and it is therefore not possible to ascribe a precise content to his concept of the spirit. The lack of precision allowed him to avoid lengthy scholastic debate, but with the later accretion of new analyses to his thought it also left him vulnerable to the accumulation of implicit contradictions. In Mounier's epistemology, the knower and the known were defined neither as separate entities nor as one indissoluble reality, but as being both distinct and united participants in a spiritual universe. The terms, while unclear, had the advantage of laying the groundwork for the introduction of a more dialectical account of the human person; at the same time they encouraged the development of a phenomenological view of perception not always compatible with the implicit metaphysic on to which Mounier grafted it. Closely linked to Mounier's spiritualism was a determination to foster a sense of mystery in the world and a responsiveness to the solicitation of events. He saw the sense of mystery as an awareness of the infinite complexity and the ultimate spirituality of the universe. Not to be confused with pseudo-mysticism, a taste for the occult, obscurity, or mere bewilderment, it did not exclude clarity of thought, he insisted, since true mysteries were in no danger however closely scrutinised, and in that respect resembled poetry. The responsiveness to events also reposed on a belief in the ultimate spirituality of every-

thing that happens. For Mounier, events were nodal occurrences where the universe outside the self most closely interacted with the self. There were many ways of dealing with them, he said, but given their spirituality, they should be regarded as a form of communication and discipline from the spiritual world.

Suggestive though Mounier's analyses were, they were clearly unsatisfactory as an independent philosophy. To be taken seriously his argument must be put in its precise context. By omitting all reference to christian doctrine, and even the name God, he seemed to discourage the connection with any specific religion, but his thought was comprehensible only in the context of his adherence to a pre-existing and familiar framework of belief. There was no sense of discovery or redefinition, there was merely the reaffirmation of a set of assumptions implicit throughout. The final paragraphs spoke of l'esprit in such a way as to leave no room for doubt as to the basis of his thought: he was talking about God, whose functions and qualities were merely subsumed under the name 'spirit'.<sup>7</sup> There were two main reasons why Mounier should omit any reference to God and to his own religious commitment. First, he was

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7. This is not meant to deny the thread of Bergsonism which ran through his exposition, modifying its expression. But while Bergson sought to establish the reality of the 'spirit' independently from religious doctrine and was led to catholicism by his search, Mounier received his Bergsonism, as has been shown, in a specifically catholic context, where it was always understood that the answer Bergson sought was contained in the teaching of the Church.

conscious of writing, not so much to represent his own beliefs in detail, as to lay down a more general doctrine for the review, into which his own catholic views fitted, but which did not exclude the assent of non-catholics or non-christians with a spiritual view of the world. Hence, all specifically catholic dogma was set aside and the remaining philosophical positions, though clearly intended to be compatible with it, Mounier hoped would be acceptable as a basis of common agreement. This was intended to appeal primarily to christians of other denominations, but was also aimed at agnostics provided they were still intellectually close to christianity. Second, Mounier was aware that a non-confessional stance would allow greater liberty of thought to his contributors, where an explicit affiliation to catholicism might lead to embarrassing interventions from the Church hierarchy, or at least oblige him to pay excessive attention to the orthodoxy of opinions expressed. The wisdom of this was clearly demonstrated in his relations with the catholic hierarchy.<sup>8</sup> In any case, it is unlikely that his readers were perturbed to any great extent by the absence of specific reference to catholicism; they were predominantly catholics, who shared Mounier's frame of reference, and they generally assumed that Esprit was, in an important sense, a catholic review.

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8. See Chapter Two, II; c.

Mounier's account of man was certainly not new; his tripartite classification of man was traditional, going as far back as St. Augustine;<sup>9</sup> his specific statements in each of the three categories were taken from the fund of research he had acquired during his intellectual apprenticeship, and all of them fell within a strictly catholic context. What his imprecision achieved was to open up an initially catholic exposition to a fertilisation from other currents of thought which were also grappling with the problem of formulating a new philosophy of man.<sup>10</sup>

b) From spiritualism to personalism.

The view of man presented in 'Refaire la Renaissance' was spiritual in essence, but its focus was man, the free, creative agent at the intersection of the material, the

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9. Cf. H. de Lubac, Catholicisme, 2nd edition (Paris, 1941), p.9-12. Augustine spoke of original sin as cutting man off from himself, God and his fellow men. The categories are not precisely as Mounier had them in 1932, but they had been variously developed since Augustine's time. The three-persons-in-one of the Trinity also provided a model for Mounier's development of this classification.

10. Mounier admitted this himself a dozen years later when he said of the article: "On s'aperçoit que finalement tout y était. Et pourtant rien n'y était. Et cette forme est commune aux choses vivantes: nous devons au début laisser une certaine imprécision. Je crois que c'est grâce à cela que nous pouvons nous développer". The assessment, made in a talk given in 1944, which was published as E. Mounier, 'Les cinq étapes d'Esprit', Dieu vivant, no.16, 1950, p. 37-53, can be found under the same title in Bulletin des Amis d'E. Mounier, no.29, March 1967, p.9.

human and the divine manifestations of the spirit. In catholic terminology this agent was usually referred to as the human person. Mounier was aware of the resonance of la personne as a technical term and used it sparingly in the article, mostly employing it as a preferable alternative to l'individu, which was too reminiscent of the individualism he was anxious to reject. He particularly used it in the discussion of man's social dimension, where the nature and position of the individual man in relation to the group was sufficiently contentious to make him choose his terms carefully. But he had not yet adopted the person as the central concept of his philosophy. Nor was there any indication that he intended to do so. The use of the term 'person' in a technical sense dated back to the early Church fathers. It was in part through the revival of interest in St. Thomas Aquinas that the person became a focal point of discussion in France during the 1920's and 1930's. In his discussion of the persons of the Trinity, Aquinas took up Boethius' definition of the person as an individual substance of rational nature.<sup>11</sup> Maritain developed this, opposing the person, characterised by reason and wholeness, to the individual, characterised by matter and incompleteness. As early as 1925, in a study on Luther, he argued that the individual, but not the person, was subordinate to society:

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11. Summa Theologica (London, 1921), vol.2, p.25, Ia, q. 29, a.1, Aquinas defined the person as 'substantia individualis rationalis naturae'.

C'est la cité humaine qui est ordonnée aux intérêts éternels de la personne et à son bien propre... toute personne humaine est ordonnée directement à Dieu comme à son fin ultime.<sup>12</sup>

Although Maritain's interpretation was debatable,<sup>13</sup> he was influential in establishing a distinction between the person and the individual which within ten years became a well-worn commonplace. In Maritain's view, the individual, man considered in his material aspect, was at the service of the community, which was in turn at the service of the person, man considered in his spiritual aspect, who was in turn at the service of God. For this reason, he could argue that his vision of society was 'aussi fondamentalement anti-individualiste que fondamentalement personnaliste'.<sup>14</sup> A closer definition of the person was difficult, he explained, since it was the most perfect thing in nature,<sup>15</sup> but it was possible to say of it that it had God at its centre. Only saints could be fully persons, he said, and they have understood that 'Dieu devait leur devenir un autre moi plus intime qu'eux-mêmes'.<sup>16</sup> The person

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12. J. Maritain, Trois réformateurs (Paris, 1925), p.31.

13. Maritain's interpretation has been contested at length both by J. Croteau, Les fondements du personnalisme de Maritain (Ottawa, 1955), and by P. Descoqs, 'Individu et personne', Archives de Philosophie, vol.XIV, cahier II, 1938, p.1-58.

14. J. Maritain, Trois réformateurs, p.32.

15. He quoted Aquinas (Summa theologiae, Ia, q.29, a.3.) as saying 'persona significat id quod est perfectissimum in tota natura'.

16. J. Maritain, Trois réformateurs, p.36.

therefore appeared as approximately equivalent to what might be called the spiritual dimension of man, though it was understood that it was inseparable from the material dimension. At the same time it was a goal of human aspiration, the embodied form of perfection. Etienne Gilson, another Thomist, remarked:

Comment la personnalité ne serait-elle pas la marque propre de l'être en son plus haut point de perfection, dans une philosophie chrétienne où tout est suspendu à l'acte créateur d'un Dieu personnel?<sup>17</sup>

Both the metaphysical and the moral implications of the concept of the person were thus established elements of catholic, and specifically, neo-Thomist thought before Mounier began to form his own thought. It has been shown how he had come across the notion in the course of his studies on the Spanish mystics. The influence of Maritain made him even more aware of its importance; he had certainly read the Trois réformateurs<sup>18</sup> and was familiar with much of the material included in Les degrés du savoir,<sup>19</sup> where the person was defined at greater length.

Une personne est un centre de liberté, fait face aux choses, à l'univers, à Dieu, dialogue avec une autre personne, communique avec elle selon l'intelligence et l'affection. La notion de personnalité, si complexe qu'elle soit, est avant tout d'ordre ontologique. C'est une perfection métaphysique et substantielle qui s'épanouit dans l'ordre opératif en valeurs psychologiques et morales.<sup>20</sup>

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17. E. Gilson, L'esprit de la philosophie médiévale (Paris, 1932), p.195. Personnalité is to be understood in this context as the state of being a person.

18. Mounier quoted the Trois réformateurs in his thesis on Descartes.

19. J. Maritain, Les degrés du savoir (Paris, 1932),

20. Ibid., p.457-8.

This statement not only contained much of the argument of 'Refaire la Renaissance', but also indicated the lines of its future development. Although he did not set out a triple categorisation, Maritain effectively covered the same ground. More important, however, was his explanation of the category of philosophical discourse to which the person belongs: primarily a metaphysical reality, the person was for him the source of moral and psychological values. In Maritain's own thought, the establishment of a metaphysical foundation predominated. Mounier tended to take it much more for granted, and explore the moral and psychological consequences.

At the same time as Maritain and Gilson were developing a neo-Thomist account of the person, the concept was receiving attention in other quarters. The most lucid representatives of the non-Thomist personalism in France at this time were the members of the movement Ordre nouveau, and in particular their leading theorist Arnaud Dandieu.<sup>21</sup> Dandieu drew his personalism from many sources, and while taking much from Bergson, allied a Nietzschean individualism with a deep-rooted Proudhonian socialism.<sup>22</sup> Mounier, introduced to him in October 1932, instinctively disliked him and his personalism, which denied the subordination of

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21. See Chapter 2, I.a.

22. See J.-L. Loubet del Bayle, Les non-conformistes des années 30, (Paris, 1969), p.83-5.

of the person to God.<sup>23</sup> Nonetheless, he admitted the intelligence of his conceptions, and as time passed recognised increasingly the importance of Dandieu's introduction of new ideas. The new ideas came particularly from Germany. Dandieu had made a considerable study of the phenomenological writers, who were still relatively unknown in France, and was attracted particularly to the thought of Max Scheler.<sup>24</sup> Scheler, taking Kant as his ethical starting-point and heavily imbued with Nietzsche, developed the analyses of Brentano,<sup>25</sup> Husserl<sup>26</sup> and Meinong<sup>27</sup> to construct a theory of the person as a spiritual being ontologically attached to an objectively existing hierarchy of

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23. See Oeuvres, IV, p.507-9.

24. Max Scheler (1874-1928) after studies in Munich and Heidelberg, met Husserl in Halle in 1901, and was heavily influenced by his phenomenological method, which he put to use in many varied fields, notably anthropology, psychology and the social sciences. Converted for a time to catholicism in 1920, he taught P.-L. Landsberg, who became a close friend of Mounier in the mid-nineteen thirties, and who did much to propagate his master's thought.

25. Franz Brentano (1838-1917), a German philosopher, taught at Wurzburg and Vienna, where he influenced some of the major figures in German philosophy. He became a catholic priest in 1864, but left nine years later in protest at the doctrine of papal infallibility.

26. Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), initially a mathematician, studied philosophy under Brentano and went on to develop methods of analysis which were decisive in the development of phenomenology, of which he is generally regarded as the founder.

27. Alexius Meinong (1853-1920), studied under Brentano, and went on to explore the theoretical bases of descriptive psychology, making important contributions to the theories of knowledge, feeling and judgment.

of values.<sup>28</sup> The example of Scheler encouraged Dandieu, and consequently Ordre nouveau, to develop a personalism in which the moral and the metaphysical implications were scarcely distinguished. Although Scheler's influence only became directly important in Mounier's thought after Dandieu's death, the prior flourishing of a French personalism, which assembled not only Scheler's inspiration but also so many other elements not easily synthesised, already prepared a philosophical eclecticism into which Mounier was readily drawn. The attraction of this personalism became all the more powerful as his friends and collaborators in Ordre nouveau used the person as a constant reference. Alexandre Marc, Denis de Rougemont and Robert Aron, all of whom Mounier found particularly sympathetic, were proclaiming themselves personalists at the time of Esprit's foundation.<sup>29</sup> Since the values they upheld were substantially the same as Mounier's, he gradually came to regard himself as one of them. His catholic Bergsonism inclined him in the same direction.<sup>30</sup> He was familiar with Bergson's

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28. This is substantially the conclusion of his major work, Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik (Halle, 1916).

29. See D. de Rougemont, Journal d'Epoque (Paris, 1968), p.93.

30. See Chapter One, I.c., where this question is raised. See also Jules Grivet, 'La théorie de la personne d'après Henri Bergson', Etudes, 20 novembre 1911, p.449-485, which summarises Bergson's popular course of lectures on the person in 1910-1911. Bergson's concept was characterised by the radical separation of mind from matter, which introduced a dislocation not found in the catholic conceptions examined here. Otherwise his account was close to the catholic view.

earlier thought which put considerable emphasis on the person. Chevalier had interpreted Bergson in such a way as to reconcile his position with catholic orthodoxy, and as a result Mounier could feel that his interest in the concept was entirely in harmony with his deepest convictions.

As a result of these factors, Mounier was increasingly inclined to situate his thought in terms of a philosophical category, the person, both traditionally established and newly rediscovered, which seemed to offer a fertile and flexible centre on which to base his own explorations. Though it is difficult to chart the evolution of a man's thought in chronological terms, the decisive moment in Mounier's personalism appears to have been the summer of 1933. The first occasion on which he used the term personne in a fully technical sense was in a summary of the conclusions reached by a special issue of Esprit devoted to the problem of work. Work, he argued, was a value only in so far as it was directed at the 'accomplissement de la personne',<sup>31</sup> and taking up Maritain's distinction between the individual and the person, he referred to the person as 'première valeur spirituelle'.<sup>32</sup> This marked a distinct innovation, confirmed by the next issue of the review in which he promised studies on personnalité and communauté. This promise was almost certainly motivated by his recent

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31. E. Mounier, 'Quelques conclusions', Esprit, no.10, juillet 1933, p.630.

32. Ibid., p.633.

initiation into the writings of Scheler, for at this period he wrote to Izard:

Je viens de remettre un peu le nez dans la psychologie, côté Scheler, etc. Certainement c'est par là que nous ressentirons le plus la mort de Dandieu.<sup>33</sup>

Dandieu's death made Mounier feel responsible for filling the breach it left. The maturation of the development thus launched was long, but he now had a clear idea where he was heading. In October 1933 he was already in a position to map out the ground to be covered, and examining the nature of private life, he declared:

Nous le verrons plus clairement le jour où nous développerons, à la fois contre l'individualisme et contre le collectivisme, cette philosophie conjointe de la Personne et de la Communauté, qui sera notre métaphysique sociale.<sup>34</sup>

The assurance of this declaration stemmed from the visible coherence of the personalism he attributed to Scheler and the Ordre nouveau school, from the confidence that it was compatible with christian personalism in Maritain's manner, and from the convenient way in which both brands of personalism appeared to converge on the account of man he had set out in 'Refaire la Renaissance'. The article continued with a swift sketch of the general lines of his projected philosophy of the person. The person was the supreme value, he said, and the cultivation of its interior life,

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33. Oeuvres, IV, p.537, in a letter dated 6 September 1933.

34. E. Mounier, 'Argent et vie privée', Esprit, no.13, octobre 1933, p.55. This paragraph was omitted from the later published version of the article in La révolution personnaliste et communautaire (Paris, 1935), since Mounier felt by that time he had developed the necessary philosophy.

while paramount, had to lead to an outward-going movement which initiated a communion based on love and capable of uniting two persons as one. Briefly outlining the degrees of perfection a community could attain, he gave a fore-taste of the fully communitarian doctrine he was to develop.

At this point, Mounier's formulations were increasingly dependent on Scheler, the more so since at the same period he met and was highly impressed by an ex-pupil of Scheler's, Paul-Louis Landsberg<sup>35</sup> who had already formulated a coherent christian-based notion of the person, and who was one of the most influential figures in the study group Mounier set up in the spring of 1934 to define a metaphysic based on the person.<sup>36</sup> From this time onwards he felt committed to personalism, though his concept of what constituted a person remained vague. In April 1934, for example, he published his study on property, basing important parts of it on the person,<sup>37</sup> and in the same month drew a firm distinction between his view of the person and

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35. Paul-Louis Landsberg, a German christian philosopher, was a pupil of Max Scheler in Bonn, and taught there himself. Leaving Germany at the time of Hitler's accession to power, he eventually settled in Paris and worked for Esprit. Active in the French Resistance, he was arrested and deported to the German concentration camp at Oranienburg, where he died in April 1944.

36. See Oeuvres, IV, p.548 & 552. In a letter to Berdyaev (ibid., p.580) Mounier wrote "Je vais organiser des groupes d'études, notamment, avec un élève de Scheler, exilé à Paris, un groupe pour définir la philosophie personaliste-communautaire de notre mouvement." Mme Mounier dates this letter 15 February 1936, but it's clearly an error and must date from 1934, probably 15 February. Mounier participated actively in this group himself.

37. See below, Chapter Three, II.a.

that of Ordre nouveau, for whom it came close to being an aggressive and autonomous agent.<sup>38</sup> While in both these instances a specific content of the term 'person' was implied, it was not sufficiently defined to repay analysis. Only in late 1934 did Mounier feel capable of setting down a coherent account. When it did appear, it was the fruit of much study and discussion, and the first full formulation of a personalism many of whose elements were implicit in his preceding work. Two essays<sup>39</sup> presented the doctrinal basis of Esprit; an analysis of them is indispensable here, since they were never superseded, even though some of the details were later modified.

c) Communitarian personalism.

The first essay attempted to explain what was meant by the person. Taking up Maritain's point, Mounier distinguished the person from the individual.

L'individu, c'est la dissolution de la personne dans la matière. Pléonasme: l'individu, c'est, tout court, la dissolution de la personne; ou encore la reconquête de l'homme par la matière.<sup>40</sup>

The individual, defined as materiality, represented the easy way out, drifting with the tide, inflexibility, selfishness, aggressivity and isolation, he explained, in

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38. E. Mounier, 'Réponse à Ordre nouveau', Esprit, no.19, avril 1934, p.199-203.

39. E. Mounier, 'Qu'est-ce que le personalisme?', Esprit, no.27, décembre 1934, p.357-367, reprinted in Oeuvres, I, p.175-183, and, 'La révolution communautaire', Esprit, no. 28, janvier 1935, p.548-580, reprinted in Oeuvres, I, p. 184-209.

40. Oeuvres, I, p.177.

short, man surrendering his being to the blind forces of the world, as opposed to the person, which was characterised by control and initiative.

The person was equally distinguished from consciousness of the self such as it might be perceived in prolonged introspection, Mounier said, for it ultimately escaped even the deepest scrutiny. It was like an invisible centre to which everything was attached, he suggested, but was not a psychologically isolable phenomenon, nor was it localised in space. 'Personal', he suggested, was synonymous with 'spiritual', and to speak of a person was to designate a spiritual presence in a man, beyond time, space or consciousness, which constituted a moral absolute. This approximation of a definition was clearly modelled on the concept of God as the centre of man's being, such that man was more truly himself the nearer he came to conformity with the divine will. In short, for Mounier, the person was the equivalent of that manifestation of the Holy Spirit to which man was a temple. It was therefore, properly speaking, ineffable. No attempt at definition could be successful, he insisted, since the divine was beyond human comprehension; all that could be done was to point to the existence of a reality which was either experienced and believed in, or not. The religious implications of this analysis were ambiguous. Mounier admitted that for him it reposed on christian faith, but that he was also willing

to suppose that it might also be acceptable to a non-christian. This was the same posture as that of Jacques Chevalier with regard to Bergson: in each case, the catholic considered himself to be in possession of the full truth, but was indulgent to the non-believer in so far as he held a part of that truth and did not exclude the whole.

Having established the spiritual nature of the person, he elaborated its dimensions:

La personne est le volume total de l'homme. Elle est un équilibre en longueur, largeur et profondeur, une tension en chaque homme entre ses trois dimensions spirituelles: celle qui monte du bas et l'incarne dans une chair; celle qui est dirigée vers le haut et l'élève à un universel; celle qui est dirigée vers le large et la porte vers une communion. Vocation, incarnation, communion, trois dimensions de la personne.<sup>41</sup>

This succinct definition recalled the tripartite analysis of 'Refaire la Renaissance'. The three dimensions of man had become dimensions of the person and acquired names. 'Incarnation' designated the link which bound man inseparably to his material environment through his body: Mounier emphasised that man should not seek to deny this condition of his existence, but should use it to fulfil and transcend himself. 'Communion' designated his situation as a part of one or several human societies, and was developed in the following article. 'Vocation' designated the aspiration which led man to discover what would most fulfil his deep spiritual nature; Mounier explained that

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41. Oeuvres, I, p.178.

it was the divine sollicitation which led him to discover God's will for him. To each of these dimensions Mounier allocated a fundamental exercise which would allow a man to realise his person more completely. To incarnation corresponded commitment, the recognition of one's materiality and the effort to spiritualise it. To communion corresponded self-denial,<sup>42</sup> the determination to live in and for others. To vocation corresponded meditation, the persevering quest for a greater knowledge of oneself and of the spiritual reality beyond oneself.

The person was, for Mounier, in the first instance, a metaphysical entity. But it also provided a normative model embodying those ethical values which must be promoted or defended. This meant that an action was to be judged according to the extent to which it encouraged or prevented a man's development towards becoming more fully a person as characterised by Mounier. Furthermore, he used the person as a yardstick for judgement in social, economic and political matters. Every state, he argued, had the duty to promote and protect the fullest development of all its citizens as persons, and ought never to treat a person as other than an end in himself. This doctrine differed from defending 'the liberty of the individual', he declared, in that it refused to accord liberties which did not both comply with the moral obligations

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42. Mounier's term was dépouillement, a term which constantly recurred under his pen, implying the renunciation of self-seeking, and the promotion of personal humility and self-giving.

placed on the individual, and conduce to the spiritual development of his neighbour. Mounier's analysis repeated the catholic conception of man with the addition of something of Scheler's notion, but the vocabulary was more clearly christian and theological than he had previously been prepared to allow.<sup>43</sup> What he offered was a coherent, more systematic account of the values embodied in man which should direct any modification of society.

In his second article he looked for the values embodied in society which should direct men to modify their attitudes. To do this he drew heavily on Scheler's phenomenological sociology to supplement his catholic training. If the first Renaissance established the individual as the central value, he argued, a second Renaissance now in progress aimed at establishing society as central. Just as individualism was a vicious caricature of the personalist humanism it failed to attain, he explained, so nascent

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43. For the catholic doctrines relating to the human person in society, the following books have been consulted: A. Delmasure, Les catholiques et la politique (Paris, 1960), esp. p.29-39, which examines the Church's teaching on man as a person, as a social being, and in relation to the common good; H. de Lubac, Catholicisme, p.253-273, which expounds the theology of man in society based on the Church fathers, was written in the late 1930's, and reflects some of the contemporary debate; J.Y. Calvez & J. Perrin, The Church and social justice, p.101-132, which deals with the human person, his rights, his development in society and the organisation of society for him. Mounier took his first inspiration from catholic doctrine, modelling his thought closely on it, but even when he underwent the influence of other thinkers, he was careful to ensure that his borrowings were compatible with the Church's teaching. To establish a detailed correlation between Mounier's thought and catholic sources would be a long task outside the scope of the present study: the sources are pointed out in general terms at the appropriate places.

collectivism threatened to fall short of the communitarian socialism it ought to strive for. He suggested that a primary distinction was to be made between a society and a community. Societies were mere agglomerations of individuals, he said, but a community was a bond between persons. There were, he added, degrees of attainment in the establishment of the true community. Mounier established and described at some length a hierarchy of types of society and community which closely corresponded to Scheler's analysis.<sup>44</sup>

Scheler held that there existed a permanent and objective hierarchy of values. The lowest category related to the purely material and inorganic world, the next related to the organic and living world, the third to intellectual and cultural experience, and the highest to religious and spiritual experience. This hierarchy, for Scheler, applied to all judgements, and served as a universal criterion for establishing relative worth. Thus for him the most worthy of all people was the saint, followed by the genius, the hero and finally the producer in that order, depending on the values which directed their efforts. Applied to human groups, this classification gave a spiritual community of persons as the highest aspiration, with the artificially constituted society, the natural life-community and finally the mass, following in descending

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44. Much of the following material was drawn from the detailed study on the subject: E.W. Ranly, Scheler's phenomenology of community (The Hague, 1966).

order.<sup>45</sup> Mounier adopted Scheler's account virtually unchanged. For Mounier, the lowest degree of community was the mass, the anonymous, impersonal herd. Strictly speaking, it was not a degree of community at all, he explained, but rather the absence of community. He called it the 'monde de l'On',<sup>46</sup> Heidegger's das Man, Berdyaev's obje ctivation, the modern ad-mass, depersonalised and irresponsible. A higher stage was what Mounier termed 'les sociétés en nous autres',<sup>47</sup> which occurred when a section of the mass acquired a collective will and a sense of identity. This included political parties, but, Mounier said, for all the dedication they inspired, they could not encourage the development of the person, nor therefore be counted as genuine communities. The first degree of real community, he thought, were life-groups, formed by physical or environmental chance. These could be based on race, nationality, kinship, geography or any other natural accident, he argued, and by being organic in essence, they tended to foster both individuation and social awareness in their members. Though at worst they could become closed and aggressive, he thought, at best they could provide a dynamic base for the preparation of true

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45. This analysis was implicit in Scheler's Wesen und Formen der Sympathie (Bonn, 1923), which Mounier was familiar with in its French translation, Nature et formes de la Sympathie (Paris, 1928).

46. Oeuvres, I, p.186.

47. Ibid., p.198.

community. Above these, Mounier found the 'société raisonnable',<sup>48</sup> an association of men based on an intellectual principle. In practice, however, he saw this ideal as tending to fall into impersonal detachment and hence evade the personal development necessary to true community.

Though he adhered to Scheler's hierarchy of community, Mounier was not enthusiastic about the precise order of classification, except in the case of the lowest and the highest. The highest form of community, Scheler's Gesamtperson, was what he was really concerned to promote. Referred to alternately as 'la communauté personnaliste' and 'la personne de personnes',<sup>49</sup> it had the same role on a social level as the person itself on an individual level. It could only be founded on the values of the person, Mounier argued, and was the logical outcome of those values. In his view, the true community was a series of interlocking love relationships which taken together presented the same characteristics as a single person: 'toute communauté aspire donc à s'ériger, à la limite, en personne'.<sup>50</sup> To forestall any abuse of this concept, Mounier added that just as the perfect person was an aspiration unrealised in human life, so the perfect community was not to be found in this world, but rather to be seen as an ultimate goal

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48. Oeuvres, I, p.201.

49. Ibid., p.202.

50. Ibid., p.194.

which was only reached in, for example, the Communion of Saints, and, most eminently, in the Holy Trinity, which should be the model for an aspiring community. The conclusions implied in the analysis, Mounier argued, were that nothing should be allowed to hamper the development of the person, which alone could ensure the development of true community, but that this priority should not be used as a disguise for the selfish egoism characteristic of the individual. In practice, he said, it meant a rigorous self-discipline on the part of the person, and a decentralised, pluralist state, whose structures Esprit was striving to establish.

The community, like the person, and all the more so since it depends on the person, was first of all a metaphysical entity, whose ontological foundation remained entirely unelaborated, but was assumed to be uncontroversial since it hung entirely on an implicit acceptance of a catholic theology whose precise content remained unspecified. Second, and, for the purposes of this study, more important, the community, like the person, was a normative model. Each group, association or society was seen as being always at some stage below the level of true community, which by implication it should strive for. It should therefore abandon, Mounier was suggesting, or be made to abandon, those elements of itself which most impeded its upward progress, primarily its oppressions of the

person, but also its implicit concessions to the selfish use of individual freedom. Equally, each individual was seen as existing in a society, or a number of societies, whose development to true community was a necessary means to his own fulfilment as a person. He should therefore abandon, Mounier concluded, or in some cases, be made to abandon, those habits which hindered the growth of true community.

In establishing this comprehensive theory of man in society, Mounier was consciously trying to provide a metaphysical basis for a social doctrine which was firmly within the catholic orthodoxy, which was adequate to understand and respond to the urgent problems of modern industrial societies, and which was sufficiently cogent to command the assent of non-catholics. His account contained philosophical inadequacies, largely deriving from his reluctance to attach the person to a faith in the christian God, but he was less concerned with providing a logical account than with promoting a set of values. Nonetheless, he was prepared to modify his account to some extent, and in his exposition in the Manifeste au service du personalisme<sup>51</sup> he introduced changes to counter two serious objections.

The first objection was: if the person is able to be perceived as a part of experience, why do some people deny its existence? To this Mounier replied that while the

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51. E. Mounier, 'Manifeste au service du personalisme', Esprit, no.49, octobre, 1936, p.7-216. Reprinted in Oeuvres, I, p.481-647. Especially the section entitled, 'Qu'est-ce que le personalisme?', Oeuvres, I, p.523-542.

person was experienced as a spiritual reality, some people may be 'aveugles à la personne'.<sup>52</sup> Just as others were colour-blind, these people did not perceive the person, he said, though this in no way detracted from its reality; at the same time he implied that it was at least partly culpable since the person was an experience available to all. This was an appropriation from Scheler, who developed the notion that some people were personblind, as a response to those who professed not to accept his category of the person. The circularity of the argument is evident; it was a reasonable but not a persuasive reply. Fortunately Mounier did not often invoke the principle of personblindness. The second objection was: if everyone is a person, how can they also strive to become one? Mounier countered it in two ways. He defended his presentation of the person both as a descriptive and a prescriptive concept, but attempted to make the link clearer:

...à cette exigence d'une expérience fondamentale, le personnalisme ajoute une affirmation de valeur, un acte de foi: l'affirmation de la valeur absolue de la personne humaine.<sup>53</sup>

Whereas Scheler had cemented the connection by establishing an objectively existing hierarchy of values, Mounier, without this resource, was obliged to base his solution on an act of faith, a logically unsupported affirmation of the person as that which is ultimately and absolutely

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52. Oeuvres, I, p.524.

53. Ibid., p.524.

valuable in itself. Since the person as a metaphysical entity was itself ultimately affirmed through an act of faith, this defence made Mounier's position doubly fragile from a philosophical point of view. As a second defence, Mounier operated a shift in his description of the relation between the person and the individual:

Dans cette opposition de l'individu à la personne, il ne faut voir qu'une bipolarité, une tension dynamique entre deux mouvements intérieurs, l'un de dispersion, l'autre de concentration.<sup>54</sup>

Where previously there had been a straight opposition, there was now a tension between two opposed movements. On the one hand, he argued, material constraints exercised a permanent tendency to dissipation and degradation, on the other the spiritual dimension exerted a force for unification and perfection. It was, he said, the spiritual dimension which, in its purest form, was designated the person. But the person, as the spiritual part of man, was always beyond its concrete manifestation, he pointed out, and therefore never strictly attained. Hence he thought it more fitting to speak of it as a process of spiritualisation, or, synonymously, a process of personalisation. This was a more effective defence, even if it still left ample room for ambiguity. In any case, the move from a static account of the person as essence to a dynamic account of the person as movement introduced a flexibility and generality which had not formerly been

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54. Oeuvres, I, p.526.

present. Each of the three changes introduced in the Manifeste was taken directly from P.-L. Landsberg's essay on the person,<sup>55</sup> and thereby indirectly from Scheler. They did not materially affect the substance of what Mounier had already set out as his personalism, but they reveal at least Mounier's willingness to integrate new concepts into his doctrine.

d) The uses of personalism.

The publication of the Manifeste marked the end of most of Mounier's creative work on the level of speculative philosophy. Although it underwent modifications and received elaborations, the personalism with which he and Esprit were always identified was substantially complete. As a philosophy in its own right, it was both unoriginal and inconsistent, the inconsistency deriving from the unoriginality. Its sources were numerous, and became increasingly so as time passed: rooted in Jacques Chevalier's catholic Bergsonism, it grafted Scheler's phenomenology on to Maritain's neo-Thomism, forming an odd hybrid nourished by any other ideas which came to hand. On a purely formal level it could hardly command serious attention, since it was open to critical attack from many sides.

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55. P.-L. Landsberg, 'Quelques réflexions sur l'idée chrétienne de la personne', Esprit, no.27, décembre 1934, p.386-399, reprinted in his Problèmes du personalisme, (Paris, 1952), p.13-27.

The contradictions, implicit and explicit, the ambiguity of key terms, the lack of assignable intellectual content in others, the undeclared and unelaborated assumptions, all contribute to undermine its claim to be coherent synthesis, and all give weight to the view that it was an eclecticism assembled from whatever material came to hand. Fortunately, the strength and interest of Mounier's personalism did not rest on its intellectual coherence. It rested first on its success as an ideology, second on its value as a method of investigation.

Personalism as an ideology embodied a set of values shared to a greater or lesser extent, more or less consciously by an important section of the population. By virtue of its generality, personalism did attract a handful of non-believers, and a larger number of christians of other denominations, but by far the majority of its devotees were catholic. Mounier based his thought firmly in the values and doctrines which catholics shared and recognised. Much of his theoretical writing would command an easy assent from catholics who recognised the language of their Church and the traditional values it stood for. By articulating these values in a rough synthesis, personalism drew the people concerned into more conscious solidarity, thereby increasing their capacity for concerted activity. Having established a corpus of doctrine, Mounier could hope to draw consequences from it which would direct the actions

of his audience into channels which they had not previously considered, but which could be shown as legitimate in terms of the basic values and doctrines. This was especially important in social and political matters, where the Church left a wide margin of initiative to its members in their choice of action. By establishing personalism as a semi-autonomous philosophy within the catholic tradition, Mounier was preparing it to function as a sub-ideology of catholicism, but intervening in a wider range of human activities than the Church, and gaining the support of people outside the Church. In this way, Mounier could claim to be carrying forward the Church's work of understanding and responding to the modern world particularly in the area of social problems. At the same time he was aware of the possibilities of extending the apostolic work of his religion. The theoretical aspects of Mounier's thought were clearly unsatisfactory as philosophy; they were more effective as the core of an ideology.

Less important in the short term, but possibly more important for its long-term survival, was personalism's function as a method of investigation. It depended on regarding the person as a nexus on which several crucial issues converged; for Mounier it was the most important nexus, on which all crucial issues converged. Most thinkers at some stage consider the nature of man and his relation to the world; Mounier would argue that in so doing they reveal the fundamental characteristics of their philosophy. He would argue that most practical and theoretical

problems in some way raise the question of how man is to be viewed. The acceptance of a particular view, in his opinion, would suggest the kind of solution to be adopted; at least it would be a useful starting point for a discussion. Mounier's thought must be judged in part, at least, by the extent to which his philosophy of the person proved probing, flexible and productive as an instrument of analysis and construction.

Mounier's studies on property and anarchism demonstrate these considerations. The first was written before the full elaboration of his personalism, but it reveals the way in which the person was used as a point of reference to elucidate a complex theoretical problem with important practical consequences. The second, written after the Manifeste, shows Mounier's attempt to establish personalism not only as a means of analysis, but also as a serious political philosophy with a claim to embody a potentially powerful ideology. In works such as these the value of personalism was most critically tested.

## II. PERSONALISM IN OPERATION.

### a) Property.

If Mounier had set himself to mobilise the Church's social doctrine to deal in relevant ways with the social problems of his time, then it was clear that one problem he had to face very early was the problem of property.

It was a current reproach, dating back more than two hundred years, that the catholic church had set itself up as a defender of the property owning classes at the expense of the generally propertyless working classes. It was true that the Church had always pronounced itself as a champion of private property.<sup>56</sup> The popes, following St. Thomas, had declared that God gave man the right to possess the earth and everything on it, that ownership was a human right based on the dignity of the person, that the only legitimate form of property ownership was that exercised by private persons, that property should be freely disposable in exchange or gift, and that temporal authorities had the duty to defend private property against violation. The Church allowed a wide degree of freedom in the specific forms which ownership might take and conceded the right of the state to intervene in regulating property relations, but denied the right of the state to own property anonymously. On the other hand the Church recognised the social function of property, the obligation for owners to use property in the common good, and the subordination of property rights to more fundamental human rights.

The Church's view of property was complex, and in view of the conflicting interests within society, tended to be oversimplified and misinterpreted. The wealthy property-owners saw the Church as supporting their position,

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56. The account given here of the Church's doctrine of property is drawn from J.Y. Calvez & J. Perrin, The Church and social justice, p.190-225.

and their dispossessed opponents saw the Church as bolstering their enemies' position. Since Rousseau<sup>57</sup> had denounced property as the first step in man's social oppression, since Proudhon<sup>58</sup> had denounced property as theft, since Marx and Engels<sup>59</sup> had declared war on private property, the social struggles of the working-class had increasingly rested on the view of private property as an oppressive instrument of the ruling class. In the 1930's it was evident to Mounier that the existing property relations were contributing to the economic crisis and would have to be changed. He felt, as part of his general commitment to dissociating the Church from the 'established disorder',<sup>60</sup> that he should try to show that the Church's doctrine of property was not tailored to the needs of wealthy capitalists. More than that, he hoped to show that its doctrine was actually helpful in solving the social problems deriving from current property relationships.

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57. For example, J.-J. Rousseau, Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité, (Paris, 1755).

58. For example, P.-J. Proudhon, Qu'est-ce que la propriété? (Paris, 1840).

59. For example, K. Marx & F. Engels, The Communist Manifesto (London, 1848).

60. The term désordre établi was used in the title of Esprit's special number of March 1933, and has since passed into general usage. It has been claimed that Mounier coined the phrase; certainly it was not current in written sources before the early 1930's, but its paternity is impossible to establish with certainty.

The question of property had interested Mounier for some time,<sup>61</sup> but it was not until the spring of 1934 that he was able to devote himself to producing a serious study of it. The essay 'De la propriété capitaliste à la propriété humaine' was first published in April 1934.<sup>62</sup> It began with an analysis of possession in metaphysical, moral and psychological terms, after which Mounier hoped to be in a position to draw implications for property on the legal and economic levels. The distinction between possession and property was an old one, rooted in Roman law and common to most analyses of the subject. He argued that possession was at its most perfect in God,<sup>63</sup> since God alone was fully himself, and everything existed in him; there was therefore no separation between what he was and what he had. For man, Mounier said, there was much which was permanently alien from his own being, and with which he felt the need to establish a relationship; since he could not be that which he was not, the nearest he could come was to have it. He suggested that 'having' was a degraded substitute for 'being'. The ideal form of human possession, he said, was a co-existence in a love-relationship with another person, where the sense of being

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61. He wrote to Georges Izard in the spring of 1932 to say he was working on the problem. (The letter, not published in full, is transcribed and available in the Bibliothèque Mounier.)

62. E. Mounier, 'De la propriété capitaliste à la propriété humaine', Esprit, no.19, avril 1934, p.5-70. It was reprinted in book form two years later (Paris, 1936), with slight modifications, and also in Oeuvres, I, p.419-477.

63. He argued that this held good as a hypothesis even for those who did not accept the existence of God.

swallowed up the sense of having. At the other end of the scale, he argued, pure having involved no relationship with a man's being. The best possession open to man was God, he said, for man could participate in God's being and thereby in the being of everything. This part of Mounier's analysis resembles the thinking of Gabriel Marcel whose 'Esquisse d'une phénoménologie de l'avoir' dates from the same period<sup>64</sup> and also recalls the analysis offered in Karl Marx's early writings which were first published at this period.<sup>65</sup> Marcel's explorations and the interest shown in Marx's analysis spring from the same concerns which moved Mounier: the attempt to elucidate the theoretical foundations of property relationships in order to understand, and possibly change, the existing property structures.

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64. Marcel's Être et avoir (Paris, 1935), appeared the following year and contained the 'Esquisse...', which was written in November 1933 but had not been published till 1935. In a later note (Oeuvres, I, p.438), Mounier acknowledged Marcel's work, quoting, with some satisfaction, passages which ran parallel to his own thought. Mounier knew Marcel from the meetings at Maritain's home in Meudon, but had little contact with him otherwise. The two men were of different generations and different intellectual traditions. Marcel was best known as a dramatist and had not yet established his reputation as a philosopher; his Journal métaphysique had appeared (Paris, 1927) but he had not yet published the works for which he became best known. It would be mistaken to see any real influence in either direction, though the coincidence is significant.

65. Marx's 'Economic and Political manuscripts' (see T.B. Bottomore (ed.), Karl Marx: Early Writings (London, 1963)), presented 'having' as the lowest form of appropriation, of which love was the highest. Although the work was written in 1843, the manuscripts were not discovered till later and provoked a great deal of interest when they were generally published in the early 1930's. Mounier had certainly not read them, but he read parts of A. Cornu's Karl Marx, l'homme et l'oeuvre 1818-1845 (Paris, 1934), to which Esprit gave extensive coverage. There was no direct influence, but an interesting concurrence.

Turning to the imperfect forms of property, from which God was excluded, Mounier distinguished degrees of degradation. The highest form, possession as conquest, he thought the most heroic since it at least procured the virile pleasures of struggle, victory and domination. It failed, he suggested, since it had constantly to nourish itself on new conquests without which it would collapse. This kind of possession provided the motive force for capitalism, he said, but though it sought the satisfaction of overcoming difficulty, it inevitably tended to the elimination of all difficulty. Conquest, he thought, was still preferable to the second degree of degradation, possession as enjoyment, which excluded no possible gratification, to the point where, reduced to a mode of passive receptivity, it became the lower degree of possession as comfort. In possession as comfort, Mounier argued, the possessor allowed his life to be governed by his belongings until he was effectively possessed by them. Lower than this he placed property as status, in which the fact of owning merely enhanced the proprietor's reputation, and property as self-assertion where all that concerned the proprietor was the legal status he enjoyed as a property-owner. Overschematic and abstract though this analysis was, Mounier was proposing a series of models for understanding types of imperfect possession. His categories were fluid, and presented as being distinct for didactic rather than logical reasons, reflecting his desire to provide readily assimilable frameworks for his readers to adopt.

Passing on to examine true possession again, Mounier offered the state of communion with God in prayer as a pattern, arguing that this involved the recognition of a presence beyond oneself, and a respect for its inherent dignity. This entailed love and the giving of oneself, he argued, and all forms of possession aspired to the condition of a love-relation. He hastened to add that this did not mean that a man should give himself to an inanimate object, but that in so far as everything in the world had a spiritual presence, he should give himself to that presence, which ultimately was God. In giving himself, Mounier said, a man possessed himself all the more, and at the same time possessed that to which he gave himself. Conversely, he went on, he possessed a thing all the more in giving it, to the point at which, paradoxically, the supreme degree of possession was a total dispossession. At this extreme limit, Mounier could only appeal to the experience of the christian mystics who felt most themselves when they had given themselves entirely to God, who was, for them, the ultimate reality within man. The effect of this analysis was to set up a model of the highest form of possession, to serve as a criterion for judging all lower forms. This procedure implied a series of analogous orders where the highest was a model which the lower should imitate. Mounier's paradigm was God, and the way in which the persons of the Holy Trinity possessed each other demonstrated in his view the ultimate and unfathomable ideal of possession in dispossession through total love and self-giving.

Mounier's descriptions appear unrelated to what is normally understood by the words possession and property, but his primary concern was to elucidate as far as possible the spiritual and personal implications before passing on to the material aspects, which were, for him, secondary in importance. Using the basic principles thus established, he would then be at liberty to work out a practical system of rights to replace existing ones, safe in the knowledge that it was compatible with his and the Church's fundamental spiritual doctrines. In the second, and longer part of the essay, Mounier attempted to work out the practical implications, basing his position on the doctrines laid down by St. Thomas and by the popes. Man in general had dominion over nature, he began, to use and distribute it, but in particular it was the person, who had to exercise this dominion. The person, as primary reality, was the repository of all human functions, he pointed out, including the administration of property, but the person existed only in the context of a series of communities which surrounded it. The problem, he thought, was to reconcile the two, and in that sense the question of property was bound up with the whole relationship between the person and the community. At its simplest, the private property was the power of each individual to govern and dispose of goods, he said, not as a consequence of natural law, but agreed by both reason and convention

as being the most suitable way for man's dominion to be exercised. He summarised it as 'un régime de responsabilités personnelles, ces responsabilités disposant d'autant d'initiative et de liberté que le permet le bien commun'.<sup>66</sup> Mounier conceived it as a basis for attacking both the communist and the capitalist conceptions, each of which failed in his view to fulfill an important part of it. He pointed out that the capitalist mode of property ownership shared communism's denial of personal responsibility, compounded with the centralisation of property in the hands of a privileged few, and ignoring the factors of work and occupancy, which alone conferred a legitimate right to ownership. In other words, he argued, capitalism illegitimately assumed an unlimited right to personal property, regardless of the common good. At the least, he asserted, property should be an institution for the more effective participation of all men in enjoying the fruits of the earth.

Looking at the existing society, Mounier examined the capitalist system, in which profit determined production, which in turn determined consumption, which was put above needs, particularly those of spiritual life. He argued that the desirable hierarchy was exactly the opposite, with the spiritual requirements paramount. This new order of priorities obviously demanded a different account

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66. Oeuvres, I, p.449.

of property rights, he suggested, and offered a system based on human need. If need were the criterion, he said, every man should have the right to enough for pure survival, the 'nécessaire vital'.<sup>67</sup> He considered this right to be so absolute that he who had not the 'nécessaire vital' could legitimately take what he needed from anywhere, or anyone, without being morally guilty of theft. Beyond this, Mounier continued, every man had the right to enough to be able to develop himself as a person, the 'nécessaire personnel'.<sup>68</sup> The two rights were fundamental, he insisted, and until everyone was assured of them, no one had a right to more than that. Once they were satisfied, he went on, if there was a surplus of wealth, everyone had a right to that which would best allow him to express his gifts and satisfy his aspirations, the 'nécessaire large'.<sup>69</sup> To these rights Mounier added obligations, arguing that people with more wealth than they needed should give it away because they had no right to what they did not need, and could only claim even the 'nécessaire large' if everyone already had the 'nécessaire personnel'. He pointed out, following Péguy and Nietzsche, that a moderate poverty was the most enriching condition, and that giving away one's surplus encouraged the virtues of justice, liberality and compassion.

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67. Oeuvres, I, p.453.

68. Ibid., p.453.

69. Ibid., p.454.

In answer to the problem of how to implement these principles in modern societies, Mounier suggested that it would be necessary to introduce new forms of collective ownership which still met the requirement of property's being attached to the person. He suggested a way:

Dégager là où elles se forment, des personnes collectives reposant sur l'organisation de personnes responsables dans toute leur économie interne, personnes de personnes, comme un corps vivant est un organisme d'organismes. C'est à la notion et à l'institution de personnes collectives que nous conduit, de soi, le principe personaliste joint aux conditions collectives de la production moderne.<sup>70</sup>

This basic statement of personalist aims on a social and economic level implied the establishment of a decentralised state composed of autonomous productive communities, communally owning both the means and the fruits of their production. To implement this proposal he saw it would be necessary to fight the growth of monolithic collectivism in the form of large trusts and state capitalism, both of which discouraged the development of organic communities. He also saw the need to eliminate anarchy and conflict between productive units. Since such a vision of the future would clearly not be fulfilled spontaneously, he recognised the need for state intervention to introduce and maintain the system, while insisting that the rôle of the state must be severely limited. Not being a person, the state, he said, could not own property, but could legislate

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70. Oeuvres, I, p.470 (Mounier's italics).

as to its distribution and the rights and duties attaching to it, since the state was the guardian of the common good.

In this essay, Mounier's primary aim was to separate the authentic christian conception of personal property from the distorted notion of it which was used to defend injustices in the capitalist system of property relationships.<sup>71</sup> While criticisms may be levelled at the detail of his analysis on points of theory and practice, he nonetheless established a comprehensive and coherent account which rectified many easy assumptions about catholic social doctrine. He also aimed to use the Church doctrine as a means to proposing a workable social order, towards which existing society could conceivably move, and which would resolve some of the acute social and economic problems currently facing the world. His main method in this second aim was to emphasise all those elements of catholicism which concerned the human person, and to integrate them into his own nascent philosophy of the person. The success with which he achieved the integration is the more striking because he had not at that stage elaborated his full personalism, a fact which explains the sometimes disconcerting ambiguity of his vocabulary. The practical

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71. Mounier tried to base his account as rigorously as possible on catholic doctrine as established by the Church fathers and by papal encyclicals. Throughout his exposition he made constant and copious reference to authoritative sources. Referring mainly to St. Thomas, he relied heavily on commentators, from Cajetan to modern exegetes, among whom Maritain was prominent. This was not an automatic guarantee of orthodoxy - his notion of collective persons is of doubtful orthodoxy - but it meant that the conclusions he drew were generally compatible with, and inspired by, the Church's teaching.

consequences Mounier drew from his personalist analysis of property were the weakest part of his book. A strange mixture of medieval pluralism, nineteenth century utopian socialism and Proudhonian syndicalist anarchism, his vision of a decentralised personalist state was more a dream than a blueprint. What it did offer was a theoretical standpoint from which to criticise the two major alternatives of capitalism and communism. That was as much as Mounier needed to establish, since the immediate need was for catholicism to be presented as offering a criticism of the existing, unsatisfactory society, to be seen to base its criticism on its own permanent principles, and to be able to offer a direction in which to move. The person as a method of analysis was successful in this limited ambition, but it was a defensive ambition which sought to answer the increasing numbers of people who reproached the Church for its failure to produce a pertinent response to social problems. It remained to be seen whether personalism could play the positive rôle of producing a genuinely effective catholic solution to these problems.

b) Anarchism.

In setting up personalism as an ideology which was recognisably of the Left, it was necessary for Mounier to confront the ideologies which already existed on the Left. On a social level, if Mounier wished to compete for the

adhesion of the industrial working-class, he had to situate himself with respect to the doctrines which at present enjoyed their support. Two ideologies occupied the ground on which Mounier wished to operate: Marxism and anarchism. Of these, Marxism was a powerful force, supported by efficient and combative organisations; the communist and socialist parties. To challenge Marxism was a major undertaking which Mounier was ill-equipped for at this time, and he was content to keep at a safe distance, not elaborating on the position Esprit had outlined from the beginning. Anarchism, however, was a more manageable proposition, since it had no organised or coherent defender. In addition it offered the possibility of exploiting an important current of thought as an ally against the increasing domination of Marxism.

Anarchism as a political ideology had arisen in the latter part of the nineteenth century.<sup>72</sup> Though a number of thinkers could be regarded as important theorists, there was no coherent central doctrine which could be taken as accurately summing up anarchism. It is almost true that there were as many forms of anarchism as there were anarchists. The defining theme was an opposition to the concept of the state, usually accompanied by a vigorous refusal to accept any form of authority or absolute, whether political, religious or intellectual. It combined a

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72. The information on anarchism used in this section is taken from: G. Woodcock, Anarchism (London, 1963); J. Joll, The Anarchists (London, 1964); D. Guérin, L'anarchisme (Paris, 1965); H. Arvon, L'anarchisme, 4th edition (Paris, 1968).

defence of individual freedom with spontaneous and militant political activity. Although most anarchists were animated by these concerns, the ways in which they developed and expressed them were varied in the extreme. Anarchism therefore allowed Mounier a considerable range of possible interpretations. He was not slow to turn the fact to his advantage. The immediate occasion for his 'Anarchie et personnalisme'<sup>73</sup> was the considerable role played by anarchists in the Spanish Popular Front government, and in the struggles of the Spanish Civil War. The existence of anarchism as a significant political force even in this limited context, and the upsurge of interest it provoked in France at the time,<sup>74</sup> led Mounier to examine it more closely, particularly since, through the intermediary of Proudhon, it found many echoes in his own thought.

Since he considered that no progressive social action was possible without the participation of the working class, Mounier began by stating the task of personalism as being to combine those authentic values the working class had preserved with those it had neglected. For this operation he proposed to look behind the screen of professed doctrine to discover those values which were genuinely defended by the working class movement. The

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73. E. Mounier, 'Anarchie et personnalisme', Esprit, no.55, avril 1937, p.109-206. Reprinted in Oeuvres, I, p.635-725. The essay was also reprinted in two collections of Mounier's articles, Liberté sous conditions (Paris, 1946), and Communisme, anarchie et personnalisme (Paris, 1966).

74. The interest in anarchism can be gauged by the fact that Esprit's special number on it, in which Mounier's essay appeared, sold out almost immediately.

anarchist thinkers, he argued, were particularly close to the people, and did not admit to the separation of their thought from their life. It was therefore legitimate, he thought, to distinguish the spirit of their thought from the letter. He dismissed those forms of anarchism which had no basis in the working class: Stirner's ego-centric individualism,<sup>75</sup> Tolstoy's idyllic ruralism,<sup>76</sup> Nechayev's frenetic nihilism.<sup>77</sup> He wished to confine himself to the positive contributions of Proudhon, Bakunin<sup>78</sup> and Kropotkin,<sup>79</sup> and it was to their inheritors that he referred when he said:

Un certain courant anarchisant, qui a mûri dans l'expérience ouvrière, reste vivace dans le monde ouvrier. Assoupi depuis un certain nombre d'années, il se cabre dès qu'il se sent provoqué. Je n'hésite pas à dire que pour nous personnalistes<sup>visé</sup> il est

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75. Max Stirner (1806-1856), an early disciple of Hegel, was best known for his book Der Einzige und sein Eigentum, which appeared in 1844 and proclaimed an extreme form of individualism. His real name was Johann Schmidt.

76. Leo Tolstoy (1826-1910), the Russian novelist, gave up his great wealth in 1892 and practised a mystical version of primitive christianity based on a return to the land and non-violence.

77. Sergei Nechayev (1847-1882), a Russian revolutionary and friend of Bakunin, he was noted for the violence of his political commitment to destroy the existing order by all possible means. Arrested in 1872, he died in prison.

78. Michael Bakunin (1814-1876), born into the Russian military aristocracy, he became one of the major theorists of anarchism and participated in many of the European revolutionary movements. He was a 'communist anarchist' and a founder member of the First International, from which he was eventually excluded after a long struggle with Marx.

79. Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921), a Russian aristocrat, was active in revolutionary agitation throughout Europe. In later life he developed a more scholarly approach to anarchist theory. He returned from exile to Russia at the time of the revolution, but denounced the Bolsheviks and the violence of their methods.

un des espoirs sur lequel nous misons pour l'avenir et le développement de ce mouvement. Il a formé et inspiré encore le meilleur de l'esprit syndical, l'opposition à l'impérialisme ouvrier et au fascisme prolétarien, il est le plus apte à recevoir, mieux, à découvrir de lui-même l'idée personnaliste.<sup>80</sup>

This statement reveals Mounier's attraction to federalist, libertarian socialism. Whereas constructive anarchists had sought to foster solidarity and fraternity, he saw, they had also consistently refused centralised authority and thereby presented him with the elements of a base for personalism in the working-class tradition. Implicit in the statement was also the hope that anarchism might offer a means of wooing the workers from their entrenched allegiance to Marxism: this was the force of his denunciation of 'l'impérialisme ouvrier' and 'fascisme prolétarien'. To substantiate his case, Mounier went on to give a brief history of the First International from the anarchist point of view. Marx and Engels were presented as doctrinaire, power-hungry manipulators who ruthlessly crushed the authentic aspirations of the working-class as expressed by Bakunin and by the French anarchist representatives. The historical survey was intended to persuade and move, rather than to inform, but in appealing to nationalist feelings, in using personal <sup>in</sup>uendo, in giving an extremely partial account, he revealed a willingness to use polemical techniques he had previously eschewed. The clear conclusion to

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80. Oeuvres, I, p.660.

be drawn was that Mounier was offering personalism as an alternative ideology to Marxism, and that he was prepared to fight for it as a living ideology, and not just a philosophical system. The next step was to demonstrate that personalism was in harmony with the best parts of the anarchist tradition, and to establish what those parts were.

The central point, he suggested, was the anarchist critique of power and authority. In the first instance, he agreed, this took the form of a denial of God, but more essential was the refusal of political power. Basing his analysis closely on Proudhon, Mounier accepted the anarchist point that authoritarian and coercive power-structures implied a pessimistic view of man, which was self-fulfilling in view of the corrupting, degrading effect of power. Anarchists, he said, sought to replace a structure of authority based on subordination by one of equality based on coordination. In this way, he pointed out, they wished to create a just society which would not be disordered, but, built on free exchange, would simply be different from the present state-imposed social order.

Mounier accepted the logic of this analysis, affirming its relevance and its basis in historical fact. He added; however, that there was perhaps a legitimate sense to the concept of authority, divine or human. The anarchist critique held against the distorted and caricatural form authority had often been forced into, he conceded, but did not

destroy the true essence of it. Mounier distinguished two radically different meanings of authority, as spiritual preeminence or as mere coercive force. The first, he argued, was legitimate and undeniable, the latter illegitimate and to be resisted. Between them was the difficult area where they overlapped, he said, and thought that the error of the anarchists lay in not appreciating that there existed hierarchies of spiritual ascendancy, which had the need and the right to be expressed in the visible world, even if it involved a limited degree of coercive force. He felt that the anarchist attack on power and authority was justified against the abuse of authority, but that it should not be allowed to detract from spiritual authority as exercised by God or by human persons. He suggested that this view of authority retained the essence of anarchist thought, but integrated it into a higher, more complete account. Mounier was concerned as far as possible to reconcile catholic teaching with a plausible interpretation of anarchism, in order to acquire the broadest possible area in which to install his personalism. Since he could allow himself little latitude of interpretation with his catholic values, it is not surprising if he was less scrupulous in what he presented as the principles of anarchism.

Next he turned to examine the anarchist denunciation of government and the state. Anarchists did not reject the principle of social order, he insisted, but they did reject the imposition of a specific form of order on the grounds that it bred oppression and alienation. Anarchists, he said, opposed centralisation because it merely facilitated the exploitation of the governed and increased the wealth of the governors. States, in their view, were by their nature based on an alienation of liberty, he said, and even the most equitable of state machines remained a machine, generating power and its consequent abuse. Mounier pointed out that this criticism was even applied to revolutionary governments, and, in a sense, no government could be revolutionary since revolution was against government by nature, and no historical government, however apparently progressive, had been other than reactionary. Taking up Proudhon's criticism, Mounier showed how the communist form of government was as oppressive as the bourgeois state in curtailing personal liberties in the name of freedom for the impersonal collective mass. The solution to this problem, he proposed, was the setting up of a federative pluralist state. It was impossible to eliminate the state altogether, he accepted, except in an unrealisable utopia, which was not helpful. But in practice he thought it ought to be possible, as the anarchists wanted, to reduce the intervention of the state to a minimum. The new 'rump'

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state, he said, would obviously have to be conceived in action after the destruction of the present regime, with the ultimate aim of complete self-government for every part of it. He explained that the principle of federation implied a series of autonomous, freely associated members, each having the right of secession. Economic and industrial decentralisation followed logically from this, he pointed out, though centralised controls might be necessary to a limited degree. In this matter Mounier agreed that anarchist thought suffered, by comparison with Marxism, from imprecision and naïvety. But he insisted that the spirit of freedom and generosity inherent in their thought more than compensated, for even if they failed to make a sound case for the complete abolition of state regulation, their utopian impulse at least pointed in the right direction, promoting the freedom and integrity of the person.

Pointing out the lines of inspiration which were common to personalism and anarchism, Mounier judged that anarchists indulged in excesses, but that their flights of fantasy, when toned down and adapted with common sense, came close to recommending the same structures and values which dominated his own political theory. He concluded:

Comment ne sentirions-nous pas une parenté avec les hommes qui les premiers ont cherché, si maladroitement que ce soit, à accorder vie collective et liberté.<sup>81</sup>

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81. Oeuvres, I, p.699.

It amounted to saying that though they expressed themselves badly, their instincts were sound, and Proudhon's heart, at least, in the right place.

Going on to deal with the philosophical bases of anarchism, Mounier acknowledged that the reconciliation with personalism was more problematical, since anarchism's irreducible core was positivist materialism, entailing in the first instance a refusal of all absolutes. Distant though this materialism apparently was from personalism, Mounier examined in detail some of Bakunin's attack on spiritualism, and found that all he destroyed was an unworthy sham, not the essential truth. He even asserted:

Son 'matérialisme' est, en intention profonde, un désir de réalisme spirituel maladroitement habillé en matérialisme.<sup>82</sup>

The qualities Bakunin ascribed to matter - movement, life, intelligence and direction - were in fact attributes of the spirit, Mounier argued, and the difference between them was therefore only one of terminology. At the same time as he attacked bourgeois pseudo-spirituality, Mounier said, Bakunin was ill at ease with the impersonal determinism of Marxism, which he accused of setting up a tyranny of science, as anti-human as the tyranny of spiritual absolutism. Why, Mounier asked, did he not take the final liberating step of throwing off his materialism? Possibly, he thought, Bakunin and his contemporaries needed a new

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82. Oeuvres, I, p.704.

Plato who would have integrated the essential truths of materialism and spiritualism. Mounier then outlined the shape such a synthesis would have taken, suggesting the existence in the material universe of a tendency to prepare and serve man as a person. This spiritual dimension was, he agreed, closed to anarchists so long as they persisted in their materialism.

Since they rejected spirituality, there was no possibility of anarchists giving an account of man which would adequately satisfy the conditions of Mounier's personalism. But he thought they often came close to it in their anthropology. The only freedom they attributed to man was that he obeyed and was conscious of obeying, the laws of nature, he pointed out, and they considered subordination to any other force or agency to be a humiliation from wherever it came. Although anarchism could not avoid metaphysical individualism, he argued, the fact did not prevent its main theorists from unanimously asserting the importance of social liberation for the liberation of the individual.

But if they failed to establish a satisfactorily integrated account of man on which to rest their philosophy, Mounier continued, they were strenuous in the defence of three important values: human dignity, emancipation and revolt. For them, he said, man was neither good nor bad, all depended on the environment and institutions which formed him, and therefore a society had to be built which

allowed him to be just and free, to be at one with himself and to respect his fellows. In this society, Mounier explained, the anarchists felt that a man could exercise his human dignity; the construction of the society required an emancipation from all that obstructed its development; the emancipation could only be gained by confronting all absolutes and obediences with a proud refusal, which constituted revolt.

Such a view of man visibly disappointed Mounier in failing to come near to his own notion of the person. Consequently, he turned with some relief to the anarchist account of the community, which provided a richer analogy with his own vision. Mounier pointed out that anarchists refused to accept mass society as the only form of collective existence and proposed the model of society as a decentralised organism rather than a centralised mechanism. They saw 'the people' as a complex and organic whole which could not strictly be defined, he argued, since any attempt to reduce it to simpler components, such as social classes, resulted in the destruction of its reality. If 'the people' were thus conceived, it was evident to Mounier that the emancipation of the proletariat, the only section remaining in servitude, must inevitably engender the liberation of the entire people. This he saw as the goal which anarchism proposed for itself.

Throughout the examination of anarchist philosophy, Mounier was visibly embarrassed in his attempts to institute a dialogue with a creed which plainly *corresponded* so little to his own. The method he used was to select and emphasise those elements with which he could find sympathy, deploring and diminishing the importance of others. In that way he presented his own interpretation of the essence of anarchism, which then appeared as a doctrine close to personalism on the whole, except on those occasions where the thought was weak, and compared badly. Had any of his interlocutors been alive, they would undoubtedly have wished to challenge his conception of their real concerns; but since he conceived anarchism as a diffuse conglomeration of themes rather than a coherent philosophy, Mounier felt justified in practising a thoroughly tendentious selection. His treatment of the atheism and materialism of Bakunin was particularly contentious, implying a considerable lack of awareness on Bakunin's part. The suggestion that an explicitly christian synthesis, transcending materialism, might have been acceptable to him was even less substantiated. The rapid dismissal of the anarchist view of man did not take into account the different context of assumptions and priorities in which they worked. Mounier's only real enthusiasm in the discussion of philosophy was for the anarchist concern for community, but there he was content briefly to examine the vague concept of le peuple,

with its overtones of Péguy, emphasising the difference from Marxism, and not seriously developing the relation to his own thought. Mounier regarded anarchist philosophy as separable from anarchist politics, not hesitating to denigrate and diminish the philosophy while seeking to establish the politics as in many respects close to his own thought. This again demonstrated that his intention was polemical: taking advantage of the relative diffuseness of anarchism compared, for example, with Marxism, Mounier presented a picture of it which did no justice even to those of its advocates he had chosen to study.

In his final chapter Mounier set out to summarise what he regarded as anarchism's positive contribution. In effect he pointed out the various ways in which the anarchist tradition had prepared working class socialism to receive personalism. Its major contribution, he said, was the refusal of the will to power as a temptation both on a personal and a political level. He explained that they combined this refusal with a thoroughgoing critique of politicians, who tended to be so engrossed in the struggle for power that they forgot the emancipation of the proletariat. The anarchists understood that even when the politicians were not of bourgeois origin, they soon become assimilated to a bourgeois power-élite, he said, with the consequent reluctance to abandon their positions of power and privilege. The same critique, he suggested, applied to the intellectuals who automatically parasitized the working

class, and although they did not exclude them from the revolution, anarchists very properly insisted that intellectuals be put in their humble place, and not be allowed to attain preponderance in a movement they should serve without seeking to control. Although it became ridiculous when systematised, he argued, anarchism was a fertile and unsystematic movement best suited to defending those qualities it embodied in the libertarian and even utopian wing of the socialist movement. While it was not capable of constructing a coherent plan of action even on a theoretical level, he thought, it did at least prevent the working class from becoming closed in a rigid Marxism, and thereby held the door open to personalism. Finally Mounier drew two practical lessons. Anarchism had always insisted on the need for ideological propaganda, he said, recognising that men must be transformed, not only institutions, if the revolution was to succeed. And anarchism was firmly committed to concrete and direct action, he added, realising that beliefs had to be implemented; even if they had occasionally fallen into excess, their infallible presence in revolution either on the barricades or in the market place had, in Mounier's view, assured them of an influence out of all proportion to their number. Mounier was happy to find these two lessons, close to his heart, at the centre of anarchism, even if he was obliged to state them more baldly than usual. The parallel between ideological propaganda

and the spiritual revolution makes it clear that though he believed his doctrine to have a higher, spiritual dimension, Mounier's personalism was competing on the same ideological ground as anarchism. The parallel between anarchist committed action and his own 'méthode d'immanence'<sup>83</sup> clarifies Mounier's own intentions for the small dedicated élite which he had suggested would radiate their influence through the revolution; it points to Mounier's growing determination to act more effectively.

This whole study of anarchism was an attempt to establish personalism as a political ideology, with a base in the working class, offering an alternative to Marxism. By comparing it with anarchism Mounier situated personalism as an ideology of like aspirations. Implicit in the study was the suggestion that anarchism had been groping for values and truths which personalism clearly apprehended, also that anarchism's political and institutional aims were fully included in personalism, though given an improved formulation. There was therefore no reason, Mounier implied, why personalism should not supplant anarchism as the libertarian current of working class socialism. How successful was Mounier's attempt? The later chapters of this thesis will show how far he made contact with the working-class, and how far he won acceptance as a socialist. In neither case can he fairly be said to have occupied any of the ground held by anarchism, nor to have established personalism as an independent political ideology. On the side of ideas, the account is only slightly

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83. Oeuvres, I, p/725.

more positive. His presentation of anarchism was excessively selective, both in limiting his sources to three thinkers and in taking disparate elements from each. He relied heavily on Proudhon in the field of political theory and on Bakunin in metaphysics; Kropotkin was only introduced for occasional corroboration. He stressed in each case the divergences from Marx, ignoring the convergences. He described a total anarchism which corresponded to nothing a professed anarchist would recognise as his. Within this framework Mounier successfully drew parallels and distinctions between anarchism and his own thought, always to the advantage of his own. An important consequence was that he clarified the limitations of his declared readiness to enter dialogue. He was unable to deal with atheism or materialism except by ascribing it to insufficient thought, and could not recognise it as a serious or lucid position. He was embarrassed by the firm assertion of any belief he did not hold, and tended to assume that it was symptomatic of a deeper, often contrary, impulse. He was incapable of questioning his own beliefs in the spirit he asked of his interlocutors, since he considered himself to be possessed of the truth on essential matters, and his opponents at best groping for it. In view of these limits, Mounier failed to appreciate the full force of anarchist thought or to add to the understanding of anything other than his own positions. The book was, however, a first attempt at ideological warfare with a serious socialist opponent, and as such prepared

the ground for the more important battle he was preparing to engage with Marxism.

c) Conclusion.

By the end of 1937 Mounier's thought had become substantially what it was to remain to the end of his life. Its theoretical articulation was largely completed within the first two and a half years of Esprit's existence and scarcely varied thereafter in more than a few details. Its gestation had largely consisted of a focussing of attention on an important area of catholic thought, the human person, its nature and its consequences. To this was added a mixture of elements from those philosophies of man which seemed to be most easily reconciled with this catholic humanism, particularly those of Bergson and Scheler. Adopting the person as a central value provided a useful link with catholicism, but also allowed a semi-autonomous philosophy to evolve around it. This philosophy Mounier hoped to use both as a basis for analysing other philosophies and theoretical problems, and also as the central doctrine of a new ideology which would offer practical remedies to the social problems that were becoming urgent. In both cases personalism was semi-autonomous from catholicism. Philosophically it was inspired by and always compatible with Church doctrine, though it welcomed the possibility of fertilisation from other intellectual sources. Ideologically it was born and developed in a catholic environment; it took its strength from, and tried to strengthen

the Church's social extension; and it attempted to extend its appeal outside the social circles which the Church occupied, but which were gradually shrinking in size. Although ideology and philosophy are inextricably bound together, the driving force behind the philosophy was its function as ideology. Mounier was not interested in philosophy for its own sake, he was interested in it as doctrine which would direct people's minds and ultimately their actions. The object of his study on property was not to produce a disinterested exegesis of the Church's position, it was to demonstrate that a catholic need not defend capitalist property relations, and to open up new areas of exploration and reflection on the problem. Equally the study on anarchism was not an exercise in political theory, it was a blow in Mounier's ideological struggle, an attempt to replace an existing ideology by demolition and assimilation. The theory of personalism cannot be isolated from its practice, because, as ideology, it had a political and social dimension which determined its survival as a living doctrine. Mounier was aware of this, and as a result of his decision to devote more of his time and attention to social and political practice, the theoretical bases of personalism scarcely evolved after this time.

CHAPTER FOUR

WAR (1938-1944)

- I. Preparation for war.
- II. 'Phoney war'.
- III. Vichy.
- IV. Resistance.
- V. Conclusions.

## C H A P T E R   F O U R

### WAR (1938-1944)

#### I. Preparation for war.

In March 1938 the German army marched into Austria; from that time on, war became a real possibility.<sup>1</sup> European politics was dominated by the Czechoslovakian crisis. Hitler claimed the right to annexe the Sudetenland area of the country to Germany on the grounds of a large proportion of German-speakers in the population. The claim was strongly resisted by the Czech government. France and Britain, fearing that the situation might provoke a military confrontation, met the German and Italian leaders in Munich in September 1938 and came to an agreement conceding the German claim. Daladier, the French Prime Minister, and Chamberlain, the British, claimed a victory for peace in Europe. Public reaction in France was mixed, regretting the plight of the Czechoslovak nation, but welcoming the apparent assurance that war was averted.<sup>2</sup> The agreement was received with a divided mind by every major political grouping in France, with the exception of the communist party, which vehemently opposed it.

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1. The details of these events are contained in any standard history. Particular use has here been made of A. Werth, France and Munich, before and after the surrender (London, 1939), which deals with the events as they affected France.

2. These reactions were graphically described in J.-P. Sartre, Le sursis (Paris, 1945).

Mounier's reaction was instantaneous and unequivocal. In a strongly worded leader article entitled 'Lendemain d'une trahison',<sup>3</sup> he roundly denounced the betrayal, fustigating those who had perpetrated it. Characteristically, he saw the action as stemming from a deeper cause than political mismanagement:

Si nos gouvernants ont choisi une paix ignominieuse, ce n'est pas seulement parce qu'eux-mêmes manquaient de foi et d'autorité. C'est parce qu'au même moment, démoralisés par le même mal, les rues et les villages de France grouillaient d'hommes suant de peur, que n'intéressaient ni la justice des Sudètes, ni la justice des Tchèques, ni l'Allemagne, ni l'Europe, ni la France, encore moins l'innocence de la France et même pas l'injustice de la guerre, mais une seule chose: un moratoire de tranquillité... on ne nous fera pas croire que c'étaient là des hommes qui ne voulaient pas tuer; c'étaient bien plus simplement des hommes qui ne voulaient pas se battre.<sup>4</sup>

The cowardice and decadence of the whole French nation were to blame, he argued. France, he said, was in the grip of a spiritual malady which impelled it to dishonour and disavow its tradition of heroism and justice, a corrupt bourgeoisie had injected its poison into the nation, and Munich was the culmination of its effects. But in condemning both the agreement and its spirit, Mounier added that it was possible beforehand to have been substantially in favour of the same solution for valid reasons and opposed

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3. E. Mounier, 'Lendemain d'une trahison', Esprit, no.73, octobre 1938, p.1-15. Esprit had already devoted a special number (June 1938) to the question of war over Czechoslovakia, and had taken up a position strongly supporting the Czech resistance to Hitler's demands, but refusing to accept that war was a necessary consequence of this.

4. Ibid., p.3-4. The omission marks are mine.

to it for invalid reasons. War might have been avoided, he thought, but a strong peace was necessary, a peace which would have been as effective a check to nazi imperialism as would a declaration of war. This had not been achieved at Munich, he insisted. Again, he thought, a declaration of war made in the spirit of fear and weakness was equally undesirable, but it was possible to have advocated war as a necessary step to halt fascism and reestablish international justice. Whatever the force of these arguments, he went on, the essential need was to oppose fascism with strength in the full awareness of its easily discernible ambitions. Predicting, with remarkable accuracy, the future course of events, he warned that anti-Germanism and purely negative antifascism were not the answer, but that what was needed was a national re-awakening on personalist lines. Only this, coupled with international disarmament, he said, could avert catastrophe. He concluded, however, by implicitly recognising the probability of war and defined his own response:

Notre combat sera en tout lieu où manoeuvreront nos principaux ennemis en cette affaire: le mensonge, la haine et l'avilissement des coeurs. Notre rôle sera de maintenir un peu d'humanité dans une condition inhumaine, et de préparer, contre la démence collective, les conditions d'une paix juste, mesurée, créatrice.<sup>5</sup>

Mounier foresaw the consequences of war quite clearly, and was already resolved to fight to attenuate its effects in

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5. E. Mounier, 'Lendemain d'une trahison', p.15.

the minds of the population with the object of creating the best possible conditions for a successful aftermath. This short paragraph set out the broad programme of action which he undertook during the entire war.

Since the Munich agreement was accompanied by the mobilisation of French military reservists and by frenetic rearmament, Mounier had every inducement to produce an analysis of this nature. Nevertheless his position had undergone an important evolution. His acceptance of the likelihood of war imposed a totally different perspective on his activity: the perspective of a major historical catastrophe which would affect every aspect of life, and against which nothing he could do would have any material effect. All he felt he could hope to do was to limit the moral damage. Faced with the urgency of events, it had been agreed at Esprit's summer conference<sup>6</sup> that an organ was needed which would be more capable of dealing with developments than a monthly review could hope to be. To this end a fortnightly newspaper was created. Entitled le Voltigeur,<sup>7</sup> and directed by P.-A. Touchard,<sup>8</sup> it was to

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6. The conference was held on 28 July 1938 at Jouy-en-Josas. Reports from it were published in the October number of Esprit.

7. The first number was dated 29 September 1938, and subsequent numbers appeared at roughly fortnightly intervals until the 18th, dated 12 July 1939, which announced that the paper would not appear again until after the summer break. With the outbreak of war, however, it 'merged' with Esprit, which continued to print the name Le Voltigeur as a subtitle until June 1940.

8. Pierre Aimé-Touchard (b.1903) studied at the Sorbonne, became a teacher, joining Esprit early as a theatre critic, and was active in the Troisième Force. During the war he was a leading figure of the literary resistance in Paris. He later held administrative posts in the arts, most notably as administrator of the Comédie-Française and as director of the Paris Conservatoire, as well as making important contributions to theatre criticism.

concern itself with questions of immediate political importance, basing itself on the principles of Esprit, and run by the friends and contributors of the review. Mounier wrote a number of short articles for it himself, but the majority of the contributions came from those members of Esprit - particularly Touchard and Madaule - whose interests were mainly political. Since it was aimed at the same readership as Esprit, the first result of its creation was to relieve Mounier of the increasing domination of comment on events, and to allow him room in the review for more general reflection, which in turn formed the basis of the Voltigeur's perspective. The decision was amply vindicated, for the proliferation of crises leading up to the declaration of war made it difficult even for the Voltigeur to keep abreast of events. Esprit was thus able to examine the underlying issues and the consequences of international and domestic affairs without the burden of taking explicit position on day to day developments.

From the summer of 1938 until September 1939, Mounier's thought was dominated by the impending war. Apart from the moral issues involved, he was concerned at the attitude of the Church and the recrudescence of fascism in France. In the Voltigeur he did what he could to prevent catholic opinion from following the conservative Right in its sympathy for Hitler and its *disregard* for nazi victims.<sup>9</sup> He

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9. E. Mounier, 'Au Voltigeur catholique', Voltigeur, no.2, 19 octobre 1938, reprinted in Bulletin des Amis d'E. Mounier, no.23-24, décembre 1964, p.6-8.

stressed the papal condemnation of nazism, constantly referring to the encyclical Mit brennender Sorge.<sup>10</sup> In one particularly courageous article,<sup>11</sup> he spoke out plainly against what he saw as cowardice in the pope's refusal to condemn atrocities committed by Hitler and Mussolini, and the explicit approval accorded to Franco's initiation of war in Spain. The months preceding the war also saw an alarming proliferation of fascism in France, both in the tradition of the French extreme Right, and imitated from the German and Italian models. Mounier's stand against it was powerfully stated. In October 1938, he wrote: 'jamais ... la tentation du fascisme ne se présentera plus virulente que cet hiver',<sup>12</sup> and the considerable number of articles he devoted to the subject is some measure of his concern. Fascism was a strong and seductive movement, he argued. Like nazism, it showed no gratitude for concessions made, and could only be countered by a resolute and force-

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10. E. Mounier, 'Pie XI, pape de l'unité humaine', Voltigeur, no.10, 15 février 1939, reprinted in Bulletin des Amis d'E. Mounier, no.23-4, décembre 1964, p.22-24. The encyclical, published on 14 March 1937, contained a strong denunciation of nazi doctrines. It is partly reprinted in A. Freemantle (ed.), The Social Teachings of the Church (New York, 1963), p.89-94.

11. E. Mounier, 'En interrogeant les silences de Pie XII', Voltigeur, no.16, 5 mai 1939, reprinted in Bulletin des Amis d'E. Mounier, no.23-4, décembre 1964, p.28-33.

12. E. Mounier, 'Lendemain d'une trahison', loc.sit., p.14. The major articles on fascism, on which the following summary of Mounier's position is based, are: 'Comment le fascisme vient aux nations', Esprit, no.72, septembre 1938, p.645-51, 'L'Europe contre les hégémonies', Esprit, no.74, novembre 1938, p.147-165, reprinted in Oeuvres, IV, p.193-207, and 'Les deux sources du pré-fascisme', Esprit, no. 75, décembre 1938, p.322-6.

ful affirmation of true values, particularly those which fascism sought eventually to suppress. Christians should not be deceived by the lip-service paid to religion, he warned, for it was purely temporary and tactical. At the same time, he said, the opponents of fascism should avoid the trap of setting up an alternative type of fascism, which would be just as totalitarian and would defeat the object. Radical regeneration and constructive resistance should not be abandoned for their caricatures of frenetic activism and shrill diatribe, he insisted, and opposition to nazi imperialism should not be a cover for French imperialist aspirations. Worse, he thought, was the fatalistic acquiescence before the displays of power presented in Italy and Germany, the paralysis of the will which was a prelude to servile imitation and, eventually, cheerful subjugation. Mounier's analysis was lucid and thorough in showing the dangers inherent in fascism; he was subtle in exposing the dangers which threatened to pervert the different responses. In presenting his solutions, however, he displayed only a theoretical understanding. This sprang from the nature of his intention, which was to foster awareness among those whose task it was to formulate concrete solutions.

Mounier was among the first to realise that the immediate effect of Munich, far from ensuring peace, was to make war highly probable in the near future. The same

realisation struck the whole of France within a few weeks, provoking intense discussion of the problems of war and peace. Mounier's contribution was a detailed study of the problems from a christian point of view. Entitled originally Pacifistes ou Bellicistes?,<sup>13</sup> the study was published in pamphlet form during the summer of 1939, and contained a summary of the arguments and analyses which Mounier was propagating in Esprit and elsewhere.

Defining peace as a spiritual state, not simply the absence of military warfare, Mounier pointed out that peace could not be said to exist when hatreds and armaments were proliferating, nor so long as politics remained a continuation of war by other means. Christian peace was not synonymous with tranquillity, docility or immobility, he argued, it demanded courage, sacrifice and action, and in some situations it might require the use of force, if that were the only way the christian's inner strength could express itself. He equated peace with the affirmation of the human person in all its dimensions. Peace as an eternal order had to be based on justice, generosity and love, he said. At its limit he considered that it implied an ethic of non-violence, but, since few men were capable of its authentic implementation, he conceded that it entailed the use of force in preference to a cowardly abstention

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13. E. Mounier, Pacifistes ou Bellicistes (Paris, 1939), reprinted under the title 'Les chrétiens devant le problème de la paix', in Oeuvres, I, p.785-834.

from action. Examining the Church's declared doctrine, Mounier emphasised its condemnation of general and obligatory conscription, of armed peace, of economic imperialism, of the militarisation of youth and of the disregard for treaties; he stressed the two constructive principles of arbitration and disarmament. If all failed, he argued, there were limited conditions in which the use of force was legitimate, though war was a catastrophe both spiritually and materially, and in the context of 1939, pointed to the failure of western christianity. He emphasised, however, that there were other catastrophic eventualities which could not be admitted, even though resistance entailed the risk of war. The proper course of action for a christian, he concluded, was to struggle to avoid both, leaving God to decide the outcome.

Mounier's exposition of the true nature of peace posed the problem of war as a choice between relative failures, in which the christian was faced with a cruel dilemma, which he could not accept without accepting the fact of failure. His only solution, in Mounier's view, was to refuse the dilemma until such time as one or other failure was forced on him, hoping at the same time that God would resolve the situation in the best possible way. In a theoretical sense, Mounier evaded the issue, by refusing its obvious terms, but in the context of 1939, the practical consequence of the analysis was clear-cut: war was admitted

as a possible, even probable, course of action, and one which should not be shirked if it became necessary. In the frenzied months following Munich, French and British diplomacy was everywhere conceding before the intransigence of German, Italian and even Spanish demands. Each concession was excused as being necessary for the avoidance of conflict, with the result that it became increasingly apparent that war was increasingly likely, and on increasingly unfavourable terms. Mounier's advice, which found growing support on the political Left, was effectively to stand firm. Hitler's invasion of Czechoslovakia and the fall of Prague in March 1939 marked the end of the last illusions generated by the Munich agreement; simultaneously the behaviour of General Franco in snubbing the French ambassador to Spain, Marshal Pétain, in joining the Rome-Berlin axis, in demanding and receiving financial and military aid, awoke the traditional nationalism of the Right, who now reluctantly joined in the chorus of those who wanted a firm stand. From this time onwards France urgently prepared for war as crisis succeeded crisis, so that when it was eventually declared in September 1939, no-one, least of all Mounier, was surprised.

The months preceding the war did little to advance directly the progress of personalism, and personalism did little to alter the succession of events. The urgency of the crisis compelled Esprit to adopt a series of positions,

of which, in retrospect, few people could challenge the wisdom, and the review consolidated its growing reputation on the political Left. Mounier revealed himself as a perceptive political commentator whose predictions were often accurate, but his success was a personal one, based on the acuity of his intelligence rather than the solidity of his professed ideology.

## II. 'Phoney war'.

From September 1939 until May 1940 the drôle de guerre plunged France into a strange half-world with all the discipline and appearance of war, but with little of its reality.<sup>14</sup> Most of the action during these nine months was on the level of propaganda. A large section of the population was under army discipline, and the remainder were being exhorted to work to support the war machine. The communications media were under the strict supervision of the government information service, and critical comment was firmly discouraged. Most writers not on active service were quite willing to give their energies to promoting the war effort in whatever way they could, and much of what was published was entirely subordinated to this end.

Mounier, being deaf in one ear and almost blind in one eye, had not previously done any military service; with

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14. In addition to standard histories, use has been made here of A. Zévaès, Histoire de six ans (1938-1944) (Paris, 1944).

universal conscription he was called to join the Auxiliary Service in the region of Grenoble.<sup>15</sup> His duties were clerical and undemanding, so that he was able to devote some of his time to writing. Despite the considerable difficulties involved he succeeded, with the help of friends, in continuing to direct Esprit, which was allowed to continue publication.<sup>16</sup> In the situation which he had largely foreseen a year earlier, he determined to carry out his promise of providing a haven of truth and lucidity amid the propaganda, lies and confusion of war.<sup>17</sup> His primary task, Mounier felt, was to do full justice to the complexities of the various issues he dealt with, thereby countering the oversimplification and easy emotivity of officially encouraged sources. He attempted to analyse the situation coolly, opposing the total militarisation of life, resisting

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15. For details of Mounier's life during this time see Oeuvres, IV, p.633-651, and Esprit, décembre 1950, p.1005-1015.

16. The work was mainly done by P.-A. Touchard and his wife, both in Paris. The independent publication of the Voltigeur was discontinued. To add to the material difficulties, Mounier's only daughter, Françoise, developed an incurable encephalitis following a small-pox injection. The child, aged two, was reduced to a vegetable-like existence till her death in 1954. This added a testing personal ordeal to the already difficult situation.

17. The main articles on which the following summary of Mounier's position is based, are 'Par tous les temps', Esprit, no.85, octobre 1939, p.4-9; 'Gardons-nous de notre ennemi, l'ennemi', Esprit, no.88, janvier 1940, p.115-9; '1940', ibid., p.113-4; 'Des deux Allemagnes aux deux traités', Esprit, no.89, février 1940, p.209-19.

the imposition of aggressive values of war in place of the spiritual values of peace, rejecting a crude and nationalistic anti-Germanism in favour of determined anti-nazism, keeping an open and constructive attitude to the preparation of the post-war period, and affirming the ultimate supremacy of love against the expedient fostering of hate. The personalist-spiritualist offensive was no longer appropriate, he realised, and he saw his work as a defensive action. In a sense, he believed, western civilisation was entering the beginning of a new Middle Ages.<sup>18</sup> Esprit, he felt, could play the rôle of a monastery which would preserve the best part of the culture of the past to contribute to that of the future. He did not renounce the attempt to participate in and influence the events and thoughts of the day, but in the face of a massive war effort, he recognised that he could not hope to do any more than keep alive a small current of purity and integrity. The process of dehumanisation, necessary to the successful prosecution of the war, he knew could not be reversed; at best he hoped not to be tainted by it. Mounier did not believe that the Axis powers would triumph, but at the same time he could not foresee a rapid Allied victory - his perspective was a long, grim, exhausting struggle.<sup>19</sup>

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18. Mounier suggested this specifically in a letter to Nicolas Berdyaev, dated 13 November 1939 (Oevures, IV, p. 646).

19. He made this belief explicit in a letter to Daniel Villey, dated 12 December 1939 (Oeuvres, IV, p.651).

As part of his attempt to defend spiritual values against the effects of this long state of siege, Mounier produced a work which stated more explicitly than before the intimate link between personalism and christianity.<sup>20</sup> His intention was to confront catholics with an awareness of spiritual imperatives at a time of temporal crisis. His method was to examine the metaphysical structures of the person in order to deduce moral, social and political consequences. He admitted the conditions of this method:

C'est qu'à vrai dire les exigences temporelles du personnalisme ne sont à la rigueur astreignantes que si la personne est ontologiquement transcendante au biologique et au social, et que seule une métaphysique chrétienne assure cette transcendance.<sup>21</sup>

This clarified the fact, which he had always disguised, that personalism was only philosophically tenable in the context of a corpus of christian doctrine, which had always been assumed but never stated. He went on to say that if personalism was necessarily catholic, catholicism was not necessarily personalist, though personalism seemed to him to unite the central catholic doctrines in such a way as to permit a practical philosophy to be constructed on them.

Mounier insisted on the relevance of spirituality and he warned those who went to war assuming that God was on

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20. E. Mounier, 'L'enjeu des valeurs judéo-chrétiennes; Personnalisme catholique', published in three parts in Esprit, February, March & April 1940, reprinted in Oeuvres; I, p.729-779 under the title 'Personnalisme et christianisme'. It was written at the request of the Catholic University of Washington for their centenary. It was later published as 'Catholic Personalism faces our times', in J. T. Delos, et.al., Race, Nation, Person, (New York, 1944).

21. Oeuvres, I, p.736.

their side to be sure first of all that they were on God's side. This reminder was directed both against the catholic hierarchy, who acquiesced too easily before the priorities of war, and against the civil authorities, who embraced too enthusiastically the totalitarian possibilities offered by the emergency; it was addressed to the majority of believers, whom the outbreak of war had once again thrown into confusion and exposed to the dangers of pragmatic materialism. Mounier contended that christianity was made more, not less, relevant by the situation, and that it was more than ever necessary to remain faithful to the eternal spiritual values when confronted with a war which represented a triumph of the forces of matter.

At the same time as asserting the primacy of spirituality, Mounier pointed out the importance of commitment. Spirituality did not mean a detached cultivation of purity, he argued; on the contrary it demanded openness to events and a sustained, active presence in the world. The reassertion of this well-established personalist tenet was specifically intended to forestall the temptation felt by many catholics to withdraw from public life, feeling, as often before, that the temporal world was beyond redemption and should therefore be abandoned in favour of purely spiritual pursuits. Against this, Mounier urged that the world was in more than usual need of assistance from the resources of the spirit and furthermore that the menace which threatened to swamp spiritual values should not be evaded by

withdrawal from the area of danger, but should be fought with determination on its own ground. On both counts, he concluded, the christian's duty was in commitment and action, even though, in the present circumstances it might be possible to do little more than bear isolated witness to the true values.

Despite the apparent assurance with which Mounier delivered his strictures, this study was less trenchant than his writing generally tended to be. The reason for this was that he was no longer certain where the main ideological enemy was, or how far he could oppose an undesirable propaganda which was nonetheless aimed at mobilising the nation's morale so as to defeat the Axis powers more effectively. Although he was experienced in ideological struggle after seven years with Esprit, now that the government was seriously directing its attention to propaganda on the ideological level, Mounier was unsure of his response, and divided in his own mind about the war. Like the whole of France, he could only with difficulty believe in the reality of it; he was just old enough to remember the Great War, and tended to anticipate a conflict which would pose essentially the same problems, to the extent that one of his major preoccupations was the preparation of a peace treaty which should not fall into the same errors as the Versailles Treaty of 1919. The patriotic reflex which ran through all his writings of the time tended to moderate the harshly critical approach which at other times characterised his atti-

tude to the government. In part this was a spontaneous desire to mute any criticisms which might impede the war effort, but in any case he had to show prudence under the constant threat of censorship. He dare not damage army morale since such an action would automatically deprive him of the readership he had built up in the armed forces, and perhaps bring about unfortunate consequences on a personal level since he was himself a soldier. As a result of these many factors Mounier found himself according the war a higher priority than he professed to condone in the realm of values.

An important example of Mounier's readiness to accept the war as a priority was his reaction to the dissolution of the French communist party.<sup>22</sup> Since the signing of the Soviet-German pact of non-aggression in August 1939, the party had suppressed its previously vehement anti-nazism in favour of a blanket opposition to the war. This policy reversal had provoked fearful division in its ranks, but the official line had been accepted with varying degrees of reluctance by many militants. Eventually, the French government, recognising its docility to orders from Moscow and its potential danger to the war effort, declared it illegal. The first result, as Mounier acknowledged, was to deprive a large section of the working class of any form of organisation or political expression. In a time of peace, he

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22. Cf. E. Mounier, 'Sur les décombres du communisme', Esprit, no.90, mars 1940, p.428-30. The account of these events is taken largely from J. Fauvet, Histoire du parti communiste français, vol.2 (Paris, 1965), esp. p.11-44.

might well have denounced the move as a measure directed against the working class, but now he accepted it as necessary and added: 'Nous ne partageons aucun des attendrissements d'un libéralisme larmoyant devant le caractère radical de telle ou telle mesure prise'.<sup>23</sup> Not only did he not shed any tears, he also saw a golden opportunity to win the working class over to a personalist ideology while they were in a state of confusion. Clearly it was a tenable position to hold that the dissolution of the party was a necessity of war, but Mounier accepted the argument with surprising alacrity at a time when he had declared that the war could not be an absolute priority.

In the spring of 1940 Mounier was inevitably involved in the increased military activity. He was beginning to see a modified role for Esprit, owing to the difficulties of publication and diffusion facing most reviews, as a platform for writers who had lost their usual tribune,<sup>24</sup> and he himself took a decreasing part in the review's activities. Its future now posed more questions than there were answers available, so that it was fitting and perhaps merciful that the catastrophe of events imposed its own solution.

### III. Vichy.

France fell in six weeks before the German onslaught. A demoralised National Assembly transferred all its powers

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23. E. Mounier, 'Sur les décombres...', p.428.

24. See E. Mounier, 'Changer les hommes, changer les méthodes', Esprit, no.92, juin 1940, p.213-217.

to the ageing Marshal Pétain, who dissolved the Third Republic and became Chef de l'Etat Français.<sup>25</sup> France was overrun and divided up. Pétain as head of State was allowed to establish his administrative capital at Vichy and to have effective rule over a large area of southern France. The remainder of the country was under the direct rule of the occupying forces. At this moment there seemed little chance of Germany not conquering Europe, few people expected England to hold out, Russia was apparently in league with Hitler, America would not be committed, France was humiliated, continental Europe was overrun. The sensible thing seemed to be to make the best of a bad job, which was precisely what the Vichy régime at first seemed to offer. The Vichy government installed a right-wing, catholic administration under the motto 'Travail, Famille, Patrie', and called for France to repent of its sins and work for a spiritual renewal. In proposing a 'National Revolution', while leaving the terms vague, Pétain allowed everyone to believe that this was the revolution they had been calling for since the early 1930's. He also appeared to have wrested a degree of autonomy for his government, although in reality he was obliged to acquiesce in whatever the German authorities wanted.

After the débâcle, Mounier spent a short period in a prisoner-of-war camp but by early July he was demobilised

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25. The account of the Vichy régime given here is drawn from A. Werth, France 1940-1955 (London, 1956); Robert Aron, Histoire de Vichy (Paris, 1954); and S. Hoffman, 'Aspects du régime de Vichy', Revue française de science politique, no.1, janvier-mars 1956, p.44-69.

and back in Grenoble with his family.<sup>26</sup> His immediate concern was to discover what possibility he had of continuing Esprit, and to this end he established himself in Lyon, a natural centre of intellectual activity in the southern zone.<sup>27</sup> Along with several colleagues, Mounier hoped that the ambiguities in the new State philosophy might be made to permit true spiritual and human values to be smuggled in beneath the counterfeit. He set out his analysis of the situation in the diary he kept during the period:

Est mort ce qui était mort; un nouveau visage est imposé à l'histoire qui nous attend, un visage autoritaire; nous ne pouvons éluder ces oscillations à grande amplitude de l'histoire, ni travailler à contre-courant de ses données élémentaires; il ne reste qu'à assurer les mêmes fidélités, avec des gestes et des formes nouvelles, dans la matière nouvelle. Blondel a une bonne formule: "faire de l'armement spirituel clandestin", c'est-à-dire profiter des similitudes de noms entre nos valeurs et les valeurs publiquement proclamées pour y introduire, à la faveur de cette coïncidence, le contenu désirable.<sup>28</sup>

He would not contemplate abandoning his mission of propagating the gospel of personalist revolution, therefore the only question arising was how best to implement his intention. The ambition of subverting Vichy from within was encouraged by the fact that many of the official declarations were couched in terms analogous to those of his own personalism. It was clear to him that nothing was possible in the north,

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26. For details of the private life of Mounier, and of the evolution of his thought during this period, see Oeuvres, IV, p.664-723, and Esprit, décembre 1950, p.1015-1032.

27. See H. Amoretti, Lyon capitale 1940-1944 (Paris, 1964).

28. Oeuvres, IV, p.668, dated 4 August 1940. The Blondel referred to was Charles Blondel, a long-standing leader of the christian democratic movement. Mounier had recently met him in Lyon, when Blondel had returned from a visit to Vichy.

which was directly under nazi occupation, but in the south he was prepared to publish Esprit openly and to participate in the government-sponsored youth movements in order to carry out his mission more effectively. After consultation with as many of his old associates as possible, it was agreed that Esprit should reappear, the first number coming out in November 1940. Some of his friends warned him that publishing the review was likely to compromise him, whereas others were delighted at his courage. Mounier stood by his decision throughout, but he became less certain as the months passed.<sup>29</sup>

The arguments levelled against him revolved around how far he might be construed as giving his tacit consent to the Vichy régime, and how far he allowed it to camouflage its essential totalitarianism under an apparent liberalism. No one, it is true, seriously saw Mounier as any sort of collaborationist, but there was deep division over the tactical wisdom of his action. In his own defence he deployed a number of counter arguments. Initially, he suggested that it might be possible to save Vichy from its own worst tendencies by working to assert its best aspects.

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29. Mounier kept a copious diary during this time (cf. Oeuvres, IV, p.664-723) from which most of the debate can be inferred. Béguin discusses it to some extent in 'Une Vie', Esprit, décembre 1950, p.1020, as does François Goguel in 'Positions politiques', Esprit, décembre 1950, p.815. Jacques Duquesne, in Les catholiques français sous l'occupation (Paris, 1966), draws on these sources in his discussion (p.131-137) of Esprit's 'hesitations', but he gives no specific references and the details are not always accurate.

It is true that he could not propose such a plan with much hope of success, but he felt it as a moral obligation. It would be illegitimate to condemn Vichy, he argued, without giving it a fair chance, even though the condemnation was ultimately almost inevitable. At the same time he felt that it was possible to work within that framework with some hope of exercising an effect in his own field. He was well aware of his defects as a man of action and wrote in his diary:

Il ne faut pas forcer son génie. Je suis un homme de conversation, de méditation, de dialogue[...]  
C'est en ce sens que je fais de l'action[...]. Ce n'est peut-être pas une position d'efficacité politique, je n'y ai aucune prétention. Mais ce n'est pas non plus une position de dégage-ment. Je pense bien peser dans le sens d'une efficacité mais dont le point d'insertion est autre que politique.<sup>30</sup>

This went far towards summarising his dilemma. By temperament and by experience Mounier was fitted only to operate publicly and by a process of debate and persuasion. The whole of his work had always been open and public in order to reach and awaken as many men as possible. He relied on the media of publicity: widely-circulated publications, lectures, debates, discussions, none of which would function successfully in clandestinity. For this reason he was convinced that if anything was to be done during the reign of Vichy, it had to be done in the open, and with the constant aim of keeping the channels of communication open. This, he felt, was possible in a mixed

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30. Oeuvres, IV, p.701, dated 30 March 1941. The emphasis is Mounier's, the omission marks mine.

and chaotic régime, where it would be impossible in a disciplined and monolithic dictatorship. Moreover, since he situated his action on a non-political level, he calculated that there was less chance of being seen as a dangerous influence. In his own view, however, the non-political influence he might hope to wield was ultimately more profound and therefore more effective than any political action he might undertake towards his subversive ends. He insisted that within France under Vichy, it was still possible to maintain true values openly in certain sectors, and to a certain extent. In some of the youth organisations and in some intellectual circles there was a real degree of independence, he argued, and it should be fostered. To one of his critics he wrote:

Je ne pense pas que, sous prétexte que pour des mois les Français vont respirer difficilement, il soit préférable de leur dire qu'entre l'asphyxie et la santé il n'est pas de digne intermédiaire, au moment où nous pensons leur distribuer un peu de mauvais air où lentement nous introduisons de plus en plus d'oxygène.<sup>31</sup>

In other words, against the 'all-or-nothing' argument he proposed the 'half-a-loaf-is-better-than-no-bread' one. The people needed spiritual food, he argued, and since he could for the moment supply their needs without too much sacrifice of integrity it would be negligent to refuse. He was acutely conscious of the battle for the minds of the French population, particularly the youth, and insisted that they should not under any circumstances be abandoned until it was impossible to continue fighting.

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31. Oeuvres, IV, p.695, letter dated 22 February 1941, addressed to Etienne Borne, an active christian democrat who wrote for Esprit up to the war.

In November 1940, therefore, Esprit reappeared, reduced to a slim volume of 64 pages. Much had changed with the defeat and Mounier was as yet unsure of the possibilities offered by the new situation. For this reason, the November edition was somewhat timid. His leading article<sup>32</sup> acknowledged the failure of the Third Republic and reiterated all the general positions Esprit represented. Of the new régime he said he expected it to be excessively authoritarian, but affirmed his willingness to submit to the discipline of events in order to be 'présent à ceux qui souffrent et à ce qui se crée'.<sup>33</sup> Despite its moderate tone, the article deployed a wide range of subtle implications and deliberate ambiguities intended to convey a position of substantial reservations to the informed reader. One example will suffice to illustrate the point. He concluded:

La France s'est suffisamment confessée, mes amis.  
Laissons maintenant les morts enterrer les morts.  
Laissons la France morte enterrer la France morte.  
Comme chacun, voici que nous avons regardé notre  
passé. Ne nous attardons pas dans une mauvaise  
conscience morbide. Il y a plus de travail que  
jamais. Commençons-le de bonne volonté.<sup>34</sup>

The conscious imprecision of the passage permitted several different interpretations according to the inclination of the reader. A Vichy censor might have seen in it a sincere determination to adapt to the new government. A neutral observer would perhaps have read it as an exhortation to

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32. E. Mounier, 'D'une France à l'autre', Esprit, no.94, novembre, 1940, p.1-10.

33. Ibid., p.10.

34. Ibid., p.10.

shrug off the unhappy memories and make the best of a bad job. The initiated reader, however, would have recognised a number of blows struck against the new order. Possibly the passage contained incisive allusions to specific events or declarations which must remain opaque to a later reader, but even in the general context of the time the attacks can distinctly be discerned. Vichy saw defeat as an act of God and consequently demanded that the nation should repent and purge itself of the past errors which had provoked it. In effect, this implied a disavowal of the Third Republic, particularly the Front populaire and all it stood for, in favour of a conservative and authoritarian State. Mounier, in calling for an end to the continued self-reproach and sterile lamentation officially encouraged by Vichy, implicitly resisted the consequent conversion to the values of the catholic Right. In discouraging a morbid preoccupation with past errors, he conveyed his reluctance to abandon much that was valuable in the Third Republic, as well as a refusal to renounce the substance of his own previous positions. Finally, he implied that if there was more work than ever to be done, it was because the new régime would be harder to 'save' than its predecessor. The bulk of this issue of the review was in a similar vein, with the general theme that harsh reality must be faced, but that it must not lead to despair or acquiescence. In another article the concrete implications emerged more clearly.<sup>35</sup> On a political level,

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35. E. Mounier, 'Les nouvelles conditions de la vie publique en France', Esprit, no.94, novembre 1940, p.60-64.

Mounier admitted the only acceptable response to defeat was a massive and dignified silence; but he insisted it should be supplemented by constructive effort in the non-political sector. Hence he felt that attention had to be concentrated on youth organisations, trades unions, religious associations, intellectual circles and public education.

It is difficult to assess the effect of this style of intellectual combat, presented as it was in highly opaque form. Mounier's supporters tended to assert that his unshakeable opposition to any kind of acquiescence to Nazi Germany or Vichy was transparently clear to them at the time, though time and forgetfulness have eliminated much of the clarity.<sup>36</sup> Other, less sympathetic, commentators have taken his ambiguous writing as clear evidence that he flirted with the régime.<sup>37</sup> Post-war polemic has tended to oversimplify the issue in order to assert one or the other point of view more forcibly. Mounier obviously felt his first month's attempt to be unsatisfactory in that his opposition should have been expressed more firmly. Accordingly he became bolder the following month and was rewarded by severe censoring. The resulting areas of blank page were both satisfying and evocative; but on the one hand they were effective in eliminating controversial comment, and on the

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36. This was the position forcefully expressed by Mme. Paulette Mounier and M. Jean-Marie Domenach in private conversations. See also A. Béguin, Esprit, décembre 1950, p.1027.

37. J. Duquesne, op.cit., p.133-134, strongly implies this, as does Roger Garaudy, Lettre à Emmanuel Mounier, homme d'"Esprit" (Paris, 1950), which is a short, highly polemical pamphlet written in the heat of debate over developments initiated by Marshal Tito in Yugoslavia.

other hand, if Esprit were to continue they would not long be tolerated by the authorities. In subsequent numbers, therefore, he struck what he hoped was an effective balance. Publishing substantial quantities of uncontroversial or highly theoretical articles, he also introduced a system of highly allusive criticism. One section, for example, merely reproduced particularly outrageous or ridiculous statements from government officials and the puppet press, under the title 'Pour servir à une histoire de notre temps'. Usually these extracts required no comment and the implied judgement was clear; occasionally the point was emphasised by witty juxtaposition with other extracts or by a pungent title. The book-review section hid a number of barbs, and took every opportunity to attack works by Vichy supporters. Mounier also won many minor victories over the censors, inducing them to cut out quotations from Pétain, to allow articles by Jews, to permit quotations from banned books, to miss references to potentially subversive material and the like. Furthermore, with the aid of influential friends he extracted from them a number of concessions they were initially unwilling to make.<sup>38</sup> A battle Mounier fought with great vigour was against the sudden promotion of Péguy to the rôle of patron to the National Revolution. In a highly selected, expurgated version, Péguy was presented as

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38. The detail of this intellectual skirmishing with the censors can be found in Mounier's diaries for the period, in Oeuvres, IV, p.679-712, passim.

a ferocious peasant patriot in love with a traditionalist catholic France, eulogising Mother-earth as the fount of solid virtue.<sup>39</sup> Such a Péguy was well adapted to the ideology now in command at Vichy, and Henri Massis in particular was active in promoting the cult, which gained considerable momentum. Mounier deployed considerable efforts to rectify this partial, deforming view of the writer he considered as his own spiritual mentor.<sup>40</sup>

The total effect escapes a modern reader, but it is apparent that, after the first two unsuccessful numbers, Esprit won the respect and loyalty of many readers who could not be presented as supporters of Vichy. The fact alone of presenting calm and intelligent discussion was sufficient to ensure the review a wide readership at a time when calm and intelligence were so conspicuously absent. In a sense the mere stimulation of thought was felt as a concrete liberation. In addition, Esprit, along with Stanislas Fumet's Temps nouveau,<sup>41</sup> was probably at the furthest point in

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39. The cult of Péguy is described in A.Werth, France 1940-1955, p.42-43.

40. Mounier was not entirely displeased at Péguy's popularity, but tried to point to the side of Péguy about which Vichy was silent - for example, his admiration of Jews (see E. Mounier, 'Charles Péguy et le problème juif', Esprit, no. 97, février 1941, p.256-259), embarrassing during the campaigns of anti-semitism. Péguy was an eminently ambiguous writer who could be construed as attacking or defending quite contradictory positions. Mounier hoped to turn the ambiguity to his advantage, just as Vichy did. Significantly, Péguy also appeared in a later edition of the clandestine Editions de Minuit series, with selected passages supporting the Resistance cause.

41. Temps nouveau was a continuation of Temps présent which had tried to take the place of the suspended Sept in the tradition of outspoken and socially aware catholic reviews. Though more specifically catholic it held a similar position in the

opposition that any publication was allowed to reach without risking suppression and worse: it therefore attracted the support of a dissenting public which would otherwise have nothing to read. Within five months the review had reached a circulation in the south equivalent to its total circulation before the war. Its opposition was also recognised by the true mentor of Vichy, Action française, which made a slashing attack on it as early as December 1940.<sup>42</sup>

The question arises as to why the authorities allowed Esprit to appear. A first reason is that it was recognised as a catholic review. Since the régime gave the Church a position of considerable privilege, and in return received from it considerable moral support, Esprit was probably considered unlikely to adopt an ultimately dissident position out of harmony with the declarations of the Church hierarchy. A second reason is that Esprit shared much of the vocabulary of the National Revolution. The twin inspirations of Vichy were Maurassian nationalism and catholic personalism.<sup>43</sup> Personalism, less influential than nationalism, stemmed largely from the doctrines elaborated by Ordre nouveau and the reviews of the Jeune Droite in the early 1930's. Three influential figures, René

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41.(cont.) South to Esprit, and was suppressed at the same time. Stanislas Fumet (b.1896) a catholic writer and journalist, directed Temps présent after being a journalist with Sept. Involved with the resistance, he was briefly imprisoned. After the war he made a career in publishing, continuing to write art-criticism and studies on catholic authors and themes.

42. See Oeuvres, IV, p.683.

43. Cf. Robert Aron, op.cit., p.196-217, who gives a detailed analysis of Vichy's doctrine. Aron himself belonged to the Ordre nouveau movement. Expelled from Paris in 1941, he spent some time in Lyon before working successively with Generals Giraud and de Gaulle in Algiers.

Belin,<sup>44</sup> Gaston Bergery<sup>45</sup> and Robert Loustau,<sup>46</sup> were among those who contributed to the elaboration of the National Revolution and who had received some of their earliest training in these movements. As an earlier chapter showed, much of the critique of society proposed by these movements had been shared by Mounier and Esprit and for a few months there existed a degree of unanimity in rejecting the totalitarian state, parliamentary democracy, liberalism and individualism, and in demanding absolute respect for the person, pluralism, corporatism and the implementation of catholic values in public life. Though firm distinctions became increasingly apparent after the events of February 1934, the different movements continued to express their positions in the same terms. Whereas the renewed vogue for these terms gave Mounier hope that he might subvert their official meaning by imposing his own content on them, the Vichy ideologists may equally have hoped to draw Mounier into effective support of their objectives by means of the same ambiguity. A third reason why Esprit was permitted is perhaps that an appearance of liberalism would be encouraged

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44. René Belin (b.1900) an anti-communist trades union leader with a working class, militant background, he was the 'token' Left-wing minister in the government, occupying the Ministry of Production and Labour.

45. Gaston Bergery (b.1892) the former associate of Izard, and the Front social leader, had been the only deputy to vote against war credits in September 1939. He was an Ambassador with various posts under Pétain. He was tried and acquitted of collaboration, after the war.

46. Robert Loustau (b.1899) a professional mining engineer, he had belonged to Ordre nouveau but had passed on to the Fascist Croix de Feu and Parti Populaire français. He was head of the Foreign Affairs office under Paul Baudouin's Ministry.

by the visible toleration of dissent. Provided it remained relatively mild in its attacks, Esprit could serve as a channel of recuperation, focussing discontent in a way which implicitly accepted the form of the régime, and hence forestalling more radical opposition. The question remains as to who was more successful in achieving their objectives, Mounier and his colleagues, or the Vichy authorities. To answer this it is necessary to examine Mounier's other activities which were the logical and necessary adjunct to his activity at Esprit.<sup>47</sup> Mounier was a qualified teacher and considerably experienced as an organiser and leader, so that when Pétain announced his plans to give priority to the formation of French youth in various youth movements,<sup>48</sup> Mounier was able, with a little discreet help from friends in the civil service, to offer his talents.

Jeune France was a movement set up and sponsored by the Youth Ministry for the purpose of fostering cultural and artistic activities among young people.<sup>49</sup> On the

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47. Mounier himself considered that 'La revue n'est qu'un tremplin' (Oeuvres, IV, p.702-703, in his diary dated 30 March 1941). The publication of Esprit was far less potentially compromising than Mounier's personal involvements in Vichy's youth policy.

48. Pétain, following Hitler's example, saw the need to impress the new values of the régime on the nation's youth, and to that end formed a special Youth Ministry, charged with the task. The Revue d'histoire de la deuxième guerre mondiale dedicated a special number (no.56, octobre 1964) to a detailed study of the question, which remains unsurpassed, and from which much of the following material is drawn.

49. Mounier's account of his collaboration in Jeune France is contained in his diaries, especially in Oeuvres, IV, p. 690-692, dated 28 January 1941.

advice of friends, Mounier agreed to participate in it, and for a short time was one of its directors. His rôle was to ensure that the potential élite had a thorough cultural formation, to encourage the growth of regional cultural resources and ultimately to prepare the establishment of a series of maisons de culture. In this, Mounier seems to have enjoyed a considerable autonomy; most of his energy was spent organising lectures, discussions and conferences with little or no intervention from official sources. The relative abundance of funds allowed him to travel freely and organise meetings with whomsoever he saw fit, and he was therefore able to make contact with many intellectuals and artists who shared his own perspectives.<sup>50</sup> The Ecole des Cadres at Uriage<sup>51</sup> was a school blessed by Vichy in the hope of forming new leaders and administrators within the régime. Run by a determined ex-army officer, Pierre Dunoyer de Segonzac, it retained a consistent spirit of fierce independence and invited guest lecturers who were often firmly opposed to the politics of collaboration. Several of its staff and students later passed into the Resis-

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50. The most prominent of these were the four poets Max-Pol Fouchet, Pierre Seghers, Loys Masson and Pierre Emmanuel. Seghers was a contemporary of Mounier's, the other three being about ten years younger. All were connected in some way with the literary Resistance, Fouchet being the most active. Emmanuel was living at Dieulefit, where Mounier settled after his trial.

51. The most useful accounts of Uriage are R. Josse, 'L'école des cadres d'Uriage', Revue d'histoire de la deuxième guerre mondiale, no.61, janvier 1966, p.49-74; and J. Bourdin, 'Des intellectuels à la recherche d'un style de vie: L'Ecole nationale des cadres d'Uriage', Revue française de science politique, décembre 1959, p.1029-1045, on which the present account is based.

tance, but in the meantime it operated on a basis of official sponsorship from Vichy allied with a maximum of autonomy in its workings. From the beginning Mounier paid regular visits as a part-time lecturer and soon established solid links with its staff - including the future director of Le Monde, Hubert Beuve-Méry. Mounier was convinced that it was a bastion for the kind of values he stood for, and did all he could to support and defend it.<sup>52</sup> Mounier also participated for a short time in Compagnons de France,<sup>53</sup> a government-sponsored variant of the scout movement. It published a magazine to which he contributed,<sup>54</sup> but he soon felt its totalitarian and para-military spirit to be uncondusive to the promotion of personalist values and by mutual agreement withdrew.

In the early spring of 1941, Mounier was at the height of his success. Esprit was acquiring a wide following,

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52. Not all those associated with Uriage were connected with any kind of Resistance. Paul Claudel, Henri Massis and Gaston Bergery were involved with the school in varying degrees - all convinced supporters of Vichy. Nor was the school entirely free from the Vichy ideology: Segonzac had a great admiration for Pétain, and he taught a respect for leaders and authority - being referred to himself as 'le vieux chef'.

53. For details of the Compagnons de France, see A. Basdevant, 'Les services de jeunesse pendant l'occupation', Revue d'histoire de la deuxième guerre mondiale, no.56, octobre 1964, p.65-88; and J. Duquesne, op.cit., p.201-205.

54. Mounier contributed only two articles to the weekly magazine Compagnons, in the first and fifth issues. Mme. Mounier, in Oeuvres, IV, p.864, mentions another, but it was not published. Mounier had envisaged a regular column, but his contributions were out of harmony with the rest of the magazine and nothing more appeared after November 1940.

particularly in the youth movements. He himself was in constant demand for talks and lectures, and he felt that his philosophy was winning an increasing acceptance. As time progressed, however, his growing enthusiasm was accompanied by a growing unease. He was enthusiastic because Esprit seemed to him to be the only serious opponent to Action française in the ideological battle for the soul of France.<sup>55</sup> He was uneasy because his continued presence in Vichy organisations, and the continued appearance of Esprit began to awaken his fears of seeming compromised and increasingly drew criticism from his close friends. In April, Uriage was ordered to dispense with his services. The mechanisms behind this are unclear, but it is probable that it stemmed from an attempt to keep so obviously influential a project as the education of a future élite in the hands of more orthodox teachers. Mounier also detected the presence of Henri Massis in the affair.<sup>56</sup> Nonetheless he continued to visit Uriage on an informal basis for some time, as did several more active Resistance leaders.<sup>57</sup>

Throughout the spring and early summer Esprit's opposition to Vichy became more overt. Alongside uncontroversial and often deliberately childish articles, Mounier

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55. See Oeuvres, IV, p.712. This was a gross overestimation on his part and ignored the influence of other personalists, mainly from Ordre nouveau, and of other liberal catholics, such as Fumet. It also ignored the ideological forces which could not be publicly expressed, but which nonetheless were present: particularly the various forms of socialism and Gaullist patriotism.

56. See Oeuvres, IV, p.705&711. Massis was in an influential post at the Youth Ministry. Part of his duties included supervising the official control over Uriage. He was almost certainly instrumental in obtaining Mounier's exclusion, as he implicitly admitted later (cf. Aspects de la France, 30 April 1970).

57. Among these visitors was Henri Frenay, the dynamic lea-

included denunciations of false values and attacks on the Action française orientation of the régime,<sup>58</sup> Correlative-ly the Maurrassian campaign against Esprit intensified and it is likely that a more efficient system would have banned the review more quickly. In July, however, Mounier, increasingly anxious to avoid seeming compromised, published a hilarious mock fairy-tale by Marc Beigbeder wherein Pétain was lampooned in the figure of a donkey, and the whole of Vichy savagely ridiculed.<sup>59</sup> The local censor missed the point, but not many readers did so, including the Vichy authorities. One final issue appeared in which Mounier was able to set down his personalism in full; though prudence demanded that he omit the explicit practical conclusions.<sup>60</sup> In August, he was ordered to cease publication of Esprit, a month previously he had been definitively excluded from Uriage, and a month later he was dismissed from Jeune France.<sup>61</sup> His public activity was now at an end, and he took stock.

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58. E. Mounier, 'Le seul mal de l'intelligence', Esprit, no. 100, mai 1941, p.506-509; E. Mounier, 'Encore un', *ibid.*, p.509-510; E. Mounier, 'Notre maître Barrès?', Esprit, no. 101, juin 1941, p.594-595.

59. Marc Beigbeder, 'Supplément aux mémoires d'un âne', Esprit, no.102, juillet 1941, p.647-651.

60. E. Mounier, 'Pour une charte de l'unité française', Esprit, no.103, août 1941, p.689-711. This article was based on lectures Mounier had often delivered, but strengthened to include a number of direct attacks on Vichy policy, though without naming it as such. It consisted largely of a reiteration of the principles of personalism in an abstract way.

61. See Oeuvres, IV, p.712-717. Esprit was forbidden 'en raison des tendances générales qu'elle manifeste' (*ibid.*, p. 714), on 20 August 1941.

The suppression of Esprit came as a relief and the strength of his relief is indicative of the extent to which his activities had been ambiguous. He wrote to his parents:

Quelle pure joie de n'être pas du côté de la lâcheté, d'être consacré sur papier le frère de tous les innocents qui souffrent pour leur foi dans les camps de concentration, de tous ceux qui peuvent aujourd'hui lever leur regard sans biaiser.<sup>62</sup>

He felt that he was now publicly declared a genuine opponent of Vichy, and saw the event as a kind of accolade. Later he professed surprise at having been tolerated so long, and attributed the fact of publishing ten issues to the stupidity of the censor,<sup>63</sup> though the matter was clearly not so simple. During these ten months he saw his achievement as two-fold: 'le freinage net de la poussée totalitaire' and 'la suture entre notre génération et les jeunes'.<sup>64</sup> Any judgement of Mounier's action in these months must take account of these points as the essence of the case for the defence.

It is doubtful whether Esprit can claim to have made a significant contribution to combatting the creeping fascism which Vichy represented. Any hopes of influencing the new régime were soon dashed as it revealed itself wholly docile to the orders of the occupying power. Esprit's effect on the population as a whole is more difficult to

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62. Oeuvres, IV, p.713, dated 25 August 1941.

63. E. Mounier, 'Les cinq étapes d'Esprit', Bulletin des amis d'E. Mounier, no.29, mars 1967, p.20.

64. See Oeuvres, IV, p.714.

assess, but within its self-imposed limits it was clearly a force for the anti-totalitarian opposition at a time when sullen acquiescence had not yet crystallised into active resistance. Mounier's activity in the official organisations reinforced its effect and arguably provided a degree of lucidity and intelligence which might impede the progress of fascism. Most of his efforts were directed at a small but important élite concentrated in the sphere of education both inside and outside school. In this way his influence, wherever it was exerted, tended to multiply itself automatically. The second point follows from this analysis. Mounier's major success was to have gained a firm foothold in the rising generation. Nine years had passed since Esprit first appeared; the review was marked indelibly by the early 1930's and those - including Mounier - who had been young then. To retain its ideological relevance it had to receive a new injection of youth. This was successfully operated both in the editorial team and in the readership by the considerable impact of the review and its director between November 1940 and August 1941. Esprit was privileged in being the most dissident of the non-clandestine reviews, in being one of the few reviews to appear at all, and in having retained a solid body of support from before the defeat. It was therefore able to command a large potential audience otherwise uncatered for; it was also able to draw on a large number of young intellectuals with few other means of expression. Mounier was privileged

in being one of the most dissident of those intellectuals who were allowed to lead a public life, in being given positions which provided exceptional opportunities to communicate his ideas, and in having retained untarnished his pre-war reputation for courage and integrity. He was therefore in a strong position to qualify as a symbol on which youthful idealism could focus. At a time of extreme confusion he articulated an ideology of constructive opposition which had not been discredited and which offered hope and direction. The importance of these achievements became apparent after the Liberation. The only remaining question is whether Mounier's action had the immediate effect of channelling dissatisfaction into channels acceptable to Vichy, thereby detracting from a more militant Resistance. In the short term it is highly likely that such was his tendency. However, militant Resistance was only beginning to emerge as a tangible alternative for most people and was determined much more by historical developments than by philosophical considerations. Mounier's elimination from Vichy was probably a stronger source of persuasion to resist than his ambiguous presence had been a dissuasion. The effect of his activity under Vichy was therefore negligible in the efforts of building a Resistance movement. In the history of the war, Esprit's intellectual 'opérette face à l'ennemi',<sup>65</sup> was irrelevant. In the history

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65. The phrase is that of Daniel Villey, a contributor to Esprit, who had opposed Mounier's decision to publish the review under Vichy, see Oeuvres, IV, p.700.

of Esprit, it provided a vital base on which to build Monnier's ideological rôle after the Liberation.

#### IV. Resistance.

Complex as Vichy was, the Resistance was even more complex. Even to define the Resistance poses difficult problems.<sup>66</sup> There is no ready criterion for what constituted the Resistance, much less for those who can be said to have been in it. The maquisards and the more flamboyant leaders of the underground movements were a relatively minor part of the whole, and even the more militant resistance workers spent most of their efforts on relatively humdrum business. The majority of those who later claimed to have resisted did little more than practise a sullen non-cooperation with the Germans until very late in the war. Besides those whose resistance was expressed in action, there was a whole category of intellectual or spiritual resistance which is far harder to assess, and to which Mounier belonged.<sup>67</sup> In order to locate Mounier more precisely, a short historical outline will be useful.

Northern France was under German military occupation.<sup>68</sup> This created a situation of instinctive opposition from the

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66. Among the many studies on the Resistance, the most useful are those of M. Henri Michel who has written on many aspects of it. His compact Histoire de la résistance française (Paris, 1965) is particularly useful. Use has also been made here of Henri Noguères, Histoire de la Résistance en France, 2 vols., (Paris, 1969).

67. The problems and achievements of the intellectual resistance are well described in J. Debû-Bridel, La Résistance intellectuelle (Paris, 1970); and Vercors, La Bataille du silence (Paris, 1967).

68. Material on the general conditions of the occupation

vast majority of the population. It was expressed in a multitude of small gestures but serious resistance was from the outset a hazardous undertaking. The earliest organisations were fragmentary and uncoordinated. They succeeded in producing ephemeral underground newspapers from around December 1940, but were ruthlessly suppressed by the Germans, and from early 1941 a steady stream of executions and deportations began. The many small organisations gradually merged so that from roughly the end of 1942 three major networks were in operation in the north: the socialist, trades-union-based Libération-Nord, the middle-class Organisation Civile et Militaire, and the communist-dominated Front National. Even at this stage the number of militants involved was quite small, but as the tide of war turned against Germany during the course of 1943 the movements grew rapidly.

Resistance in the south was different, at least until November 1942. The presence of the ambiguous Vichy government, the absence of German soldiers and the lack of contact with the north created special conditions. Dissent was not immediately perilous and the crystallisation of clandestine movements was slow. From the middle of 1940 Henri Frenay began organising his Combat movement gathering together a number of left-wing catholics who after some

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68. cont. has been drawn mainly from 'L'occupation de la France', special number of Revue d'histoire de la deuxième guerre mondiale, no.54, avril 1964; and Henri Amouroux, La vie des français sous l'occupation (Paris, 1961).

hesitation rallied to de Gaulle in mid-1941. Little by little the network developed a wide variety of subversive activities and published its own paper from December 1941. Sharing Lyon as a base were Franc-Tireur, centred on refugee intellectuals from Paris, and the southern branch of Libération. With the occupation of the south in November 1942, conditions came more closely to resemble those which the North was accustomed to, and from scattered and half-hearted support, the southern movements progressed to more integrated and dedicated series of networks which eventually linked up with the North.

The composition of these early Resistance movements was largely left-wing. The bulk of membership of the Right and Centre parties solidly supported Vichy, while the non-communist left, including more progressive catholics and christian democrats, tended to oppose it. The communist party, clandestine already, held an uneasy and ambiguous neutrality until the German invasion of Russia in the spring of 1941, after which it threw all its forces into Resistance. Added to this were a number of nationalists in the old anti-German tradition and many uncommitted individuals who resisted by personal decision rather than on ideological grounds. Although there was always a great deal of internal disagreement, the major movements were gradually unified under the ultimate, if precarious, authority of de Gaulle and the Conseil National de la Résistance which first met in May 1943.

Much of the activity of the resistance naturally took the form of acts of subversion, increasingly so as time went on. But in addition to the immediate task of liberating French territory, winning the minds of the people and planning the post-war were high priorities that resisters were anxious not to leave in others' hands. The substance of this ideological combat was undertaken by two main methods: study groups and clandestine publications.<sup>69</sup> The study groups were usually composed of prominent intellectuals and aimed at drawing up projects and plans of action to be implemented upon Liberation. They also contributed to the underground press. The press existed for the purposes of information and propaganda in the first instance, but in the long term aimed to stimulate discussion and to prepare a climate of opinion in which a reconstruction could most successfully be carried out. Apart from the regular radio broadcasts from abroad, the secret press was the only effective means of communication, its printing and diffusion were carried out at considerable risk and sacrifice, which placed a particularly heavy responsibility on the intellectuals who wrote for it.

With his experience of ideological struggle Mounier was apparently well equipped to participate in the ideological resistance. In some respects his public activities

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69. On the clandestine press the most useful works are R. & P. Roux-Fouillet, Catalogue des périodiques clandestins diffusés en France de 1939 à 1945 (Paris, 1954); C. Bellanger, Presse clandestine 1940-1944 (Paris, 1961). On the intellectual content of both press and study groups the main published sources are H. Michel, Les courants de pensée de la Résistance (Paris, 1962); and H. Michel & B. Mirkine-Guetzévitch, Les idées politiques et sociales de la résistance (Paris, 1954).

under Vichy could be placed in this category, but there was also a clandestine side to his action which more clearly belongs to the Resistance. Initially it was a simple extension of the broad ideological struggle he was leading at the time. In late November 1940 he organised the first of a series of large gatherings of intellectuals who had sought refuge in Lyon.<sup>70</sup> Not all those present were opposed to Vichy, but this was deliberate policy, both to legitimise the gatherings and to try to exert some pressure on the pro-Vichyites. Many of the journalists and philosophers who attended became prominent names in the history of the Resistance. Hubert Beuve-Méry,<sup>71</sup> François de Menthon,<sup>72</sup> André Philip, François Perroux<sup>73</sup> and Louis Martin-Chauffier<sup>74</sup> are among the best known, but the meetings also included less militant catholic laymen such as Gabriel Marcel, Stanislas Fumet and Jean Lacroix, and several influential and militant priests: Fathers de Lubac, Chaillet, Daniélou

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70. See Oeuvres, IV, p.680 in his diary dated 30 November 1940, and Esprit, décembre 1950, p.1020.

71. Hubert Beuve-Méry (b.1902) had been a foreign correspondent for Le Temps and from 1940 till 1942 was on the staff of the Ecole des cadres, Uriage. Active in the Resistance, he later founded and edited Le Monde.

72. François de Menthon (b.1900), a christian democrat, lectured in economics and politics. Active in the Combat movement and the Comité Général des Etudes, he later held various government offices.

73. François Perroux (b.1903), a prominent economist, was born and taught in Lyon. After involvement in the Resistance, he founded the Institut des sciences économiques in 1944.

74. Louis Martin-Chauffier (b.1894), writer and journalist, was active in the Libération-Sud movement, whose paper he edited. He is mainly known for his contributions to Le Figaro and Figaro littéraire, and for his literary criticism.

and Fessard among them.<sup>75</sup> Not all the participants were of one mind, on the contrary, there was often deep division, though usually on the level of tactics, depending on each man's assessment of the Vichy government. Mounier received some harsh criticism for publishing Esprit, but the majority were unanimous in their long-term aims. How far these meetings can be described as an early manifestation of the Resistance depends on the definition adopted. They had the effect of establishing a loose liaison between all the dissident intellectuals of the southern zone, and of diffusing opinions and information that could not be expressed openly.

Militant resistance was only just beginning at this time, either in the north or in the south. A handful of clandestine pamphlets had appeared, but these early attempts were essentially individual gestures and no concerted organisation had yet asserted itself. The Combat movement was beginning to emerge more strongly during the early months of 1941, and Mounier kept in contact with its activities so that soon after the suppression of Esprit he began, with the blessing of Combat's leader, Henri Frenay, to organise a clandestine study group.<sup>76</sup> Its first task was the elabor-

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75. These four Jesuit priests were all born around the beginning of the century. Chaillet and Fessard in particular were active resisters; Chaillet founded and directed the clandestine Cahiers du Témoignage Chrétien, Fessard wrote its first number 'France, prends garde de perdre ton âme'.

76. The group included Jean Lacroix, André Philip, Joseph Hours, le père Desqueyrat, Jean Wahl and Stanislas Fumet. Its work was of a highly theoretical nature with a long-term intention, arguably more appropriate to a later stage of the war. Its relation to the Combat movement is ambiguous, particularly since most of Combat's activities were more concrete at this stage. The resulting declaration was published in Esprit, no.105, décembre 1944, p.118-127.

ation of a new Declaration of Rights which would serve as the preamble to a new constitution. For a month the group of half-a-dozen intellectuals worked to establish a draft 'Déclaration des droits de la personne', but events cut short their further projects.

Though he was not actively engaged in militant resistance at this stage, Mounier was on close terms with some of the leading Resistance figures and more than once acted as an intermediary putting potential workers in touch with one or other of the local organisations. It was at this time too that the clandestine Cahiers du Témoignage Chrétien began to appear. Though he did not personally take part, he was in close contact with its Jesuit editors, so that the police at one point mistakenly suspected him of having written the first issue.<sup>77</sup> In reality, Mounier devoted much of his time to the preparation of his next projected book, dealing with the French working-class tradition. The project, which occupied him for some time, was never brought to fruition. The extent of his clandestine activity is difficult to establish with certainty, as will become apparent, but the Vichy police suspected him of belonging to the Combat resistance movement. On this suspicion, Mounier and forty-six others were arrested on 15 January 1942. From then until the end of October,

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77. See F. & R. Bédarida, 'Une résistance spirituelle; aux origines du "Témoignage chrétien" (1941-1942)', Revue d'histoire de la deuxième guerre mondiale, janvier 1966, p.3-33.

excepting a short period on parole, he spent his time in prisons at Clermont-Ferrand, Vals-les-Bains, and Lyon. In mid-June he and several others undertook a hunger strike in protest against their detention without charge. After a battle of wills with Vichy lasting twelve days, and amid considerable publicity, the government relented; the detention order was lifted and Mounier and his friends were transferred to hospital. The victory was unfortunately brief, for three days later they were all charged and imprisoned in Lyon gaol, where they remained until the trial took place in later October 1942.<sup>78</sup>

Fifty Combat militants were charged with various anti-governmental activities, but only Frenay and seven other leading figures, all of whom had escaped, were given severe sentences, the remainder receiving light penalties. Mounier was accused of being the spiritual leader of Combat. The only real evidence against him was confined to the text of the 'Déclaration des droits de la personne', to surmise based on the occurrence of his name in association with other known resisters and to suspicion that the Esprit group system was part of a Resistance network. Through the brilliant conduct of his defence by his lawyer, through an impressive array of witnesses to vouch for him, and through the lack of any concrete evidence, he was given the benefit of the doubt and released.

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78. The details of these events are related in Esprit, décembre 1950, p.721-775, and p.1032-1038; and in Oeuvres, IV, p.725-765.

How justified Mounier's acquittal was, is difficult to tell, since the evidence is ambiguous. Nothing surviving of what was written at the time can be relied on, since it would obviously have been foolhardy for any resister to admit to his activities on paper. On the other hand, such accounts as were written after the war are imprecise and coloured by the considerable temptation to overstate Resistance activities. At the time, he wrote to his lawyer denying ever having written in Combat or any of the tracts he was accused of writing.<sup>79</sup> He wrote a long statement of explanation to the Secretary General of the Police<sup>80</sup> thoroughly exonerating himself from any suspicion of subversion, an action which was later judged naïve by fellow-resisters.<sup>81</sup> Clearly he was anxious to escape condemnation, but if no proof were found against him it is possible that there really was none to be found. On the other hand, it is possible that he was successful in hiding the traces, as he later suggested.<sup>82</sup> He also claimed that the leaders of the three resistance movements of the south were due to meet at his house on the day of arrest, but that the rendez-vous had been retimed at the last minute.<sup>83</sup> It is

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79. The letter, unpublished, was written to Maître Gounot in the spring of 1942. A transcript is deposited in the Bibliothèque Mounier at Châtenay-Malaby.

80. Oeuvres, IV, p.745-750.

81. See F. & R. Bédarida, 'Une résistance spirituelle...'

82. In an unpublished letter to Mankiewicz dated 30 December 1945, of which a transcript is held in the Bibliothèque Mounier.

83. In a letter to J. Martineggi, dated February 1945. The full transcript of the letter is in the Bibliothèque Mounier, but the details referred to are omitted from the extract given in Oeuvres, IV, p.725. The omission could be a sign of modesty or an awareness of inaccuracy, on the part of Mounier's literary executors.

evident that if he had engaged in such subversive activity, Mounier must indeed have covered his tracks remarkably well, for it was not discovered by the prosecution. However that may be, he received, for the duration of the war, a small allowance from Combat.

Important factors in Mounier's release were that Vichy had not yet felt the full impact of Resistance, and that its courts still retained some autonomy from the German occupying forces. It was therefore not yet driven to deploy the full range of its punitive powers against dissent. Mounier and those tried with him were among the last to benefit from this leniency. Vichy had had to reckon with the considerable campaign mounted on Mounier's behalf in intellectual, educational and diplomatic circles. More important, perhaps, his contribution to the Resistance was not on a tangible level. He had not written any incitement to civil disorder or undertaken any disruptive political agitation; his influence was directed at fostering strength and independence of mind, cultivating the soil from which resistance could spring - a vital rôle, but not one which could be proved criminal in precise terms.

Mounier's arrest, imprisonment, hunger strike and trial are therefore more significant for the effect they had in people's minds than for the rights and wrongs of the case. The hunger strike in particular aroused a wave of support which established it as a symbolic act of opposition sufficiently important to be broadcast on the

Resistance radio, irrespective of its immediate causes, and the apparent victory gave rise to a feeling of triumph out of all proportion to the ends achieved. In the universities of the south men of moderate views and considerable prestige felt able to protest at the injustice of Mounier's detention without committing themselves to a particular political stance; writers and artists wrote to Vichy confident that their dissent need not be ascribed to complicity in Combat; diplomats, notably the Swiss embassy, considered that their pressure for his release did not violate their political neutrality. But for many people this protest was a rare chance openly to declare an opposition which went much further than the legitimate limits of its expression. The imprisonment and trial alone had an effect of making more people aware of the degree of opposition which existed and the extent to which it was organised. The presence of Mounier helped to confer on this opposition an aura of respectability which Vichy constantly strove to eliminate. Whether he willed it or not, his reputation for intellectual integrity and seriousness of purpose was in part at least assimilated to the Resistance. Not only did the Resistance benefit from his implicit inclusion, Mounier benefitted too. He was established as a resister and acquired prestige in the eyes of those who considered that to be the direction of a Frenchman's duty. The full importance of this became clear in the post-war period. In

the meantime his imprisonment could be considered as a kind of consecration which rendered him acceptable as a model to many young catholics who were determined to resist, but had few catholics of stature to look to for inspiration. It also made his thought a serious force among the ideologies which were contending for the mind of the Resistance.

On Armistice Day 1942, scarcely a fortnight after Mounier's release, the German army occupied the southern zone. Any pretence of French independence was finally shattered and the south henceforth enjoyed roughly the same conditions of life as the north. The relative leniency of the police and the courts towards the various forms of Resistance was at an end. Prudently, Mounier took an assumed name, Leclercq, and retired to a small village, Dieulefit, in the Drôme, where he remained until the summer of 1944. Since the area was nominally under Italian occupation, he felt sheltered from the German authorities. Most of his free time was occupied in reading and working on two major studies: one on the future of christianity; the other, already begun in prison, a treatise on human character. He was not entirely cut off from his old contacts, for Dieulefit had become something of a refuge for writers wanting to escape attention. In addition to residents Pierre

Emmanuel, Andrée Viollis<sup>84</sup> and André Rousseaux,<sup>85</sup> all of whom had worked with Mounier before the war, several passing guests, including Louis Aragon,<sup>86</sup> Elsa Triolet,<sup>87</sup> Loys Masson and Pierre Seghers stayed there for short periods.

At Dieulefit Mounier organised two Esprit conferences in 1943 and 1944, uniting friends from both zones in a series of short study sessions to prepare for the post-war reconstruction. In addition to the established participants, Hubert Beuve-Méry, Paul Flamand,<sup>88</sup> André Mandouze<sup>89</sup> and Gilbert Dru were also present.<sup>90</sup> The last two names

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84. Andrée Viollis, a journalist, had worked on Vendredi and had written controversial reports on French colonial activities in Indo-China.

85. André Rousseaux, writer and journalist, had moved from Action française to Le Figaro and was marginally involved with the Resistance.

86. Louis Aragon (b.1897), a surrealist who turned to communism, was already an eminent poet and novelist. He was one of the leading figures of the literary resistance and engaged in many clandestine activities.

87. Elsa Triolet (b.1896), a Russian born journalist and writer, had married Aragon in early 1939 and shared his activities.

88. Paul Flamand had been editor of the Editions du Seuil since 1938, a position he still holds.

89. André Mandouze had been active in the pre-war catholic Left as a writer and journalist and later became a leader of the progressiste movement.

90. Gilbert Dru, at the time in his early twenties was a follower of Mounier and a militant Resistance worker. Executed by the Gestapo in July 1944, he was considered to be a main founder of the M.R.P.

are particularly significant in that they represent the young catholic intellectuals who became closely associated with Mounier and also the development of the two movements which could claim most affinity with his thought - christian democracy and progressisme. Little enough can be said to have sprung directly from these meetings, though Mounier did take the opportunity to express his determination that Esprit, under his direction, should reappear after the end of the war.

Since the winter of 1942-1943 the prospect of a German defeat had become increasingly apparent and the French Resistance began to grow rapidly. Its activities diversified and on the intellectual side, the preparation for a new post-war France was its major preoccupation. To this end, de Gaulle's envoy, Jean Moulin, the famous "Max", set up a weighty study group, the 'Comité Générale des Etudes'. The group's task was to publish a review of serious political reflection, and to prepare itself to act as advisor to an eventual provisional government, and its regular members were Paul Bastid,<sup>91</sup> Robert Lacoste,<sup>92</sup> François de

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91. Paul Bastid, an eminent academic in political science and law, had held various parliamentary and ministerial posts before the war. He became a member of the Conseil National de la Résistance, and retired from an eminent public career in 1965.

92. Robert Lacoste, a civil servant and trades unionist, later joined de Gaulle as Minister in the provisional government, and held various ministerial posts as a socialist député until 1968.

Menthon, Alexandre Parodi,<sup>93</sup> Pierre-Henri Teitgen<sup>94</sup> and Marc Bloch.<sup>95</sup> Mounier was invited to join, and although there is no record of what he actually did or discussed with the group, he contributed a substantial article to the clandestine review, Cahiers politiques, which expressed the Comité's positions and researches. It is the only surviving piece of clandestine writing Mounier published and it appeared in July 1943.<sup>96</sup> Few of the key words of personalism were present, but that is explained by the desire to evade identification and by the possibility that the article may have been retouched by another hand lest the style be too revealing. Nonetheless, all the basic themes of Mounier's political theory were expounded, emphasising those parts

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93. Alexandre Parodi had already held government posts. He became a minister in the provisional government and represented France on the U.N. Security Council, in addition to other national and international offices.

94. Pierre-Henri Teitgen, professor of law, became Minister of Information in 1943 and went on to hold various ministerial posts as a député for the M.R.P., of which he became President in 1952.

95. Marc Bloch, the distinguished historian, returned from England, where he had escaped at the Fall of France. Active in the Franc-Tireur movement, he was arrested and shot in June 1944 near Lyon.

96. Other articles have been attributed to Mounier, but only one can be claimed with any certainty to have been written by him (see Bibliography 1943 NOTE.): E. Mounier, 'Pourquoi je suis républicain: réponse d'un catholique', Cahiers politiques, no.2, juillet 1943, p.4-9. Reprinted in H. Michel & B. Mirkine-Guetzévitch, Les idées politiques et sociales de la résistance (Paris, 1954), p.88-94.

which were common to all catholics, particularly the refusal to assimilate the catholic faith to any specific form of régime. He outlined the catholic values which any régime should respect, and in conclusion recommended a radically new republic, free from the errors which had vitiated the Third Republic, as the best way to embark on a reconstruction. Relatively free from polemic, the article was an example of Mounier's lucid, though committed, intelligence.

Apart from the Cahiers politiques, Mounier's name has been associated with Combat, Témoignage chrétien and La France intérieure.<sup>97</sup> He was certainly in contact with the first two, and probably with the latter, a substantial review produced in the Grenoble area. If he wrote anything for them then no trace remains. The only other article by Mounier's hand to have appeared was a brief extract from a pre-war article attacking the right-wing press and the cowardly defeatism of the bourgeoisie.<sup>98</sup> Towards the end of the war Mounier was involved in planning at least two projected newspapers, but events prevented the realisation

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97. Incomplete collections of these reviews are kept in the Réserve section of the Bibliothèque Nationale and in the Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine (BDIC). Information on them is drawn from F. & R. Bédarida, 'Une résistance spirituelle...'; R. & P. Roux-Fouillet, Catalogue des périodiques clandestins...; J.-P. Gault, Histoire d'une fidélité, Témoignage chrétien (Paris, 1964); M. Granet & H. Michel, Combat, histoire d'un mouvement de résistance (Paris, 1957); F. Rude, "'La France intérieure': une revue clandestine née dans la région Rhône-Alpes", Annales de l'Université de Grenoble, section Lettres-Droit, tome 22, 1946, p.51-96.

98. It was taken from 'Lendemain d'une trahison', Esprit, no.73, octobre 1938, p.4-5, and was reprinted in Le populaire, no.29, janvier 1944. See D. Mayer, Les Socialistes dans la Résistance (Paris, 1968), p.9. It was reprinted without acknowledgement and without Mounier's knowledge.

of his planned contributions.<sup>99</sup> In all the eighteen months following his release from prison he did not produce much of immediate concrete import. He had clearly decided that he had no vocation as a man of action or as a politician. He declined to serve on any of the provisional committees being set up, and carried his decision even to the point of refusing an invitation to join the Consultative Assembly in Algiers in January 1944.

With the Normandy landings in June of that year, all the adult males in the Drôme lived in a state of semi-mobilisation until the eventual liberation of the area at the end of August. Dieulefit was of little strategic importance and therefore largely escaped the savage battle which was going on around it, though it was only a few miles away that the maquis were decimated in the Vercors. Within a month of Liberation Mounier was back in Paris and ready for the hard battles confronting him in post-war France.

#### V. Conclusions.

Mounier's rôle in the Resistance and his importance at the Liberation were essentially ideological. The military success of the summer 1944 owed nothing to him, and he considered the political events up to that time as being of secondary importance in so far as they affected only the

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99. See Oeuvres, IV, p.795.

material conditions of the post-war reconstruction. He placed his own action on a different level. He sought primarily to exercise an influence on the level of beliefs and values, and though he may have disapproved of the connotations of the term he must be considered as an ideologist. In order to assess the extent of his success in this realm, it is first necessary to examine briefly the position of the other ideological forces operating in France.<sup>100</sup>

With the ignominious fall of the Vichy government and the collaborationist factions, the political Right within France was, for a time at least, eliminated from public affairs in disgrace. Probably the most coherent single force to emerge from the Resistance was the communist party. Although since Hitler's rise to power it had been the most strenuous opponent of nazism, the signing in August 1939 of the Soviet-German pact of non-aggression had split the party by forcing its leadership to denounce the pending war as "imperialist". The party was in disarray and subjected to savage persecutions throughout the war months. Despite tentative approaches both to Vichy and to the German occupant, this persecution was continued and increased after the French defeat and the party, demoralised and decimated, continued a precarious underground existence. June 1941,

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100. In addition to material already mentioned, material for this section is drawn from Robert Aron, Histoire de la Libération de la France (Paris, 1959); Adrien Dansette, Histoire de la Libération de Paris (Paris, 1958); Jacques Chapsal, La vie politique en France depuis 1940 (Paris, 1966).

when Hitler invaded Russia, was the turning point. From this date onwards communists flocked enthusiastically into clandestine organisations and, although under more severe oppression than other branches, soon became the most dynamic wing of the Resistance. Whether they formed a numerical majority is impossible to ascertain, but it is beyond doubt that they amply proved themselves in dedication, in organisation and in effectiveness. Communist preponderance in the Resistance had two main effects. First, it allowed the occupying and collaborating authorities to use the well-established fear of bolshevism as a weapon to hinder the growth of support for the Resistance. Particularly among catholics, many potential recruits were prevented from joining, at least in the early stages, lest they might be contributing to a communist take-over which could be worse for them than the German occupation. Second, and in the long term, more important, the communists had won a degree of respect, trust, and, eventually, influence among resisters of every political complexion. Non-communist intellectuals in particular were often highly impressed by their first real contact with a powerful ideology they had previously dismissed, and had their conditioned fears allayed by close personal relationships. No one who had fought in the Resistance could contest the communists' claim to an important part in the decisions of the post-war. This was

a serious inconvenience in some quarters, but nonetheless a fact which had to be taken into account. Although Mounier had been relatively insulated by events during the occupation, it was a fact which conditioned his action and one he was obliged to take into account increasingly as time passed.

Much ambiguity surrounds the activities of the catholic church during these years.<sup>101</sup> Since Vichy was dominated by the political Right and since the Right was almost entirely catholic, it is not surprising that the Church was accorded a place of privilege in the new order. For the Church, there was no question of dissidence in the first instance, since catholic doctrine traditionally stipulates loyalty to the established civic powers. Although the Church hierarchy could not contemplate any sort of profane authority over it, it amply compensated Vichy by a thoroughgoing cooperation with the régime, sometimes bordering on positive subservience. In return the Church was offered a considerable degree of power, mainly visible by the appointment of traditionalist catholics in political office; Jacques Chevalier, for example, was for a time Minister of Education. By tactical error Chevalier failed

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101. This remains the subject of controversy. The interpretation given here is my own drawn from the following highly divergent sources: P. Vergnet, Les Catholiques dans la Résistance (Paris, 1946); Mgr. E. Guerry, L'Eglise catholique en France sous l'occupation (Paris, 1947); R. Garaudy, L'Eglise, le communisme et les chrétiens (Paris, 1949); J. Duquesne, Les catholiques français sous l'occupation (Paris, 1966).

to achieve his objective of total clericalisation, but in other fields, particularly in youth organisations and social work, those responsible were more successful, to the extent that many clerics thought of Pétain as the instigator of a great new christian revival, and gave their wholehearted support. The hierarchy, finding itself in greater harmony with the government than at any time for more than a century, was not conspicuous in its protests, and indeed one member, the ageing Cardinal Baudrillart, was embarrassingly pro-German. Beyond its charitable work on behalf of prisoners, refugees and other war victims, the official Church's participation in the Resistance amounted to occasional protests at nazi atrocities, isolated protests against the persecution of Jews and the refusal to make forced labour in Germany an obligation of conscience. On the level of individual action, it was a different picture, though among the higher clergy only the Archbishop of Toulouse and a handful of bishops made more than a derisory contribution. Despite the general discouragement of their superiors, many priests and laymen were militant resisters, taking part mostly in non-confessional activities. The production of such clandestine publications as Témoignage Chrétien, the number of catholic maquisards, and the relatively strong catholic representation in the Combat movement helped lend respectability to an otherwise un auspicious record. The immediate effect of the Hierarchy's

position was generally to discourage resistance and encourage compliance with the demands of Vichy even until late in the war. A conscientious catholic could not do other than hesitate before engaging in subversive action, though many did not hesitate long. One result of this was the emergence of a greater spirit of independence among the laity and lower clergy, who felt that their moral position was stronger than that of their slightly discredited spiritual superiors. It became an urgent necessity for the Church to rehabilitate itself in the public mind. As a result, those catholics who did resist were given a prominence which the intrinsic value of their actions did not always merit. This gave rise on the one hand to their being in a position of considerable influence, but also to their being used as a means to secure the reimposition of the Church's lost authority, and eventually the re-establishment of the catholic Right as a political force. This complex position inherited by catholicism from the war was a major determinant in Mounier's action.

After a long period of disarray, the non-communist left asserted itself in the latter half of the occupation as a major ideological current. Less monolithic than either the catholic church or the communist party, it was a product of the Resistance in a sense that they were not. On a political level it found its expression in a regenerated socialist party and in a greatly enlarged christian democratic movement. The socialist party had split in confusion

at the fall of France. Despite the courageous public stand of Léon Blum and one or two other prominent figures, the party had effectively ceased to exist. Many socialists had spontaneously joined the various resistance movements as individuals, and after the communist party had entered the Resistance as a unit, it was not long before socialists began to prepare a reconstituted S.F.I.O. Under almost entirely new leadership, the party drew support from its traditional sources but also from many otherwise uncommitted Resisters. The catholic Left in general, including Mounier, was for a long time disorientated under Vichy and reactions varied widely, though by 1942 many were won over to resistance. Of these a small proportion found an acceptable expression in orthodox socialism, but many felt a rethinking of christian democracy to be more appropriate. These latter, including a large section of the rising intelligentsia, laid the foundations of what was to become the Mouvement Républicain Populaire (M.R.P.).

Since the war, many attempts have been made to establish the Resistance as predominantly belonging to the non-communist Left. If christian democracy can be termed left-wing, which until the Liberation it generally could, and if a small number of glaring exceptions are admitted, those Resistance workers who were not communist were mostly left-wing. Vague though the term might be, it expresses the

desire for a renovated democratic republic, social reform and peaceful international cooperation, however the suggested means of achieving them varied. Within this loose grouping is situated the substance of Mounier's influence. Distinct from catholicism, to which he owed spiritual loyalty but whose temporal embodiments he often had to resist, distinct from communism, to whose social programme he owed broad cooperation but whose philosophy he considered nefarious, distinct from the ideologies of the pre-war years, in which his own thought took its origins but which the war years had largely discredited, Mounier strove to crystallise an ideology based on the principles of personalism. This personalism was intended to express and direct the aspirations of the new men which the Resistance had formed.

The impact of personalism is difficult to assess. On a specific level it is possible to point to individuals who were animated by it. Perhaps the most energetic of these was Gilbert Dru<sup>102</sup> a young catholic intellectual who before the war became attracted to Mounier and Esprit, and who attempted in his own activity to implement the ideals of personalism. A determined resister, he played an important rôle in shaping christian democratic resistance and laying the foundations of the M.R.P. before his death at the hands of the Gestapo. Another energetic resister and close friend

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102. Dru's importance is discussed in Jean-Marie Domenach, Celui qui croyait au ciel (Paris, 1947) and in the special issue of the christian democrat review France-Forum, no.58, juillet-août 1964.

of Dru's, Jean-Marie Domenach,<sup>103</sup> shared a similar enthusiasm and survived to join the staff of the resurrected Esprit. On a slightly different plane, Alban Vistel, a pre-war sympathiser with Esprit, also looked to Mounier.<sup>104</sup> Having set up his own small resistance organisation, but having no activist acquaintances, he wanted to be put in contact with other Resistance groups, and sought out Mounier as one of those most likely to be able to help in practical terms. Mounier introduced him to André Philip and the Libération movement. These three publicly-known figures may be taken to represent many other lesser-known people who looked to Mounier and personalism during the war either as a new discovery or with the experience of familiarity, and who formed the base for personalism as a post-war ideology.

On a general level the impact of personalism is visible in the ideas which dominated the Resistance, though they display a considerable heterogeneity.<sup>105</sup> A revolution was broadly accepted as being necessary to a satisfactory regeneration of France after the defeat of Germany. Though

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103. Jean-Marie Domenach (b.1922) was a student in Lyon, where he contributed to the Cahiers de notre jeunesse. After the Liberation he joined Esprit, which he has directed since 1957.

104. Alban Vistel, catholic journalist and writer has written his own account of the events in La nuit sans ombre (Paris, 1970). His estimate of Mounier's importance to the Resistance can be seen in his article 'Fondements spirituels de la Résistance', Esprit, no.195, octobre 1952, p. 480-492.

105. The following analysis is derived from H. Michel & B. Mirkine-Guetzévitch, Les idées politiques et sociales de la résistance, and from H. Michel, Les courants de pensée de la Résistance.

common to left-wing thought, the anticipation of a material revolution was often accompanied, particularly in Combat, and the southern Resistance, by the insistence on a spiritual regeneration without which it would be in vain. The means of achieving this spiritual and material revolution was a form of social humanism which would renounce the use of totalitarian methods, adopt as its axiom the respect of the human person, and implement the Republican ideals of liberty, equality and justice. These themes, all commonplaces of Esprit's canon in the thirties, now became commonplaces of the Resistance canon, and although a direct causal link is impossible to establish, there can be little doubt that Mounier contributed towards its establishment, however indirectly. Whether his long work of propagation had borne fruit or whether his ideas merely chanced to coincide with those of many other resisters at the time is debateable. What is undeniable is that at the Liberation a new and effective ideological force was needed, and that for a time it seemed that the historical conjuncture might have singled out personalism to fill that need. The need for a political ideology was produced by the failure of the old ones. Liberalism as embodied in the Third Republic was discredited by Munich and the fall of France, nationalism and monarchism had fallen with Pétain, conservatism had become enmeshed in Laval's double jeu, fascism had frankly collaborated with the invader. Patriotism was too diffuse to qualify as a

coherent ideology and communism had too many enemies and too dubious a past to command a consensus. Socialism and christian democracy seemed to hold the key to the future, and a synthesis of the two into a democratic and libertarian socialism based on the values of christian humanism was what personalism offered.

But if events conspired to make Mounier's ideas so potentially applicable, it is also true that events conspired, and were used, to make Mounier an appropriate agent to communicate the ideas. His stature as a public figure and as a symbol was considerable. He was already known to a broad section of the population as editor of Esprit, a prominent review which had tried to continue under Vichy but had been suppressed. He was known to many of the rising generation as a teacher and organiser who had been eliminated from Vichy's youth movements while at the peak of his popularity. He was established by virtue of his imprisonment, hunger strike and trial as a member of the Combat movement. For having adopted or been forced into these crucial positions, Mounier received absolution from any ambiguity which may have surrounded his actions: his public image was that of an intellectual leader of the Resistance. The significance of this is hard to overstate when it is realised that post-war France required Resistance credentials of any public figure who aspired to power or influence. Mounier had also acquired the reputation of being a just

man of unimpeachable integrity. Partly perhaps because he had not acted primarily as a politician, his name was not associated with any of the squabbles or less savoury incidents which had occurred during the occupation years. His hands were free and clean to undertake the task of building a new France on the fresh and untried principles of personalism. Moreover, his appeal was not limited to the Resistance. As a loyal catholic he could hope to win the support and assent of many whose mediocre record owed something to the Church's excessive deference to Vichy, but who were prepared to work in the new spirit of regeneration provided their religious convictions were not an object of recrimination. Finally, although he firmly resisted the consequences, Mounier's insistence on seeing every side of a question before giving a considered, balanced judgement, compounded with the ambiguities inherent in his thought, exposed him to the constant risk of misappropriation. Some whose dubious past obliged them to seek new channels of expression saw Mounier as an apparently progressive model which could safely be imitated on a formal level, but which could be used to serve objectively retrogressive ends. By blurring essential distinctions, by shifting crucial emphases, by neglecting vital reservations, these newly found disciples hoped to use him as a cover for the stealthy reintroduction of conservatism, and rallied to his support. As a result of these factors, at the time of the Liberation,

Mounier was well-known in most sections of the community, and widely looked upon for a variety of motives as a spiritual and intellectual leader. His personal reputation and the opportuneness of his personalism, left him poised to become a major ideologist of the post-war; that is the significance of the war years for him.

C H A P T E R F I V E

THE RISE AND FALL OF PERSONALIST POLITICS

(1944-1950)

I. LIBERATION.

- a) The context.
- b) Mounier's position.
- c) A first analysis.
- d) Personalist politics.

II. COLD WAR.

- a) The communist question.
- b) Retreat from politics.
- c) Backs to the wall.
- d) Conclusion.

C H A P T E R F I V E

THE RISE AND FALL OF PERSONALIST POLITICS

(1944-1950)

I. LIBERATION.

a) The context.

In the autumn of 1944, liberated Paris was in an atmosphere of euphoria; the sense of victory was fuelled by the progressive retreat of the German forces on all fronts.<sup>1</sup> At this early stage it was tempered by the difficulty in assuring the basic material needs, but not even the acute food shortages could stifle the general feeling of relief. France seemed unified as rarely before, though already signs began to emerge that the relative unity would be short-lived. Those forces which contributed to the Liberation all thought of themselves as the Resistance, but their differences, patched over for the sake of defeating a common enemy, soon reappeared when faced with the task of fashioning a new France. Everyone knew what they had been fighting against; there was sharp disagreement as to what they had been fighting for, and each group insisted on its right to a part in

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1. The account given here is common to most studies: particular use has been made of A. Werth, France 1940-1955 (London 1956), and C. Gavin, Liberated France (London, 1955) for general historical material; the political interpretation is drawn in addition from P. Williams, Politics in Post-war France, 2nd ed., (London, 1958), and J. Chapsal, La vie politique en France depuis 1940 (Paris, 1966).

the reconstruction. The end of four years of occupation and puppet government had left the country in a state of turmoil where no one was entirely sure of the forces which composed it. The war was still being fought and the economy had to be lifted from its total collapse, daunting tasks in themselves without the additional problem of creating new political, social and cultural structures. Although it sought ostensibly to unite all movements and tendencies which had played a part in the Liberation, the provisional government of General de Gaulle was divided between various tendencies which, pending the holding of elections, could not yet be accurately perceived.

In the winter of 1944 these tendencies were beginning to crystallise with the foundation congress of the christian democrat Mouvement Républicain Populaire (M.R.P.) and the reconstituting congress of the socialist party. Both these congresses joined with the communist party in pledging their committment to the charter drawn up in March 1944 by the Conseil National de la Résistance (C.N.R.).<sup>2</sup> This charter, intended as a programme of government for the new Republic, was the basis of the revolution which many Resistance workers confidently expected to follow the Liberation. It offered a clear index for situating men and movements on the political spectrum. Briefly it provided for the setting up of an independent Republic, the punishment of collaborators and Vichyites, the expropriation of traitors and all

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2. See H. Michel, Les courants de pensée de la Résistance (Paris, 1962).

who had profited by the war and occupation, universal suffrage, full civil rights and liberties, and economic and social reforms. The economic and social reforms were the main point of contention since they provided for widespread nationalisation, workers' participation in management, producer and consumer cooperatives, economic and social democracy, the right to work and rest, a protected and adequate standard of living for all, full social security, independent trades unionism, education based on ability rather than privilege and full political, economic and social rights for the colonies. It was a left-wing programme reminiscent of the aims of the Front Populaire of 1936 and coincided most closely with the general line of the socialist party. But it was a reformist rather than a revolutionary project and therefore the communist party regarded it as a minimum programme, the first step towards a socialist society. Within the ranks of the M.R.P. it was diversely received, and although the progressive wing gave its enthusiastic committment, there were many who paid no more than lip service.

Although they had introduced new elements into their action, neither the communists nor the socialists were new to the political scene. Both parties had been heavily depleted by executions and deportations, but the new élites which replaced the pre-war leaders followed closely on their predecessors in their approach to political action. Of the

three major parties, only the christian democrats were substantially new, and they did not fail to emphasise that the M.R.P. was born in the Resistance.<sup>3</sup> Although it was not a new conception, christian democracy had never acquired a large following in France. It drew its inspiration from many sources, ranging from Albert de Mun,<sup>4</sup> the Sillon,<sup>5</sup> the catholic youth organisations and the small Parti Démocrate Populaire<sup>6</sup> which had been a minor political force between the wars. In its new form as the M.R.P., it sprang directly from the war, corresponding to the realisation of many catholics that they had a legitimate and important duty to participate in the political life of the nation in a positive and constructive sense. The parties of the Right, to which they had traditionally given their allegiance were now discredited and the time now seemed ripe for the establishment of a progressive party built on specifically christian principles. The founders and leaders of the M.R.P. almost all had strong connexions with the A.C.J.F. and its tributaries which rose to importance during the late 1920's and the 1930's, and must be counted among the Church's young intellectual élite. Although it could not claim any formal ties with the Church, the abundance of informal links with the hierarchy and the various catholic

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3. On the M.R.P., see M. Vaussard, Histoire de la démocratie chrétienne (Paris, 1956); M. Einaudi & F. Goguel, Christian democracy in Italy and France (Notre Dame, 1952); R.W. Rauch, Politics and belief in contemporary France (The Hague, 1972).

4. Albert de Mun (1841-1914) had been engaged in catholic social action in the later nineteenth century, and was a founder of the A.C.J.F.

5. The Sillon, founded by Marc Saignier, had been a flourishing political movement for reform among catholics in the early twentieth century.

6. The P.D.P., a small christian democrat party of the 1930's, was the M.R.P.'s immediate predecessor.

organisations ensured that in its early years at least, it could rely on the Church's blessing. It was also able to use the network of contacts and organisational resources of the catholic organisations. The party's clientèle was drawn almost entirely from practising catholics and from a wide spectrum of opinion. It included at one end those who looked for genuine social reform and even revolution, but were not prepared to risk the possible erosion of christian values which communism and socialism might entail. At the other end it included those who, with the dissolution of the traditional Right, gave their support to the movement as being the most likely to further the reactionary ends they could not yet publicly profess. The ambiguity implied by this broad range of support, was the party's strength in so far as it initially ensured a strong electoral support, its weakness in that it led to division and loss of direction. But in the early days after its foundation in November 1944, the M.R.P. could still claim both to be a direct descendant of the Resistance and to embody the progressive aspirations which the C.N.R. had laid out as its programme.

Although the M.R.P. received most of its support from catholics, it was not the only party catholics supported. As time passed and genuine right-wing parties began to re-emerge, the M.R.P. lost many followers who had supported it only as a temporary expedient. Also, during the first months following the Liberation, a small number of catholics supported the communist party, and a rather larger number, the

socialist party. An important minority had been won over to the kind of revolutionary socialist humanism which emerged as the dominant current of the Resistance, and, in the temporary absence of prohibitions from the Church authorities, had constructed their own relationship with the two major parties which embodied it. Both parties had the advantages of long political experience in political organisation, a proud Resistance record and a coherent political doctrine; these coupled with the muting of their once virulent opposition to religious belief, made them particularly attractive to progressive catholic militants, and to the catholic working-class.

Within the catholic church itself, changes had taken place.<sup>7</sup> The war had sufficed to mute for the time being the voices of authoritarianism which had previously been so prevalent. Such a development gave an opportunity for progressive elements to exert their influence more freely, and could only lead to a leftward shift. The lower ranks of the clergy had drawn from the war a measure of understanding and contact with people outside the Church's immediate ambit, which made them more aware of the relative inadequacy of their traditional pastoral activities. Hence pressure was felt by the upper reaches of the hierarchy, which responded by calling for a renewal of the Church's apostolic mission.

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7. Material in this section is drawn mainly from W. Bosworth, Catholicism and Crisis in Modern France (Princeton, 1962) and A. Dansette, Destin du catholicisme français 1926-1956 (Paris, 1957).

The call was welcomed and interpreted as a new openness and flexibility in answer to which renovations were initiated both within the priesthood and in the auxiliary organisations. The Mission de Paris began to extend its experiment with worker-priests; the religious orders in their different fields re-examined and increased their action in the world, as for example the Jesuits in the spiritual direction of youth movements or the Dominicans in the communications media; experiments with community living and a new emphasis on missionary work began to emerge on a parish level; certain sections of the Catholic Action movements, such as the Mouvement populaire des familles, abandoned their strict denominationalism, preferring a broad and effective action to doctrinal purity; study groups were being set up throughout the country to examine the possible reforms in liturgy and education with the help of which the Church might more effectively fulfill its rôle in the post-war world.

The atmosphere was one of readiness to change within the structures of the Church, although the tendency was not to flourish unchecked. In their temporal activities too, catholics no longer felt bound to traditional patterns. There was the hope of an end to the prickly formalism which had always limited the action a catholic could take to obtain social justice; likewise there was the expectation that the recent upheavals had blown away the ingrained sectarian reactions which had always restricted catholic participation in political life. An example of this was the

evolution of the catholic-inspired Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens. This trades union had always been considered as docile to the employers and bound by strict observance of papal encyclicals which generally excluded militancy. After the war, however, it relinquished its explicit dependence on the Church and, while remaining pledged to christian principles gradually evolved to a position of accepting non-christian workers and of taking its place alongside the other unions as militant defenders of working class interests. In all this the Church authorities acquiesced and continued to encourage catholics to associate themselves with the C.F.T.C.

Throughout France the Liberation was therefore seen as an opportunity for renewal. Four years of occupation had given many people inflated expectations of the post-war; it was seen as a victory for the Resistance in particular and for the Left in general. It was not long before the cracks began to appear in this rosy picture, but in the meantime Emmanuel Mounier embraced the future with high hopes.

b) Mounier's position.

Mounier saw that the gestation of a new order presented enormous difficulties for anyone wanting to influence its formation, but also that the opportunities offered were

unprecedented in their scope. The basis of experience and influence which he had now acquired gave him every reason to hope to play a large part in the creation of a new France. His method was already decided, and, after arriving in Paris in September 1944, he spent two months in frenzied activity to obtain the publication of Esprit.<sup>8</sup> Both materials and facilities were limited. Communications and transport were only slowly recovering from the complete halt to which they had been brought by the fighting; paper was heavily rationed, with newspapers still appearing only on one sheet; manpower, in short supply, was concentrated on priority production and those who helped prepare Esprit were busy much of the time with more immediate concerns. Weekly newspapers were just beginning to appear in diminished form and when Esprit finally reappeared in December 1944, it was by several months the first monthly periodical to do so. The effect of this was to put Mounier in a particularly influential position. The reasons behind this crucial success are not difficult to distinguish. No doubt Mounier's seemingly boundless energy was a major cause, but energy alone cannot suffice as an explanation. The two government ministries which most closely affected his situation were those of Industrial Production and of Information. They were respectively controlled by Robert

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8. Information on Mounier's activities is drawn from Oeuvres, IV, p.797-831, and Esprit, no.174, décembre 1950, p.1046-1060.

Lacoste and Pierre-Henri Teitgen, both of whom had been to some extent associated with Mounier through the Comité Général d'Etudes, during his time at Dieulefit. Fortunate contacts and relationships added to the pressure he was able to apply,<sup>9</sup> so that following Teitgen's permission to appear, he was able to squeeze from Lacoste sufficient paper to print the first number.

Mounier took care to send the first issue of Esprit as far as possible to all those who had been subscribers in the spring of 1940 or the summer of 1941, thereby reaching his widest established audience with a firm expectation of their renewed support. At the same time an entirely new readership was open, particularly in the north, among those who had been brought to political and intellectual adulthood by the events of the war years, and for whom a serious review was a new experience. In the short term at least, he could also count on a substantial support from the professional, educational and intellectual sectors which had for so long been deprived of serious material for reflection. Evidence of this is amply furnished by the subscription lists which were published during the early months. They reveal the names of loyal readers from before the war, of young men and women at the beginning of their career, of institutions for which it would be required reading, and of the new

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9. For example, Mounier's friend and former Esprit contributor, Etienne Borne, was a commissaire in the Ministry of Information. Also the wife of a contributor was related to Lacoste (see Oeuvres, IV, p.798) and he did not hesitate to call on her to help. His other contacts were certainly used similarly, though no records remain.

stars in the French intellectual firmament. The initial response was highly encouraging and soon showed in a healthy regular circulation. The majority of these readers were, as had always been the case, catholic, and any attempt to assess Mounier's activities must take account of the fact that he was addressing himself primarily to catholics.

The catholic context was not a liability, however, and although Mounier might have preferred to have a wider audience, he nonetheless gained access to an impressive system of communication and diffusion which he was fully able to exploit.<sup>10</sup> Although it was careful not to describe itself in such terms, Esprit was generally regarded as a catholic review, and a catholic publication could in the first instance usually rely on an actual readership several times larger than its circulation figures. Many catholic institutions automatically subscribed to Esprit after the war in a way they had been reluctant to do before it, since it was now considered as an important and almost respectable review. This meant that the major articles at least would be widely read and discussed in these establishments. Beyond that, students, seminarists, priests and teachers were interested to keep abreast of what Esprit was saying, and since they were relatively poor, one copy might easily pass through many hands. In the second instance, major articles in catholic monthlies were soon reported in summary and extract form

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10. See Georges Suffert, Les catholiques et la gauche (Paris, 1960), where this system is discussed at some length.

in the weekly and daily catholic press, often with comments, replies and additional contributions. From there the main points would be taken up in the specialised magazines, the provincial press, newsletters and other organs so that the substance of an intellectual article was in some form communicated to a public much larger and more varied than non-catholic writers could hope to reach. The process would not stop there, but in the course of time ideas that were considered significant would become the subjects for study and discussion groups of various kinds, retreats, conferences, debates, lectures and sermons, which contributed to give them an extremely wide currency within the catholic community, and, depending on their quality and aptness, a substantial potential influence. Finally, the Church by the nature of its organisation facilitated networks of personal contacts throughout the country, giving any catholic access to a fund of goodwill which could often be of greater help than more impersonal material means of communication.

Though catholics made up the majority of readers, Esprit also reached a small non-catholic audience, largely made up of intellectuals. Some belonged to other christian denominations or wavered on the margins of belief, some read the review as part of their general attempt to keep abreast of developments in the intellectual field. Though its influence on intellectuals had limited practical effect, the fact of Esprit's status obliged such readers to take its

positions seriously, and at times led to the initiation of debates and dialogues in which the review had at least the chance to exercise a lateral influence on those who did not share its doctrines.

Outside Esprit Mounier and his editorial team contributed widely to other publications both as spokesmen of the review and in their own right. Mounier himself was particularly close to Combat, writing some 20 articles for it between late 1944 and spring 1947; he also wrote several for the socialist daily paper Cité-soir during the course of 1945. This by no means exhausts his journalism outside Esprit, but the bulk of it, along with the vast majority of his radio broadcasts, was devoted to topics not directly connected with political issues. It is less easy to evaluate the impact of the other communication media Mounier used. His various lecture tours, the debates he attended, all that can be called public appearances, attracted interest and comment wherever he went, particularly in the provinces, where he was in constant demand.<sup>11</sup> For the most part his audiences did not extend much beyond the confines of the Church's sphere of influence, though at times he came into direct contact with those socialists and communists with whom he sought a dialogue. Equally difficult to

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11. Mounier's movements can be deduced from his letters and diaries, from allusions made from time to time in Esprit, and from the unpublished internal newsheets which circulated among contributors and subscribers (available in part at the Bibliothèque Mounier).

assess is the impact of his books. The only one which may be said to have a specifically political incidence, Qu'est-ce que le personnalisme?,<sup>12</sup> was first published in Esprit, and will be discussed in that context. Like his personal appearances, his books may have made his thought accessible to some readers who would not otherwise have come into contact with it, mainly by means of advertising or of reviews<sup>which</sup> the books received in the press generally. Most probably, however, their readership was substantially in the same area as Esprit itself. On a political level, therefore, Mounier could hope to influence a predominantly catholic audience which would generally be receptive to his ideas, and a small body of non-catholic intellectuals who respected his judgement, but who did not share his basic assumptions and had thus no reason to regard him as an authority. He could of course also rely on the attention of others, for whom catholic support could play a substantial rôle in their own political actions, and whom Mounier from time to time tried to draw into discussion.

c) A first analysis.

At the time of Esprit's reappearance, Mounier faced a complex political situation in which his own possibilities

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12. E. Mounier, Qu'est-ce que le personnalisme (Paris, 1947) reprinted in Oeuvres, III, p.179-245. Of the others, all but one (Le personnalisme) were reprints of already published material. Apart from Liberté sous conditions (Paris, 1946), which reprinted pre-war essays, they were all of doctrinal or cultural rather than political interest.

were nonetheless clear and considerable. Before the war he had seen his political rôle as being to revolutionise the spiritual; now he saw it as to spiritualise the revolution.<sup>13</sup> In other words, he thought that the most urgent task was to make the leaders of the post-war reconstruction aware of catholic values, whereas before, it had been more urgent to make catholics aware of revolutionary values. In 1944, Mounier realised, the most urgent needs of the country were political and economic, but he insisted that his own overall intentions were the same as they had been in 1932. In his first post-war editorial, he wrote:

Nous n'avons pas le dessein d'être une revue principalement politique. Sans jamais en négliger l'incidence politique, souvent primordiale, nous désirons étendre notre recherche à tous les problèmes de civilisation qui sont remis en cause par la crise.<sup>14</sup>

Esprit was conceived as an ideological weapon, but one that should serve a total ideology of which the political aspect was only the most tangible.

In his first article, Mounier assessed the political situation at length.<sup>15</sup> Assuming that history was moving towards a radical material upheaval, he declared that his long-term aim was to use the historical moment to precipitate a renewal, which would ultimately create a spirituality

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13. Mounier expressed this conception in an address of 23 December 1944 reprinted under the title 'Les cinq étapes d'"Esprit"', in Bulletin des amis d'E. Mounier, no.29, mars 1967, p.9-25.

14. E. Mounier, 'Esprit, nouvelle série', Esprit, no.105, décembre 1944, p.3.

15. E. Mounier, 'Suite française aux maladies infantiles des révolutions', Esprit, no.105, décembre 1944, p.19-33. Reprinted in Oeuvres, IV, p.76-90.

appropriate to the new social order. He argued that since spiritual values and social change were in a reciprocal relationship and the defenders of the spiritual should accept the implications of revolution even if it led to the transformation of their traditional values. Drawing on the frequently-invoked parallel with the Revolution of 1789, he suggested that two dangers had to be avoided. On the one hand, imitation of the Girondins' high moral tone and civilised moderation would leave room for the insinuation of objectively reactionary elements behind the shield of legitimate scruple. On the other hand, the example of the Jacobins might lead to a cold and fanatical extremism which was ultimately a form of fascism. Only if these errors were avoided could France achieve the total revolution which Mounier defined as:

un ensemble de transformations assez profondes pour abolir réellement les maux réels d'une société arrivée dans une impasse, assez rapides pour ne pas laisser à ces maux finissants le temps d'empoisonner un pays par leur décomposition, assez mesurées pour laisser le temps mûrir ce qui ne mûrit qu'avec le temps.<sup>16</sup>

In practical terms this entailed boldness, strength and decision in destroying the former bourgeois, capitalist structures and replacing them with new popular socialist structures. Unless this was quickly done, Mounier argued, the revolution would fail on all fronts, including the spiritual front.

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16. Oeuvres, IV, p.89.

In this analysis, Mounier summarised his attitude to the main political forces in France. He felt that the danger of Girondinism was most present among the christian democrats. For reasons they could never understand, they received only criticism and scorn from Mounier, whom they in turn regarded as a spiritual patron of their movement.<sup>17</sup> The apparent paradox of this is explained by a comparison of the bases on which both relied. The majority of Mounier's audience fell, by social class and by religion into the natural constituency of the M.R.P. However, as a specifically catholic party, the M.R.P. also included most of the conservative elements which Mounier was dedicated to opposing. Therefore, however close to his own the ideas of many christian democrats were, Mounier knew that it could only be a conservative force in practice. Hence, to identify in any way with the M.R.P. would have been an ideological suicide which would probably lose for Mounier any audience outside it. On the other hand, as experience had shown him, almost no amount of hostility on his part would undermine the respect and attention which the christian democrats accorded him. Mounier's position in this was mostly a tactical necessity, but on one major point of principle he was adamant. The M.R.P. presented itself, often cynically, as the only political expression of catholicism. It was

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17. The reactions of the christian democrats were best expressed after Mounier's death in Francisque Gay, Les démocrates d'inspiration chrétienne à l'épreuve du pouvoir (Paris, 1951), and in Etienne Borne, 'Mounier, juge de la démocratie chrétienne', Terre Humaine, février 1951, p.65-71. The problem is studied in some detail in R.W. Rauch, Politics and belief in contemporary France (The Hague, 1972).

therefore guilty of confusing the spiritual and the temporal, an offence which Mounier had strongly attacked in the pre-war Right. He was not going to condone it in the M.R.P. As time passed and the christian democrats emerged as increasingly reactionary, Mounier's insistence on this point of principle also increased. He was able to observe similar situations in Italy and Germany where, for comparable reasons, christian democrats were proving to be the new right wing in politics.<sup>18</sup> As a result of these considerations Mounier gave the least sympathy and the least attention to the political movement which in many ways was closest to him.

When he spoke of Jacobinism, Mounier was referring to the danger he saw lurking in the communist camp of totalitarianism. He did not at this time consider the question at length, but during the post-war period it was the problem of communism which occupied him the most acutely, although in almost every way it was the political force most alien to him. With regard to the communists and the socialists, Mounier faced his most difficult problem. If he was to avoid being swallowed up by christian democracy and if he was to establish personalism as a viable political ideology he had to maintain support within the socialist party and at least gain tolerance from the communists. In late 1944 the three political movements were beginning to take shape, but the

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18. This tendency is discussed in M. Einaudi & F. Goguel, Christian democracy in Italy and France, and in F. Spotts, The Churches and Politics in Germany (Middletown, Connecticut, 1973).

relationship between them was as yet unclear.<sup>19</sup> Mounier did not want to situate himself in terms of a party since he wished to base his personalism on elements from all of them. Whatever its expression, personalism as a political ideology was constructed to command the assent of what Mounier considered to be the best elements among the socialists and christian democrats. In practice this meant the progressive wing of the M.R.P. and christians in the S.F.I.O. These elements, he supposed, would be all the more receptive since they lacked the kind of solid doctrinal foundations which gave communism so much of its force and direction. While he could not hope to supplant communism, he could certainly hope to introduce coherence into the muddled mixture of ideas and habits which passed for doctrine on the non-communist Left.

Until the late spring of 1945, it had seemed possible that united action might be initiated by the three major forces, crystallising the aspirations of the Resistance. Mounier had encouraged this as far as he could, particularly insisting that the communists should not be isolated or excluded,<sup>20</sup> and even went so far as to support the attempt of the communist-dominated Front national group to set up a broad-based party of the Left on the model of the British

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19. The communist party had survived the war with its structures more or less intact, but with an increased membership. The S.F.I.O. (socialist party) held its reconstituting congress in November 1944, the same month in which the M.R.P. held its foundation congress.

20. See E. Mounier, 'La querelle du travaillisme', Esprit, no.106, janvier 1945, p.288-290.

Labour party.<sup>21</sup> This movement could, he thought, resolve the problem, already acute, of the split between the government and the Resistance and the incipient division in the ranks of the Resistance itself. He may even have entertained hopes of establishing himself as a major ideologist of the projected party, and his admonitions to its various constituent elements were all directed towards establishing a common synthesis. During this period of ferment it seemed entirely reasonable to work in the perspective of an imminent revolution which would usher in a new era. A large number of Frenchmen shared this view. The word 'personalism' was on everyone's lips, as a synonym, quite often, for 'socialist humanism', and for a time Mounier's hopes appeared to be in process of realisation. The apparent success of the Resistance movements in preparing a harmonious Liberation suggested that Mounier was about to wield the kind of ideological influence for which, as has been seen, the war years had prepared him.

Despite this apparent success, it rapidly became evident that the united revolution had failed that might have given personalism a political reality; Mounier had to moderate his ambitions for personalism. Despite considerable goodwill and restraint even on the part of the communists, the fusion

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21. See E. Mounier, 'Front national', Esprit, no.108, mars 1945, p.620-621. The F.N. was a group based on a Resistance movement which united communists and the old radicals, among others. It even included a priest on the central committee. During 1945 it merged with other small ex-Resistance movements to form the Mouvement Unifié de la Renaissance Française, a short-lived organisation.

of the three major forces failed to occur. The immediate reasons behind this were the deep-rooted reservations against cooperation with the communists felt by large sections of the socialist party and the M.R.P. The decisive reasons are to be found in the lack of an integrated social and economic base for the proposed union, as the old class divisions painfully reasserted themselves. The three parties emerged from the 1945 elections with their characters sharply distinguished, but still prepared to work together despite their differences. Mounier was in difficulty: his major hope had been for a new organic union which would find in personalism the ideological expression of its fundamental aspirations, the synthesis which would transcend the individual ideologies of its constituents. This hope was now dashed, but its failure held lessons. The establishment of a political ideology required a strong social base, he realised. The required broad base did not exist in society, and personalism on its own had not the social extension with which to challenge its rivals, however strong its intellectual position. In particular it lacked any real hold within the working class. Mounier took the M.R.P. to task for its fear of popular forces,<sup>22</sup> but for all his goodwill, the larger part of his own followers were open to the same criticism. The remedy for such a situation might have been

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22. E. Mounier, 'Les mauvaises raisons', Esprit, no.108, mars 1945, p.619-620.

the creation of an Esprit movement to make contact with the working class, but Mounier's pre-war experience gave him every reason to be sceptical of its practical effect. He therefore had to reassess the situation to find a more modest means of insertion. Such modesty was encouraged by the fragmentation of the Resistance movements in spite of their apparent theoretical agreement.<sup>23</sup> Their adherents had seemed to profess a kind of revolutionary christian or near-christian socialism very close to personalism, but even a common orientation, admittedly vague, could not hold together the political unity which social and economic reality contradicted. Although an organic union of communism, socialism and christian democracy had failed to materialise, the three forces continued throughout 1945 and 1946 in the uneasy cooperation of 'tripartism'. The more modest insertion Mounier now looked for was as a sympathetic observer with no partisan commitment, but who would have the ear of all parties. It was in the light of this situation that he produced his major political work of the post-war period, Qu'est-ce que le personnalisme?<sup>24</sup>

d) Personalist politics.

A year had passed since the heady days immediately following the Liberation, when Mounier had thought utopia

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23. See E. Mounier, 'Obscurium per obscurius', Esprit, no. 113, août 1945, p.444-445.

24. E. Mounier, Qu'est-ce que le personnalisme (Paris, 1947), was written as a series of articles in Esprit, janvier & mars 1946, février 1947. It is reprinted in Oeuvres, III, p. 179-245.

to be on the brink of realisation. He explained personalism now as being complementary to existing political ideologies:

On ne devient pas personnaliste en quittant ses fidélités antérieures ou les points de vue pratiques que l'on a choisis sur la résolution des problèmes pratiques. On peut être chrétien et personnaliste, socialiste et personnaliste, et pourquoi pas? communiste et personnaliste.<sup>25</sup>

The only difficulty with this conception was that although a communist personalist was a theoretical possibility, none existed in reality. Personalism, Mounier explained, supported the socialist revolution but was also opposed to any oppression of the person by totalitarian forces. He realised that his formulation was vulnerable to misappropriation by reactionary elements, but felt that important values were at stake which could not be abandoned. Acknowledging the dangers of theoretical purism, Mounier nevertheless reasserted that the fundamental means of Esprit's action remained unchanged: the strategy of 'le petit groupe, qui vaut par la qualité des hommes rassemblés et l'intensité du rayonnement plus que par le nombre'.<sup>26</sup> This policy of operating through a small dedicated élite, he admitted, held the risk of producing a small band of revolutionary purists, but he felt that the risk could be countered if the necessity of commitment were sufficiently impressed upon them. He pointed out that pre-war experience had proved to him how important were commitments made in imperfect situations

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25. Oeuvres, III, p.179.

26. Oeuvres, III, p.190.

not of one's own choosing. Mounier developed a theory of political practice which accepted that the precondition for influencing events was in the first place to understand them, that the only way to understand them was to take part in their development and that only by taking part in them could one hope to implement the changes decided on the basis of that understanding. Mounier acknowledged that in his attempt to find a satisfactory balance between the retention of fixed principles rooted in the eternal and the introduction of history as a new absolute, he had come close to the Marxist concept of praxis.<sup>27</sup> The difficulty, he saw, was that it became impossible to avoid compromising principles unless they were stated in the most flexible terms. Since his analysis laid weight on practical judgement in particular circumstances, Mounier expected that divisions would inevitably arise from time to time among personalists. The only answer he proposed was to undertake a radical work of education, in the broadest sense. Such education, he said, would be directed towards eliminating, especially among catholics, the illusory stance of neutrality and objectivity, the excessive cultivation of scruple, the narcissistic conscience-searching, the selfish protection of individual integrity and the extreme perfectionism which ultimately inhibited decision and action. He insisted that it was an urgent matter to end the situation where 'les spiri-

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27. Oeuvres, III, p.193. He avoided suggesting that he had taken the concept from Marxism.

tuels sont trop souvent, dans les coups durs, absents pour raison de conscience'.<sup>28</sup>

Mounier's call to commitment, while echoing his earlier analyses, contained a note of urgency previously lacking. In common with the existentialists of Sartre's school, who largely shared the same political objectives,<sup>29</sup> his preoccupation with commitment reflected the realisation of a generation of intellectuals that they were confronted with a situation of massive change which would transform the conditions of their lives. They understood that they and their contemporaries were at the height of their ability and presented with a unique opportunity to exercise a decisive effect on the events of their time. The experience of helplessness which had until then been their lot was now replaced by a determination to make use of the new possibilities of power and influence that seemed to be held out. The satisfaction of these ambitions was incentive enough to make them impatient of the constraints which had traditionally kept so many intellectuals from involvement in political action.

While insisting on commitment, Mounier was careful to emphasise the necessity for recognising transcendent absolute values, without which, he warned, temporal action could

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28. Oeuvres, III, p.196.

29. See M.-A. Burnier, Les existentialistes et la politique (Paris, 1966). Apart from the brief experience of the R.D.R. (see below) the personalists and the existentialists had little contact in political affairs, despite the closeness of their positions. The philosophical relations between them are discussed in the following chapter.

only lead to servitude. He felt that while he himself had the prophetic task of asserting the rights of the absolute, his readers should not interpret this as a call to defend any specific embodiment of the absolute. Rather, he said, they should seek a progressive and inventive response, creating where necessary new forms of temporal action and new institutions more appropriate to expressing spiritual imperatives in the modern world. First, however, Mounier considered that spiritual values required a new form of expression as a result of the dislocation of the classical conception of man proposed by optimistic liberal rationalism. He presented his personalist humanism as the appropriate alternative. The political implications were clear, he said:

Le personnalisme en effet considère que les structures du capitalisme se dressent aujourd'hui en travers du mouvement de libération de l'homme, et qu'elles doivent être détruites au profit d'une organisation socialiste de la production et de la consommation. Ce socialisme, nous ne l'avons pas inventé. Il est né de la peine des hommes et de leur réflexion sur les désordres qui les oppriment. Personne ne le réalisera sans ceux mêmes qui l'ont tiré de leur propre destin.<sup>30</sup>

The unambiguous embracing of socialism was intended to express Mounier's view that it was the only way in which personalism could be put into practice at that time, and that it was the best available means of preparing the world for the spiritual revolution which was still his final

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30. Oeuvres, III, p.244.

aim. An unspoken implication of this commitment was that personalism could not aspire to replace socialism as a political ideology. It could either become a current of socialism, or else renounce its claim to be a political ideology and hope, as a general cultural ideology, to exercise a lateral influence on socialism. At this stage, in early 1947, Mounier was reluctant to choose between the two options. The choice did not long remain open. The spiritual revolution was obviously not imminent, the political struggle was urgent. Mounier's difficulty was that those whose political aims he shared, particularly the working-class and their main representatives, the trades unions, the communist and socialist parties and their allied organisations, these bodies were largely indifferent, if not hostile, to his spiritual values. On the other hand, those whose spiritual aims he shared, particularly the catholic church, and French catholics as a whole, were generally suspicious of, if not repelled by, his political commitments. The war had muted the contradictions between the two and increased the area in which they overlapped. This area of overlap was the one in which Mounier worked, hoping to expand it.

Politically, Qu'est-ce que le personnalisme reveals Mounier as being firmly established on the non-communist Left. In most situations Esprit took up a position similar to the socialist party, Les Temps Modernes, France-Observateur, Témoignage Chrétien and the other non-communist organs

of the Left. For this reason a detailed examination of Esprit's political commitments would not yield the same degree of interest as its pre-war declarations. As one of France's major political and cultural reviews, it made, under Mounier's direction, an important contribution to reporting, analysis and debate in connexion with most political issues. Although its positions were still considered 'advanced' among catholics, it was still respectable enough for the French government to take 500 subscriptions for the purposes of its diplomatic and cultural services.<sup>31</sup> Mounier was by now doing little more than consolidating changes which had been largely won by 1944. In terms of ideological force, his political commitments before and during the war were much more influential than his post-war positions and declarations. In part this can be attributed to the relative novelty of his earlier positions, which had now become familiar. Virtually the only issue on which Mounier's position was not easily assimilated, the one which demanded of him determination and courage in the face of hostility from all sides, was the question of relations with the communists.

## II. Cold War.

### a) The communist question.

Since the departure from the government of General de Gaulle in January 1946, the system of tripartisme had given

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31. See E. Mounier, in a letter to Victor Serge dated 20 October 1945, in Bulletin des amis d'E. Mounier, no.39, avril 1972, p.13-15.

Mounier a favourable political climate in which he could hope to exercise an influence impartially on the three constituent parties and their supporters.<sup>32</sup> Particularly important in this was the basic assumption that a degree of unanimity existed which permitted some common doctrine to be constructed in a limited field. For more than a year the uneasy coalition lurched from one disagreement to another with tensions increased by domestic and foreign pressures. At home, economic difficulties led to a disenchantment with the governing parties; the problem of constructing an acceptable constitution took its toll in disharmony; and the shifts in the balance of electoral power, coupled with the emergence of a Gaullist Right-wing party, the Rassemblement du Peuple Français (R.P.F.), made the concept of three-way cooperation seem less unequivocally necessary or even desirable. Abroad, the first decisive moves in the Cold War made it difficult for France to continue a system of 'national unanimity' increasingly in contradiction with the international disunity. At the crux of the problem were the communists who, as the strongest individual party, had every claim to their share of power, but who excited the fear of France's Anglo-American allies, of the conservative and moderate majority within France, and of their politically weaker partners in government. In May 1947 they were

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32. In addition to sources already quoted, use has been made here of O.R. Taylor, The Fourth Republic of France (London, 1951) and Jacques Fauvet, La IV<sup>e</sup> République (Paris, 1959).

excluded from the government following their protest against the economic policy it was pursuing, and thereafter they became the permanent opposition. This situation served to underline what had only been disguised by tripartism, that of all the differences which separated the parties, those existing between the communists and the others were the most substantial. Whatever conclusions may be drawn from this, it infallibly entailed that the communist party with the consistent support of one fifth of the electorate, became the major point of reference in economic, political and ideological matters, whether in order to oppose it, to support it or to find some other kind of relationship with it. Mounier was not exempted from this necessity, and as a result, much of his attention and much of his writing was devoted to the problem of communism.

The position of the Church on the matter had in theory not changed, although in the immediate months following liberation few leading catholics had felt it opportune to speak out publicly against communism. However, by the end of 1945 orthodox catholic circles were beginning to point out more firmly the dangers inherent in communism for catholics.<sup>33</sup> In February 1946, Mounier drew up a precise account of his attitude towards communism. Tripartism was at its height and the communist party was officially still consi-

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33. See, for example, J. Daniélou, 'La vie intellectuelle en France, communisme, existentialisme, christianisme', Etudes, septembre 1945, p.241-254; L. Beirnaert, 'Les chrétiens en face du communisme', Etudes, décembre 1945, p. 289-303. These articles refused communism with increasing firmness, though with a moderation of tone which was never found again in this Jesuit periodical after 1946.

dered a respectable expression of political aims. Mounier introduced an investigation of the fascination which the party seemed to hold for young intellectuals, with an article which was intended to institute a dialogue between himself and the party.<sup>34</sup> Despite the temptation it represented, he said, there were considerable reservations preventing many from joining the party, and it was his intention to grasp the essence of these reservations. He pointed out that France was split by one major political division:

Elle passe entre ceux qui ne peuvent s'adresser aux communistes globalement pris que dans une disposition fraternelle, même quand ils les combattent, et ceux dont l'anticommunisme, qu'il soit socialiste ou réactionnaire, est le réflexe politique directeur. Nous sommes du côté des premiers.<sup>35</sup>

This in itself was a bold statement, even if he may have been overgenerous in drawing the boundaries of the first category, but his total refusal of the anticommunism which was preparing to sweep the West was, he said, a political judgement taking many factors into consideration. First, he recognised that, whatever its good excuses, anticommunism was the consolidating bond behind the various reactionary forces and as such had to be resisted. Second, he observed, it was an undeniable fact that the communist party had the confidence of the majority, and certainly the militant wing, of the working class. This fact was decisive, he explained, since no one could seriously plan a revolution in which the

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34. E. Mounier, 'Débat à haute voix', Esprit, no.119, février 1946, reprinted in Oeuvres, IV, p.114-137.

35. Oeuvres, IV, p.115.

working class was not the major force; consequently he considered that 'toute flèche dirigée sur le parti atteint dans sa chair même l'espoir des désespérés et dans sa force leur silencieuse armée'.<sup>36</sup> In another time or another country a different party might occupy the same privileged position, but in France in 1946, he suggested, the two other main parties owed their weakness precisely to a lack of contact with the working class: the socialist party slipping centrewards with the deadweight of its bourgeois roots, the M.R.P. sinking under its growing load of Right-wing support and its confessionalism. Third, he saw the attraction of the communist party as springing from its virile solidity, its commitment to action and the near-religious self-discipline it required of its members. Why then did not he and his colleagues become communists?

Briefly, Mounier said, he accepted the force of the Marxist social and economic analysis, but he had to insist on the importance of moral and spiritual considerations, particularly regarding the nature and future of man. There was room, he was sure, both for the Marxist, more concerned with material conditions, and for the personalist, more concerned with human problems. But whereas the personalist was prepared to work with the Marxist, each dealing with his own sphere, the Marxist, he complained, saw the personalist as unnecessary, if not actually harmful, and refused to listen to him. The consequence of such a situation, he

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36. Oeuvres, IV, p.116.

warned, was that the Marxist, by neglecting human questions on the level of means, ran the risk of compromising the human benefits of his envisaged end. While he did not wish moralism to weaken revolutionary action, he went on, he felt that a moral standpoint was a necessary safeguard against new forms of social alienation, and therefore called on the communists to practise a degree of intellectual integrity, putting an end to the wilful double-thinking and repugnant cynicism of some comrades. He called upon them to encourage a liberalisation of conditions within the Soviet Union, permitting more diversity and individual freedom. He also called on the communists to encourage frankness in Russian propaganda so that potential allies could see more clearly what Soviet intentions were. In making these points, Mounier said, he was not participating in the growing anti-communism, but only expressing reservations which were in theory open to be dissolved. He agreed that his reservations did not exclude membership of the party, but felt that they did impose a long hesitation at least. In effect, Mounier was saying, he could only embrace a communism which conceded the acceptance and implementation of personalist values, but he claimed that such a concession was compatible with Marxism and was a feasible proposition, which he would welcome. The texts which Mounier's remarks introduced tended to confirm his impression of communism's attraction for young intellectuals but also of the strong reservations

existing in non-communist circles. From the texts he drew the conclusion that a deep-seated christian humanism and a desire for intellectual and cultural liberty were the two authentic factors opposing communism. Non-communists, however, should not rest, he stressed, until they had satisfactorily solved for themselves the problem of effective political action, which the communists had solved and which constituted their strongest claim to anyone's adherence.

The total effect of Mounier's montage is hard to assess. From his point of view it was first an attempt to draw them into a debate which might lead to a dialogue, which might lead to an eventual modification of their less acceptable principles. The legitimacy of such an ambition is questionable since it implied their acceptance of his perspective and his scale of values; he could hardly expect a sympathetic response to the implicit suggestion that their view of the world was shallow and ill thought out, whereas he held the key to its completion.

Mounier's conviction of his own righteousness was only equalled by the parallel conviction of the communists. In the event, his enquiry attracted the interest of a number of young communists, who tried frankly to explain the reasons for their commitment. Most notable of these was Georges Mounin,<sup>37</sup> a young communist intellectual who replied

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37. G. Mounin, 'Pourquoi je suis resté communiste', Esprit, no.121, avril 1946, p.572-580. Mounin is now better known for his literary criticism and his work in linguistics.

point by point to Mounier's questions and who demonstrated a genuine desire for dialogue. Mounier, though delighted at his openness, chose to tackle the more weighty reaction published by Roger Garaudy in a party review.<sup>38</sup> Garaudy welcomed the intent of the inquiry but could not appreciate why Mounier drew back from joining the party. He thought Mounier was mistaken in his analyses of the relationship between communism and the working class, and between thought and action. He criticised Mounier's thought as being divorced from action and his concept of liberty as lacking any material substance. He suspected the implicit regurgitation of all the worn anticommunist slogans of the last twenty years and concluded:

Tel est au fond le véritable révélateur de ces pensées impuissantes: l'échec devant les problèmes pratiques. Lorsqu'une pensée est incapable de déterminer les conditions actuelles de son efficacité, et de situer son point d'insertion, elle n'est plus que machine à moulin du vent.<sup>39</sup>

In short, he raised the one ghost Mounier had been trying earnestly to lay: his lack of practical efficacy. Stung, Mounier replied<sup>40</sup> attacking Garaudy for his intellectual

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38. R. Garaudy, 'Impuissance et malfaisance du spiritualisme politique', Cahiers du communisme, mars 1946, p.212-223. Garaudy (b.1913) had been a député and a member of the party central committee since 1945. One of the party's leading intellectuals he left it after the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

39. Ibid., p.223.

40. E. Mounier, 'Autour du communisme (suite)', Esprit, no.122, mai 1946, p.855-367.

dishonesty and prejudice. He refused to recognise himself in the caricature which identified his thought with the hackneyed anticommunism he spent much of his time attacking, and accused his critic of misrepresenting his position on thought and efficacy. Sadly, he concluded that there was a long way to go before a true dialogue became possible. There, for the time being, the conversation rested with neither side any closer to a common understanding. While Garaudy was less than just to Mounier's intentions, the barb directed against his ineffectiveness went deeper than Mounier was prepared to admit. And although Garaudy arguably exaggerated Mounier's anticommunist reflexes, it cannot reasonably be held that Mounier had more than a forced sympathy for communism.

There were a number of possible consequences which Mounier could hope to provoke by his efforts. The first, a modification in the party's philosophy, was obviously unlikely. The second, a heightened awareness of moral and spiritual values among party militants, was more feasible, and in 1946 he could at least seek to break down the uncritical and dogmatic adhesion of communists to the party line, although he could scarcely expect the thanks of the Central Committee. The third consequence, a new dynamism injected into the entire Left by the example of the best elements in communism, was perhaps the one Mounier most earnestly wanted to promote. The points on which he specifically praised the party - solidity, efficacy and working-class roots -

were those he constantly urged on the personalist movement. The fourth consequence, an immunisation of the rest of the Left against the temptation of communism, was one he did not and could not formulate publicly. While they did not amount to the obsessive anticommunism of many socialists, which Garaudy thought he detected, Mounier's objections to communism were strong enough and deep-rooted enough to drive him to counter the spread of its influence beyond the unavoidable minimum. The last two consequences come near to explaining the accusations which have often been urged in condemnation of Mounier's effort of dialogue: that he was either contaminating the catholic Left with communism or else was undermining the party's support within the catholic working class. That such contradictory allegations could be made was the logical result of his trying to occupy a position between two forces which both assumed no man's land to be in the hands of the enemy: communists demanded nothing less than total adherence, anticommunists nothing less than total opposition, it was Mounier's first task to refuse the dilemma of choice. To establish this middle ground was the indispensable condition for a generalised growth of personalism as an effective element in the political ideology of a revolution, however far away its realisation might be.

Mounier's efforts at dialogue were received with caution in more traditional catholic circles. Although more trust was placed in him than before the war, a journal like

Etudes was not slow in giving alarmed warnings to Esprit against the dangers it was courting.<sup>41</sup> In particular, Mounier was advised not to underestimate the efficacy of christian social doctrines, and not to concede too many virtues to the communists. No one thought that Mounier was seriously tempted to join the communist party. However, one of the most difficult problems of Mounier's position was whether he was prepared to condone any catholic membership of the party. He only became fully aware of the problem during his visit to Poland in spring 1946, during which he spoke to men who, by nature of their country's government, were being obliged to think out their attitude in the knowledge that a great deal hung upon their decision. In the France of 1946, Mounier realised that many catholics were in fact members of the party, and at that stage, he did not feel it to be illegitimate. His lack of concern was encouraged by the fact that the Church judiciously refrained from any disciplinary measures over the issue. In mid-1947 with the mounting pressure of the Cold War to temper his relative permissiveness, Mounier was obliged to write more precisely worded explanations of his position.<sup>42</sup>

While he still did not deny the practical admissibility of the step, he was now careful to surround it with a whole series of conditions. Communism was not the only possible

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41. See J. Daniélou, 'Tentation du communisme', Etudes, avril 1946, p.116-117, and L. Barjon, 'Quand les chrétiens s'accusent', Etudes, mai 1946, p.214-220.

42. See E. Mounier, 'Réponse à une enquête sur le communisme', Confluences, no.18-20, 1947, p.191-206, reprinted in Oeuvres, III, p.611-620; and E. Mounier, 'Communistes chrétiens?', Esprit, no.135, juillet 1947, p.116-121, reprinted in Oeuvres, III, p.620-625.

political stance, he insisted, and those who embraced it should be aware that alternatives existed. If they persisted, he said, they must be exceptionally watchful that their christian faith be not eroded; under no circumstances should they abandon their ultimate reservations on spiritual matters and indeed they should try as far as possible to impregnate their action as communists with a true and thorough spirituality. On the level of theory, he stressed, catholicism and communism were deeply at variance, but practical considerations were also part of a spiritual life, and important concrete realisations ought not to be jeopardised for the sake of purely theoretical differences, provided these differences were constantly borne in mind. The effect of his analysis was to safeguard the right of a catholic to join the party, but at the same time to demonstrate the difficulty of such a decision and its limited practical effect. He reiterated his conviction that revolutionary action was not limited to political action and that in the political sphere other commitments were as defensible as that to the communist party. Unfortunately, from Mounier's point of view, this one aspect of his thought aroused passions which the rest did not. No one much minded ostensibly revolutionary ideas in non-political matters, and if they did they could always reply within the conventions of intellectual debate; catholic participation in the M.R.P. and the socialist party was hardly controversial, even to those who disapproved of it; but support for the only

remotely revolutionary force in politics was not taken lightly. His position in 1946 was acceptable to the catholic authorities only temporarily. In 1947 it had become more difficult to sustain, and as the Cold War intensified it became almost impossible, even with the reservations which Mounier progressively multiplied round it.

b) Retreat from politics.

Throughout 1947 the anticommunist campaigns intensified while the living conditions of the working class worsened. Mounier's dilemma was sharpened by the crisis which broke during the winter of that year. In response to widespread strikes and demonstrations the government unleashed the full force of its repressive machinery to restore order; the working class, divided in its response, was defeated and the trades union federation split in two. France henceforth slipped into the orbit of the United States, the communist party was isolated and the working class weakened. More than ever Mounier was under pressure to adopt a position of anticommunism and more than ever he asserted his refusal. The communist party, threatened, began to close its ranks and tended increasingly towards the intransigent and illiberal reflexes which Mounier most regretted in it. To add to his problems a series of political trials in Eastern Europe had begun with that of Petkov in Bulgaria, and the behaviour of the Soviet Union, as demonstrated in the take-over in Czechoslovakia, seemed to confirm his worst fears

about it.<sup>43</sup> Though not actually changing his position, Mounier felt obliged to set out more emphatically his reservations about the party.

An important incentive to him in this action was the founding in late 1947 of the Union des Chrétiens Progressistes,<sup>44</sup> who declared that spiritual and political matters were entirely separate and that in their judgment the only feasible means of defending the working class and the ideals of popular democracy was to work in conjunction with the communist party. Replying to their manifesto,<sup>45</sup> he criticised them for their unseemly haste, their uncritical adulation which forgot or ignored the negative side of communism's record, and their lack of a strong and independent position which alone could prevent their merely being assimilated into the party. He took care not to condemn their efforts as such, but also not to identify himself with their line. Religiously, he argued, they were perfectly within their rights as far as he could tell, but politically they were being naïve. As the progressistes defined their attitude more precisely, it appeared that they were less unconditionally bound to communism than had at first seemed the case, and particularly that they were not party members for the most part. Mounier felt more confidently that they

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43. See Mounier's commentaries on these affairs: 'Petkov en nous', Esprit, no.138, octobre 1947, p.591-599, reprinted in Oeuvres, IV, p.142-150; and 'Prague', Esprit, no.143, mars 1948, p.241-255, reprinted in Oeuvres, IV, p.151-160.

44. See A. Dansette, Destin du catholicisme français, p.225-234.

45. E. Mounier, 'Délivrez-vous', Esprit, no.141, janvier 1948, p.133-139, reprinted in Oeuvres III, p.625-632.

might be a promising movement,<sup>46</sup> though he knew that too close an involvement with communism was unacceptable to the catholic hierarchy, and that the hierarchy was bound eventually to assert its view. For himself, he was careful to keep contact with the communists to purely verbal exchanges.

By 1948 Mounier was finding it difficult to sustain his revolutionary political posture within the framework of existing political forces. The communists were becoming intractable, the socialists sterile and centrist, the christian democrats increasingly reactionary. The only apparently dynamic group was the Gaullist R.P.F., and he wanted nothing to do with its neo-fascist tendencies.<sup>47</sup> He began to look for a new socialist force, free from the contaminations of the existing parties. Only at one moment did this hope come anywhere near fulfilment. Towards the end of February 1948, after several months of preparation, a new political movement was launched: the Rassemblement démocratique révolutionnaire (R.D.R.). Its comité d'initiative, dominated by the figure of Sartre, included Paul Fraisse<sup>48</sup> as Esprit representative among the nine journalists, four members of the National Assembly and seven trades unionists. The

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46. See E. Mounier, 'Les chrétiens progressistes', Esprit, no.150, novembre 1948, p.744-746, reprinted in Oeuvres, III, p.632-634.

47. In December 1947 Esprit produced a special number devoted; among other things, to Gaullism, and entitled 'La pause des fascismes est terminée'.

48. Paul Fraisse (b.1911) a long-time contributor to Esprit was at the time directeur-adjoint of psychology at the Hautes Etudes. He has since established himself as a distinguished psychologist.

foundation appeal<sup>49</sup> declared its independence from liberal democracy, weak-kneed social democracy and Stalinist communism, its determination to struggle for human rights, liberty and social justice, and its fidelity to the working class and the spirit of revolutionary democracy. Concrete proposals were not precisely stated, but its declaration coincided closely with the principles and aspirations which Mounier held. He greeted it with cautious optimism as the first sign of a new socialist revival, and urged his readers to lend their efforts to ensuring its success. To some extent it seemed to him the answer to his problem of political insertion:

Il n'est pas contestable que l'absence d'un mouvement politique qui tant bien que mal exprimât l'incidence politique de nos recherches créait à beaucoup, à nous-mêmes, une sorte de malaise. Le R.D.R. fondé fin février, sera-t-il ce mouvement? Il est trop tôt pour l'affirmer. Il peut l'être.<sup>50</sup>

He had become conscious that despite his attempts to lever the major parties in a personalist direction, he was failing to exert more than a piecemeal influence which could not be fashioned into a cogent political force. The R.D.R. offered the promise of a movement which might embody a near-personalist ideology, and he detected in it the youthfulness and seriousness which might command success. To his credit, however, Mounier also saw the embryonic faults which might

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49. Printed, among other places, in Esprit, no.143, mars 1948, p.464-466.

50. E. Mounier, 'Premier signe: le R.D.R.', Esprit, no.143, mars 1948, p.463. See also Esprit's 'Enquête sur la France désorientée' (no.146, juillet 1948) which called for 'un regroupement de tous les éléments progressistes non communistes' (p.74).

vitiating its action: a temptation to mere rhetoric, a lack of economic and political rigour and an excess of leaders with too scanty a base. Sadly, his fears were too well grounded and the R.D.R. soon foundered in theoretical squabbles and a surplus of good intentions over political realism. Disavowed by the socialist party which furnished most of the troops, and strongly criticised by the communists and their fellow travellers, on whose cooperation they had counted, the movement had no substantial group left to turn to for support and eventually died a natural death.

Mounier was extremely disappointed, and began to feel that he was gradually being forced on the defensive. He lacked the political vehicle which might have made it worthwhile for him to formulate practical suggestions. Though he did not despair, he found his attention increasingly taken by his other work, to the extent that his political declarations became more sporadic. He had, it seemed, nothing to add, and in the face of a great reactionary upsurge he felt politically helpless. Personalism now had no specific political expression either in one party or in a coherent grouping of parties which might serve to install it as a political ideology. The most he could do was to encourage the development of a personalist tendency within all parties. For himself, he now emphasised the need to withdraw from specific political commitments:

Il faut que l'intelligence se donne le recul, les doutes, le champ de réflexion nécessaires pour rendre l'action plus efficace, ou l'accorder à des exigences qui la débordent.<sup>51</sup>

Though not precisely a reversal, Mounier's position had evolved considerably in the year since he had emphasised the need to 'mettre la main à la pâte révolutionnaire'.<sup>52</sup> Without any single concrete objective to pursue, one political party was as good as another for Mounier's purposes. Since he could not be sure of finding an audience, sympathetic or not, among non-christians, Mounier was increasingly addressing himself to christians. His efforts were directed at revolutionising catholics once more, in the hope that eventually as much as possible of their spirituality would penetrate the revolutionaries. In the case of the socialist party, catholics were already a significant minority and, along with a number of protestants, formed a ready audience within the party.<sup>53</sup> Mounier had no need to appeal for a spiritualisation of its doctrines since most of the unacceptable elements had been removed or muted, he therefore spoke to socialists in a similar way as to christian democrats, emphasising the need for bold revolutionary action with no dogmatic anticommunism. The M.R.P. to all intents and purposes consisted of catholics and had largely slipped into a reactionary political stance. Mounier tried to conduct a rearguard action against the resurgent right wing and to keep open the M.R.P.'s early

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51. From an untitled editorial note, Esprit, no.146, juillet 1948, p.75.

52. In 'Communistes chrétiens', Esprit, no.135, juillet 1947, p.119 (Oeuvres, III, p.623).

53. See René Rémond (ed.), Forces religieuses et attitudes politiques dans la France contemporaine (Paris, 1965).

progressive tendency. Mounier therefore resigned himself to a long term strategy, trying to prepare ideologically for the day when events might again lend themselves to the assertion of personalism as a political ideology. He effectively withdrew from political debate at this point, and it was only an initiative from the communist party that drew him temporarily back into political activity.

The beginning of 1949 saw a serious attempt by the communist party to initiate a wide-ranging peace campaign and once more to extend the hand of friendship to catholics. For some months, Mounier's interest in communism had been purely philosophical, he now found himself plunged back into the troubled waters of a political dialogue with them. In April 1949 Maurice Thorez,<sup>54</sup> speaking at a party congress, called specifically on Mounier, Claude Bourdet,<sup>55</sup> and men like them who refused anticommunism, to join in a common action with them.<sup>56</sup> Thorez presented cogent reasons:

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54. Maurice Thorez had been Secretary-General of the French communist party since 1930. He had been a Minister in the government until 1947.

55. Claude Bourdet, editor of Combat, was a christian socialist. He had been Vice-president of the Assemblée consultative and later was a founder of the Observateur.

56. The speech, given to the National Congress of the party 10 April 1949 at Montreuil, was published under the title 'Partisans de la paix, unissons-nous', Cahiers du communisme, mai 1949, p.623-646.

Nous ne vous demandons pas de penser comme nous, de renoncer à vos croyances, à vos opinions. Nous vous demandons de nous entendre pour lutter contre une politique que vous-mêmes condamnez. Vous aussi vous vous élevez contre le Pacte Atlantique, contre la guerre au Viet-Nam, contre la préparation à la guerre anti-soviétique, contre les provocations anti-communistes. Vous reconnaissez que la justice aux balances faussées frappe les militants ouvriers, tout en épargnant les spéculateurs, qu'elle condamne les résistants, tout en libérant les traîtres. Vous reconnaissez que de graves dangers menacent la France, la République, la Paix. Comment dans ces conditions, pouvez-vous vous refuser à l'union indispensable pour sauver ce qui nous est commun, pour sauvegarder l'esprit de la Résistance qui nous animait et qui nous anime toujours vous et nous?<sup>57</sup>

The list of common points was impressive and Mounier could not fail to recognise the force of the appeal; he took it seriously and replied in Esprit.<sup>58</sup> Without questioning Thorez's sincerity or courageous attempts to put an end to the isolation of the party and the resulting sectarianism, he had, he said, to refuse his invitation, however sad and depressing the refusal might seem. Admitting his irritation at being singled out, he accused the communists of going the wrong way about obtaining the left-wing unity which they professed to desire. They were, he said, intolerant, intractable and inflexible, and could not hope to attract serious collaboration from himself or the non-communist Left in general until such time as they gave up their insistent attempts to swallow up all who came near. This

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57. Ibid., p.634-635.

58. E. Mounier, 'Ne nous demandez pas de ne pas être nous-mêmes', Esprit, no.156, juin 1949, p.849-852, reprinted in Oeuvres, IV, p.172-176.

strong retort, coming soon after Mounier had firmly reprimanded the progressistes for their excessive cooperation with the party, drew immediate responses from major communist intellectuals. François Billoux<sup>59</sup> considered Mounier's position interesting from the point of view of the foundation of a future United Front movement, but thought it unfair to attack the firmness of the party's doctrine when this was part of its strength. Roger Garaudy<sup>60</sup> felt that Mounier's position was based on a kind of philosophical relativism which ignored class and political determinations. He thought it was illegitimate or at least ill-advised to try to separate Thorez from the party, or the party from the working class, whereas communists were justified in trying to separate individual catholics from their fellows since the Church as a political force was anticommunist and anti-working-class. J.-T. Desanti<sup>61</sup> saw Mounier as torn between the Church and the working class, and felt he would benefit from a little self-criticism which might reveal to him the contradictions inherent in his position. All three articles offered fraternal advice and left open the possibility of cooperation, but all were written on the assumption, exactly symmetrical

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59. F. Billoux, 'Eléments de discussion avec Emmanuel Mounier', France nouvelle, 2 juillet 1949, p.3 & 8; 9 juillet 1949, p.3; 16 juillet 1949, p.3. Billoux was a long-standing member of the Political bureau of the party, and a député for Marseilles.

60. R. Garaudy, 'Le dialogue communistes et catholiques et le marxisme vivant', Cahiers du communisme, août 1949, p.993-1004.

61. J.-T. Desanti, 'Scrupules et ruses d'Emmanuel Mounier', La nouvelle critique, octobre 1949, p.56-70. Desanti was a party journalist and philosopher.

to Mounier's, that they were in possession of the truth and had to persuade their interlocutor of the wisdom of abandoning the outstanding differences. Both parties used the plea 'ne nous demandez pas de n'être pas nous-mêmes' while asking the other to change. Clearly little could come from such a dialogue. At precisely this point, with a state of comradely deadlock inaugurated, the Church authorities chose to intervene.

c) Backs to the wall.

On 14 July 1949, the catholic Holy Office published a decree which forbade catholics, on pain of excommunication to join the communist party or to undertake any activity which might lead to the setting up of a communist state. Though it was scarcely more categorical than the encyclical Divini Redemptoris of 1937, it went so far as to threaten excommunication and was immediately seized upon by the Right wing who turned it into ammunition for the Cold War. It was far from certain what the aim of the decree was, since any number of situations might have provoked it - particularly the position of catholics in Poland, or it might merely have been a reminder of the Church's declared view. In the face of a virulent press campaign against the French catholic Left, with himself prominent among the targets, Mounier had within days written a long analysis of his reaction.<sup>62</sup>

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62. E. Mounier, 'Le decret du Saint-Office', Esprit, no. 158, août 1949, p.305-314, reprinted in Oeuvres, III, p.654-663.

Refusing to dismiss or disobey the decree, he tried to reach a full understanding and assent, but first insisted that the measure could not be taken as evidence of the Church's right-wing sympathies, and that neither he nor Esprit were guilty of the activities it condemned. It was, he said, a warning and a guide to the Church's avant-garde to exercise an increased caution and rigour. The duty of an avant-garde, he noted, was to venture into dangerous and unknown regions in order to explore and chart them, but it was essential that it should not lose contact with the main body on whose behalf it was operating. The effect of declaring part of this territory out of bounds, he added, was not to prevent exploration, in the contrary, it was to encourage a redoubled effort of exploration in the areas still within bounds. In other words the faithful should interpret the decree in a constructive way, using it to become more fully aware of their obligations and responsibilities both to other catholics and to the non-christians with whom they were engaged in dialogue. This said, however, he admitted that some political content had inevitably entered the promulgation, though that need not vitiate the spiritual. If a blow had been struck against communism, the only serious opponent to capitalism, then, he argued, it was all the more a catholic's duty to assert himself in the fight against capitalism, lest the poor and wretched, the working class, feel itself abandoned by the Church. He noted that the Church had excommunicated neither the nazis,

nor the fascists, nor the exploiters, nor the arms manufacturers, all of whose material crimes were far greater than those of the communists. Perhaps the most appropriate reaction to the decree, he suggested, was to regard it as a measure to prevent the rising forces of democracy and socialism from being contaminated by the risk of tyranny which communism still undoubtedly contained. In the same way, the Church had in the past tried to defend reason against liberalism, social reform against materialism, and science against scientism, and each time attempts had been made to throw the baby out with the bathwater, the same attempts to throw revolutionary socialism out with communists, he concluded, must not be allowed to succeed.

While in this article Mounier did not ostensibly deviate from his already established political relationship with the communists or anyone else, it nonetheless marked a turning point. His brave words could not erase the fact that he was now obliged unconditionally to reject the possibility of catholics joining the communist party, though he had previously always stopped short of such a rejection. But perhaps more important, for the first time since the war, Mounier was confronted with the danger which had haunted him before the war, that of disavowal by the Church. Of course, the climate was now different, but the shadow of disapproval was still a serious problem, since Esprit was still dependent on predominantly catholic support. His criticism of the progressistes had been undertaken at least partly because he recognised that their position was ultimately unacceptable to the hierarchy, but he was commonly

thought of as being close to them, so that any attack on them would by implication cloud his reputation. The decree was widely construed as just such an attack and however unjust this lack of nuance might be, he knew that it would inevitably have its effect. He was correct in his assertion that the decree did not condemn him, but its impact was wider than the precise area of its strict application. Extra prudence was therefore necessary for those close to the people and positions affected: Mounier was almost as close as it was possible to come. Privately Mounier considered the decree as extremely unfortunate, probably based on a massive error of historical interpretation and sense,<sup>63</sup> but since the Church had spoken he had to take its decision as containing a prophetic warning in addition to the immediate practical consequences. It was as if a sharp rap on the knuckles had been administered. Mounier's attitude towards the communists, which had never been enthusiastic and which for some time had been less than warm, cooled rapidly.

The communists, dismayed at the set-back to their attempts at reconciliation with catholics, and finding their former misgivings confirmed, returned to their hard line. Relations deteriorated. Although 1949 was not a politically turbulent year within France, international

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63. He made this assessment in a letter of 9 October 1949, Oeuvres, IV, p.821.

controversies arose which proved highly divisive on the Left, serving especially to separate the non-communists from the communists. Mounier had always gone out of his way to give the benefit of the doubt as far as possible to the communists in previous affairs; even the trial of Cardinal Mindszenty in Hungary had not drawn Mounier to join the righteous howl which was set up in catholic circles. Now after the decree, though not necessarily as a direct consequence, he began to take a more intransigent stance against the communist bloc where catholicism was often being roughly dealt with, and from which disquieting stories were emerging. In November 1949 he published in Esprit two articles relating the difficulties Czechoslovakian catholics faced from an antireligious government, an article analysing the Rajk trial in Budapest, and an account of a recent visit to Yugoslavia. All the articles were sharply critical of Russian communism, and in his presentation Mounier denounced 'le silence peureux, le mensonge cynique et l'illusion satisfaite'<sup>64</sup> which, having rooted itself in communism, threatened to vitiate all that was positive and valuable in it. He did not, he insisted, want to damage the interests of the international working class which looked to the communist party as its only serious protector, but could not accept that its aims would be better served by lies than by truth. The following month he published two statements by prominent

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64. E. Mounier, 'De l'esprit de vérité', Esprit, no.161, novembre 1949, p.660.

fellow-travellers, Jean Cassou<sup>65</sup> and Vercors,<sup>66</sup> who wished to make a similar protest against the falsehoods which the party was propagating. The French communists took these criticisms as part of a much broader orchestrated attempt to undermine their position and divide the working class. Their replies were vigorously polemical taking the attitude that those who were not solidly behind them must be against them and classifying Esprit along with the anticommunist press.<sup>67</sup> Mounier stuck to his position but refused to be drawn into a generalised attack on the communists, insisting that he and other sympathetic intellectuals had the right and duty to formulate constructive criticism.<sup>68</sup> Since he was no longer able to assume that the communists were amenable to such criticism and since he himself could not make such concessions as would restore the lost dialogue, he felt that the time had come to reassess his whole position regarding them.

Mounier's editorial in Esprit of February 1950 was significantly entitled 'Fidélité',<sup>69</sup> to indicate that he was following the fundamental principles he had always held; but its effect was to modify his political position. He

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65. Jean Cassou, the writer and art critic, became curator of the Musée d'Art Moderne.

66. Vercors, writer and journalist, had founded the clandestine Editions de Minuit.

67. The party's hostility to Esprit's new position was expressed in Humanité, 14-19 décembre 1949, in Les cahiers du communisme, janvier & mars 1950, and in La nouvelle critique, décembre, mars, avril, mai 1950, among others.

68. E. Mounier, 'Réponse à "Humanité"', Esprit, no.163, janvier 1950, p.130-134.

69. E. Mounier, 'Fidélité', Esprit, no.164, février 1950, p.177-182, reprinted in Oeuvres, IV, p.17-21.

had, he said, never been directly linked with either the communist party or Marxist philosophy, however much he might have benefited from their inspiration, and if he had been particularly concerned with communism since the war, it was because that had been a basic condition for the satisfactory implementation of the ideals of the Resistance. Moreover, he added, he could not contemplate abandoning the mass of the working class, who looked to communism as their only true friend. As long as there had been a chance of a united national movement he had, he insisted, refused to strike any blow against the communists. However, such a movement, he said, required the communists to respect their allies and refuse the dangers of dishonesty, totalitarianism and subordination to foreign models, particularly the U.S.S.R. Since they had failed to meet these conditions three duties seemed to Mounier to impose themselves. First it was necessary to continue the fight for material security, human and social dignity, democracy, honesty and liberty regardless of whoever else, even communists, he might be in practical alliance with at any time. Second, it was necessary to take more account of the price and the consequences of socialist revolutions, weighing more carefully the incipient dehumanisation they may contain. Third, it was necessary patiently and intelligently to avoid the isolation of communism and therefore the proletariat from the other progressive forces, since experience had proved that only if

all three were combined could a socialist revolution succeed. As a result, he concluded, the non-communist Left had to refuse anticommunism, refuse to be excluded from the proletariat by the communists, refuse the negative satisfactions of ineffectual purism, and redouble its efforts to create an authentic and just socialist force.

In effect, Mounier was signalling the end of the privileged situation which communism had enjoyed in his eyes since the war. No fundamental difference was theoretically involved, but the tactical immunity he had given the party was lifted, and though he did not mean this to herald a concerted attack, it inevitably meant preparing for battle. The Cold War was now anyway in full swing, and the Left, divided seemed condemned to a long term of entrenched fighting. The communists, already under severe pressure, adopted a savagely defensive posture. Garaudy's reply to Mounier's new position was vicious.<sup>70</sup> Attacking him as the servant of anticommunism, and as part of an organised offensive in the guise of friendship, Garaudy accused him of using the ~~excuse~~ excuse of spiritual values to cover a crusade on behalf of the interests of capital. With a highly selective anthology of quotations, he attempted to discredit Esprit's action during the occupation. Then, pointing out his refusal to accept the reality of class or class struggle, his persistence in trying to set up a kind

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70. Roger Garaudy, 'Lettre à Emmanuel Mounier, homme d'Esprit', (Paris, 1950), this was a short pamphlet.

of third force, his defence of Tito against Russia, and his rejection of Thorez's offer of cooperation, he suggested that Mounier's real ambition was to lead the left-wing working class youth away from the defence of the working-class. Mounier's reply was measured and calm.<sup>71</sup> He rebutted the unfair suggestions as to his intentions, his war record and his participation in a plot and reiterated his firm determination to refuse the polarisation of communism and anticommunism. He did not agree that his ambition to exercise a salutary influence on communism could be equated with an attempt to subvert it. Finally, he reaffirmed:

Nous restons sur le terrain que nous occupions, si difficile soit-il à tenir aujourd'hui. Il arrive que l'histoire récompense ceux qui s'obstinent, et qu'un rocher bien placé corrige le cours d'un fleuve.<sup>72</sup>

These lines, among the last he published before his death in March 1950, asserted an ambitious desire to occupy a position which was becoming practically untenable: that of bridge between the communists and the non-communist and mostly anticommunist Left. How long he could have held it is impossible to guess; already his shift over the previous six months had made it extremely precarious. He had on the one side to overcome his constitutional repugnance for the methods of communists both in France and in other countries, the prudence dictated by the Church's categorical position and the increasing force of anticommunist

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71. E. Mounier, three articles in Esprit, no.165, mars 1950, p.545-552, reprinted under the title of one of them, 'L'avalissement ne rend pas', in Oeuvres, IV, p.180-189.

72. Oeuvres, IV, p.189.

pressure among those who had usually been close to him in outlook. On the other side he had to overcome the communists' fierce hostility to criticism, especially from outside, their deeply rooted reluctance to tolerate non-materialist philosophy or religion and their unwillingness to respect the independence of their potential allies. Dialogue had broken down, but Mounier did not intend to allow himself to be ignored. He determined to carry on trying to do the impossible since he could not see an acceptable alternative and was unwilling to do nothing at all. The task was all the more difficult for being obviously a long term commitment, and had he lived, it would have demanded a heroism and obstinacy equal to anything he had yet shown.

A man of less determination might quite reasonably have despaired. With the failure of the R.D.R. Mounier's political insertion had been brought to an end, except in so far as his influence continued to be felt in the parties of the pragmatic and conservative Troisième force government. The government offered less and less ground for any hopes he had entertained as to its capacity to embody the principles of personalism. Political reality did not lend itself to the implementation of the programme sketched briefly in Le personalisme.<sup>73</sup> Taking up the major themes of the Manifeste from before the war, his programme was formulated more as an act of duty than hope, revealing by its brevity the improbability of its being seriously pro-

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73. E. Mounier, Le personalisme (Paris, 1949). Part Two was entitled 'Le personalisme et la révolution du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle', and is reprinted in Oeuvres, III, p.509-525.

posed in the foreseeable future. All Mounier could hope for Esprit was that it be accepted as a journal of serious political comment until such time as it might again become the vehicle of an effective ideology. In this he need not fear, for it had long been established as an important source of material for reflexion with a high reputation for informative and perceptive reporting of international affairs. Mounier himself had contributed considerably to this, but had never considered it as more than one aspect of his total mission. He was disappointed at the failure of his attempt to establish a viable political ideology and though he did in a sense refuse to admit the failure, the refusal was more of a stubborn defiance, a dogged gesture to the future, than a real belief in the possibility of success.

d) Conclusion.

It would be unjust to dismiss Mounier as a complete political failure. His ambitions had been progressively eroded since his early dreams of setting up a comprehensive personalist ideology. He had failed to make contact with the working-class and therefore could not advance the personalist revolution which he hoped it would lead. He had failed to maintain a meaningful dialogue with the communists, without whose political strength, he recognized, no revolution could take place. These failures were of his own making, though not altogether his own fault. His intellec-

tual and élitist methods were not designed to work in a communist, working-class milieu, which was foreign to him, but in the catholic middle-class to which he belonged. The priorities he defended were too remote from working-class experience, the language he used too close to that of the middle-class intelligentsia for him to breach the class barrier, let alone the religious barrier. It was inevitable that the success he ultimately sought should elude him, but in the process he achieved a different kind of success, which was less spectacular but not negligible. He had fulfilled the rôle of the vanguard in establishing positions in relatively unknown territory: in this case the margins of communism. Despite the severe strain under which the events of 1949 had placed him, Mounier did not slide into anti-communism, nor was he censured by the Church, so that although he failed to maintain the dialogue, he did at least succeed in keeping the possibility open on the catholic side. Limited though this achievement may appear, it was nonetheless valuable in the context of the intensifying Cold War, the Vatican's increasing intransigence, and the temporary defeat of working class militancy within France. Other catholics more audacious than Mounier came to grief with surprising speed: the progressistes, the worker-priests, the advanced Dominican theologians, Jeunesse de l'Eglise and Quinzaine, for example.<sup>74</sup> Mounier therefore

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74. The evolution of the various groups in the catholic avant-garde is complex, and remains contentious. The most useful survey of developments in the years immediately following Mounier's death is A. Dansette, Destin du catholicisme français (Paris, 1957).

stands out again as arguably the furthest a catholic could go in that direction at that time. The effect of such a position was to make him a point of reference and a point of departure for other catholics.

In terms of political changes, Mounier had no tangible effect, but in terms of ideological changes, his influence is undeniable. The intellectuals of the M.R.P., among whom he counted many personal friends, borrowed extensively from his analyses, albeit in attenuated form, and even looked to him along with Jacques Maritain, as one of the party's spiritual patrons. It is doubtful how much of this reflects creditably on Mounier, and how much can be ascribed to the M.R.P.'s search for coherence and intellectual respectability, particularly since it was on the level of political judgements that the M.R.P. diverged from his thought. Other intellectuals, politically nearer to the socialist party, were more faithful to his inspiration. Some of them, less cautious than Mounier, became involved in the various movements mentioned earlier which came to grief under the weight of papal displeasure during the early 1950's, but many avoided these hazards and continued to pioneer the same paths. For them Mounier was as much a comrade-in-arms as a spiritual mentor. They had been formed before and during the war and shared the same struggles. Esprit and the group which Mounier had gathered round it held a leading position among the catholic avant garde. The newspaper Témoignage chrétien typified the relationship: it took

Mounier for a helpful and respected guide though not an authority.<sup>75</sup> Mounier's effective political contribution lay therefore in helping to form a progressive intellectual group of which he was only part, and in giving the example of a successful attempt to follow in principle a consistently revolutionary line, while retaining his integrity as a catholic.

Mounier had at one time hoped for more than this, but his chosen method of creating a small active élite to educate and animate the people was of necessity a long term project. He could not reasonably have expected at this stage a more tangible political result than the existence of such an élite. The less tangible success of setting an example fulfilled the ambition of his early years to lay down an act of witness. He believed then that he would act as much by what he was as by what he did, and although his conception of political action underwent a considerable evolution, he finally returned to his earlier notion. In effect, he represented the combination of catholicism and revolutionary socialism. Whatever its defects and whatever his failures, the fact that such a combination could exist in one man without prejudice to his faith was in itself a powerful political statement. Mounier failed as a political ideologist but in his failure he set up a human paradigm for his revolutionary personalism, and the cadres for a

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75. See J.-P. Gault, Histoire d'une fidélité, Témoignage chrétien, 1944-1956 (Paris, 1964).

continuing attempt to implement it politically. Whether it can be termed success therefore depends on the extent to which his successors promoted his political aims. After his death, Mounier's influence merged even more into the multiplicity of currents affecting the political behaviour of French catholics, and his particular contribution is impossible to isolate. The achievements of those who, consciously or unconsciously, continued his efforts belong to a different study. Mounier, however, led his ideological struggle on more levels than the political and was more concerned with the success of personalism in what he considered more important: the spiritual revolution.

C H A P T E R   S I X

BATTLE FOR MINDS (1944-1950)

I.    EXISTENTIALISM.

- a)    The participants.
- b)    Confrontation.
- c)    Interpretation.
- d)    Developments.

II.    MARXISM.

- a)    Sparring partners.
- b)    Confrontations.

III.    PERSONALISM.

- a)    Situation.
- b)    A fighting science.
- c)    Potted personalism.
- d)    Conclusion.

C H A P T E R   S I X

BATTLE FOR MINDS (1944-1950)

I. EXISTENTIALISM.

a) The Participants.

The war and the German occupation had destroyed France's political institutions, and placed its social and cultural institutions under severe pressure from many different directions.<sup>1</sup> Throughout France, the ways in which people thought of themselves, each other, and their relation with the world, had been called into question by events. Of the pre-war ideologies which sought to give structure and coherence to people's reflexions, none had emerged unshaken. Many philosophies and attitudes were available in post-war France, but of those which claimed to offer explanations and directions for all levels of human experience, and which commanded sufficient support to be considered as ideologies, only three seemed to have survived the war: catholicism,<sup>2</sup> Marxism and existentialism.

By virtue of its ambiguous rôle during the occupation, the catholic hierarchy had been widely discredited and as a result lost much of its moral authority. With it, the conservative and traditionalist wing of the Church had suffered a temporary eclipse. In the years immediately

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1. The historical judgments made in this chapter are substantially taken from discussions in previous chapters and the material used is drawn largely from the same sources.

2. Protestants and jews had emerged from the war with credit, but they were small, relatively diffuse minorities, and could not be considered as major ideological forces.

after the war, therefore, responsibility for maintaining the Church's ideological power fell to younger, more progressively-minded catholics. They formed a variety of groups and movements within the Church, each expressing its view of christianity in a specific activity.<sup>3</sup> Some worked in political formations, like the progressistes, some in theological explorations, like the Dominicans, some in home missionary innovations, like the worker-priests; there were many others. Among them, Emmanuel Mounier and Esprit had chosen the task of producing a synthesis within catholicism, which would encompass all levels of ideological activity, defending the established values of the Church and extending the application of those values to as wide an audience as possible. Within catholicism there was no ideology which combined a comparable degree of coherence and comprehensiveness with the prestige and the audience which personalism commanded. Mounier led the strongest of the catholic ideologies in post-Liberation France, and was therefore in the vanguard of the Church's spiritual and intellectual struggles against its ideological rivals. The other main religious group in France, protestantism, was not sufficiently organised or widespread to present an ideological challenge to personalism. In any case, many protestants, like André Philip or Denis de Rougemont, were happy to subscribe to personalism, which was generally compatible with their own beliefs. Mounier's task was two-fold: to consolidate and

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3. A detailed analysis of these groups and movements is given in William Bosworth, Catholicism and Crisis in Modern France (Princeton, 1962), and in Adrien Dansette, Destin du catholicisme français (1926-1956) (Paris, 1957).

extend personalism as a distinct though not fully autonomous ideology; and to defend the central values of catholicism against its two major opponents. His confrontation with the more powerful of them, Marxism, will be examined later. Existentialism was a more complex challenger. It was more diffuse and ambiguous than Marxism and it was in many ways close to personalism.

The first difficulty with existentialism is defining it. As a general concept it is open to many interpretations and may include many thinkers within its scope, including Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Jaspers, Marcel, Sartre, Camus and a long list of others.<sup>4</sup> As an ideological movement of the 1940's, however, it had a much more specific meaning. It was a social phenomenon which found its expression in a loose grouping of French intellectuals. By looking at the social functions of existentialism and at its intellectual leaders, it will be possible to grasp existentialism as an ideology.

In the absence of appropriate sociological analyses, the social base of existentialism in liberated France is difficult to establish with precision. Nevertheless, it is possible to draw an approximate picture which makes it sufficiently clear.<sup>5</sup> First, existentialist was a term

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4. There are many accounts of existentialism, few of which give a clear definition of their subject. The most useful philosophical accounts are John MacQuarrie, Existentialism (London, 1973); Jean Wahl, Philosophies of existence (London, 1969); and Mary Warnock, Existentialism (London, 1970).

5. The account which follows is compiled from K. Douglas, 'The French intellectuals: situation and outlook', in E.M. Earle (ed.), Modern France (Princeton, 1951), p.61-80; from D.G. Charlton, 'French thought in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries', in D.G. Charlton (ed.), France (London, 1972), p.243-290; from brief comments in historical studies already quoted; and from a study of the French press of the 1940's.

loosely applied to a broad, non-conformist subculture which ranged from anarchistic young social drop-outs to the sophisticated expression of disillusionment in various art-forms. Often there was little connexion between these people and Sartrean philosophy, but the mood was sufficient to suggest a link. The mood was based on an amoral individualism, most often founded on bitterness and disillusion, but often enough giving birth to a surprising intensity and imagination. It was a middle-class phenomenon, even the social drop-outs had mostly dropped out of middle-class families. And it was largely centred on the generation which had come to adulthood just before, or during, the war. This is not to say that its various manifestations did not appeal to an older or socially wider audience, but the wider audience were largely visitors, rather than inhabitants of existentialism. The mood on which the existentialist vogue was based was not of Sartre's creation - it was a product of the historical conjunction, a reaction by the rising generation to the years of occupation and the post-war austerity. Sartre expressed a similar mood. He was therefore appropriated, and, as often as not, misappropriated. Many disparate phenomena were assimilated, rightly or wrongly, to existentialism once the label had been established. A taste for jazz, American films and fiction, Juliette Greco, unkempt appearance, unconventional behaviour, iconoclastic views, all qualified in the popular press and the popular imagination as existentialist. This tendency was to some

extent encouraged by the flow of novels, plays, films, articles and public appearances by the recognised intellectual leaders of the movement, and by their frequent association with those public figures who catered to the tastes which were seen as existentialist. Whether or not it was initially due to a misrepresentation, Sartre and his colleagues undoubtedly owed their influential position to the success of 'existentialism' on this level. The centre of the sub-culture was the Parisian Latin Quarter, the traditional centre of French student life. Students formed the main link between the sub-culture and the second major reality which the term existentialist designated - the cultural ideology.

In so far as it had a distinct reality, existentialism as a cultural ideology was atheistic and took as its leader Jean-Paul Sartre, although he was not alone in this rôle. The consciously ideological supporters of existentialism largely consisted of students and the educated young middle-class, predominantly Parisian, who were filling the lower ranks of the professions, education, the media and the civil service. As well as appreciating the fashionable popular culture they also found their needs satisfied by the literary and intellectual output of leading figures in the existentialist circle. Sartre's novels, plays and to a lesser extent his theoretical writings were an abundant means of propagation. He himself was the object of enormous attention, even adulation - Boris Vian's friendly exagger-

ation in L'écume des jours is not entirely unfounded.<sup>6</sup> Simone de Beauvoir maintained a steady production. Camus, who for some time was regarded as an existentialist, had a large following, increased perhaps by his journalistic activities. Les Temps Modernes was widely read. In addition to these, other figures added their contribution in literary, philosophical or journalistic ways to consolidate the spread of the new ideology and there was also a sizeable backlog of works published or written before or during the war which had not received the attention they now commanded. Nowhere was material lacking.

For the most part, even those who read Sartre and the others were not especially concerned with the intricacies of phenomenological existentialism. What they took was a way of looking at themselves and the world and a way of behaving in it. In many respects it was an *expression* of attitudes they already felt appropriate, but since they now found an intellectual framework which suited them they adopted it as their personal and communal ideology. The main features of this ideology were the denial of any kind of philosophical or moral absolute, the affirmation of the free individual as the only point of reference, a disillusionment with the world, and a determination to face the worst, and if possible change it, with courage and honesty.

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6. The hero of the novel (published in 1947) was obsessed with Jean-Sol-Partre, presented as the subject of widespread adulation. There was sufficient truth in this for the exaggeration not to appear ridiculous. Biographical notes are not given in the present section on the main existentialist figures, since it is assumed that they are sufficiently familiar.

It was not generally a warm nor an optimistic world-view, but it did take account of the situation in which its adherents found themselves, it did explain much that they felt, and it did offer a credible way of coping with the overwhelming experiences they had come through and could expect to continue to face.

It was in the same group that the political support, the third aspect of existentialism, was based.<sup>7</sup> Of this there is less to say, since it could not be said to have established itself as a political ideology. There was no clear continuity between the substance of its message and its political positions, despite the general requirement of commitment. The politics of existentialism rested ultimately on the declarations of Les Temps Modernes, and the circle around it, which made it a less than cohesive force in the non-communist Left.

The fourth and final face of existentialism is philosophical. It involved the intellectual leaders and the school which sprang up around them, and was socially based again in the higher reaches of the same class. Of necessity perhaps, its members were drawn from those sections of the middle-class which dealt with ideas and who had the leisure to devote themselves to study: writers, journalists, teachers in senior secondary or higher education. To them might be added a few students and a sprinkling of intellectually inclined people from other sectors, but not many

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7. The political aspects of existentialism are dealt with at length in M.-A. Burnier, Les existentialistes et la politique (Paris, 1966).

could do more than try to keep up with developments. Who precisely these intellectual leaders were, is more difficult to establish, particularly in the early months following the Liberation. By the time the first issue of Les Temps Modernes was published in the autumn of 1945, however, certain figures had emerged clearly. For the first time the existentialists had access to their own monthly review; previously their work had been published individually in a variety of organs. There can be no simple equation between existentialism and the writers whose names appear in the review. Certainly the three major contributors must be included: Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, but beside them a large number of other writers appeared who cannot easily be classified. Can Jean Genet be so labelled? Or Michel Leiris, or Violette Leduc, or Boris Vian, to mention a few of the better-known writers who figured in its pages. There is no satisfactory answer, but they and others felt an affinity with existentialism, and, more important, were felt by the public to belong to the movement. This perhaps is the crucial point; as long as they were thought of as existentialists they were effectively assisting the ideological growth of existentialism. There were others, less closely bound to Sartre's circle, writers of the calibre of Georges Bataille, Etiemble, Francis Jeanson and Maurice Blanchot, of whom

something similar could be said. Perhaps most prominent of these latter was Albert Camus.

To try to establish a coherent intellectual position which would be acceptable as a description of something common to all these is a fruitless pursuit. They were too varied individually and they never produced any common statement of position. Quite the reverse, if anything they were distinguished by their extraordinary lack of unanimity. From the beginning they were divided by a succession of debates and quarrels of varying gravity which had them almost all set against one another at some time. As a result it is difficult to find a more precise characterisation of their common features than that which has already been applied to their ideological supporters. Nonetheless, they would all have acknowledged that intellectually, ideologically or subjectively their basic concerns were most typically articulated in the central position of Sartre. Immediately objections arise on several counts, but it was largely true of the existentialists in the autumn of 1945, though Camus should perhaps be excepted. This situation was reflected on the one hand by Sartre's immense personal popularity and on the other by the torrent of opprobrium which was soon poured on him by ideological opponents. But if Sartre was the acknowledged giant of existentialism at this stage, it must also be said that he was joined by colleagues of only slightly less stature. A thinker like Merleau-Ponty, or a novelist like Simone de Beauvoir could

not fairly be assimilated to Sartre's account, however closely the three of them cooperated on the review, and the other stars in the existentialist firmament were all too brilliant and too independently minded to permit Sartre to be considered as more than the first among equals. It is outside the scope of this study to examine in detail the structure of existentialism, but its growth and eventual disintegration as an intellectual and cultural movement can best be understood in terms of Sartre's own development. He occupied and then withdrew from the central position in a configuration of relationships between relatively autonomous individuals who were not decisively determined either by him or by one another. The exception to this is that Simone de Beauvoir chose to accompany Sartre in his development.

At this point it is appropriate to explain briefly the position of Camus relative to both existentialism and personalism. He had emerged from the war with two widely read and influential books, Le mythe de Sisyphe and L'Etranger, both of which were published in 1942 without receiving the reception they would have been given by a free press. Hence, at the Liberation, they were commonly assimilated to the existentialist school, with whom Camus shared some preoccupations. He was also one of the new figures to have come to public prominence as a result of his Resistance activities and to be actively engaged as a journalist in political affairs. For a brief period he was

regarded as philosophically linked with Sartre, a misconception encouraged by their personal friendship, by their common stand on several political issues and by Sartre's association with Combat, the newspaper Camus edited. It rapidly became evident, however, that the two men were widely divergent in their views and interests - a divergence apparent from their earliest writings. By the end of 1945, few informed commentators would have classed Camus as an existentialist along with Sartre, though they were sometimes cited together as examples of modern atheism. Mounier himself spoke of this similarity, but was never drawn to present Camus as an existentialist. He was familiar with Camus's work as a novelist, essayist and journalist, and later wrote a substantial critical article on it,<sup>8</sup> but was not deceived into thinking him a major ideological opponent.

From this brief examination of the social structure, the ideological functions and the intellectual leadership of existentialism, it can clearly be seen how far it posed an ideological threat to Mounier's personalism. Before considering the philosophical issues involved and the question of intellectual antecedents, the comparative resources with which Mounier could respond must be taken into account.

On the level of a fashionable sub-culture, Mounier could not seriously hope to compete, but even there his situation was not as bleak as it seemed. 'Existentialism'

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8. E. Mounier, 'Albert Camus, ou l'appel des humiliés', Esprit, no.163, janvier 1950, p.27-66, reprinted in Oeuvres, IV, p.326-358.

was primarily a Parisian phenomenon, and Mounier's strength had always been in the provinces. The cultural lag, strong catholic traditions and provincial conservatism combined to attenuate the more aggressive manifestations of the new fashion, but could not ultimately resist its spread throughout France. In any event Mounier was neither equipped nor anxious to challenge on the level of fashion.

On the second level, that of the cultural ideology, Mounier was not so helpless. As has been seen, he had access to a highly organised network of communication through the Church and its various associated movements. The strength of this, combined with the hostility felt in many quarters towards Sartre and his associates, provided a ready reception for any potential antidote, particularly among the older generations. Mounier had made a concerted effort during the war to recruit young men and women to personalism. Of necessity his efforts had largely been directed towards the southern half of the country, but they had given him a foothold in the generation which was now turning to existentialism. Most of them were catholics of provincial origin, but with those of their elders who remained loyal to Esprit, they provided the support Mounier needed if his ideological battle was to have any chance of success. His clientèle therefore consisted of his own contemporaries - he was 40 in 1945 - and a section of the young catholic élite with whose aid he wished to win over the rising generation. Catholics were understandably hostile to the

militant atheism of existentialism. Conservatives of the older generation were shocked at the comprehensive rejection of established values, fearing the erosion of the prestige and influence which now seemed within their own grasp. Both groups thought it urgently necessary to stem the rapid advance of the existentialist movement among the young. Both were prepared to use their position in the community, and the channels of communication to which they had access, in order to achieve this end. Reviews and newspapers began carrying hostile examinations, books appeared in a similar vein.<sup>9</sup> There was, in short, a backlash against existentialism, and although Mounier did not wish to appear a middle-aged reactionary, he found a fertile soil waiting for his ideological alternative and was not inclined to refuse it. So he found himself contending for the minds of the non-catholic middle-class under-30s, which Sartre seemed increasingly to be holding. Mounier knew them to be crucial to his own ideological struggles.

On the political plane the problem was not the same. In many ways Esprit and Les Temps Modernes were engaged on a similar path in the non-communist Left. Their brief cooperation in the abortive R.D.R. project was evidence if this were needed.<sup>10</sup> But whereas Mounier had to contend with the

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9. The best example of such a book is the Que sais-je study Paul Foulquié, L'Existentialisme (Paris, 1946). Many articles appeared, of which a good example is J. Mercier, 'Le ver dans le fruit', Etudes, février 1945, p.232-249; speaking in the orthodox Jesuit review, Mercier accused Sartre of satanism and blasphemy, among other things.

10. See Chapter Five.

catholic church and could not come too close to the communists, Sartre had no authoritative restraints on his political options. Moreover, Mounier was attempting, initially, to establish personalism as a distinct political ideology, while Sartre was attempting to modify the already existing ideology which Marxism offered. For this reason personalism and existentialism did not come into open conflict on the level of political ideology.

Among the intellectual leaders of personalism there were widely divergent thinkers, but they were a much more unified and centralised group. Like the existentialists, their work was centred on a monthly review, Esprit, but there could be no doubt that Mounier himself was firmly in command, even if his colleagues from time to time gently reproached his dictatorial tendencies. The basic team had not changed significantly since before the war. Jean Lacroix, Edmond Humeau, Henri Marrou, Georges Zérapha, Paul Fraise, Pierre-Aimé Touchard, Jacques Madaule, François Goguel, Henry Queffelec<sup>11</sup> and Adrien Miatlev<sup>12</sup> still formed the backbone of the review. They were joined gradually by younger writers like Claude-Edmonde Magny,<sup>13</sup> Marc Beigbeder,<sup>14</sup> Paul de Gaudemar,<sup>15</sup> Joseph Rovin<sup>16</sup> and Jean-Marie Domenach.

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11. Henry Queffelec was a novelist and literary critic.

12. Adrien Miatlev was a poet and literary critic.

13. C.E. Magny is well known for her studies on modern literature.

14. Marc Beigbeder, who joined Esprit during the war, was a critic and polemicist.

15. Paul de Gaudemar was a critic and for a time correspondent in England.

16. Joseph Rovin was a historian and political scientist.

The cohesion of the editorial team was assured by regular meetings to hammer out points of theory and policy, and by annual conferences to gather together as many readers and contributors as possible. Mounier still felt that some organised movement of friends of the review was needed, but learning from his pre-war experience he insisted that such personalist centres as were set up should be surrounded by sufficiently demanding conditions of participation to prevent them from degenerating into directionless talking shops. These centres were animated by Esprit militants of long standing and kept in close contact with the review's regular activity.<sup>17</sup> Although editorial policy encouraged a large number of articles from specialists outside the personalist milieu, from the autumn of 1945 onwards there was an increased emphasis on establishing the positions of basic doctrine, aimed at welding the review into the coherent ideological organ which it had sought to become before the war.<sup>18</sup> This meant that new contributors were expected to serve their ideological apprenticeship before being accepted as regular members of the team, though Mounier did try to encourage the recruitment of new, young writers. The intellectual leaders of personalism were therefore much more unanimous in their allegiance to a unifying doctrine than were the more individualistic existentialists of Les Temps Modernes. Whereas atheist existentialism recognised Sartre

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17. Details of these were published regularly in the back pages of the review. Some centres also published their own internal newsheets and bulletins.

18. Mounier's editorial policy can be gathered from his personal writings: Oeuvres, IV, p.797-831 & Esprit, décembre 1950, p.1046-1060.

as the first among several related but independent theorists, personalism had an appearance of broad orthodoxy established ultimately by Mounier. It would be wrong to represent Mounier as imposing his individual views, however, since he encouraged his colleagues at the same time to develop their own positions. Any agreed orthodoxy was always the result of a cooperative effort, and it was never specific or exclusive enough to provoke the kind of disharmony which was so typical of the existentialists.

Socially the leaders of the two schools were almost indistinguishable. If leading personalists included more provincial-born men, the difference was scarcely perceptible. Both were heavily male-dominated, despite the presence of outstanding women like Simone de Beauvoir and Claude-Edmonde Magny. There were certainly a majority<sup>of</sup> practising catholics among Mounier's colleagues, but the proportion was not as high as among his readers. Despite the later arrival of the existentialists they were contemporaries in age, Sartre himself was barely three months Mounier's junior. Both teams held positions of comparable eminence in the same fields, and could call on the same range of public platforms to communicate intellectually with each other and with their peers. Possibly the existentialists came more often from wealthier backgrounds, but it is not consistently true and without a long and exhaustive study could not be demonstrated conclusively enough to permit any meaningful inferences. Apart from religious differences, there is thus no important

distinction which can be drawn between the social bases of existentialism and personalism at this level.

From the comparative social insertion of the two ideologies, certain tactical considerations emerge which throw light on Mounier's action. In the fields of popular culture and politics competition was pointless, and in terms of intellectual power the opposing doctrines met on the same territory with equal arms. In the field of cultural ideology, however, both sides had different strengths and weaknesses, and there the stakes were highest. Mounier's obvious tactic was to reinforce and unite his own points of strength, while attempting to isolate the different elements of existentialism, thereby reducing its cohesion and increasing its vulnerability. Later he might hope to annexe it selectively, assimilating some elements and neutralising the rest. Such is the plan Mounier adopted, without specifically acknowledging any social dimension in his operations.

b) Confrontation.

Intellectually, existentialism sprang from a strange mixture of traditions. Mounier had his own view of its nature and genealogy, but the form which presented an ideological challenge to him was the Sartrean variety. Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and Simone de Beauvoir drew their philosophical inspiration mainly from the German-based school of phenomenology.<sup>19</sup> Following Husserl, they held that any account

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19. See E.N. Lee & M. Mandelbaum (ed.), Phenomenology and existentialism (Baltimore, 1967); and Edo Pivčević, Husserl and phenomenology (London, 1970).

of the world had to take its starting point in the act of perception. Since all experience was received through the senses, they argued, nothing could properly be said to exist except in terms of a perceptual relationship, and therefore existence was constituted in the mutual interdependence<sup>end</sup> of the perceiver and the perceived. Many consequences followed from this initial position; they were explored at length by Sartre in his L'Être et le néant (1943) and by Merleau-Ponty in his Phénoménologie de la Perception (1945), but from an ideological view-point only the general implications were influential. The heavy and complex analyses phrased in technical language, borrowed directly from the German, roused few people to examine the difficulties posed by Husserl and Heidegger, the fathers of Sartrean existentialism. What was communicated was a serious attempt to face the problems of human isolation, both metaphysical and psychological, of guilt and anguish, of freedom and responsibility. Although Sartre's was an uncomfortable vision which raised many problems and solved few, his determination to deal lucidly and honestly with real human experiences in purely human terms found strong echoes<sup>s</sup> in a generation which had just emerged from a war into a difficult post-war period. It was less the philosophical cogency than the emotive and imaginative power of existentialism which was its strength. In this perspective, its clearest antecedents were the two non-academic thinkers, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche.

From Mounier's point of view it was more important to confront the problems raised by the imaginative power of existentialism than to involve himself in abstract discussions involving phenomenology, about which he knew little. Hence, as a prelude to facing Sartre directly he addressed himself to the antecedents he felt to be most relevant. Kierkegaard had played little part in Sartre's own formation, but his writings expressed many elements which Sartre, despite his atheism, had been marked by in the strongly Calvinistic protestantism of his upbringing. Although Søren Kierkegaard had died in Denmark in 1855, his works had long remained unknown.<sup>20</sup> Interest had been aroused in him when his works became available in German during the 1920's, but only in 1929 did the first translation appear in French. Most of his major works had been published in French between 1932 and 1938, when Jean Wahl's Etudes kierkegaardienes<sup>21</sup> had established him as an important thinker. The intensity and anguish of his mind found a strong echo in the minds of a generation which had undergone the harrowing experience of the war. The specific content of his teachings was secondary to men who could not share his passionate commitment to the Christian faith. The important thing was that he was a prime example of 'Existentialist Man', one who lived his

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20. The most useful short study of Kierkegaard is Ronald Grimsley, Søren Kierkegaard, (London, 1973).

21. Jean Wahl's book, published in Paris, 1938, remains a major study of the subject.

philosophy and whose life was his central message. Kierkegaard's harsh nordic protestantism was alien to Mounier's temperament and upbringing. Nonetheless he recognised in a detached way the fertile elements which it might offer as well as the common ground which existed between it and his own faith. These elements emerged in his later study,<sup>22</sup> but in 1945 Kierkegaard posed a urgent problem for Mounier.

Nietzsche was a more formidable, if more familiar proposition.<sup>23</sup> A constant source of inspiration in France since the turn of the century, he had been more often adopted as a literary than a philosophical influence, and, as in other parts of Europe, had been harnessed to a variety of causes, not always pleasant. His fierce attack on received morality and his often savage polemic against christianity made him a powerful and dramatic figure. What particularly singled him out as a model for existentialism was the way in which, like Kierkegaard, he had passionately lived out his philosophy, even to the point where he had lost his sanity in the course of his momentous struggle. Mounier had a passing acquaintance with him, though naturally he felt a deep hostility. Since nazism represented Nietzsche as one of its fathers, it had seemed to Mounier that he must prepare himself to do intellectual battle with him. During his retreat at Dieulefit

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22. See below.

23. Apart from Nietzsche's own works, Gilles Deleuze, Nietzsche et la philosophie (Paris, 1962) has been consulted for the following discussion.

he read and digested a great deal of Nietzsche's works. Their impact on him was greater than he had anticipated, and in his attempt to come to terms with them he wrote L'affrontement chrétien.<sup>24</sup> Originally conceived as a defence of christianity, the book sought to draw the teeth of Nietzsche's critique and to adopt that part of it which could be instructive. By the time Mounier was able to publish it, the scope had broadened to include the first shots in his intended battle with existentialism, or neo-stoicism as he then called it. In order to do this he assumed that atheistic 'neo-stoicism' adopted the substance of Nietzsche's critique of christianity without acquiring any of his positive virtues:

Nietzsche se lançait à l'assaut de l'univers chrétien les mains ruisselantes des richesses lointaines du surhomme et du surmonde. L'athéisme moderne est calviniste, ses églises sont nues, ses pasteurs aiment le frisson; ils ont l'oeil morose et trop souvent la voix geignante.<sup>25</sup>

This was a fierce, though not undeserved attack on Sartre, to whom he only once referred by name in the book. In so far as Mounier was concerned to parry the onslaught of atheism, he was right in taking Nietzsche to be at the centre of his concerns. In regarding Sartre and company as pale shadows of the master, he was assuming that their preoccupations stemmed from the loss of belief in God. Such an assumption was probably inevitable in one for whom the

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24. E. Mounier, L'affrontement chrétien (Neuchâtel, 1945), reprinted in Oeuvres, III, p.7-66.

25. Oeuvres, III, p.17.

existence of God was of central importance, but it did not do justice to the thought of atheist existentialists. Later Mounier's increased acquaintance with their work brought modifications to his assessment. In this book, however, he was more concerned to confront Nietzsche and to use him as a stiff broom to sweep away some of the accumulated impurities of christianity.

The introduction called to arms a decadent and slumbering Church. History, he said, dealt ruthlessly with the weak and if very much of Nietzsche's attack was justified, the Church could be in imminent danger of destruction. For having rested too long under the wing of the ruling class, and for having fed off the fat of the land, he declared, it had grown unused to battle, and appeared to have lost its heroic virtues. In view of the many powerful critiques and the many-fronted attack under which it was coming, Mounier thought that the Church needed to recover the strength of its early struggles if it was not to risk historical oblivion. He proposed to face honestly the questions which Nietzsche's attack raised:

Le christianisme est-il un pseudonyme de la coalition des faibles et des peureux? Hante-t-il les carrefours de la décadence?<sup>26</sup>

Mounier saw that these questions were penetrating enough to awaken contempt among non-christians and had conscience among many christians who were intimidated and ashamed by the strength and resolve of their opponents. He was not prepared

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26. Oeuvres, III, p.11.

to concede that the Church could be other than victorious in Eternity, but in History, he warned, the victory was not assured. The first step was to diagnose the weakness - was it inherent and inevitable, or was it a foreign germ caught from a sick era?

In answering these critical questions, Mounier tried to carry the offensive to the enemy, The Church was accused of lacking virility, but the reality, Mounier argued, was that it combined both virility and femininity so as to avoid making an idol of either. The Church was accused of complacency, but, he replied, it was right to avoid the debilitating excess of anguish with which atheistic existentialism was afflicted, and right to refuse hysterical and unconvincing melodramatics when dealing with the great questions about man and the universe. Part of the trouble, he suggested, was that existentialists failed to distinguish between despair and tragedy. Despair, he explained, was empty, destructive, individual and foreign to christianity, whereas tragedy, however painful, allowed hope, offered spiritual riches and lay at the heart of catholic doctrine. He admitted that some christians failed to rise out of a comfortable complacency, but then so did some atheists. The remedy was already in christianity, he said, and not to be found in the frenetic nihilism of post-nietzschean atheism. Underlying the discussion was the familiar assertion that the catholic truth exemplified to the highest degree all positive values, properly understood. When Nietzsche or his successors exalted the value of strength, drama or tragedy, Mounier replied

that christianity was stronger, more dramatic and more tragic in a more complex and meaningful way. Once that had been established, and the attack was, to his satisfaction, parried, Mounier used the strength and the lessons he had drawn from the operation to apply the various criticisms from within.

Mounier now admitted that the failure of christians to live up to their faith was sufficiently widespread to require more than a casual dismissal. This malaise was, he claimed, the product of the Church's temporal expression. Naturally, since the Church was in the world, it acquired many imperfections from its environment, but, Mounier insisted, none of these invalidated, though they might mask, the essence of christianity. This essence he regarded as separable from the temporal context, though he conceded that only an experienced insider could accurately discern the line of division. Nietzsche's charge that the Church operated a spiritual castration on its members was based, Mounier thought, on an erroneous negative view of the Middle Ages and on a misinterpretation of Saint Paul's condemnation of the flesh, as against the spirit. The flesh which must be chastised, Mounier corrected him, simply referred to the tendency to sin, not to the human body and its instincts. The taint which christianity had acquired from its historical circumstances was not implicit in its teaching, he continued, but nonetheless needed to be combatted so that when western

civilisation collapsed, as Mounier considered it likely to in the near future, christianity would not sink with it. On a smaller time-scale, but no less seriously, the christian malaise also operated, he said, on the sociological level. He repeated his familiar analysis of the way in which the Church in France was taken over by the bourgeoisie, leading to a sharp decline in its insertion in the working class. This, he argued, was to the detriment of the Church as it came to be identified with the mediocre and conservative values of the decaying twentieth century bourgeoisie, shored up by the anemic apologetics of dull clerical hacks out of touch with the real world. Mounier then examined in some detail the elements of this spiritual castration which the bourgeoisie had imported into the christian education. The excessive emphasis on restraint and austerity; the negation of natural instincts; the cultivation of moderation and submissiveness; the resulting dissimulation and shame, tortuous self-analysis and casuistry; the morbid negation of sexuality; the cloying possessiveness of the family; obsession with sin and guilt; all these and many more faults besides could be ascribed, Mounier affirmed, to the bourgeoisie deforming aspects of christian education. Often, he said, the result no longer resembled the original stronger and more demanding teachings of the Scriptures and the saints. The mediocrity of nineteenth century bourgeois values was passed off as christian truth, he warned, and against these perversions

the denunciations of Nietzsche held good. He added that there was even no originality in the denunciations, at least not in 1945, since Esprit had already for a dozen years been saying precisely the same.

In addition to attacking its bourgeois accretions, Nietzsche accused christianity of fostering a slave mentality. Mounier probed the distortions which had been perpetrated on christian doctrine so as to lay it open to such charges. The stress on humility, authoritarian methods of teaching, moral intimidation, Mounier agreed, now produced brow-beaten individuals without strength or joy, whereas in their medieval formulation they were intended to temper the brutal manners of a violent age. The exaltation of obedience in and out of season robbed the young christian of his rightful spiritual autonomy, he continued, and a morbid obsession with suffering for its own sake maimed sensitive temperaments. He added that even the christian virtue of charity could be perverted into a lukewarm sentimentality, a spineless refusal to stand up for the truth and a neurotic retreat into childishness. None of this, Mounier claimed, was compatible with the words or the intention of the great catholic educators, who were aware of the dangers lurking for their pupils and who would have considered the bourgeois perversions of their doctrine as nothing less than blasphemy.

Having lengthily expounded the faults which, he conceded, existed in modern christianity, Mounier returned to the offensive. Despite the deformations, he asserted that it was

capable of creativity and adventure. Christianity had its aggressivity and power, its boldness and daring, he said; it feared neither life nor death and held the key to self-transcendence. These virile qualities were, he affirmed, fundamental to a faith which claimed to have the way, the truth and the life, and only such a faith could have the necessary strength and completeness to provide an adequate response to the upheaval of the modern world, always provided it could find and express its own true nature.

In ideological terms Mounier displayed a keen tactical sense in this book. On the one hand he sought to undermine existentialism as a potential rival before it was able to find cohesion. He did this by setting Nietzsche against Sartre and by setting what he considered to be the strengths of his own position against the weaknesses of the opponent. On the other hand he sought to strengthen both christianity, by inoculating it with the neutralised Nietzsche, and personalism, by presenting it as the most healthy and combative current within the Church. There is no doubt that in the second aim he was able to achieve a good deal of success, but in the first aim he had a long struggle on his hands. Existentialism was a more hardy growth than he had anticipated and his apparent taming of Nietzsche had no more effect on its development than did his sideswipes at Sartre and Camus. As an opponent, existentialism was diffuse and elusive, demanding a much more careful approach than he had foreseen.

Straight after the war the existentialists were not in a position to establish themselves with the firmness and authority of Mounier. They had no organisation and could not call on any of the resources which were available to Mounier. It is not surprising, therefore, that Mounier did not understand the nature and strength of his opponents more clearly at this stage. L'affrontement chrétien had been a confrontation with Nietzsche modified to take in the existentialists. Much more was required, though Mounier drew valuable experience from this early exercise. As existentialism asserted itself during 1945, Mounier followed its different manifestations and was careful to publish adequate analyses, reviews and summaries so that he and his readers had a basic understanding of its principles and their implications. The most comprehensive was Claude-Edmonde Magny's sympathetic exposition of Sartre's philosophical work in March and April of that year,<sup>27</sup> but by the time Les Temps Modernes appeared in October all the major works of French existentialism had been examined in Esprit. Mounier himself wrote the assessment of the new review's first issue.<sup>28</sup>

Stressing that both reviews belonged to the same age section of the same generation, Mounier welcomed the several points on which they shared a common view, particularly the

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27. Claude-Edmonde Magny, 'Système de Sartre', Esprit, no. 108, mars 1945, p.564-580; no.109, avril 1945, p.709-724.

28. E. Mounier, 'Le message des "Temps Modernes" et le néo-stoïcisme', Esprit, no.117, décembre 1945, p.957-963.

importance of a philosophy of man in which the human person was both free and yet committed to his situation. Pointing out that Sartre's place was only on one branch of existentialism, he suggested that existentialism, along with Marxism and personalism, was one of the three great doctrines of the time. Sartre's version, however, he regarded as excessively pessimistic and felt it displayed the moral ambiguity common to all forms of stoicism. Already Mounier had decided that Sartrean existentialism was radically unacceptable and even went so far as to suggest that despite similarities of language he was further from Sartre than from Marxism. As always with Mounier, the test was seen as the conception of man implicit in the philosophy. Sartre's conception was stated succinctly in the first issue of his review:

Nous concevons sans difficulté qu'un homme, encore que sa condition le conditionne totalement, puisse être un centre d'indétermination irréductible. Ce secteur d'imprévisibilité qui se découpe ainsi dans le champ social, c'est ce que nous nommons la liberté, et la personne n'est rien d'autre que sa liberté.<sup>29</sup>

This passably non-technical summary of Sartre's position was close to Mounier's in so far as it asserted both the autonomy of the person and the limitations imposed by his environment. What Mounier could not accept was that the person was given total freedom and defined in terms of it. This knocked the bottom out of his own view of the person as a nodal point in a network of forces. In particular the dimension of interiority, crucial for Mounier as leading to God, for Sartre

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29. Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Présentation', Les Temps Modernes, no.1, octobre 1945, p.17.

led to nothing. In a word, it was the irremediable atheism at the centre of Sartre's philosophy which determined Mounier's reaction to it. During the following months he devoted himself to preparing a major response which would take account of the major importance of existentialism as an ideology and at the same time present a view of it which could challenge its identification with Sartre's atheistic brand.

c) Interpretation.

The result of Mounier's labours appeared in Esprit between April and October 1946, and was published in book form at the end of that year under the title Introduction aux existentialismes.<sup>30</sup> The introduction to the book made clear Mounier's intention:

*(il est) temps de rendre à chacun son dû, et écartant le tumulte de la mode, de ramener ce mélange d'existentialisme et d'inexistentialisme, qui constitue le sartisme, à sa situation propre: le dernier surgeon d'une des traditions existentialistes, tradition qui, issue de Heidegger, s'est elle-même constituée en opposition radicale avec les fondateurs de la philosophie moderne de l'existence. Notre dessein est de rétablir ici cette tradition dans son ampleur oubliée.*<sup>31</sup>

He was determined to put Sartre in his place, or, more precisely, to describe existentialism in such a way as to reduce to a minimum the importance of Sartre within it. He sought to achieve this aim by pitching the battle on an

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30. E. Mounier, Introduction aux existentialismes (Paris, 1947), reprinted in Oeuvres, III, p.69-175.

31. Oeuvres, III, p.70.

apparently non-ideological level, and by speaking in terms of philosophical traditions. He was thus able to deride the current popularity of Sartre's brand of existentialism as 'la livraison au bavardage quotidien d'une philosophie dont le sens est de nous arracher au bavardage'.<sup>32</sup> He could also belittle Sartre's own contribution on the grounds that:

l'existentialisme" représentait déjà le courant le plus riche et le plus abondant de la philosophie contemporaine en un temps où le grand talent de Jean-Paul Sartre s'intéressait à la confiture sous des aspects plus immédiats que ceux de la psychanalyse existentielle.<sup>33</sup>

This reductive manoeuvre was only possible on the level of pure ideas, and in the first instance this was the level on which Mounier was talking. He traced the genealogy of existentialism, basing his analysis on the same principles, and constructed a family tree. With its roots in Socrates, the Stoics, Saint Augustine and Saint Bernard, it emerged above the ground with Pascal and Maine de Biran. Kierkegaard formed the trunk, at the top of which was Phenomenology. Thereafter there were two main branches. The first passed through Nietzsche and Heidegger to Sartre. The second subdivided into many sprouts and bore Laberthonnière, Blondel, Bergson, Péguy, P.-L. Landsberg, Scheler, Barth, Buber, Berdyaev, Shestov, Soloviev, Gabriel Marcel, Jaspers and personalism itself. Without proceeding to a detailed criticism of

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32. Oeuvres, III, p.69.

33. Oeuvres, III, p.69.

the schema, several points should be mentioned which Mounier did not always make clear. First, he was anxious to allow as wide a meaning as possible to the term existentialist. This was implicit in his statements that for existentialism 'l'existence de l'homme est le problème premier de la philosophie',<sup>34</sup> which sufficed to define it, and that at least for its christian exponents 'l'existentialisme est une autre manière de parler le christianisme'.<sup>35</sup> The wider the meaning, the more its centre of gravity could be shifted away from the atheistic branch and the more easily Sartre could be presented as out on a limb. Second, whereas Mounier included a wide variety of thinkers and writers on the christian branches, some of whom had dubious credentials, he left out a number of thinkers who might have a claim to be included on the atheist branch, not least Merleau-Ponty and Camus. This clearly all added to Sartre's isolation. Third, the analogy of a tree, emphasised by its diagrammatic form (the only diagram Mounier ever used), was potentially misleading. It embodied a perspective which did not accurately or fairly represent the relations between the various thinkers or their relative importance, and it imposed a hierarchy of values which the thinkers did not all share. Again this worked against Sartre. Finally, the unobtrusive inclusion of his own thought on the existentialist tree

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34. Oeuvres, III, p.70.

35. Oeuvres, III, p.72.

conferred on his declarations an automatic authority and a right of arbitration which were useful, if not altogether legitimate weapons.

The orientation of Mounier's examination was further compounded by his decision to deal with existentialism thematically. The utility of this approach was that it dislocated the intellectual coherence of any individual thinker and allowed Mounier to propose his own principles of coherence, which were clearly more amenable to the application of his own criteria of judgement. He thereby avoided having to confront Sartre on philosophical terms and neutralised the intellectual power of his system. In this way Mounier had the best of both worlds: having discounted Sartre's ideological impact and intellectual formulation he proceeded to his own analysis from the ambiguous stance where he felt his own strength to be, on the borderline between philosophy and ideology from which he could make sallies into both without being trapped into either.

Looking in the first chapter at the problem of knowledge, Mounier described the existentialists as rejecting all impersonal epistemologies and putting man at the centre of the analysis. Consequently all systematic philosophy was excluded as ignoring the singularity of the existing individual. Abstract and mechanical thought with its pretensions to all-embracing completeness gave way, he claimed, to a living and human diversity of individual reflection. Since

they regarded systems as built to dispense men from thinking, he said, the existentialists' first step consisted of a philosophical awakening, shaking men out of their indifference and provoking them to a vital and passionate appraisal of their existence. They thereby overturned the traditional relationship of knowledge between man and the world, he continued, rejecting the concept of man as a self-possessed consciousness passively observing the external world, replacing it by a perceiving subject rooted in mystery and opaque to itself. Since the existence of the world was inexhaustible and full of mystery, he went on, it could be examined and analysed in depth but at no time grasped in its totality, much less expressed in a systematic formulation. Immediately the exclusion of Sartre was reinforced. The refusal of systematic philosophy which Mounier attributed to all existentialism was incompatible with a work like L'Être et le néant. Mounier was implicitly suggesting that in so far as he was systematic, Sartre was betraying true existentialism. By the same token he was again dispensing with the need to consider the internal coherence of Sartre's philosophy in his analysis. He incidentally also ruled out Heidegger in the same way, and proposed the christian brand therefore as the model of all existentialism.

Passing on to examine in more detail the dramatic conception of man which he considered to characterise existential philosophy, Mounier distinguished eight major themes. Man was contingent both in that he existed at all and in

that he had one specific existence rather than another; his reason was inadequate to cope with the world; he was dynamic and restless, always moving on into the future; his existence was precarious and never assured, so that he was in a constant state of anguish, dizziness and danger, confronted with the necessity to choose himself at every stage; he was out of harmony with the world, threatened and alienated; he was faced at every moment with the dreadful awareness of his own inevitable death and had to come to terms with it; he was isolated and cut off from his fellow men and his own true nature was hidden; finally, though for Sartre alone, man was ultimately nothingness. With the exception of this last theme Mounier examined each one from two points of view: the christian and the atheist. The substance of his remarks was ostensibly based on his reading of Kierkegaard, amplified by Gabriel Marcel and at times Pascal, who between them represented for him the main stream as christian existentialism. He presented them as engaged in a dialectical process in which the austere and gloomy aspects of their vision were not allowed to be overstated, and were intended to prepare the corresponding positive characteristics of christianity. The object, he explained, was to set up a tension and intensity in which the christian faith was lived to the full. It is apparent that in fact he took Pascal as his model, amplified by Marcel and Kierkegaard, but this basic structural option was implicit rather than

explicit. Jaspers served as a transition to the atheist interpretation but Heidegger and Sartre were the main examples. Mounier used Heidegger to show how an atheist tried to find a secular substitute for the positive side of the christian dialectic, but Sartre, sparingly quoted, was taken to demonstrate how catastrophic was the unrelieved gloom of thoroughgoing atheist existentialism. Mounier attacked his nihilistic view of the frenetic dynamism of consciousness and his paranoid reaction to the contingency of being. He isolated Sartre's concept of le néant for particular attack. It entailed, in his view, an impoverished, humiliating and purely negative conception of man and his possibilities. He suggested that Sartre should really be termed an 'inexistentialist' since the basis of his thought was the void rather than the plenitude. This attack, couched in polemical terms, is an excellent example of the way in which Mounier avoided the philosophical analysis which underpinned the Sartrean account, treating it as an arbitrary and subjective view.

Mounier admitted that the historical situation had been instrumental in the spread of existentialism but he believed that its roots went deeper. He saw it on the one hand as a christian response to the over-complacent attitude of the Church, which had led to a widespread dechristianisation. On the other hand, he saw it as the atheists' response to their loss of belief in God, an attempt to replace religion, leading

more often to despair and nihilism. Mounier warned that the ontology of despair was destructive and unacceptable to the christian and must be corrected by an ontology of hope which alone could situate man in his true nature and dignity. Locating the problem on a spiritual level, he therefore saw atheistic existentialism as the expression of a malady of the soul, and its christian counterpart as the remedy for such a malady. He implicitly denied that Sartre's thought might be a response to concrete historical conditions by analysing it not in terms of a historically relative phenomenon but in terms of an ahistorical absolute. Apparently he failed to perceive its ideological nature.

Mounier began the next chapter by suggesting that existentialism shared with personalism a common recognition of the need for interiority. He added that it must be counter-balanced by a self-transcendence and an exteriorisation to prevent it falling into individualism. Existentialists, he said, saw men as torn between this true mode of existence and the false mode, its polar opposite, which had many names - divertissement (Pascal), inauthenticity (Heidegger), mauvaise foi (Sartre) or aestheticism (Kierkegaard) - all designating the same selfishness, indifference and lack of lucidity. In each case, he explained, the inauthenticity had to be overcome by a conscious choice and a radical transformation on the part of the individual. For christians this was a positive liberation, Mounier argued, but for the

atheists the liberation was ultimately meaningless - in either case the movement and the intention were substantially alike. He thus suggested a degree of harmony between the two branches of existentialism but it was a harmony achieved only by imposing on Sartre and Heidegger a structure of intentionality which neither of them expressed and which their philosophies were therefore ill-equipped to deal with.

Concomitant with their emphasis on interiority, Mounier continued, modern existentialists had been anxious to stress the insertion of man in the world. They saw man, he said, as born into a situation which he had not chosen, but which he had to come to terms with and assume responsibility for, even if this eventually led to a radical transformation of the situation. Such a position, he claimed, entailed a complex theory of action, in so far as it implied contradictions between the assumed present and the different chosen future, and between individual freewill and historical necessity. Action in the world, he went on, tended to become objective and impersonal, but refusal to act entailed a retreat into unreality, solipsism and the dissolution of the self in pure subjectivity. He regretted that early existentialists had tended to this refusal, probably an over-reaction against the menace of nineteenth century materialism. Fortunately, he thought, modern existentialism seemed prepared to restore the balance. In this analysis of engagement, Mounier rested largely on Kierkegaard, posing

the problem in terms of involvement or interest in the everyday world as against a possible retreat into art or piety. This interpretation ignored the more far-reaching analysis of commitment in Sartre's terms of purposive and ultimately political intervention in the course of events, as opposed to the passive and anyway inevitable involvement in the day-to-day flow of life. On this occasion he largely ignored the aspect of Sartre's thought which was most ideologically active, assimilating it to an allied but much more abstract argument.

Mounier went on to examine a characteristically existentialist concern: the existence of other people. Existentialists, he said, had raised the problem of alienation which occurred in the relationship between two minds, denying the possibility of communication other than by indirect and unsure means. The atheist existentialists had been particularly tormented by the problem, he suggested, and ultimately could only see consciousnesses locked in conflict. For Heidegger, he explained, the individual attained authenticity only in total solitude and dereliction: other people being only a temptation to sink into servitude or inauthenticity. Mounier then examined Sartre at some length, reiterating his account of personal relationships as a battle between hostile freedoms, committed to trying and failing to enslave each other. He admitted that it was accurate up to a point, but only as a partial account applicable only to an inauthentic mode of being. He suggested that Sartre in his

paranoia had disregarded the possibility of human relationships as a mutual enrichment in which shame, fear and hatred could be replaced by respect, fidelity and love. But he added that only christianity could show the way out of his ontological dereliction, replacing the total isolation of the individual, inescapable in Sartre's view, with a divine inner transcendence. This critique of Sartrean psychology was highly pertinent in pointing out that no satisfactory human relationships were permissible within it, except through the operation of mauvaise foi. While it did not refute Sartre philosophically, this objection reduced the credibility of his position for those who believed in the possibility of authentic and satisfying human intercourse. Mounier's suggested revision of his account was based on an emotional rather than an intellectual adjustment, and its acceptability consequently depended on the degree of optimism in his reader.

In the following chapter Mounier returned to the problem of ambiguity in the existentialist conception of action. He said that they tended to a cultivation of different forms of action only for the intensity of the subjective experience procured. For the atheists, he suggested, this was not surprising, since, despite their protests to the contrary, they had no positive force to nourish effective action in the world, and furthermore no external point of reference by which to direct it. Since moral responsibility fell, in their view, entirely on the individual, and since every least act was taken to be universally normative, Mounier pointed

out, human acts carried a debilitating load of responsibility which would tend more often to paralyse than to catalyse into action. The christian existentialists escaped this charge, he claimed, by inserting human freedom into a network of forces in tension, and by offering an external scheme of reference. The total freedom allowed by Sartre in particular could, he said, be no less than arbitrary, leading to a disorientation in a world where everything was possible, where no effective limits were placed on freedom and where there was nothing and no one to be responsible to. The danger Mounier saw in this was a total moral relativism in which there would ultimately be no firm grounds on which to condemn even nazi atrocities provided they were undertaken with subjective intensity. What Mounier missed in atheistic existentialism was a firm, independently existing hierarchy of values on which to base action or judgement. The lack of absolutes seemed to him to undermine moral or purposive activity and eventually to destroy meaning. He therefore attempted to show that such a position was untenable. There was, however, no way in which he could refute the consistent moral relativity implicit in the sartrean system. His only response was to appeal to the existence of a need for external absolutes. Since he considered christianity to meet such a need, the implication of his analysis was to woo people away from one self-consistent ideological system to another more agreeable one.

The next chapter posed the question whether, in insisting on the priority of the individual existent, existentialism eliminated the possibility of general truths and therefore of philosophy. Mounier could suggest only two ways to resolve the problem. The first, he said, was to stress the primacy of the way in which truth was perceived at the expense of neglecting its content. The alternative he offered was to accept duration and repetition in existence as a basis for generality which escaped the isolated unicity of the individual in the instantaneous present. However, he agreed that these were weak replies and that the best way to understand the resulting fragmentation of truth was as part of a total dialectic. The dialectic, he suggested, was completed by the older essentialist doctrines which had become fossilised and needed to be shaken and challenged in the interests of truth, which ultimately, he argued, the existentialists had at heart. Once more, Mounier's response was to impose the model of christian existentialism, whose exponents could legitimately be described as wishing to apply a sharp corrective to the decadent tendencies of the Church. Such was not true of the atheists, however, Their work was not carried out in the perspective of an established account of truth, and there was no reason to suppose that they regarded truth as the kind of absolute which it represented for Mounier. To treat Sartre as deliberately exaggerating his case was thus a refusal to take seriously his declared position, and amounted to interpreting Sartre's explorations as the

defective but well-meaning restatement of a known absolute already available in a satisfactory, though old-fashioned, formulation. It was the catholic paternalism which Mounier had never lost.

In the final chapter, Mounier detected in all forms of existentialism the intuition of a presence in the world which was not altogether explicable. Atheists were troubled by the experience, he argued, and ascribed it to an illusion of the mind projecting its hidden preoccupations into the world, hence the disquieting experience of the Double. Christians knew, he said, that it was the revelation of the superabundant source of being. Here Mounier launched into his final attack on Sartre. Hideously misconceiving the creative fullness of being, Sartre, in Mounier's view, contrived to strangle being, reducing it to the hostile and nauseating status of his être-en-soi. Robbed of spontaneity or movement, Mounier exclaimed, this brute mass was set over against human consciousness which in its turn was misconceived as pure negativity, lacking any notion of fullness or real being. The irremediable separation Sartre introduced into being, Mounier argued, was a false and pernicious one produced by a mind unable to stand outside its own impoverishment. To divorce man from existence, he went on, was the inescapable consequence of refusing living being, and in this sense Sartre represented the honest and lucid working out of the initial refusal. Mounier declared that christian existentialists offered a positive answer to Sartre in the notion of an authentic transcendence which was that infinite

movement within being which drove it on to be more than itself, and rather than a negation, was an affirmation of something beyond. He added that this beyond called for a response which rational thought could not encompass, the model of which was an act of faith, and thought that only in this way could human existence reach outside itself to a reality which could transform it. Thus, Mounier concluded, existentialism offered a kind of prophetic revival, capable of shaking the church into a healthy reappraisal and of revitalising western rationalism to face the challenge of the new world. Here, once the polemic is disregarded, Mounier recognised the principle which had underlain his attack on Sartre since the outset: atheism in any form was unacceptable and when it was expressed with coherence and honesty it was to be rejected with all the energy at his disposal. Although he scarcely referred to God specifically, Mounier visibly used belief in God as the ultimate guide to his analysis. As a result his hostility towards Sartre was most pronounced in those areas of discussion where belief or unbelief were most decisive in philosophical terms.

Throughout the book, Mounier's aim was to defend christian doctrine and to discredit atheism. The aim was carried out first by setting up the christian existentialists as the true form of existentialism. Marcel, Kierkegaard and Pascal were constantly recommended, though Kierkegaard was occasionally reproached for the more distinctively protestant features of his thought. Jaspers could be regarded as an

honorary christian, Mounier implied, since he was represented as striving for a truth which he never fully perceived, though his analyses always suggested a possible religious solution which was never embraced. Heidegger, with whom Mounier was clearly not familiar, was shown as a lost soul, working to come to terms with the loss of God and signally failing, a sad rather than a dangerous figure. So far, Mounier had no difficulty in showing the harmony of the existentialist school and the obvious superiority of its christian members; he even emerged as something of an existentialist himself on these terms. With Sartre, however, the situation was different. He was caught in three impossibilities. First, he could not ignore Sartre because without him his account of existentialism would be both incomplete and ideologically irrelevant. Second, he could not base his account on Sartre, since this would make the job of refutation immeasurably more difficult and ideologically ineffective. Third, he could not be over-selective in his presentation of Sartre, since, Sartre being already widely known, that would have laid him open to the charge of misrepresentation and would have been ideologically counter-productive. The result was a compromise. Mounier grappled with Sartre from different angles, seeking leverage wherever he could find it, but without gaining a decisive victory. Pitching the fight sometimes on philosophical, sometimes on emotional grounds, he tried first to present Sartre as an aberrant, almost illegitimate member of an otherwise

valuable school of thought, second to suggest deficiencies in his ontology, third to neglect important areas of strength in his thought. Ideologically this was the only effective response available. Although a dialogue had not really been instituted, Mounier appeared to face Sartre honestly and to develop an intelligent position in relation to him. Resisting some but also accepting some of Sartre's points, Mounier conducted his argument on a level which was never drily technical, often richly expressive and always of some intellectual complexity. In short, the book was tailored to appeal to the anticipated audience of informed catholics with a sympathetic interest in new ideas, whether the older personalists of Mounier's vintage, or the leaders of the new generation of young catholics. In this context, the book was carefully judged to have a maximum effect on the ideological clientèle he had already acquired, strengthening their self-assurance and providing a useful defence against the sollicitations of a powerful rival.

The measure of Mounier's success with his Introduction aux existentialismes can be assessed by comparing it briefly with the treatment of existentialism which appeared in the popular Que sais-je? series at the same period.<sup>36</sup> The author's dry, catechistic approach was only enlivened by a vehement denigration of everything connected with Sartre. Not

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36. P. Foulquié, L'existentialisme (Paris, 1946). The modifications introduced in latter editions affected both the substance and the structure of the book. Recent editions bear little resemblance to the first one.

only did he deal pedantically and condescendingly with him, failing to confront or undermine him philosophically or ideologically, but he also devoted more of the book to expounding scholastic distinctions and the academic neo-essentialist philosophy of Louis Lavelle. It was a book which having disastrously misconceived its audience and its subject could not hope to exercise the kind of influence Mounier did. Successive editions of the book show substantial changes to remedy this, but Mounier, in contrast, was a skilled ideologist who had the ability to find the right method to communicate effectively with his audience.

d) Developments.

Mounier's success in articulating an adequate response to existentialism was quickly recognised in catholic circles.<sup>37</sup> He was seen more generally as a prominent figure in the debate over existentialism which was widely pursued in the press and elsewhere.<sup>38</sup> Having once established his position in the matter, Mounier modified it very little in his subsequent work. He took care, however, to follow the progress of the existentialists closely, reviewing their work regularly in Esprit. The succeeding three or four years brought little

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37. See for example Marcel Reguier, 'Existentialisme et personnalisme', Etudes, juillet-août 1946- p.134-136.

38. For example, he took part in an organised public debate on the subject with Merleau-Ponty, Gandillac, Wahl and Daniélou (17 June 1946), which attracted a vast audience (see press reports). This was after his first major articles but before their appearance in book form.

new intellectual development in the existentialist camp. The period was one of consolidation during which its positions were variously explored and elaborated by its protagonists. Parallel to this a flurry of books appeared offering examinations and criticisms in varying depth from different points of view, sympathetic or hostile, outside the existentialist circle. Possibly the most significant development, from Mounier's point of view, was the upsurge of interest in christian existentialists, who had hitherto slumbered in relative obscurity. Such interest, broadly confined to christian circles, may have led some to personalism, but there is no real evidence to support such a claim. What it did achieve was to help sensitize the catholic population to the change, questioning and rethinking which was running through the old structures. Against the background of this growing awareness Mounier's personalism appeared as a firm and respected doctrine and as an open window on to the intellectual unknown. Even if they did not embrace it wholeheartedly, there were many, even cautiously progressive catholics, who looked to personalism for a lead.

As the forties drew to a close, Mounier attenuated some of the harshness he had expressed towards Sartre. In part this followed from a closer acquaintance with his works, in part from a realisation of the serious intentions of his philosophical explorations, and in part from Sartre's unassailable preeminence in French intellectual life. In

an article of 1948,<sup>39</sup> he admitted 'je n'ai pas moins que d'autres quelques premiers mouvements à me reprocher à l'endroit de Sartre'.<sup>40</sup> Referring to the method he had used in his Introduction aux existentialismes, he asserted that 'ce n'était point diminuer Sartre, c'était l'entourer d'un murmure de complicités et de questions'.<sup>41</sup> This reinterpretation was scarcely accurate, since the book's whole object had been to diminish Sartre. However, it is evidence of a distinct shift in Mounier's position. The points of difference remained unchanged, but Mounier was less peremptory, and more prepared to concede that Sartrean existentialism had its strong points. He could well afford to: two years had passed in which Sartre had become the undeniable giant of French thought and was widely thought to hold the same position in the world of letters. Ideologically the position, though largely unchanged, had acquired a stability which seemed to permit a degree of fraternisation. Politically, Mounier and Sartre were running along similar paths. In 1948 they were actively collaborating together in the R.D.R. project, so that active hostility on Mounier's part would have been politically ill-conceived. As a result, the debate rested.

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39. E. Mounier, 'Perspectives existentialistes et perspectives chrétiennes', in Colette Audry (ed.), Pour ou contre l'existentialisme (Paris, 1948), p.129-164, reprinted in Oeuvres, IV, p.359-381.

40. Oeuvres, IV, p.360.

41. Oeuvres, IV, p.359.

In terms of their rôle as cultural ideologies both doctrines had reached their peak by 1948. Within four years atheist existentialism had been torn apart by the tensions of the Cold War. Personalism, suffering from similar strains, entered a rapid decline following Mounier's death. Neither was destroyed by intellectual considerations, but simply because the conditions of their functioning as ideologies had changed. Personalism was already destroyed as an effective political ideology. The growing conflicts within France, and the re-emergence of catholic conservatism to challenge the avant-garde, rendered finally pointless any attempt to preserve personalism's coherence as a philosophy, and therefore as a distinct cultural ideology, after the death in 1950 of Mounier whose work it had been. For existentialism, the increasing political divisions between its major figures and Satre's own absorption in politics deprived it of the coherence it required to continue as an independent ideology. Social conditions also evolved, young middle-class supporters were growing older and seeking more settled habits of mind; their younger brothers and sisters were looking for new idols; the intellectual establishment was looking for new debates; and the political left was being flung into the brutal polarisations of the Cold War. Under these circumstances both existentialism and personalism succumbed. But before examining the reasons for personalism's collapse and the manner of its dissolution, it is

appropriate to consider its relations with the other ideology which dominated post-war France and towards which both Sartre's and Mounier's attentions were so compellingly turned.

## II. MARXISM.

### a) Sparring partners.

Marxism, like personalism, but unlike existentialism, sought to be a total ideology. That is, it claimed to describe the world comprehensively and to formulate a complete practical response to it. The last chapter showed how Marxism's major exponent in France, the communist party, dominated political thinking and activity, especially on the Left. It also dominated broader theoretical discussions, and Mounier was obliged to confront its general ideological implications.<sup>42</sup>

Socially, Marxism had its main base in the working-class, where it was virtually unchallenged. The reasons for this are not difficult to find, since it was an ideology whose analysis of history was based on the class struggle and which committed itself both practically and theoretically to the victory of the working-class. Despite the strong influence which Marxism enjoyed in the non-communist left, it is undeniable that, both politically and ideologically, its most energetic and influential defender was the communist

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42. For material in this section substantial use has been made of David Caute, Communism and the French Intellectuals (London, 1964); George Lichtheim, Marxism in modern France (New York, 1966); and F. Bon and others, Le communisme en France et en Italie, vol.I, (Paris, 1969).

party. There were other forms of Marxism, held by fellow-travellers of the party, and, to a lesser degree, by some members of the socialist party, but in liberated France, to talk of Marxism automatically involved the communists. The influence of Marxism therefore extended at least as far as the party's influence, which meant that it was felt in every aspect of working-class life. Clearly, not all of those who could be described as Marxists were more conscious of the intellectual implications than were those who claimed to be existentialists, but there was far less distance between committed supporters and followers. The structure of the party itself was closely knit. Its stress on education was supported by a network of communications comparable in scope to that of the catholic church and certainly more efficient. Even against the communists alone, Mounier could not hope to challenge Marxism in the working-class, and there were other Marxist influences at work to increase the impossibility.

In the middle-class, however, the picture was different. Following the war, the middle-class was conscious of the failure of traditional liberalism as a viable ideology. Many still held to the political and religious authoritarianism which had traditionally been the major alternative, but the generation which had grown to maturity in the Resistance, along with many of their elders who had been active in it, were drawn into close contact with the communists.

Such contact would, for the majority, have been unthinkable five years earlier, and it forced them to assess their position in relation to the party and the ideology it offered. The respect and sympathy which its Resistance record commanded, the unaccustomed acceptance of communists in government posts, and the high regard in which the Soviet Union was for a time held, ensured an unprecedentedly receptive audience for Marxist ideas. Among catholics there was rarely any question of embracing Marxism, though there was a clear need to come to terms with it; among non-christians there were many for whom it resolved satisfactorily the ideological disorientation they felt. The major rival to Marxism in this social sector was existentialism, but both overlapped sufficiently into Mounier's territory to forbid any complacency on his part. The leading Marxist intellectuals in France were more varied in social origins than their rivals, but they were nonetheless dominated by the same social group of teachers and journalists. The important difference was that as an older and international ideology, Marxism could call on a body of theory and practice that existentialism could not hope to equal, and that Mounier could only surpass by presenting himself in a specifically catholic light.

To assert himself ideologically against Marxism Mounier had to take account of social considerations similar to those which existentialism provoked. One area, in this case the working-class, was effectively closed to him; one area, again

the catholic middle-class, was virtually closed to the opponent; one area, the young non-catholic middle-class, was open to contest. For personalism to become a strong cultural ideology it was essential that it should consolidate its position among catholics, but equally important that it should win acceptance among non-catholics. It was therefore with a constant eye on the young élite who were as yet ideologically uncommitted that Mounier engaged battle with Marxism.

Earlier chapters have shown the beginning of Mounier's confrontation with Marxism and the response he had prepared. The intellectual position had not changed, but the ideological position had, and Esprit's first major investigation was aimed precisely at discovering the extent of communist penetration into the vital generation - the 20 to 30 age group.<sup>43</sup> The individuals consulted in this enquiry were all young intellectuals mostly from the Paris area. As with one voice they acknowledged the strong attraction of the communist party and almost as often the powerful effect of the Marxist analysis. The christians among them, however, mostly drew back on the brink of commitment either in distrust of the party or because they felt that Marxism excluded a spiritual dimension which they would not abandon. Significantly, a minority of christians were not deterred by these considerations. Perhaps not surprisingly also, several were convinced of the need for a coherent alternative, not to be found in the existing political parties, but along the lines of the personalist inspiration.

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43. E. Mounier, 'Ceux qui en étaient, ceux qui n'en étaient pas: enquête sur le communisme et les jeunes', Esprit, no. 119, février 1946, p.191-260.

During the early post-war period, political questions were so dominant as to be unambiguously the key to Marxism as a total ideology. This did not eliminate the need to meet Marxism intellectually, but it did make it less urgent. Throughout 1946 and 1947 Mounier's declarations were turned less towards a new examination of Marxist theory than a reiteration of the basic points he had defended since the thirties. He had initially been almost entirely ignorant of Marxist thought, and his early declarations on the matter had leant heavily on the knowledge brought to Esprit by various of his colleagues. In particular, he was strongly influenced by the Russian émigré Nicholas Berdyaev, whose position Mounier had largely adopted as his own.<sup>44</sup> The cruder elements of Berdyaev's account had been attenuated by a knowledge of Marx's early manuscripts which revealed analyses of alienation, ideology, philosophy and social superstructures, which Marx later muted.<sup>45</sup> Although Mounier gained a degree of verbal sophistication he did not materially alter his position throughout the thirties. The problem of Marxism had at all times been a function of the activities of the communist party, and Mounier had therefore not been forced into a serious ideological confrontation for which he was not prepared.

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44. See above, Chapter 2, I.c), where the question is discussed in some detail. See also N. Berdiaeff, Problèmes du communisme (Paris, 1933).

45. A. Cornu's account of the early Marx had been reviewed and analysed in some detail in Marcel Moré, 'Les années d'apprentissage de Karl Marx', Esprit, avril, juin, septembre & octobre 1935.

Although his inevitable contact with Marxism had compelled Mounier to formulate his views on it more clearly over the years, they were substantially the same in 1946 as they had been in 1932. In an article introducing the investigation of communism among young intellectuals, he rearticulated the theoretical basis for Marxism's inacceptability.<sup>46</sup> It sought, he said, to reduce everything to a function of economics. While it was undeniable, he admitted, that economic and social factors operated in spiritual affairs, he emphasised that spiritual forces also operated to disrupt any deterministic account. Hence, he claimed, although Marxism's social analysis was penetratingly acute, it was in other respects a crude philosophy. Primarily, it failed to accept the necessity for a guiding conception of man, without which, he argued, revolution could disastrously fail to produce the expected liberation. He concluded that until Marxists treated such considerations as more than the maunderings of a disoriented petty-bourgeoisie, and applied themselves seriously to moral and psychological explorations, they could not expect to gain the support of those for whom the spiritual dimension was vitally important.

Many criticisms can be, and were, levelled against Mounier's picture, not least of the Marxist account of superstructures and human consciousness. Georges Mounin,<sup>47</sup>

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46. E. Mounier, 'Débat à haute voix', Esprit, no.119, février 1946, p.164-190, reprinted in Oeuvres, IV, p.114-137. See also Chapter 5, II.a).

47. Georges Mounin, 'Pourquoi je suis resté communiste', Esprit, no.121, avril 1946, p.572-580.

a young communist intellectual, was quick to point out - at some length - that the crude determinism attributed to Marxism was a complete and caricatural misunderstanding. Maurice Pépin,<sup>48</sup> a young protestant communist, also pointed out that any conception of man was only meaningful in the context of concrete historical conditions. This replied to Mounier's proposal of an ahistorical paradigm for human activity. Roger Garaudy<sup>49</sup> flatly accused Mounier of asking Marxism to embrace a Platonistic idealism such as characterised personalism. Mounier welcomed Mounin's and Pépin's replies as hopeful signs of a worthwhile dialogue, but suggested that they were being perhaps a little naïve. To Garaudy he could only say that he had obviously not understood anything of Esprit's personalism.<sup>50</sup> In another article<sup>51</sup> at about the same time, he restated his position, assimilating something of the criticism offered and suggesting directions in which reconciliation might be possible. Idealism in the Marxist sense, he said, was precisely one of the alienations against which personalism had always fought, holding that

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48. Maurice Pépin, untitled article, Esprit, no.121, avril 1946, p.591-596.

49. Roger Garaudy, 'Impuissance et malfaisance du spiritualisme politique', Cahiers du communisme, mars 1946, p.212-223.

50. E. Mounier, 'Autour du communisme (suite)', Esprit, no. 122, mai 1946, p.855-857.

51. E. Mounier, 'Situation du personalisme (suite et fin)', Esprit, no.120, mars 1946, p.432-457, reprinted in Oeuvres, III, p.203-228.

thought unrelated to the material world was an aberration. At the same time, he insisted, Marxism tended to fall into the opposite aberration of refusing to acknowledge spiritual needs and thereby reducing the world to pure matter, and man to a machine. Nevertheless Marxism did have the virtue, he conceded, of demonstrating the unity of mind and body in man, and the interrelation of mind and matter in the world. Provided it could abandon its insistence on the primacy of economics in the dialectical relation between man and the world, he said, Marxism was not so far from personalism's affirmation of the ultimate sovereignty of the creative human mind. Why, he asked, could Marxism not go beyond its materialism and accept the importance of the interior dimension of man? That, for the moment, was his last word.

Intellectually, Mounier was apparently seeking to disestablish the Marxist dialectic from its economic and historical basis. He gave no strong reasons why this should be done, nor did he point to any tangible advantages in doing it. There was obviously no chance of his persuading convinced Marxists, but ideologically this was relatively unimportant, since those on whom he could hope to have an effect were the young progressively minded catholics. His approach was well judged to eliminate the mystery of Marxism as an unknown and therefore fascinating force, to establish a small number of simple and decisive points which rendered it unacceptable, and to assimilate to personalism as far as

possible those aspects of Marxism which were clearly powerful. The total effect was one of immunisation and as such a defensive rather than offensive operation. Tactically, this posture was forced on him because, whereas he could not hope to exercise much influence within the Marxist camp, Marxism was visibly making inroads into the catholic camp and therefore on personalist territory. It is clear that Mounier's dialogue with Marxism was dictated by tactical necessities, and that innocent or disinterested motives played no part in it.

During the course of 1946 the ideological extension of Marxism reached a high point. Those who had hesitated eventually made up their minds one way or the other, the political situation marked the end of the Marxist honeymoon for the time, and the anti-communist campaign from the emergent Right was beginning to force an increasing polarisation. By the end of the year Mounier noted this development and was pleased to see that more people were thinking seriously about Marxism, not just rushing to join the party.<sup>52</sup> He even suggested that Esprit's own reflections were an early contributing factor. In so far as he had tried a holding action against Marxism, it is possible to say that by late 1946 his objectives had been largely achieved, even if his own ideological efforts were a contributory rather than a decisive factor. This did not mean that he could

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52. E. Mounier, in a series of book reviews under the general title 'Récentes critiques du communisme', Esprit, no.126, octobre 1946, p.472-484.

relax, and during the following months he extended his understanding of Marxism in comment on developments in communism, in open debate with communists and in the examination of theoretical problems implied in these debates. One such was the debate on realism.

In early 1947 the communist party opened a public debate on the problems of a Marxist view of culture and art. Different opinions were aired, centring on the status of the doctrine of socialist realism, and the degree to which creative artists should be subjected to party discipline in their work. Mounier welcomed the admission that more than one view was now tolerated on a question of doctrine.<sup>53</sup> In February of that year Esprit published a small selection of contributions to the debate, stressing the freedom necessary for the artist while admitting the social responsibility. Mounier himself wrote at some length elaborating on the theme of realism.<sup>54</sup> In the course of his argument for relative freedom to be allowed to the creative avant-garde, he examined the concept of "reality". Quoting the writings of the young Marx, he pointed out that reality was not an abstract concept and could not be defined by the mere repetition of the word "objective". Instead, he said, it had to be understood as in part a function of human activity in which perception and interpretation were basic and formative elements. Such a concept of reality, he argued,

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53. E. Mounier, 'Tempête sur l'esthétique', Esprit, no. 129, janvier 1947, p.175-178.

54. E. Mounier, 'Le réel n'est à personne', Esprit, no.130, février 1947, p.206-213.

necessarily undermined the view that art should be a straightforward description of everyday events, and made room for its potential ability to explore new ways of seeing and understanding the world. To forbid this possibility to artists, he concluded, was a retrogressive measure in so far as it curtailed the forward movement of the vanguard, and therefore of the body of the troops.

As time passed, however, it became apparent that this was not a debate in which an outsider was welcome, but an internal struggle.<sup>55</sup> On the one hand, many French communist writers were anxious to defend their right to produce the kind of literature which they subjectively felt to be appropriate; they were supported in their position initially by Garaudy and Hervé, both leading party intellectuals. On the other hand, Aragon in harmony with the Soviet Union, felt that the need was above all for a literature which would contribute specifically to the unity and mobilisation of the working class against western, and particularly American, capitalism. With the formation of the Cominform under Zhdanov, the latter tendency gradually asserted itself, effectively reimposing the established doctrine of socialist realism. Those who had supported a less dogmatic line either submitted or left the party.

The significance of the debate's development was not limited to France, nor to the field of art alone. A similar

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<sup>55</sup> See David Caute, Communism and the French Intellectuals, especially p.318-335.

debate was occupying the Italian communists. Mounier took the trouble to publish comments and contributions on the Italian debate, which was most pertinent to the French one, and expressed often in highly polemical terms.<sup>56</sup> Beyond the problem of art and culture was the whole question of the relation between Marxism and the Soviet Union. The efforts of Zhdanov to get French intellectuals to accept the same orthodox line as their Russian counterparts was a long and divisive process which required the application of curbs to independent thought and the imposition of an authoritative version of Marxism. As French communists became more intractable in their understanding of Marxism, Mounier multiplied his appeals that they should adopt a more open attitude to dialogues with non-communists. His attitude must be seen in the context of the intensifying Cold War in which his political position was becoming impossible and in which the only meaningful level of dialogue available was ideological. It was essential, he knew, to keep the dialogue open because his ideological strength lay in his being able to operate on the frontiers of Marxism and catholicism. Hitherto the crux of the problem had been what attitude to take to the communist party itself and although this remained important it had by 1948 been thoroughly debated and the people who were most affected had mostly taken their decisions.

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56. For example, E. Vittorini, 'Politique et culture', Esprit, no.141, janvier 1948, p.34-57.

What remained for Mounier was the one task which he had up to now consistently avoided: a serious examination of Marxism as a philosophy and a comprehensive assessment of his own position in relation to it.

b) Confrontations.

Although Marxism was the major ideology he had to face from 1932 onwards, Mounier never addressed himself to it the same way as he had done to fascism or anarchism before the war, or to existentialism after the war. When he died in 1950 he had just begun to read a French translation of Marx's Das Kapital for the first time,<sup>57</sup> possibly with a view to a major confrontation, so that, in effect his most serious attempt to face Marxism publicly is represented by the May-June 1948 issue of Esprit. The issue with the general title of 'Marxisme ouvert contre marxisme scolastique', devoted almost 300 pages to articles and montages on various aspects of Marxism and set out to offer a fund of reflection and criticism. In this very substantial work, Mounier's own contribution was largely editorial. The contents, too rich to be dealt with here in detail, included an anthology of Marx' and Engels' writings; articles on Marx and Proudhon and on various aspects of Marx related to morality, history, religion, revolution, consciousness, materialism, economics, and culture; an enquiry into whether marxism was becoming a

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57. This information was given to me in conversation by M. Jean-Marie Domenach, who shared Mounier's community residence.

scholastic philosophy. The contributors ranged from committed communists to dominican priests and through a selection of nationalities.<sup>58</sup>

Introducing the volume,<sup>59</sup> Mounier mentioned that it was the centenary of the publication of the first French edition of the Communist Manifesto, and suggested that the occasion was best commemorated by a serious attempt to understand the obvious power of Marxism. His object was therefore to examine the strengths and the limitations without falling into the confusions which assisted polemic but did not find the truth. Refusing to expurgate Marxism for easy consumption, he also refused to father on to Marxism disguised versions of his own thought, understanding that the task of elucidating Marxism was a long difficult one which was only worth doing honestly. For that reason, he went on, this montage was not intended as a definitive statement of his positions, nor was it meant to give support to the widespread slogan

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58. Contributors to the volume were: E. Mounier; André Fiore-Decourt, a pre-agrégation student at Lyon; J. Lacroix; Remo Cantoni, Italian communist editor of Studi filosofici; Walter Dirks, German editor of Frankfurter Hefte; Julien Coffinet, socialist economist and journalist; Jean Domarchi, lecturer in Law at Dijon, scholar of Marxist theory; Maurice Caveing, communist and progressiste catholic, philosophy teacher; Aimé Patri, assistant editor of Paru; Rév P. Chenu, dominican theologian and historian; Christopher Hill, Oxford modern historian; Francis Jeanson, writer and journalist, close to Sartre; Philip Spratt, American political journalist; Henri-Charles Desroches, dominican, assistant editor of Economie et humanisme; Michel Collmet, teacher in Paris, former assistant editor of Volonté; Charles-François Hubert, communist Marx scholar and contributor to Economie et humanisme.

59. E. Mounier, 'Marxisme ouvert ou marxisme scolastique?', Esprit, no.145, mai-juin 1948, p.705-708.

'dépasser le marxisme', but he did hold an intention which could be confused with this;

Aidons le marxisme ... à se dépasser lui-même, c'est-à-dire à lutter contre ses propres cristallisations, à se débarrasser des contaminations d'époque, à découvrir ou à admettre (comme toute hypothèse scientifique) des perspectives qu'il n'avait pas d'abord envisagées, enfin à développer la force inventive de ses propres découvertes.<sup>60</sup>

This hope that Marxism would go beyond its own limitations was founded, Mounier argued, on the dynamic and open principles which were built into it. If these principles were adhered to, he hoped, a genuine dialogue would be possible which could be to the ultimate benefit of both personalism and Marxism itself. While his Marxist collaborators could probably have subscribed to the apparent spirit of these sentiments, Mounier made it entirely clear where his own reservations were:

La faiblesse du marxisme consiste, pour nous, à ériger un système d'explication valable dans certaines limites de temps, d'échelle et de structures, en une volonté d'explication universelle et totalitaire.<sup>61</sup>

This sentence summarised neatly the objection which Mounier had always held, that Marxism excluded God, and from that point stem all his reservations, reticences and oppositions. The whole of the article was another way of saying that when Marxism found room for God it would become acceptable. The openness Mounier wanted to encourage in it was therefore a readiness to concede the relative autonomy of consciousness

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60. Ibid, p.707-708.

61. Ibid., p.707.

in relation to the economic infrastructures. From this concession the way would be open to introducing the possibility of spiritual forces playing a decisive rôle in events. This was Mounier's eventual aim, though in the process of achieving it he was prepared to adopt much of the Marxist analysis of the social and economic spheres, where he had consistently admitted its superiority.

The distinction explicit in the title of the number, between a scholastic and an open Marxism, was explored in a montage of texts presented by Mounier.<sup>62</sup> He had asked a number of writers, communist and non-communist, to comment on the distinction he proposed. The answers were largely predictable. The communists, to a man, replied that Marxism was by its very nature open and creative, constantly ready and able to take account of changing circumstances, prepared where necessary to renew defunct or inappropriate analyses. Some of them pointed out that Marxists were only human and consequently there were times when they failed to be true to their principles, but as Claude Roy said, there was no reason why they should try to fit the stereotypes formed for them by non-Marxists. Moreover, Roy added, given the treatment which they had been accorded by everyone else since the

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62. 'Y a-t-il un scolastique marxiste?', Esprit, no.145, mai-juin 1948, p.736-766. Contributors were: Communists: Claude Morgan, Henri Denis, Marcel Prenant, Jean Beaufret, Claude Roy, Georges Mounin; Non-communists: J.-W. Lapierre, Brice Parain, André Dumas, Georges Friedmann.

beginning, Marxists had shown extraordinary lucidity and tenacity in remaining true, though they ought not to be complacent about it. The non-communist contributors, also to a man, felt that Marxism had suffered an inevitable loss of vigour and was tending to a rigidity comparable with the worst excesses of scholasticism. This, they hastened to add, was no one's fault since it arose from the peculiar social and historical conditions in which Marxism had to grow. It could be remedied, they suggested, if Marxists would only become more ready to criticise their beliefs and open themselves to other possibilities, which they had hitherto disregarded.

Despite the presentation of the enquiry, which suggested a certain coherence and unanimity among the contributors, there was evidently no real agreement between the two sides. The longest and most penetrating of the replies was that of Claude Roy, who came nearest to forging a link between the two sides. Having admitted that Marxists do sometimes use their ideology as a simple framework into which everything must be fitted, and fall short of the intelligence and rigour with which the Marxist method should be used, he concluded:

Nous sommes toujours menacés, de l'extérieur et de l'intérieur, en nous-mêmes et en face de nous, de périls et de paresse. Mais le marxisme est aussi une discipline de la lucidité. Il doit préparer les lendemains qui chantent avec des aujourd'hui qui parlent clair, droit et vrai. C'est un programme sur lequel je pense que nous pouvons nous

retrouver aussi, mon cher Emmanuel Mounier, avec toi, avec tes amis.<sup>63</sup>

It is difficult, theoretically, to see what more Mounier could wish from a Marxist and why he did not embrace Roy as a blood brother. The commitment to honesty, the intellectual modesty, and the openness of his declaration demanded a reciprocal response from Mounier; this was, however, not forthcoming. The same is true of the Italian communist, Remo Cantoni, whose contribution was essentially in the same spirit.<sup>64</sup> While he appreciated their position and always referred to them afterwards as honest, open Marxists, there is no evidence to suggest that Mounier tried to come to terms with them in any way, on the contrary he used them as a stick with which to beat their less amenable colleagues.

Among their less amenable colleagues, two party intellectuals, Jean Kanapa and Victor Leduc, soon made it clear that they regarded Mounier's position with suspicion, but were prepared to continue a dialogue now that it had been opened. Kanapa<sup>65</sup> accused Mounier of giving expression to a number of distorted interpretations of Marxism and trying to undermine the basic doctrine, but thought that with vigilance on both sides a dialogue was possible if Mounier were prepared to take fewer liberties with Marxist doctrine.

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63. Claude Roy, in an untitled article, Esprit, no.145, mai-juin 1948, p.754.

64. Remo Cantoni, 'Mythe et critique dans la culture marxiste', Esprit, no.145, mai-juin 1948, p.767-782.

65. Jean Kanapa, 'Avec les catholiques le dialogue est possible ... mais il y faut une vigilance réciproque', Cahiers du communisme, no.8, août 1948, p.814-831.

Leduc<sup>66</sup> echoed this sentiment and added that Mounier should leave Marxism to the Marxists and concentrate on the more fruitful line of cooperating with the party on practical issues. Both men took the whole affair as a confused indication that the party was making some headway and could hope to build on this, given the right approach. The right approach, as they understood it, was to take a firm doctrinal position, conceding nothing, and to attempt to establish a limited unity on a practical level. In this they were following orthodox Leninism. Mounier firmly repelled their advances,<sup>67</sup> denying, rather dishonestly, that he had intended any dialogue, but agreeing to open one since it had been taken that way. Rejecting their accusations of distortion, he replied to their invitation of practical cooperation saying that the elucidation of basic ideological positions was more important and that he had as much right as anyone else to examine Marxism critically, and that the communists would do well to follow his initiative as had Roy and Cantoni. The effect of this reply was to distinguish theory and practice in Marxism, a distinction his interlocutors resisted, but one which permitted him to pursue his study of it through a period in which the political implications, if accepted, would have been overwhelming.

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66. Victor Leduc, 'Qui sont les obscurantistes?', Action, 22-28 juin 1948; and 'Chronique des revues', Cahiers du communisme, no.7, juillet 1948, p.744.

67. E. Mounier, 'Main ouverte et marxisme fermé', Esprit, no.147, août 1948, p.214-217. Reprinted in Oeuvres, IV, p.169-172.

During the summer he elaborated on his position in some detail for the benefit of the review's annual conference.<sup>68</sup> He stressed that if Marxism was going to be transcended two duties were incumbent on personalists.

Il faut admettre qu'on puisse assimiler de plus en plus profondément le marxisme, lui devoir de plus en plus, et cependant jeter sur lui un regard de plus en plus critique.<sup>69</sup>

It was necessary, he implied; to intensify the relationship with Marxism, on the one hand learning more from it, on the other multiplying the reservations provoked by the basic difference. Such an intensification, he rightly saw, could not take place without his having to neutralise the proselytising force of communism, and while he felt himself immune to it, he also felt a responsibility to protect those of his associates and followers who might be less secure. In this project can be found the explanation for his attitude to dialogue with communist Marxists. Recalling the obligations which the social basis of personalism dictated, it will be remembered that Mounier needed to consolidate the catholic core of personalism in each generation while extending its grip on the young non-catholic élite. By 1948 his insertion in the latter category was relatively small, for Marxism and existentialism had proved more powerful, his efforts were consequently intensified in this area. But another factor had also emerged imperiously demanding attention: the

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68. The conference was held at Jouy-en-Josas in July 1948. Mounier's report was published as 'Les tâches actuelles d'une pensée d'inspiration personaliste', Esprit, no.150, novembre 1948, p.679-708.

69. Ibid., p.691.

substantial increase in recruitment of working-class catholics both by communist-dominated trades unions and by the party itself. Although Mounier could not hope to exercise much direct influence on events there, he was not entirely helpless ideologically. Any aid he could offer in the direction of analysis and argument would be welcomed by those catholic organisations and publications operating in direct contact with the problem. Their prime need was a pertinent, effective critique of Marxism which would not appear to run counter to the advancement of the working-class or to contradict those analyses which corresponded with working-class experience.

Taken together these factors compelled Mounier to redouble his efforts to come to terms with Marxism without yielding ground, and above all without reaching a peaceful coexistence with communism. Such coexistence, he knew, would inevitably lead to an erosion of personalism as the weaker of the two; and the erosion of personalism, he felt, would expose the Church to the risk of being undermined. For these reasons Mounier took an intransigent and uncompromising stand against the solicitations of communist intellectuals and at the same time devoted much time and energy to examining Marxism. On a personal level he read voraciously, taking over most of Esprit's reviews of books on Marxism and preparing analyses of specific themes which Marxism had raised to importance. Perhaps the most central of these was the conception of History.

The importance of History was a development of nineteenth century thought which lay at the roots of Marxism. The Church, seeing its rôle as depending on the assertion of an ahistorical absolute, had hitherto given relatively little attention to this aspect of socialist thought. After the post-war resurgence of Marxism as an intellectual force, leading catholics began to examine the question more closely.<sup>70</sup> Mounier was among them.

Before the war Mounier's perspective had always been that of Eternity, at least in so far as reflective thought was concerned. History had always represented for him a dimension of activity which did not impinge on the elaboration of moral or spiritual judgements and was therefore not a decisive constituent of personalism as an intellectual matrix. Marxism, on the other hand, had placed History at the centre of its attention, refusing to consider that any aspect of human activity could legitimately be abstracted from historical relativity. Already in 1947, Mounier had given some attention to the question in speeches made to international conferences.<sup>71</sup> Pointing out that the idea of history having meaning and direction was of judeo-christian origin, he emphasised that for a christian, history was finite and had

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70. See, for example, Jean Daniélou, 'Christianisme et histoire', Etudes, septembre 1947, p.166-184; Gaston Fessard, 'Le communisme va-t-il dans le sens de l'histoire?', Psyché, juillet-août 1948, p.844-872. See also Nicolas Berdiaeff, Le sens de l'histoire (Paris, 1948).

71. 'Pour un temps d'apocalypse', deliberated at the UNESCO conference in Paris 1946 (Oeuvres, III, p.341-360), and 'Le christianisme et la notion du progrès', delivered at an international conference in Geneva, September 1947 (Oeuvres, III, p.391-438).

a definite end in the Kingdom of God. Such a conception, he suggested, was more meaningful and more compatible with human dignity than that of an indefinite process which might or might not be a progress. From this view of history stemmed his often repeated 'tragic optimism' which expressed his belief that although history was sure to end in glory, the path was strewn with reverses, obstacles and sufferings which would only end with the apocalyptic end of time, and that, meanwhile, a christian's duty was to fight on in historical uncertainty, using his human capacities to advance his spiritual mission on earth. By 1949 he had developed this analysis of history to some complexity, examining the problems raised in detail. In one article<sup>72</sup> he suggested that a major problem was the relationship between history and human freedom. It was important, he said, to avoid falling into a refurbished form of Predestination by assuming that history followed an inevitable, ineluctable path. Marxism, he thought, stood between two possibilities; one stressed the weight of necessity in history, the other stressed the need for human effort to conquer its alienations. Provided Marxists kept the latter in constant view, he considered, they had much in common with the christian view. Ultimately the Marxist view of history was one of immanence, he thought, whereas the christian believed in a transcendent dimension. This, he argued, was the radical difference, though even such a radical difference was attenuated in prac-

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72. E. Mounier, 'Histoire: idole ou réalité', Civitas (Lucerne), no.10, juin 1949, p.584-593. Reprinted in Oeuvres, III, p.595-610.

tice. Granted that history had meaning and direction, he went on, the problem was posed as to who could interpret it, a task clearly beyond any individual. The Church, obviously, could throw some light on the divine mystery of history, he agreed, though all would not be revealed till the end. Otherwise the christian was largely in the same position as the Marxist, grappling with the unknown which was only structured intelligibly through a series of mediating, interpreting bodies such as governments, parties, leaders and theorists. Moreover, he added, history was so full of the unpredictable that it could never definitively be grasped with any certainty. Although spiritual history was not commensurate with temporal history, he insisted, the temporal was not irrelevant to the christian; and although the Church should not be identified with its historical and sociological insertion, it was still important to purify its earthly embodiment. Therefore, he concluded, those who involved themselves in exploring new forms of temporal incarnation should be recognised by the Church as having an important historical mission in which the spiritual was closely bound up.

Once Mounier had established a coherent account of history within his personalist scheme, he felt that he was in a position to counter the Marxist criticism that his thought was 'abstract'. The method for dealing with history was the same as that for dealing with the concept of man. Accepting

the apparent situation as given in the marxist account, he proposed an extra dimension which would not contradict it, but which would complete it. Introducing an area of indetermination he opened the way for the postulation of spiritual forces. In both cases the immediate effect was to raise the status of his own thought above the social and historical determinations without denying that such determinations existed. In other words, he could implicitly accept the ideological function of personalism while holding that it was not essentially ideological. This contrasted with Marxism which was prepared to admit its own ideological function until such time as historical and social contradictions were overcome, whereafter new ideostructures would be generated to correspond to new social and historical conditions.

Mounier's relationship with Marxism was reaching an intense stage in 1949, as he was increasingly obliged to accede to its analyses in temporal matters, and he grew correspondingly more insistent in his assertion of the spiritual dimension it denied. This intensity was heightened by a parallel development, as has been seen, in the political sphere, where his increasing awareness of the embattled situation of the working-class went hand in hand with a growing repugnance for the communist party. The degree of Mounier's visible evolution towards Marxism was certainly one of the reasons which prompted Thorez to appeal for his cooperation; the simultaneous intensification of his reservations was equally

important in Mounier's response of withdrawal. In order to retain his balance, Mounier was constantly obliged to introduce compensatory intensifications, a situation increasingly difficult as the months passed, with the papal decree of July 1949, the show trials in Eastern Europe, the polemic aroused by Tito's actions in Yugoslavia, and the bitter industrial strife of the winter of 1949. What the course of his development would have been, had he lived, is impossible to say. Would he have found a solution? There is no reason to suppose so: certainly he could no more embrace Marxism than he could close his eyes to it. Intellectually he was learning more and more from Marxism, but whether he could have reflected this in the political and ideological context of the 1950's is open to question.

### III. PERSONALISM.

#### a) Situation.

The examination of Mounier's relationship with existentialism and Marxism has suggested that his thought lacked the force to expand appreciably beyond the catholic milieu which had been its cradle. Two final questions must be examined in order to assess personalism as a cultural ideology: how far it was a successful and cohesive force within catholic circles, and how far it was a viable intellectual framework in its own right. Something of the answer has already emerged: it was an ideology of the catholic avant-garde, seeking to create modes of coexistence with the major

secular ideologies, exploring new territory and building a total structure of responses to meet the challenge of new situations and relationships in all areas of human activity. Attempting to give his position a concrete content, Mounier insisted more than ever on the dimension of commitment, but constantly stressed that no single political line followed necessarily from personalism. Its broad objectives must, he said, include the destruction of the western bourgeoisie and the coming of socialist structures as a result of working-class action. Divorced from these implications, he warned, it would turn into 'une idéologie à tout faire'<sup>73</sup> and be taken over by reformist or conservative interests to become a mystification. Caught in a cleft stick, Mounier saw the dangers springing from the sociological function of personalism as an ideology. How was it possible to avoid them? If he refused to work from the social reality of his insertion, he was doomed to sterility. If he allowed his social base to dictate his positions, they were bound to be perverted. His project was therefore to unite the vanguard of the catholic middle-class, a project requiring a fine sense of balance and a strong sense of direction if it was to be successful. The relationship between an ideologist and his audience is reciprocal, as has been seen. He both expresses and modifies their consciousness, and cannot separate the two tasks without losing his function. Mounier had aimed at

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73. Oeuvres, III, p.238. (From Qu'est-ce que le personalisme? (1947).)

inducing a radical transformation in his followers, so it was all the more essential that he should continue to cater for their particular tastes and needs. Such an ambition was complicated by the desire to create an ideology which would influence as wide an audience as possible. However universal he wanted personalism to be, he had always to ensure that it would not be rejected en masse by the catholic middle-class. He had therefore to remain faithful to catholic doctrine, and propose an acceptable rôle for the middle-class in the cultural transformation he considered to be imminent. The two conditions were closely bound together. Allowing subjective conditions to be decisive in judging persons permitted members of any class to contribute to the revolution in a significant way. On this interpretation, even if the working-class were decisive in the economic sphere, the middle-class could, singly or together, play a decisive, or at least positive, rôle in the cultural and spiritual one. The crucial factor for personalism was therefore its relationship with the catholic church.

Mounier's fidelity to catholicism was basic to his personalism, though he consistently refused to allow it to appear an exclusively catholic, or even christian, philosophy. In this regard he tended, more than before the war, to adopt a dual position. While always making clear how far personalism was one of a number of possible choices for a catholic, he increasingly allowed himself to be represented

as a lay spokesman for the Church on intellectual matters, whether in international visits and conferences, in books and reviews aimed at largely non-catholic audiences, or in radio broadcasts for the French cultural service. The personal prestige thus acquired contributed to his legitimate efforts to establish personalism as an effective defender of the catholic faith. He did not always show the intellectual connection between his personalism and orthodox catholicism but their coexistence in his own person was sufficient to establish an ideological link in the minds of his audience.

Mounier was always prepared to go to great lengths to safeguard his orthodoxy, as he had before the war. It was usually a happy coincidence of personal belief and ideological necessity, but on occasion the two conflicted. The most striking example of such a conflict was the Church's condemnation in July 1949 of those catholics who were prepared to work with the communist party. Privately Mounier considered this a disastrous step, but loyally swallowed his objections in public.<sup>74</sup> Eventually he might have changed his personal assessment, but he immediately perceived that his influence would be undermined unless he publicly accepted the ruling. In this decision he revealed an awareness of the nature of his audience and his sensitivity to their reactions. By virtue of his efforts, Mounier consolidated his rôle as mentor to the catholic avant-garde, offering a context in which it

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74. This affair is examined in Chapter 5, II.c].

could come to terms with the problems facing it. Through Esprit he offered serious analyses of current political affairs in France and abroad, contributions to philosophical and moral debates which were occupying the intelligentsia, and reportages on social and economic conditions throughout the world. Linked to this was a loose network of friendships, meetings and discussions which gave sympathisers an opportunity to feel in touch with important developments, and which further consolidated the solidarity which their common interests encouraged. Together these elements helped to create a movement. Other sectors of the Church were also working in the same direction, however, and the movement can be seen as part of a more general movement among catholics to seek new expressions of their place in the world by looking at hitherto relatively unexplored areas.<sup>75</sup> The wider manifestations of this are beyond the scope of this study; the question which arises is how far Mounier succeeded in giving coherence and direction to the movement which he had worked to create. The answer can be found in the intellectual articulations of his thought in the post-war period.

During early 1946 Mounier was careful to publicise his positions as widely as possible. He reissued some of his pre-war studies<sup>76</sup> and published a collection of articles recently

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75. See A. Dansette, Destin du catholicisme français, and W. Bosworth, Catholicism and Crisis in Modern France.

76. E. Mounier, Liberté sous conditions (Paris, 1946).

printed in Esprit.<sup>77</sup> This latter under general title Qu'est-ce que le personnalisme? was a reiteration of some of the major themes of pre-war Esprit and a reappraisal of their implications. It was aimed at stirring the memories of past supporters and whetting the appetite of the rising generation with the intention of calling both to thought and action. As before the war Mounier urged that he was not attempting to build a monolithic system:

Le personnalisme, tant qu'il dépendra de moi, ne sera jamais un système ni une machine politique. Nous employons ce terme commode pour désigner une certaine perspective des problèmes humains, et pour accentuer, dans la solution de la crise du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, certaines exigences qui ne sont pas toujours mises en valeur.<sup>78</sup>

The sense of this declaration was not to diminish his ambition to provide a total ideology, but rather to emphasise that it must not become fixed into a rigid dogmatism. It must be open, he insisted, not only to political, but also to philosophical variations, depending on the judgement and preference of the individual personalists. He therefore repeated that personalism was a philosophy in competition with Marxism and existentialism, but warned that all three overlapped and tackled similar problems in a situation of fruitful competition, not in a struggle to the death. Intellectually, he argued, personalism was distinct from, though not uniformly hostile to, these rivals.

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77. E. Mounier, Qu'est-ce que le personnalisme? (Paris, 1947). Reprinted in Oeuvres, III, p.179-245.

78. Oeuvres, III, p.179.

In its substance the personalist philosophy which he outlined remained unchanged since its elaboration a dozen years before, offering the same analysis of the person in the world. In its appearance, however, there were differences. His vocabulary had altered in harmony with the climate of the post-war. Much of the Péguy rhetoric had disappeared, along with the flowers of bergsonian eloquence, and the unctuous jargon of late-nineteenth century piety. Some of it lingered on, but it was being partly replaced by the drier, more precise terminology of social and economic analysis, the unwieldy jargon of germanic existentialism and the more racy and aggressive polemic of the working-class struggle.

It would be possible, on examining these articles, to detect shifts in Mounier's philosophy, but to do so would be to mistake their aim and scope, which was not to propose a philosophy, but to provoke a commitment and to point to a philosophy best expressed elsewhere. A serious formulation of personalism as a method of enquiry and analysis, and as a potentially complete account of the world, was given elsewhere, in two books quite different from each other, which together reveal the measure of Mounier's intellectual achievement. The first, Traité du caractère,<sup>79</sup> was the fruit of his researches in prison and clandestinity. The second, Le Personnalisme,<sup>80</sup> was a final summary of all his positions for popular consumption. To examine either book in detail would require a study in itself, the first because of its complexity and ramifications, the second because of its density, but it is important to take them, at least briefly, into account.

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79. E. Mounier, Traité du caractère (Paris, 1946). Reprinted as Oeuvres, II.

80. E. Mounier, Le personnalisme (Paris, 1949). Reprinted in Oeuvres III. p. 429-525.

b) A fighting science.

Published in 1946, the Traité du caractère was an attempt to provide a scientific foundation for the notion of the person which Mounier had developed. His brief introduction noted the uncertainty which he felt had begun to undermine man's conceptinn of himself and continued:

Il lui faut alors choisir vigoureusement, dans la confusion de toutes les valeurs, ce que c'est que d'être homme, et homme de son temps, puis le vouloir hardiment, en alliant imagination et fidélité. Nous avons choisi. Nous n'avons pas seulement, dans notre recherche, voulu traiter de l'homme mais combattre pour l'homme... notre science, pour être une science honnête, n'en est pas moins une science combattante.<sup>81</sup>

The intention was therefore both descriptive and normative. Mounier set out to elucidate the structures of the human personality, exploring its dimensions, the determinations which governed it, the variations it displayed and its possibilities. Within the psychological reality which emerged from this study, Mounier sought to situate the areas of authentic personal action and scientific uncertainty or incompetence so as to justify the adoption of certain values and ascertain the conditions of their promotion. The pedagogic nature of the enterprise was not disguised and it was supported by a substantial weight of references.

The Traité was a long, rich work, demanding to be considered in many different perspectives. In the context of the present study, however, its importance is primarily that it was Mounier's fullest treatment of what he took to be the

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81. Oeuvres II, p.7.

centre of his own thought, the human person. Although his approach was ostensibly scientific, an exercise in characterology, Mounier was quick to point out that any such exercise embodied, openly or covertly, 'une philosophie de l'homme et une volonté sur l'homme',<sup>82</sup> and that it was illusory for a psychologist to pretend to dissociate his science from its human attachments. Once it was suggested, he went on, that the human person transcended his empirical manifestations, any scientific approach could only be approximate, because its object was incommensurable. Hence, he continued, typologies were inherently deficient;

Le caractère est comme le dessin de l'échec de la personnalité. Nous ne sommes typiques que dans la mesure où nous manquons à être pleinement personnels.<sup>83</sup>

He insisted that the person was always more than any characterisation of him, but that this did not completely invalidate such an exercise, it only set its limitations. Equally, he argued, to know a person was only possible for another person in a personal relationship and all that that implied in terms beyond the scope of science. Moreover, he suggested, a person existed in the dimension of time, developing and shifting so that no single view of him could be adequate, for he could only be grasped in the context of a past, present and future. Clearly, he concluded, this introduced a would-be science into fields where it could not legitimately operate,

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82. Oeuvres, II, p.11.

83. Oeuvres, II, p.42.

involving ethics, values, ambiguities and the ultimate nature of man. For Mounier, the person was fundamentally a mystery, and psychology bore the same relation to the person as theology to God.

His brief introduction to his subject matter held the essence of Mounier's doctrine, for it presented the premisses on which his analyses were based. The view of the person was that which he had already elaborated in the early 1930's and in every way preceded the semi-scientific studies which comprised the rest of the book. The remaining 700 pages examined in turn the forces operating in the formation and development of the person, and the different effects which in different circumstances they produced. The underlying assumption was unchanging, that the external and internal determinations were ultimately at the service of the free centre around which they turned and which gave them meaning. The reader was shown the effects of the material and social environment and the physical condition of the body; the forces of emotive energy, receptivity and the perception of reality; the capacities of action in the world, interaction with other people and self-assertion; the higher faculties of intellectual, moral and spiritual life. Each chapter demonstrated the forces at work and sought to suggest how they might be observed and used to develop the person to the highest and richest degree within its inherent possibilities. In this sense it was explicitly educational, for Mounier continually offered advice on the correction of various maladjustments. The advice was, as he had made clear, based on a pre-conceived

model of what the human person was and should be; from the descriptions and prescriptions a composite picture emerged of what constituted this model. The key was balance. At every step the person, said Mounier, was at the centre of a play of tensions between which he must arbitrate, avoiding excess, to create himself. He suggested that there was an area of leeway between opposing excesses within which the person should strive to maintain himself, and that once having attained a given balance, he should maintain it in a positive, resolute and creative way, always seeking to improve it and explore its possibilities. This applied, he insisted, whether the person was considered in his internal structure, his external relations, his prospective and transcendent development or any other perspective. The person as a reality and as a value was indivisible for Mounier, and founded on a commitment of faith. The model, always implicit, was the conception of God expressed in the catholic dogma of the Holy Trinity. In this conception God was held to be both a living personal reality and an absolute norm, in harmony within himself; God was also held to be present in all men both as their most central reality and as source and criterion of value. The human person was therefore a fragment of the divine person incarnated through man in the world. It followed from Mounier's acceptance of this account that what began as a scientific examination of human character, ended by establishing a hierarchy of human characters, along with a hierarchy of human activities.

The structure of the book was a progression from material conditions at the beginning to religious expression at the end, with no ambiguity as to the value hierarchy thereby implied. The system of classification adopted was similarly oriented. Three main characteristics, emotivity, activity and resonance of representations were taken as appropriate coordinates for measuring and classifying characters. The character which combined the most of these three qualities was regarded as the ideal at every level, and, unsurprisingly, most suited to the religious life. Mounier explained that, in practice, people fell short of this perfect harmony, but that each imperfect character could develop appropriate, though subordinate, value. The entire exercise was an attempt to construct a human geography of divine operations.

In presenting the multiple articulations of the human character, seat of the person, Mounier drew on a wide range of reading, undertaken during the enforced leisure of the occupation.<sup>84</sup> This material gave the book a richness, variety and force which served to support the central thesis by appearing, at least, to take account of all the technical arguments which might be urged against him. Much of his technical and conceptual apparatus was drawn from the writings of the French clinical psychologist, Pierre Janet, a

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84. The analysis and criticisms of the Traité given here are based on a passing acquaintance of the sources on which Mounier drew, now largely superseded, and on a general knowledge of standard histories of psychology and works of popularisation. There are no substantial appraisals published on the Traité: those who have the necessary erudition lack the inclination.

near contemporary of Freud; his analytical methodology was based on the work of the Dutch characterologists Heymans and Wiersma. To this was added a wide range of material from French psychologists of the 1920's and 1930's, notably Wallon, Dupré, Minkowski and Baudouin; a selection of German and Austrian characterology, dominated by Kretschmer, Klages and Künkel; psychoanalysts Freud, Jung and Adler, taken largely from second-hand sources; and a broad spread of literary, philosophical and religious references. Almost entirely absent from the account was any work by English or American psychologists: even when referred to, it had clearly not been drawn on. The way in which Mounier deployed his material reveals a great deal about his method of thought in general, exemplifying both its strengths and weaknesses.

Beginning with the fundamental assumptions which he inherited from his catholic faith, he established a hierarchical structure of norms and values into which empirical observations had to be fitted. The structure was rigid in its outline but allowed a certain flexibility within its detail in order to accommodate and benefit from the observations. As far as possible, all relevant material was collected and processed for inclusion. The processing consisted of accepting all data and interpretations which appeared to be in general harmony with the structure; those which did not fit were either separated from their original context and adapted, or taken as an illustration of the errors implicit

in an incomplete understanding, or rejection, of the structure he proposed. By this method Mounier aimed to achieve a personalist synthesis. As everywhere else, what emerged was an eclecticism which never quite succeeded in becoming an integrated synthesis. The Traité itself was an enormous rag-bag of material often suggestive, often illuminating, containing some of Mounier's best writing as well as some of his worst. The central structure was there, but it often had little bearing on the substance it had to carry, much of which transferred ill from its original context. The deficiencies are apparent, and run parallel with deficiencies elsewhere in his work. There was no basis in practical experience, the account being entirely theoretical; the major theorists in the field were incompletely understood, he therefore did not come to terms with them; the portion of rigorous analysis was eked out by generous helpings of received wisdom, speculation and prejudice; the result was offered as acceptable on its own rational terms, with the spiritual implications largely optional, whereas it was only intelligible ultimately in the context of a religious faith.

As Mounier had wished, the Traité is tied to its date and place of origin. In many respects it has become old-fashioned, but twenty-five years later it was still being reprinted, read widely and even set as required reading on more than one French course in education. What it offers is a comprehensive psychological account of man which is compatible with a non-deterministic metaphysic, and a handbook

of information, argument and advice for those who share its assumptions. In terms of Mounier's personalism it sought to establish a solid scientific basis for the concept of the person, on which his ideology was centred. It also exemplified his method of analysis and the way in which he attempted to construct an integrated synthesis of disparate elements round a central conviction. Like the whole of Mounier's work it failed to fulfil the ambition which provoked it, but had considerable value and effect on a more modest level.

c) Potted personalism.

Published only a few months before Mounier's death, Le personnalisme was a work of entirely different nature. As part of the popular Que sais-je? paperback series, it had to be a clear concise and comprehensive account of personalism, thereby forcing Mounier to an effort of reflection, reassessment and condensation on a scale he had not attempted since the Manifeste au service du personnalisme of 1936. As a result the book was in the first instance a summary of seventeen years' work in which many apparently simple formulations were the fruit of long debate. In this sense, to analyse the book in any detail would involve a repetition of much that has already been said. On another level, the book is both misleading and revelatory. Mounier had always refused to present personalism as a definable system, but here he was obliged to introduce a highly schematic approach which distorted and oversimplified his thought at the same time as forcing out into the open some of the ambiguities

and confusions which it concealed. On a number of points the book proposed reinterpretations and even on occasion modifications of his doctrine. To examine these in detail would involve much comparative exegesis of dubious significance, but it is pertinent to look briefly at the more important shifts in Mounier's position and to discover what new light the book shed on personalism as a whole.

Attempting to situate personalism, Mounier insisted that it was more than an attitude and less than a system, it was a philosophy, or rather a family of philosophies with basic differences but much in common. Such an affirmation, followed by a history of the concept of the person through the ages up to a wide variety of contemporary thinkers, had the effect of pitching personalism more specifically on the level of pure thought than Mounier had previously been prepared to concede. This orientation was reinforced by the fact that little more than one sixth of the text was devoted to the practical implications of personalism, in the section entitled 'le personnalisme et la révolution du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle'<sup>85</sup> at the end of the book. There is no doubt that Mounier conceived the book in the perspective of personalism's situation in the years ahead, and that he saw that situation as a difficult and defensive one, increasingly dependent on the survival of an intellectual élite. He therefore presented a popularised, but intelligent, version of personalism as an intellectual position. This approach was entirely consistent

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85. This was the title of the second and final part.

with personalism's eroded ideological status. Most of the space was occupied by the examination of 'les structures de l'univers personnel'.<sup>86</sup> The person, Mounier began, was incorporated in the material world, partly determined by it, partly transcendent. This two-way relationship was described in terms of movements of depersonalisation and personalisation, both of which, he claimed, were already implicit in the world. Here Mounier borrowed from Teilhard de Chardin,<sup>87</sup> some of whose work, though not yet published, Mounier had seen. He gave a cursory outline of Teilhard's notion of personalisation as a structure of the natural world. The imported analysis did not clash excessively with its new context, but lost conviction and was ill-assimilated.<sup>88</sup> Rooted in the world, the person's first experience was one of communication, complemented, Mounier continued, by an equivalent impulsion of interiority. The analysis of these two dimensions of the person was enriched by the experience of the Traité du caractère and his study of existentialism, but otherwise they added little to earlier analyses. The next section, L'affrontement, dealt with an ill-defined conception of the person as an assertion of singularity, difference, strength and decision. These qualities formed the necessary conditions for the person to confront his environment successfully,

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86. This was the overall title of the first and longest part.

87. Oeuvres, III, p.444.

88. For a detailed study of the relationship between Mounier and Teilhard, see Madeleine Barthélemy-Madaule, 'L'univers personnel d'Emmanuel Mounier et de Pierre Teilhard de Chardin', in her book La personne et le drame humain chez Teilhard de Chardin (Paris, 1967), p.302-322.

Mounier argued. Despite his efforts to establish them as ontological categories, this was an instance where the schematic structure of his analysis betrayed Mounier into proposing as a coherent unity a series of disparate elements. The characteristics described were valid, if commonplace, moral themes which constantly recurred in his writing, giving it much of its peculiar quality and force; they did not form a unified or integral part of personalism outside that context.

The following chapter, dedicated to a study of freedom, was another example of distortion. Human freedom had never been a major preoccupation of Mounier's, even though his thought operated in the same areas as thinkers who were preoccupied by it. The slogan 'liberté sous conditions'<sup>89</sup> accurately conveyed his position on freedom but exaggerated the importance he gave to it. Since the person transcended his material determinations, he argued, the simplest definition of freedom is the way in which the person is everything that he is. In a sense, for Mounier freedom was a mis-leading and unnecessary concept which is covered by notions of person and personalisation. His discussion of it in this book was dictated by the important place it occupied in the thought of others; it resulted in an uneasy and at times confused chapter.

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89. Oeuvres, III, p.477. This was the title of the section concerned and also of a book he had published in 1946 consisting of three pre-war studies.

In his account of the transcendent dimension of the person, Mounier was once more at ease, reiterating his analysis of the internal transcendent link between man and a set of externally existing values, whether in the form of God or not. To this he added the brief outline of what, for him, these values implied in philosophical terms, all of which was familiar implicitly or explicitly in his previous works. The final section of the theoretical section was devoted to l'engagement, a theme fashionable in 1949 and prominent in Mounier's thought since the beginning. Returning to Maurice Blondel's notion, Mounier saw action as an integral part of existence and truth and distinguished four divisions of action: material, ethical, contemplative and communal. In practical terms, he said, commitment must take account of prophetic and political modes, the former being contemplative in essence, the latter material. The dialectical relationship thereby set up between efficacy and adherence to absolute values must be maintained, Mounier concluded, however difficult this might be. He spoke of the many dangers which lurked in such a position. Parts of this section had the anguished tone of uncertainty proper to one who was not confident of having avoided all of the dangers. He even recognised that before the dialectic of action could be authentically conducted by any one man, there would have to be a profound transformation in the spiritual climate of the time. There was no major modification of Mounier's views, but what did emerge was an increasing intensity in his attempts to reconcile the divergent sollicitations of his position. He summed up:

Une action non mutilée est toujours dialectique. Souvent il lui faut tenir dans l'obscurité et le doute, les deux bouts d'une chaîne qu'elle ne peut souder.<sup>90</sup>

It is clear that the two ends of the chain were getting further apart and that for Mounier, attempting to hold both, with the obscurity and doubt growing, the situation was becoming increasingly painful.

As an intellectual operation Le personalisme was the most coherent formulation Mounier's thought received, an attempt to express the whole of it in a short space. It revealed the scope and fertility of his account at the same time as its weaknesses. Expressed in dry, clipped terms, many of Mounier's polarities and dialectical relationships began to look like simple contradictions. Stripped of their historical references and their rhetoric, many of his themes lost their force and unity. Writing within a convention that was alien to him for an audience he did not know, Mounier was hard pressed to make his truths sound more than banal and gratuitous assertions. Separated from the ideological context in which he had constructed personalism, Mounier forfeited much of the power he exercised as the leader of a movement and as a catholic intellectual. But if this was true of his philosophy, it was even more serious for his political and social declarations. Esprit's positions on practical issues, summed up in a few pages at the end, were intelligible only in the context of a specific political programme, in the absence of which they appeared as no more than

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90. Oeuvres, III, p.505.

intimations of utopia. Mounier sketched in the main lines of his political theory, adding in very general terms what its implications were, and referring to appropriate numbers of Esprit. At best it was an invitation to reflection, at worst a succession of vague imperatives devoid of substance, ignoring the practical questions of implementation. Taken as a whole the book represented a pause in the progress of personalism. The pause might have been useful for taking stock, exploring new avenues, consolidating positions and preparing for a renewed advance, or it might have been a prelude to tactical withdrawal, reorientation or retreat. In the event Mounier died on 22nd March 1950 before it had become clear what the pause would lead to. Certainly his ambitions would have been modified to cope with the modest ideological implantation now left to him.

d) Conclusion.

In the heady days after the Liberation and even as late as the spring of 1947 personalism had seemed poised to establish itself as one of France's major ideologies. It enjoyed a secure audience which felt itself in harmony with personalist aspirations; it offered a coherent intellectual framework already familiar to many; it enjoyed a creditable Resistance record, unlike many other catholic movements; and its leading exponent was already a distinguished intellectual figure. Three years later these statements were still largely true, but outside a limited milieu it was barely possible to describe

personalism as a serious ideology. Intellectually, Mounier had produced an impressive and well-judged defence of personalism against the two major opponents which had posed a challenge. He had established a position in which catholics could hope to assimilate what was valuable in existentialism and Marxism, leaving catholic orthodoxy intact. Within the limitations of his situation it is difficult to suggest what more Mounier might have done to encourage the growth of personalism as an ideology. His energy, his intelligence, his skill as an ideologist, his personal qualities, none of these can seriously be called into question. The reasons why personalism scarcely survived the 1940's were inherent both in its intellectual formulation and in the conditions of its social existence. Mounier half perceived the reasons when he spoke of the difficult of holding two ends of a chain which could not be welded together.<sup>91</sup> He was faced with a series of contradictions which could not be reconciled, and which must now be examined in a concluding assessment.

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91. In Le personalisme, Oeuvres, III, p.505.

C O N C L U S I O N

C O N C L U S I O N

Having examined at length the formation and situation of Mounier as an intellectual leader and ideologist; the establishment of the media through which he chose to communicate; his apprenticeship in political commitment; the intellectual framework on which he based his ideology; the ambiguous but variously fruitful experiences of the war and occupation; the hopes and failures of personalism as a political ideology; and Mounier's struggle to assert personalism against marxism and existentialism as a pre-eminent ideological force in post-war France; having examined these, it is now possible to attempt an assessment of Mounier's achievement at the time of his death in March 1950.

Despite the esteem and interest with which Mounier's works and his review Esprit were read, it is clear that personalism was no longer a viable ideology, politically or culturally. It commanded a decreasing measure of assent as a distinct and coherent doctrine even among the middle-class catholic audience which had been its strength. There was no significant support for it in the working-class or among non-christians. The reasons for this are to be found in a series of contradictions, structural and historical, which worked irresistibly against Mounier's best efforts and intentions.

A first contradiction lay in the coexistence of conflicting principles of unity and diversity within personalism.

The primary movement was one of unification, modified and ultimately thwarted by a reaction of diversification. This was implicit in Mounier's conception of personalism as a philosophy which should be coherent without being systematic. It led to a situation in which he appropriated analyses from divergent sources without adequately integrating them into an overall synthesis. Since many of his sources were flatly incompatible, what remained was an eclecticism of juxtaposed fragments. This was entirely consistent with his notion of the person as an indefinable and unpredictable entity, but it also entailed that the only principle of coherence was the coexistence of all the different elements in a particular person: himself. It followed that the structure was not transmissible, a consequence amply confirmed on Mounier's death.

A similar contradiction obtained with the group of thinkers who formed the intellectual leadership of personalism. Between Marc Beigbeder, Paul Ricoeur, Jean Lacroix, Nicholas Berdyaev, Jean-Marie Domenach and all those who, like Maurice Nédoncelle and Gabriel Madinier, were personalists without being part of the Esprit team, the unifying factor was nominally a commitment to, or interest in, elucidating and defending the human person, of which each had his own conception. Such a factor proved totally useless in establishing practical criteria for determining who was a personalist and what they held in common. The operative factor was really a common loyalty to Mounier, and since he would not, and could not, introduce an agreed common position, beyond

the vaguest, upon which to unite, no firm base was established on which a satisfactory school or ideology could be founded. Mounier's own thought was taken as expressing the public position of Esprit, but he increasingly conceded the need felt by his colleagues to develop independently their own preoccupations. As a result the unity of their thought came to rest less on a tenuous personalism and more on their commitment to the spiritual values of christianity.

The attitude of rank and file personalists was also determined by this contradiction. The only doctrinal coherence to be found in Esprit itself was Mounier's own writing, even those closest to him in thought, like Lacroix, were noticeably different. The same was even more true of the collections of books which the review patronised. In terms of theory, no specific lines were laid down, and whereas before the war Mounier had made regular efforts to summarise and propagate Esprit's positions, afterwards he left his readers more often to sift through the various contributions in search of a synthesis which ultimately did not exist. The strength of Esprit lay increasingly in its special numbers on matters of general importance, where Mounier adopted once more a pluralist attitude, juxtaposing relevant views, with perhaps an attempted synthesis in conclusion. Although this attitude had the effect of making readers think, it no longer offered firm principles on which they might take a common stand. However valuable on other grounds, it did not help to build a fighting doctrine. Where it had once presented

solutions, personalism now offered its supporters only contributions to debates. In this way, Mounier's pluralism undermined the ideologically necessary unity which might have strengthened his position. Pluralism was an option, but it was also an obligation. Without a pluralistic attitude, Mounier would have been obliged to abandon the comprehensive scope of his thought, the wide range of colleagues and the broad support of French catholics. Although it undermined personalism as an ideology the contradiction between unity and diversity was one Mounier could not avoid.

A contradiction was also implicit in personalism's totalising project, which may be expressed as its ambition to become a total and universal ideology which by virtue of being adopted would cease to be a distinct ideology. Mounier did not express his ambition in such specific terms, had he done so the contradiction would have been too apparent. He said that his ambition was to awaken the total sense of man in sufficient men that personalism would be indistinguishable from everyday life. But conceptions of man are relative to conditions of man, social and historical, so that a total sense of man must be broad enough to encompass at least all the varieties of human social existence and precise enough to correspond to the experience of each. The conditions in which Mounier sought to advance such a conception were too limited for him to advance it successfully. Such as it was, his concept of man could only reflect the experience of a small section of the middle-class and only

offer an a priori account of any other social group's experience. The unity of the conception was thus vitiated by the divided nature of its object of reference.

If it is to be successful, a potentially universal conception must be communicated, either to all classes equally, or to one class which would proselytise in some way. Mounier only ever reached a middle-class audience, despite the fact that he held the working-class to be the one which would play the decisive rôle in history. The reasons for his failure to communicate can be found partly in his refusal to modify the intransigent intellectualism of his own writings and of Esprit in general. The impact was thereby largely limited to a middle-class intelligentsia. He both hoped for the diffusion of personalism over a wider range through the intermediary of the élite he reached, and also refused to envisage an organised means of realising his hope. He was unwilling and unable to take the steps which would allow him to implant his universal ideology universally, on a social basis.

In addition to the social limitations to his efforts, there was a further limitation springing from the religious basis of his personalism and the religious divisions within society. The incidence of religious belief in the urban working-class was minimal. Catholicism was still strong in some rural and provincial working-class areas but was otherwise generally a middle-class phenomenon, as was protestantism,

though a substantial section of the bourgeoisie professed no religious belief. Hence the elaboration of a universal ideology required that it be acceptable to catholic, protestant and atheist, or at least agnostic, circles. To meet this problem Mounier had to distinguish between different kinds of personalism, of which his own was of the catholic inspiration, and while striving for unity was obliged to install division. But since his own personalism was the dominant branch he was further led to mute the specifically catholic and even christian references of his thought at the expense of coherence and conviction. Hence, even to communicate with the middle-class Mounier had to introduce wide diversity into his own thought. In practice the effects of this were less harmful than might be expected since his readers were mainly catholics and took the catholic references for granted.

A more serious structural contradiction was the dislocation between theory and practice. A total ideology implies, as Mounier often stressed, that all fields of human activity be included in a single synthesis. This ambition was undermined not by Mounier's failure to treat of all areas of theoretical enquiry, a failure time might have remedied, but by the radical divorce he perpetuated between the elucidation of theoretical positions and the undertaking of practical actions. It was particularly acute with regard to politics. Since the earliest days of Esprit Mounier had insisted on the imperative need for action to implement his ideals. After, as before the war he strenuously repudiated the tendency of

personalism to be purely theoretical, and called for political commitment. At the same time he refused to formulate any specific form of action, on the grounds that personalism could not necessitate one particular choice rather than another. This position did not prevent his making contributions to political theory and debate, but it did entail their remaining without any serious chance of implementation. Conversely to the extent he did have an effect on politics it was independently of his distinct ideological position. The divorce between theory and practice in politics meant that despite Mounier's exhortations, his theoretical position did not gain adequate benefit from practical experience, nor was his theory of much assistance in defining practical lines of action. The effective separation of politics and thought was undertaken initially to safeguard the unity of personalism and avoid divisive controversy. To some extent the tactic was successful, and the amicable recognition of political diversity saved it from being torn apart by the tensions of the Cold War. Instead, it merely drifted apart and by refusing a specific line of action Mounier condemned personalism to political irrelevance and subverted its aim to present a total ideology.

The structural contradictions of personalism were, in themselves, sufficient to subvert Mounier's ambitions. But added to them were the historical contradictions of Mounier's position. He was substantially formed in a privileged class during a period of relative prosperity and tranquility. The

first serious situation he had to face as a young adult was an international economic and political crisis which he tried to understand in the framework of his inherited values. Neither his principles nor his training helped him to understand or deal with the events of the early nineteen thirties. As he learned to understand his historical situation, borrowing increasingly from socialist, and particularly Marxist, analyses, he found himself in the position of an avant-garde, constantly in danger from both sides. He was caught between the catholic middle-class to which he belonged, and the Marxist-led working-class where his political sympathies lay. The spiritual revolution was aimed at reconciling the best of both camps, and could only hope to succeed in a situation of class-collaboration. Unfortunately, whenever the class struggle asserted itself with particular intensity, the middle-ground Mounier occupied was severely reduced, to the point where it became untenable.

Again, occupying a position in the avant-garde of catholicism put Mounier under severely contradictory stresses. The margin between transforming the Church and being rejected by it was slim. He was obliged to assert his catholicism to the extent that it was difficult to assert personalism as a distinct ideology. During periods when the catholic rear-guard were muted it was possible to take wide freedom for innovatory thought. Such was the case in the late 1920's and immediately after the war. But where the Church reasserted its traditional conservatism, as during the Vichy government and in the late 1940's, Mounier's middle-ground was once more severely eroded.

Mounier was therefore working in severely limited conditions which he could not ignore. His political failure was a direct result of forces outside his control, which he did not altogether understand. At the time of his death the national and international political and economic situation made it difficult not to take sides, and Mounier could not offer his alternative course with any prospect of success. As a general cultural ideology, personalism survived slightly better than as a political ideology. It was a kind of intellectual anarchism with a powerful, but necessarily vague guiding utopia to unite it and an equally powerful repugnance for imposed structures to divide it. In some ways the tension generated by this opposition was fruitful, but its fruits were byproducts rather than end-products, and like anarchism it failed in its major objectives.

In so far as Mounier's aim was to foster the creation of an ideology which would ultimately guide the thoughts and actions of men of all conditions in all aspects of their life, it is clear that he did not achieve his aim. As a more or less coherent ideology, personalism gained currency among catholic intellectuals who were anxious to find a coherent response to the problems posed by the warring ideologies of the forties and sought to restate their faith in a new relevant form. In their efforts they attracted a few protestants and agnostics to whom neither existentialism nor marxism appealed. As an intellectual matrix it appealed to middle-class thinking catholics for whom it represented a convenient

schema of reflection on spiritual and cultural questions without involving technical philosophy to any great degree. It therefore enjoyed a secure ideological status in that restricted area, and continued to exercise considerable influence through the early fifties. This was much less than its original project, and indeed ran flatly counter to all Mounier's declared aims. But it was obviously in harmony with everything Mounier was, did and stood for. He himself was supremely the product of the milieu he now spoke to, the largely provincial catholic middle-class. His methods were intellectual and élitist, and therefore tailor-made to operate in the structures the class had evolved to accommodate its cultural and spiritual activities. He stood for confidence in the ability of his faith and intelligence to push an adventurous but not foolhardy path through the difficulties of a changing world, and was therefore adopted as a public 'directeur de conscience' by many more than would have called themselves personalists. Mounier was conscious of the ideological situation he had reached in 1950; certainly he was aware of the limitations it imposed, and of the continuing need to break out of them. Whether it can be described as success or failure is a more equivocal question, and as a final assessment either description is equally inadequate.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

1. The Works of Mounier.

NOTE: This section includes all the known works of Mounier published in French. Details of reprintings have been given except in the case of L'engagement de la foi (Paris, 1968), which contains a large number of short extracts from easily accessible material, and in the case of other collections of extracts appended to studies on Mounier, where the material was easily accessible. Also included are works published for the first time in languages other than French, though translations have not been included where the work was first published in French. The place of publication is Paris unless otherwise stated, except with Après ma classe (Saint-Jean-de-Maruéjols (Gard)), Aux Davidées (Aix-en-Provence), and Revue de culture générale (Aix-en-Provence). Where a page number has not been given, the article has been discovered only in cutting, offprint, or typescript form. The fullest published bibliography is the one established by Mme. Paulette Mounier in Oeuvres, IV, p.835-878. It is, however, inaccurate and incomplete, and the following section includes a large number of corrections and additions to it. None of Mme. Mounier's entries are omitted here, but those which should be deleted are accompanied by an explanatory note.

1926

Articles

'Henri Bergson', Revue de cours et de conférences, 27<sup>e</sup> année, no.8, 30 mars 1926, p.673-681; no.9, 15 avril 1926, p.18-26; no.10, 30 avril 1926, p.142-148; no.11, 15 mai 1926, p.193-202; no.13, 15 juin 1926, p.408-417; no.14, 30 juin 1926, p.552-560; no.15, juillet 1926, p.596-607. All signed "E.M."

'Un penseur français, Jacques Chevalier', La Vie Catholique, 3<sup>e</sup> année, no.79, 3 avril 1926, p.1-2.

1927

Article

'A propos d'une thèse sur Maine de Biran. La leçon d'une vie', La Vie Catholique, 4<sup>e</sup> année, no.153, 3 septembre 1927, p.9.

Dissertation

'Le conflit de l'anthropocentrisme et du théocentrisme dans la philosophie de Descartes', Mémoire de Diplôme des Etudes Supérieures de Philosophie, presented at the Université de Grenoble, 23 juin 1927, unpublished, but part reprinted under the same title in Les Etudes Philosophiques, 21<sup>e</sup> année, no.3, 1966, p.319-324.

1928

No known publications. Mounier spent most of the year working for the agrégation.

1929

Articles

'Cause et condition', Après ma classe (Saint-Jean-de-Maruéjols (Gard)), no.1, 20 janvier 1929, p.14-17. Signed "Un ami".

'Contraires et contradictoires', Après ma classe, no.2, 20 février 1929, p.63-65. Signed "Un ami".

'L'Idée d'Irrationnel', Après ma classe, no.3, 20 mars 1929, p.110-115.

'Subtilité et pureté', Après ma classe, no.4, 20 avril, 1929, Typescript copy in Bibliothèque Mounier, Châtenay-Malabry.

'Prouver, ou de l'honnêteté intellectuelle', Après ma classe, no.5, mai 1929. Typescript copy in Bibliothèque Mounier. Reprinted in Ecole et Pensée moderne, mai-juillet, 1950, p. 234-237.

'L'Intuition bergsonienne', Après ma classe, no.7, juillet 1929. Typescript in Bibliothèque Mounier.

'Comment expliquer un texte philosophique', Après ma classe, no.8, 20 octobre 1929, p.349-351; no.9, 20 novembre 1929, typescript copy in Bibliothèque Mounier; no.10, 20 décembre 1929, typescript copy in Bibliothèque Mounier.

'De l'esprit philosophique', Aux Davidées (Aix-en-Provence), no.2, novembre 1929, p.83-89. Signed "Jean Sylvestre".

'Comment on conduit une vie. L'exemple de Descartes', Aux Davidées, no.3, décembre 1929, p.147-152. Signed "Jean Sylvestre".

Book reviews.

'E. Bréhier, "Histoire de la philosophie"; tome II, fasc.1, "17e siècle"', Quinzaine critique, 25 novembre 1929, p.63.

'F. Palhories, "Gioberti"', Quinzaine critique, 25 novembre 1929, p.63.

'E. Lubac, "Les niveaux de la conscience et d'inconscient et leurs intercommunications"', Quinzaine critique, 25 novembre 1929, p.63-64.

'A. Mamelet, "L'idée positive de la moralité devant la critique philosophique"', Quinzaine critique, 25 novembre 1929, p.64.

'C. Serrus, "L'esthétique transcendantale et la science moderne"', Quinzaine critique, 10 décembre 1929, p.115.

'J. Chevalier, "L'habitude"', Quinzaine critique, 10 décembre 1929, p.115-116.

'G. Maire (ed.), Spinoza, "Ethique"', Quinzaine critique, 25 décembre 1929, p.168.

1930

### Articles

'Comment on conduit une vie. L'exemple de Descartes (II)', Aux Davidées, no.4, janvier 1930, p.208-211. Signed "Jean Sylvestre".

'De la valeur des explications scientifiques, ou, pour avoir une opinion sur Einstein', Après ma classe, no.1, 20 janvier 1930, p.13-19.

'Pourquoi parlons nous? Langage animal et langage humain', Après ma classe, no.3, 20 mars 1930, p.140-143.

'Une nouvelle théorie du langage', Après ma classe, no.4, 20 avril 1930, p.206-210; no.5, 20 mai 1930, p.268-273.

'Mon garçon', Aux Davidées, no.7, avril 1930, typescript in Bibliothèque Mounier. Signed "Jean Sylvestre". Reprinted in Feuillets d'information de l'amitié Péguy, mai 1950, p.5-7; and in Mounier, Oeuvres, vol.4, p.456-459.

'L'étranger', Aux Davidées, no.8, mai 1930, p.466-470. Signed "Jean Sylvestre". Reprinted in Bulletin des amis d'E. Mounier, no.3, avril 1953, p.3-6.

'De la sincérité envers soi-même', Aux Davidées, no.9, juin 1930, p.534-538; no.10, juillet 1930, p.596-598. Signed "Jean Sylvestre".

'Défense de la civilisation', Revue de culture générale (Aix-en-Provence), no.1, 20 octobre 1930, p.14-21.

'Charles Péguy et le problème de l'enseignement', Revue de culture générale, no.2, 20 novembre 1930, p.76-84; no.3, 20 décembre 1930, p.144-148.

'L'événement et nous', Aux Davidées, décembre 1930, p.145-150. Signed "Jean Sylvestre". Reprinted in Bulletin des amis d'E. Mounier, no.3, avril 1953, p.7-12.

Book Reviews

'F. Palhories, "Vies et doctrines des grands philosophes à travers les âges"', tome III, Quinzaine critique, 10 janvier 1930, p.220.

'P. Dupont, "Essai philosophique sur la théorie de la relativité"', Quinzaine critique, 10 janvier 1930, p.222.

'A. Rivaud, "Les grands courants de la pensée antique"', Quinzaine critique, 10 février 1930, p.331.

'A. Cresson, "Les systèmes philosophiques"', Quinzaine critique, 10 février 1930, p.331.

'R. Jacquin, "Notions sur le langage d'après les travaux du P. Marcel Jousse"', Quinzaine critique, 25 février 1930, p.380.

'Pietro Pomponazzi, "Les causes des merveilles de la nature, ou les enchantements"', Quinzaine critique, 25 février 1930, p.380.

'J. Tricot, "Traité de logique formelle"', Quinzaine critique, 10 mars 1930, p.431.

'J.A. Leuba, "Psychologie du mysticisme religieux"', Quinzaine critique, 25 mars 1930, p.481.

'J. Farges, "Les idées morales et religieuses de Méthode d'Olympe"', Quinzaine critique, 10 avril 1930, p.7.

'Méthode d'Olympe, "Du libre arbitre"', Quinzaine critique, 10 avril 1930, p.7.

'J. Vialatoux, "Le Discours et l'Intuition"', Quinzaine critique, 25 avril 1930, p.67-68.

'J. Chevalier, "La forêt Tronçais en Bourbonnais"', Quinzaine critique, 25 avril 1930, p.68.

'"Revue de métaphysique et morale" (1923), special number entitled "Etudes sur Pascal"', Quinzaine critique, 10 mai, 1930, p.130.

'Nicolas de Cusa, "De la docte ignorance"', Quinzaine critique, 10 juin 1930, p.249-250.

'J. Durand-Doat, "La question ultime"', Quinzaine critique, 10 juin 1930, p.250.

'H. Lestienne (ed.), Leibniz, "Discours de métaphysique"', Quinzaine critique, 25 juin 1930, p.310-311.

'Césalpin, "Questions péripatéticiennes"', Quinzaine critique, 25 juin 1930, P.311.

'J. Chevalier, "La forêt Tronçais en Bourbonnais"', La Vie Catholique, 5 juillet 1930, p.11-12 Signed "Jacques Mersennes", under the title 'Méditations dans la forêt'.

'R. Damien, "Le Monde Intérieur"', Quinzaine critique, 10 juillet 1930, p.372.

'A. Joussaint, "Les sentiments et l'intelligence"', Quinzaine critique, 10 juillet 1930, p.372-373.

'A. Bayet, "La morale des Gaulois"', Quinzaine critique, 25 juillet 1930, p.433-434.

'G. Cantecor, "Comte"', Quinzaine critique, 10 octobre 1930, p.496.

'J. Segond, "Le problème du génie"', Quinzaine critique, 10 novembre 1930, p.619-620.

'Giordano Bruno, "Cause, principe et unité"', Quinzaine critique, 25 novembre 1930, p.678.

'V. Jonsco, "La Personnalité du génie artiste"', Quinzaine critique, 10 décembre 1930, p.743.

'E. Jovy, "Etudes pascaliennes"', Quinzaine critique, 25 décembre 1930, p.790.

'H. Wallon, "Principes de psychologies appliquée"', Quinzaine critique, 25 décembre 1930, p.790.

### Speech

'La mission de la jeunesse', Address at prize-giving ceremony, Collège Sainte-Marie, Neuilly, printed in the school's magazine, Cahiers de Neuilly, juillet 1930, untraced.

1931

### Book

La pensée de Charles Péguy (Paris, 1931). Published by Plon, in the collection "Le roseau d'or". Written in collaboration with Marcel Péguy and Georges Izard, each of whom contributed a section. Mounier's sections are reprinted in Oeuvres, I, p.13-109. The studies contained in this book were previously unpublished.

### Articles

'Charles Péguy et le problème de l'enseignement', Revue de culture générale, 20 janvier 1931, p.209-213; 20 mars 1931, p.342-343; 20 mai 1931, p.453-461.

'Bibliographie de Charles Péguy', Les documents de la Vie intellectuelle, 20 janvier 1931, p.147-176.

'Confession pour nous, Françaises', Aux Davidées, janvier 1931, p.211-223; février 1931, p.280-293; juin 1931, p.360-373. Signed "Jean Sylvestre".

'Réponse à Massis', in Henri Massis, 'Péguy et l'Agrégé (suite)', Revue universelle, tome XLV, no.2, 15 avril 1931, p.227-230.

'Une amitié spirituelle: les Davidées', La Vie spirituelle, 13e année, no.139, avril 1931, p.66-91. Signed "François Chauvières". Reprinted in J. Guitton, Les Davidées (Paris, 1967), p.82-108.

'La Pensée de Charles Péguy', Les Alpes littéraires, avril 1931, untraced.

'Péguy chez les Pitoëff', Les Nouvelles littéraires, 20 juin 1930, p.10.

'Temporel et spirituel', Aux Davidées, juillet 1931, typescript in Bibliothèque Mounier. Signed "Jean Sylvestre".

'L'action intellectuelle ou de l'influence', Revue de culture générale, no.1, 20 octobre 1931, p.5-9; no.2, 20 novembre 1931, p.67-75; no.3, 20 décembre 1931, p.132-135. Pages 5-9 and 132-135 are reprinted in Bulletin des amis d'E. Mounier, no.4, janvier 1954, p.2-10.

#### Book reviews

'M. Nathan, "L'Esprit et ses maladies"', Quinzaine critique, 25 février 1931, p.172.

'T. Friedel, "Pages choisies du P. Laberthonnière"', Quinzaine critique, 10 avril 1931, p.344-345.

'C. Bost, "L'Hygiène mentale"', Quinzaine critique, 10 mai 1931, p.457.

'P. Soller, "La répression mentale"', Quinzaine critique, 25 mai 1931, p.509.

'M. Fourrier, "A ceux qui cherchent une expérience religieuse"', Quinzaine critique, 10-25 août 1931, p.32.

'J. Chevalier, "La vie de l'esprit"', Quinzaine critique, 10 décembre 1931, p.347.

1932

Articles

'L'action intellectuelle ou de l'influence', Revue de culture générale, no.4, 20 janvier 1932, p.198-202; no.8, 20 mai 1932, p.453-456. Reprinted in Bulletin des amis d'E. Mounier, no.4, janvier 1954, p.10-16.

'Le langage et la pensée. Le problème linguistique et le problème psychologique', Revue de culture générale, no.9, 20 juin 1932, p.523-533; no.10, 20 juillet 1932, p.586-598.

'Refaire la Renaissance', Esprit, no.1, octobre 1932, p.5-51. Reprinted with alterations in Révolution personaliste et communautaire (Paris, 1935), (hereafter referred to as Rév. pers. et comm.), p.14-64; and in its altered form in Oeuvres I, p.137-174.

'Programme pour 1933', Esprit, no.3, décembre 1932, p.363-369.

'Ce ne sont pas ceux qui disent: Esprit, esprit...', Nouvelle Revue Française, décembre 1932, p.824-826. Reprinted in Rev. pers. et comm., p.393-395; and in Mounier et sa génération (Paris, 1956), p.107-109; and in Oeuvres, I, p.845-847.

Speeches

Untitled address at prize-giving ceremony at the Lycée Saint-Omer, printed in the school's magazine, Bulletin du Lycée de Saint-Omer, juillet, 1932. Untraded.

'Les directions spirituelles du mouvement "Esprit"', address given at the founding congress of the review Esprit at Font-Romeu, 17 August 1932, printed in Bulletin des amis d'E. Mounier, no.13-14, mars 1959, p.1-48. This address substantially formed the basis for the article 'Refaire la Renaissance' (see above, Articles 1932).

1933

Articles

'Chronique du monde barbare', Esprit, no.4, janvier 1933, p.666-670.

'Les tendances de la jeunesse et le mouvement "Esprit"', Dépêche dauphinoise, (Grenoble), 1 janvier 1933, p.2. This article consists of a letter from Mounier with a brief reply signed "Y.F.".

'Eloge de la force', Esprit, no.5, février 1933, p.819-826. Reprinted in Rev.pers. et comm., p.239-248; and in Oeuvres I, p.307-313.

'Confession pour nous autres Chrétiens', Esprit, no.6, mars 1933, p.873-896. Reprinted in Rev.pers. et comm., p.328-356; and in Oeuvres, I, p.373-393.

'Ceux qui ont commencé.Catholiques', Esprit, no.6, mars 1933, p.1025-1033.

'Vers notre seconde journée', Esprit, no.7, avril 1933, p.4-5.

'Union, réunion et désunion pour la Vérité', Esprit, no.7, avril 1933, p.137-140. Reprinted in Rev.pers. et Comm., p.395-397, under the title 'Révolution et révolution'; and under the original title in Les certitudes difficiles (Paris, 1951), (hereafter referred to as Les cert.diff.), p.18-21; and under the second title in Oeuvres, I, p.847-849.

'Certitude de notre jeunesse', Esprit, no.8, mai 1933, p.228-234. Reprinted in Rev.pers. et comm., p.230-238 under the title of 'Réformisme et révolution'; in Oeuvres, I, p.301-306, under the new title; in Les cert.diff., p.9-17, under the original title; and in Oeuvres, IV, p.11-16, under the original title.

'Ni Droite ni Gauche', Le mâât de Cocagne, (Cahors), no.13, mai 1933, p.1.

'Vision socialiste et vision chrétienne', Esprit, no.9, juin 1933, p.437-447. Reprinted in Rev. pers. et comm., p.397-404; and in Oeuvres, I, p.849-855.

'Avertissement', Esprit, no.10, juillet 1933, p.454-456. Written and signed jointly with Georges Izard. Reprinted in Bulletin des amis d'E. Mounier, no.36, octobre 1970, p.6-8.

'Constitution des Amis d'Esprit', Esprit, no.10, juillet 1933, p.457-462. Unsigned. Reprinted in Bulletin des amis d'E. Mounier, no.36, octobre 1970, p.8-11.

'Quelques conclusions', Esprit, no.10, juillet 1933, p.629-636. Reprinted with alterations under the title 'Note sur le travail', in Rev. pers. et comm., p.201-209; and in the second form in Oeuvres, I, p.277-283; and as 'Lignes de position: le travail', in Esprit, no.23-24, août-septembre 1934, p.2-8, of a detachable supplement.

'Deuxième année', Esprit, no.11-12, septembre 1933, p.663-668.

'Confrontation', Esprit, no.11-12, septembre 1933, p.718-721.

'Catholicisme', Esprit, no.11-12, septembre 1933, p.791-792.

'Argent et vie privée', Esprit, no.13, octobre 1933, p.55-67. Reprinted in Rev. pers. et comm., p.147-160; and in Oeuvres, I, p.236-246.

Untitled introduction (to R. Aron & A. Dandieu, 'Travail et prolétariat'), Esprit, no.14, novembre 1933, p.179-180.

'Journal d'Ernest Noirfalize', Esprit, no.14, novembre 1933, p.258-269. Written and signed jointly with Jacques Lefranc. Reprinted in altered form in Rev. pers. et Comm., p.161-171; and in Oeuvres, I, p.247-254.

'Georges Pomis' (obituary), Esprit, no.14, novembre 1933, p.343.

'Au travail', Esprit, no.15, décembre 1933, p.347-348.  
Signed "Esprit".

'Pour la vérité en Extrême Orient', Esprit, no.15, décembre 1933, p.349-350.

Untitled note on Swiss legislation, Esprit, no.15, décembre 1933, p.505-506.

1934

### Articles

'Des pseudo-valeurs fascistes: prise de position', Esprit, no.16, janvier 1934, p.533-540. Reprinted in Rev. pers. et comm., p.128-136; and in Oeuvres, I, p.223-228.

Untitled note on a letter from R. de Becker, Esprit, no.16, janvier 1934, p.676-677.

'Chronique du monde barbare', Esprit, no.17, février 1934, p.834-840. Unsigned. (N.B. Mme. Mounier in Oeuvres, IV, p.841 attributes this article to Mounier. It is composed of three unsigned pieces of comment which do not read like Mounier's work, though there is no evidence to deny or confirm the attribution.)

'La Démocratie et la Révolution', L'Aube, 27 février 1934, p.1-2. Reprinted in Rev. pers. et comm., p.220-227, under the title 'Lettre ouverte sur la démocratie'; and under the second title in Oeuvres, I, p.292-297; and under the second title in Les cert. diff., p.29-37.

'La révolution contre les mythes', Esprit, no.18, mars 1934, p.905-915. Reprinted in Rev. pers. et comm., p.314-325; and in Oeuvres, I, p.361-369.

'La Démocratie et la Révolution. Un dernier mot avec Emmanuel Mounier', L'Aube, 9 mars 1934; p.1. This article consists of a letter from Mounier to Paul Archambault, with Archambault's reply.

'De la propriété capitaliste à la propriété humaine', Esprit, no.19, avril 1934, p.5-70. Reprinted in book form, see Books 1936 below; and in Liberté sous conditions (Paris, 1946), p.83-164; and in Oeuvres, I, p.419-477.

('La religion et le monde', Esprit, no.19, avril 1934, p. 197-199. This article, attributed by Mme. Mounier in Oeuvres, IV, p;841, is in fact an editorial quoted from the review Sept, 31 mars, 1934, not written by Mounier.)

'Réponse à l'Ordre Nouveau', Esprit, no.19; avril 1934, p. 199-203.

'La révolution spirituelle. Conférence faite au Foyer de la Paix, le 22 mars 1934', L'éveil des peuples, 1 avril 1934, p.3; 8 avril 1934, p.2.

'Judaïsme: la conscience des Juifs', Esprit, no.20, mai 1934, p.307-310.

'Les équivoques du personnalisme', Esprit, no.20, mai 1934, p.317-318.

'Jeunesse hollandaise', Esprit, no.20, mai 1934, p.350-356.

'Nos positions: Primauté du spirituel', Esprit, no.20, mai 1934, p.2-5, of a detachable supplement. Signed "Esprit".

'Tentation du communisme. Pour un certain sang-froid spirituel', Esprit, no.21, juin 1934, p.416-425. Reprinted in Rev. pers. et comm., p.137-146; in Cert. diff., p.177-187; in Oeuvres, I, p.229-235; and in Oeuvres, IV, p.107-113.

'Y a-t-il une politique chrétien?', Esprit, no.21, juin 1934, p.485-499. Reprinted in Rev. pers. et comm., p.357-374; and in Oeuvres, I, p.384-406; and in Les cert. diff., p.48-62.

'Nos positions: Anticapitalisme', Esprit, no.21, juin 1934, p.2-7, of a detachable supplement. Reprinted in Rev. pers. et comm., p.192-200; and in Oeuvres, I, p.270-276.

'La presse démasquée', Esprit, no.22, juillet 1934, p.611-616.

'Toujours du mensonge', Esprit, no.22, juillet, 1934, P.619-622.

'Croquemitaines', Esprit, no.22, juillet 1934, p.623-624.

Untitled note to an article by R. Fernandez, Esprit, no.22, juillet 1934, p.568-569.

'Lignes de positions: Principes de notre rassemblement', Esprit, no.22, juillet 1934, p.1-5 of a detachable supplement. Reprinted in Rev. pers. et comm., p.113-126; and in Oeuvres, I, p.210-219.

'Troisième année', Esprit, no.23-24, septembre 1934, p.687-694.

'Duplicités du corporatisme', Esprit, no.23-24, septembre 1934, p.711-712. Unsigned.

'Lignes de positions: le travail', Esprit, no.23-24, septembre 1934, p.2-8 of a detachable supplement. Reprinted in Rev. pers. et comm., p.201-209; and in Oeuvres, I, p.277-283.

'Préface à une réhabilitation de l'art et des artistes', Esprit, no.25, octobre 1934, p.5-23. Reprinted in Rev; Pers. et comm., p.172--191; and in Oeuvres, I, p.255-269.

'Pour une technique des moyens spirituels. I. Tombeau des spiritualismes', Esprit, no.26, novembre 1934, p.182-198. Reprinted in Rev. pers. et comm., p.249-266; and in Oeuvres, I, p.314-326.

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1940

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'Henri Lefebvre, "Le matérialisme dialectique"', Esprit, no.89, février 1940, p.316-317.

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'Gaston Bachelard, "Lautréamont"', Esprit; no.91, avril 1940, p.92-95.

'Jacques Madaule, "Le christianisme de Dostoïewski"', Esprit no.91, avril 1940, p.95.

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1941

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'Daniel Halévy, "Péguy et les cahiers de la quinzaine"', Esprit, no.103, août 1941, p.712-713.

'Roger Secrétain, "Péguy, soldat de la vérité"', Esprit, no. 103, août 1941, p.713.

'Pierre Péguy, "Pour connaître la pensée de Péguy", & "Péguy présenté aux jeunes"', Esprit, no.103, août 1941, p.713-714.

#### Speech

'Pour un humanisme français', address delivered at the Ecole des cadres, Uriage (Isère), 1941. Typescript available in Bibliothèque Mounier.

1942

No known publications. Mounier spent most of the year in prison.

1943

Article

'Pourquoi je suis républicain. Réponse d'un catholique', Les cahiers politiques, no.2, juillet 1943, p.4-9. Unsigned: the Cahiers were published clandestinely by the Resistance group Comité général d'études. Reprinted in brief extracts in H. Michel, Courants de pensée de la Résistance, (Paris, 1962), p.360-361; and more fully in H. Michel & B.Mirkine-Guetzévitch, Les idées politiques et sociales de la Résistance (Paris, 1954), p.88-94.

NOTE: In Oeuvres, IV, p.864, Mme. Mounier attributes to Mounier three other articles published by the clandestine Les cahiers politiques: in no.1, avril 1943; in no.4, novembre 1943; in no.5, janvier 1944. The first two mentioned are attributed in the post-war index to the review to Robert Lacoste and Louis Terrenoire respectively: there is no adequate reason to contest this attribution. The third is not attributed to any author, but Mme. Mounier's claim that her husband wrote it is an unfounded assertion. The style and the content make it unlikely that Mounier wrote it, and Mme. Mounier has been unable to substantiate her claim with any evidence. It should be added that the authorship of clandestine writings is often obscured by factors inherent in the circumstances of its production, and in this case it is not possible to attain certainty. Mounier has been mentioned in various places as having been associated with, and having written unspecified material for, the following clandestine journals: Témoignage chrétien (not specified whether Courrier français du..., or Cahiers du...), Combat, La France intérieure, Le Résistant de la Drôme. None of the surviving issues of any of these contain material by Mounier, and in the case of the first three, detailed post-war studies fail to advance any evidence for Mounier's contribution; the fourth was a short-lived, rudimentary newsheet. Mme. Mounier claims the articles in the Cahiers politiques as Mounier's only clandestine publications, and he probably only wrote one of those.

1944

Articles

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'La jeunesse comme mythe et la jeunesse comme réalité - bilan 1940-1944', Esprit, no.105, décembre 1944, p.143-151.

'Délivrons-nous de nos peurs', Combat, 8 décembre 1944, p.1.

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'Les cinq étapes d'"Esprit"', address delivered on 23 December 1944 to the editor and staff of Dieu vivant. Reprinted in Dieu vivant, no.16, 1950, p.37-53; and in Bulletin des amis d'E. Mounier, no.29, mars 1967, p.9-25.

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'Au bout de la nuit', 24 décembre 1944.

'La Querelle de la pureté', 31 décembre 1944.

1945

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L'Affrontement chrétien (Neuchâtel, 1945). Published in Switzerland by Editions La Baconnière, in the collection "Les cahiers du Rhône". Reprinted in Paris, 1948, by Editions du Seuil; in Oeuvres, III, p. 7-66; and in Paris, 1963, by Editions du Seuil in the collection "Livre de vie".

Montalembert, choix de textes (Paris and Freiburg, 1945). Published in Switzerland by L.U.F. and in France by Egloff in the collection "Le cri de la France". The book consisted of a selection of texts chosen by Mounier and a preface. The preface was printed separately in Esprit, no.111, juin 1945, p.16-25 under the title 'Montalembert ou la liberté quand même'. Reprinted in Bulletin des amis d'E. Mounier, no.20, juillet 1963, p.12-25.

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'La Résistance et les élections', Esprit; no.106, janvier 1945, p.284-286.

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'Esprit 1940-1941', Esprit, no.106, janvier 1945, p.303-306. Unsigned. This article is not attributed by Mme. Mounier, but internal evidence suggests that Mounier wrote it.

'La grande colère des administrés', Combat, 13 janvier 1945, p.1.

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'Esteva ou l'innocence coupable', Esprit, no.109, avril 1945, p.756-755. Unsigned.

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- 'Devant le désespoir allemand', Esprit, no.110, mai 1945, p.901-902.
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- 'Le dialogue France-Allemagne', Temps présent, 4 mai 1945, p.3.
- 'Montalembert ou la liberté quand même', Esprit, no.111, juin 1945, p.16-25. Printed as preface to Montalembert, choix de textes (Paris and Freiburg, 1945).
- 'La hauteur et la largeur', Esprit, no.111, juin 1945, p.106-109.
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- 'Les deux tentations de la France', Servir (Lausanne), no.25, 21 juin 1945.
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- 'Témoignage et efficacité', Temps présent, 10 août 1945, p.3. Reprinted in Bulletin des amis d'E. Mounier, no.29, mars 1967, p.27-30.
- 'Personnalisme et socialisme', Cité-Soir, 14 août 1945, p.2. Reprinted in Bulletin des amis d'E. Mounier, no.29, mars 1967, p.31-32.
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#### Articles in English

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'The Resistance', The Commonweal (New York), vol. XLII, no.6, 25 May, 1945, p.136-138.

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'A. de Waelens, "La Philosophie de Martin Heidegger"', Esprit, no.106, janvier 1945, p.269.

'Emile Bréhier, "La Philosophie et son passé"', Esprit, no.106, janvier 1945, p.269.

'Indomitus (Philippe Viannay), "Nous sommes les rebelles"; André Haurion, "Vers une doctrine de la résistance: le socialisme humaniste"', Esprit, no.107, février 1945, p.461-464.

'Georges Bernanos, "Lettres aux Anglais"', Esprit, no.108, mars 1945, p.591-593.

'Georges Duhamel, "Civilsation française", "Inventaire de l'abîme", and "Chronique des saisons amères"', Esprit, no. 108, mars 1945, p.605.

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'Roland de Pury, "Journal de Cellule"', Esprit, no.109, avril 1945, p.737.

'Jean Galtier-Boissière, "Mon journal pendant l'occupation"', Esprit, no.110, mai 1945, p.904-905.

'Thierry Maulnier, "Violence et conscience"', Esprit, no.113, août 1945, p.453-455.

'Julien Benda, "La France byzantine"', Esprit, no.116, novembre 1945, p.784-788, under the title 'Querelles de Byzantins'.

'"Vie intellectuelle" and "Dieu vivant"', Esprit, no.116, novembre 1945, p.790-791, under the title 'Les revues d'inspiration chrétienne'.

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'Renouveau des études médiévales', 13 mai 1945.

'L'Âme française devant la victoire', 20 mai 1945.

'Quelques clartés sur le débat scolaire', 27 mai 1945.

'Le Temps des dossiers', 3 juin 1945.

'Leon Brunschvicg', 10 juin 1945.

'Jeunesse de la France', 17 juin 1945.

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'Le Problème allemand devant la conscience française', 22 juillet 1945.

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- 'Le Marxisme et l'opinion française', 25 novembre 1945.
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1946

Books

Liberté sous conditions (Paris, 1946). Published by Editions

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1949

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Interview with Pierre Emmanuel concerning Mounier's book, Le personalisme, on Radiodiffusion française, 23 décembre 1949. Reprinted in Bulletin des amis d'E. Mounier, no.15, mars 1960, p.10-13.

1950

### Book

Feu la chrétienté (Paris, 1950). Published by Editions du Seuil in the collection "Esprit". Reprinted in Oeuvres, III, p.529-713. It consists of articles written between 1937 and 1949, selected and edited. It was intended as the first volume of a series of 'Carnets de route', and although it was only published after Mounier's death, he was entirely responsible for the selecting and editing, as well as the brief preface.

### Articles

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'Médecine - quatrième pouvoir?', Esprit, no.165, mars 1950, p.337-537. This article consists of a montage of comments and contributions. Mounier edited it, though not unaided, and contributed introductory remarks, linking commentary and concluding remarks.

'La ligne est en réparation', 'Une conjuration sans conjurés', 'L'avilissement ne rend pas', 'Ne jouons pas à côté du feu', Esprit, no.165, mars 1950, p.545-547, 547-549, 549-552, 552-555. Reprinted under the collective title 'L'avilissement ne rend pas', in Les cert. diff., p.284-287, 287-290, 290-294, 295-298; and under the new title in Oeuvres, IV, p.180-182, 182-184, 184-187, 187-189.

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'La France et l'Europe', Observateur, no.1, 13 avril 1950, p.3.

### Article in German

'Brief an einige europäische Freunde', Aussprache (Dusseldorf), no.3-4, 1950, p.15-22. Printed in French under the title 'Lettre à quelques amis européens', in Les cert. diff., p.323-330; and in Oeuvres, IV, p.208-213.

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'Simone Weil, "L'enracinement"', Esprit, no.163, janvier 1950, p.172-174.

'Alec Mellor, "La Torture", Roger Grenier, "Le rôle d'accusé"', Esprit, no.163, janvier 1950, p.174.

'Amédée Ponceau, "Timoléon, Réflexions sur la tyrannie"', Esprit, no.164, février 1950, p.330-332. Reprinted in the collective volume Amédée Ponceau: Etudes et témoignages (Paris, 1966), p.194-197, under the title 'La condition humaine'.

'Dr. A. Hesnard, "L'Univers morbide de la faute"', Esprit, no.165, mars 1950, p.556-559.

'H.C. Peuch, "Le manichéisme", Steven Runciman, "Le manichéisme médiéval"', Esprit, no.166, avril 1950, p.710.

## POSTHUMOUS

### Collections

Les certitudes difficiles (Paris, 1951). Published by Editions du Seuil in the collection "Esprit". Reprinted in Oeuvres, IV, p.7-281. This book is made up from articles published between 1933 and 1950 and was planned in broad outline by Mounier as one of the series of 'Carnets de route'. The detailed selecting and edition, however, was done anonymously after his death.

L'Espoir des désespérés (Paris, 1953). Published by Editions du Seuil in the collection "Esprit". Reprinted in Oeuvres, IV, p.283-406; and under the title Malraux, Camus, Sartre, Bernanos (Paris, 1970), published by Editions du Seuil in the collection "Le point", with the original title as sub-title. This book consists of four essays published between 1948 and 1950. Mounier had assembled them and chosen the title for publication. When they finally appeared, the book was presented as the third of the series of 'Carnets de route'.

Mounier et sa génération (Paris, 1956). See Private writings.

Oeuvres, 4 volumes (Paris, 1961-1963). Published by Editions du Seuil. Volume I (1961) contains material written and published between 1931 and 1939, which appeared in book form during Mounier's lifetime.

Volume II (1962) contains the Traité du caractère (1946) with some additions to the original text.

Volume III (1962) contains material written and published between 1945 and 1950, which was published in book form during Mounier's lifetime, omitting the Traité du caractère and Montalembert, and adding Feu la chrétienté (1950).

Volume IV (1963) contains Les certitudes difficiles (1951), L'Espoir des désespérés (1953) and Mounier et sa génération (1956), the latter with later additions. It also contains a bibliography of Mounier's work, established by Mme. Mounier.

Communisme, anarchie et personnalisme (Paris, 1966). Published by Editions du Seuil in the collection "Politique". This book consists of three articles 'Le destin spirituel du mouvement ouvrier; Anarchie et personnalisme' (1937), 'Bilan spirituel: Court traité de la mythique de gauche' (1938), and 'Débat à haute voix' (1946).

L'Engagement de la foi (Paris, 1968). Published by Editions du Seuil in the collection "Livre de vie". This book consists of a selection of Mounier's writings edited by Mme Mounier, most of the passages are short extracts from articles published in the Oeuvres, or in the Bulletin des amis d'E. Mounier.

#### Private writings

'Journaux de prison', Esprit, no.174, décembre 1950, p.721-775. Includes extracts from the diaries Mounier wrote in prison in 1942 and a short selection of letters written at the same time.

'Une vie', edited by Albert Béguin, Esprit, no.174, décembre 1950, p.923-1060. Consists of a montage of extracts from Mounier's letters, diaries, and occasionally published works; reminiscences and commentaries by people who knew Mounier during his life; and narration and commentary linking the article into a kind of documentary biography, by the editor.

Mounier et sa génération (Paris, 1956). Published by Editions du Seuil in the collection "Esprit". Reprinted with additions in Oeuvres, IV, p.407-831. This volume, edited by Mme Mounier, who occasionally adds a footnote, contains extracts from letters, diaries, reports and other papers, assembled to form a documentary biography. It is the largest single source for Mounier's private writings.

Maritain-Mounier. Correspondance 1929-1939, edited by Jacques Petit (Paris, 1973). Published by Editions du Seuil and Desclée de Brouwer in the collection "Les grandes correspondances". In addition to the correspondance indicated in the title, extracts from Mounier notebooks are included, as well as extracts from items published in Esprit at the time.

'Une semaine', Bulletin des amis d'E. Mounier, no.1, février 1952, p.5-9. Notes on his daily activities written at the request of an English review on 19 March 1950.

'Emmanuel Mounier et la naissance d'Esprit', Bulletin des amis d'E. Mounier, no.2, octobre 1952, p.3-31. Letters and diaries of the early 1930's, not all of which were reprinted in Mounier et sa génération.

'Journal de Dieulefit', Bulletin des amis d'E. Mounier, no. 7-8, décembre 1955, p.1-39. Mounier's diary from June to September 1944.

'Correspondance entre Mounier et Berdiaeff', Bulletin des amis d'E. Mounier, no.33, février 1969, p.5-17.

'Lettre à Victor Serge', Bulletin des amis d'E. Mounier, no. 39, avril 1972, p.13-15.

'Entretiens avec Jacques Maritain et d'autres', Feuillets d'information de l'Amitié Péguy, no.84, mai 1961, p.7-24. Notes made after conversations about Péguy during the preparation of his book on the subject.

'Entretiens avec Marcel Péguy et d'autres', Feuillets d'information de l'Amitié Péguy, no.85, juin 1961, p.19-28. As previous entry.

NOTE:

In addition to the work listed above, the Bibliothèque Mounier contains a collection of letters, some of which are completely unpublished, others of which have only been printed in extract form. The remainder of Mounier's private writings have either been lost, or have not been made available by Mme Mounier, in whose charge they remain.

## 2. WORKS ON MOUNIER

### a) Books wholly or partly about Mounier

Barlow, Michel, Le socialisme d'Emmanuel Mounier (Toulouse, 1971)

Borne Etienne, Emmanuel Mounier ou le combat pour l'homme (Paris, 1972)

Calbrette, Jean, Mounier, le mauvais Esprit (Paris, 1957)

Chaigne, Hervé, and others, Emmanuel Mounier ou le Combat du juste (Bordeaux, 1968)

Charpentreau, Jacques, and Louis Rocher, L'esthétique personaliste d'Emmanuel Mounier (Paris, 1966)

Conilh, Jean, Emmanuel Mounier, sa vie, son oeuvre (Paris, 1966)

Domenach, Jean-Marie, Emmanuel Mounier (Paris, 1972)

Guissard, Lucien, Emmanuel Mounier (Paris, 1963)

Lacroix, Jean, Le personalisme comme anti-idéologie (Paris, 1972)

Lestavel, Jean, Introduction aux personalismes (Paris, 1961)

Loubet del Bayle, Jean-Louis, Les non-conformistes des années trente (Paris, 1969)

Moix, Candide, La pensée d'Emmanuel Mounier (Paris, 1960)

Rauch, Rufus William, Jr., Politics and belief in contemporary France: Emmanuel Mounier and Christian democracy. 1932-1950 (The Hague, 1972)

Roy, Jean-Marie, Mounier aux prises avec son siècle (Paris, 1972)

Zaza, Noureddine, Etude critique de la notion d'engagement chez Emmanuel Mounier (Geneva, 1955)

### b) Theses consulted

Dunphy, Jocelyn 'Emmanuel Mounier et la crise de l'humanisme, 1932-1950' (unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of Melbourne, 1964).

Lewis, David Levering, 'The Politics of Moral Revolution in France, 1926-1951; a study of Liberal Catholicism' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, London School of Economics and Political Science, 1962).

Lurot, Gerard, 'Pour une genèse de la thématique de la personne chez Emmanuel Mounier' (unpublished Mémoire de maîtrise de philosophie, University of Paris, Sorbonne, 1970).

c) Periodicals devoted wholly or partly to collective studies of Mounier.

Action (Beirut), mars 1957, p.60-78.

Aussprache (Dusseldorf), February 1952, special number.

Bulletin des amis d'E. Mounier (Paris), first number février 1952, twice yearly since then. This prints and reprints works by and on Mounier, and monitors developments in Mounier studies, It is an important source of material.

Combat (Paris), 23 mars 1970, special supplement.

Coopération (Basle), 18 décembre 1965, special number.

La croix (Paris), 25 mars 1970, special feature.

Esprit (Paris), décembre 1950, special number. The most important and useful single publication on Mounier to date. Contains substantial studies and unpublished material.

Esprit (Paris), avril 1970, special feature.

Frères du monde (Bordeaux), no.27, 1964, special number, later expanded into a book (see: Hervé Chaigne and others).

Informations catholiques internationales (Paris), 15 mars 1960, p.15-23, special 'dossier'.

Le monde (Paris), 28 mars 1970, p.4-5 of 'Monde des livres', special feature.

Planète plus (Paris), septembre 1970, special number, illustrated.

Reflets (Grenoble), mars 1970, special number of the magazine of the Lycée Emmanuel Mounier, Grenoble.

Témoignage chrétien (Paris), 12 mars 1970, special feature.

Vie nouvelle (Rennes), mai 1962, p.1-13, special number.

Vie nouvelle (Paris), mai 1961, special number.

d) Articles on Mounier with some interest

Anonymous, unsigned article in Pravda (Moscow), 29 September 1951, reprinted in Preuves (Paris), novembre 1951, p.21.

G.A., 'Int-rodution à Emmanuel Mounier', La vie enseignante (Lot), septembre, octobre, novembre, décembre 1960, février, mars, mai, juin 1961.

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### e) Obituaries

NOTE: Although usually brief, the obituaries published at the time of Mounier's death are often revealing. The following list also includes reports and comment printed at the time which do not constitute formal obituaries. The name of the periodical or paper is followed by the date, the year is 1950 in all cases, the authors' names are in brackets where available.

#### i. Paris

Action, 27 mars (Yves Farge)  
L'Action Nationale, avril (Arthur Laurendeau)  
L'Age nouveau, juin 1950 (Jacques Madaule)  
Alliance nouvelle, 27 mars (Paul Estèbe)  
L'Ame populaire, avril  
Arts, 24 mars (E. Humeau)  
Arts, 31 mars (E. Humeau)  
L'Aube, 23 mars (Etienne Borne)  
L'Aube, 24 mars (Georges Bouyx)  
L'Aube, 28 mars (Georges Bouyx)  
L'Aube, 25 avril  
Aurore, 23 mars  
Aux écoutes, 31 mars  
Bataille socialiste, mai  
Carrefour, 28 mars (Pierre Andreu)  
Ce matin, le pays, 23 mars  
Christianisme social, mai-juin  
La Cité nouvelle, 13 avril (Jacques Bois)  
Combat, 24 mars (Louis Pauwels)  
La croix de Paris, 24 mars  
La croix de Paris, 28 mars  
Cruzko deya Paris, avril  
La Défense, juin (J.-M. Tarrago)  
Echo de la presse, 30 mars  
Esprit, avril  
Etudes, avril-mai-juin (Jean Daniélou)  
Figaro, 23 mars (Georges Izard)

Figaro littéraire, 25 mars (Jean Prasteau)  
Figaro littéraire, 1 avril (Jean Cayrol)  
France-Allemagne, 1 avril  
France catholique, 31 mars  
France illustration, 8 avril (André Rousseaux)  
Franc-Tireur, 23 mars (Georges Altman)  
Franc Tireur, 25 mars  
Gazette des Lettres, 1 avril  
La Graphologie, avril  
L'Homme nouveau, 2 avril (E. Biancani)  
L'Humanité, 23 mars  
La Jeune République, 18 avril  
Larousse mensuel, juin (Gérard Caillet)  
Libération, 23 mars  
Liberté de l'Esprit, avril (Max-Pol Fouchet & Geneviève de Gaulle)  
Les Mal-Pensants, mai (Georges Suffert)  
Le monde, 23 mars  
Le monde, 25 mars  
Le monde ouvrier, 1 avril  
Nouvelles littéraires, 30 mars (Pierre Emmanuel)  
Opéra, mars (Gérard Caillet)  
Paris libéré, 24 mars  
Le populaire, 23 mars  
Le populaire, 25 mars  
Réforme, 1 avril (André Dumas)  
Réforme, 15 avril (H. Luga)  
Revue de la pensée française, mai (Georges Lerminier)  
Revue de métaphysique et de morale, avril-juin  
Revue de Paris, mai (Gaetan Bernoville)  
Revue juive, 11 avril (Emmanuel Rais)  
Le socialisme chrétien, avril (Robert Angleviel)  
Témoignage chrétien, 24 mars  
Témoignage chrétien, 31 mars (Albert Béguin)  
Témoignage chrétien, 31 mars (Joseph Folliet)  
Les Temps Modernes, avril  
Terre retrouvée, 1 avril (Rabi)  
Tribune des nations, 31 mars (André Ulmann)  
Vie catholique illustrée, 2 avril  
Vie intellectuelle, avril

ii. Provincial France (the name of the town is placed first)

Albi, Le Tarn libre, 31 mars  
Angers, Le courrier de l'Ouest, 3 avril  
Bar-le-Duc, Le Meusien, 8 avril  
Bayonne, Le Républicain du Sud-Ouest, 25 mars  
Brive, Informations, 24 mars  
Comar, Le nouveau Rhin français, 24 mars  
Elboeuf, Journal d'Elboeuf, 29 mars  
Grenoble, Le Réveil, 24 mars  
Lille, La croix du Nord, 26 mars,  
Lille, La voix du Nord, 24 mars  
Limoges, Le courrier, 23 mars  
Lyon, Echo du Sud-Est, 24 mars  
Lyon, Le Progrès, 23 mars

Le Mans, La dépêche du Maine, 24 mars  
Le Mans, L'Eclaireur régional de l'Ouest, 23 mars  
Metz, Le Lorrain, 24 mars  
Montpellier, Le siècle, 1 avril  
Moulins, L'Aurore du Bourbonnais, 2 avril  
Nantes, France nouvelle, 1 avril  
Orléans, République du centre, 24 mars  
Poitiers, Le libre Poitou, 24 mars  
Rodez, Le Rouerat, 2 avril  
Rouen, Paris-Normandie, 25 mars  
Strasbourg, Dernières nouvelles de Strasbourg, 26 mars  
Strasbourg, L'éveil alsacien, 26 mars  
Strasbourg, Le nouveau meusien, 23 mars  
Tournan, Le mémorial, 1 avril

iii. Outside France

Algiers, Journal d'Alger, 29 mars  
Oran, L'Echo d'Oran, 6 mai  
Pondichery, Libération, 10 mai

Augsburg, Deutsche Tagepost, 8 April  
Baden, Badische neueste Nachrichten, 27 März  
Baden, Badische Zeitung, 25 März  
Berlin, Lancelot, n.d.  
Berlin, Der Monat, Mai  
Berlin, Der Tagespiegel, 24 März  
Essen, Die Welt, 25 März  
Frankfurt, Frankfurter allgemeine Zeitung, 25 März  
Frankfurt, Frankfurter Hefte, Mai  
Frankfurt, Frankfurter neue Presse, 24 März  
Frankfurt, Frankfurter Rundschau, 24 März  
Frankfurt, Die neue Zeitung, 27 März  
Hamburg, Hamburger Echo, März  
Koblenz, Reinischer Merkur, Mai  
Munich, Müncher Merkur, 29 März  
Oberlahnstein/Rhein, Rheinische Post, 24 März  
Stuttgart, Stuttgarter Nachrichten, 24 März

Vienna, Geistiges Frankreich, n.d.

New York, New York Herald Tribune, 4 April (Paris edition)  
New York, The Commonweal, vol.LII

London, Daily Mail (Paris edition)  
London, The Personalist, Summer  
London, Socialist commentary, May  
London, The Tablet, April

Dublin, The Dublin Review, 3rd Quarter

Basle, Basler Volksblatt, 27 März  
Basle, Coopération, 1 avril  
Bern, Der Bund, 29 April  
Freiburg, Freiburg Tagepost, 27 März  
Geneva, Courrier de Genève, 25 mars  
Geneva, Journal de Genève, 25 mars  
Lausanne, Gazette de Lausanne, 25 mars  
Lausanne, Gazette de Lausanne, 11 avril  
Lucerne, Luzerner neueste Nachrichten, 29 März  
Porrentury, Le Pays, 31 mars  
St. Morritz, Le nouvelliste valaisien, 7 avril  
Winterthur, Der Landbote, 15 April  
Zurich, Neue Zürcher Nachrichten, 5 Mai  
Zurich, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 15 April  
Zurich, Die Tat, 29 März  
Zurich, Die Weltwoche, 31 März

Antwerp, Gazet van Antwerpen, 28 Mar.  
Brussels, Face à main, 22 avril  
Brussels, Le peuple, 24 avril  
Brussels, Revue Générale Belge, avril  
Louvain, Construire, juin  
Louvain, L'escolier de Louvain, mai  
Ypres, GrenzEcho, 5 April

Luxemburg, Escher Tageblatt, 8 Apr.  
Luxemburg, Luxemburger Wort, 28 Mar.  
Luxemburg, Luxemburger Wort, 5 Apr.

Copenhagen, Litterae, May

Bologna, De l'Avvenire d'Italia, 24 mar.

Elisabethville, L'Essor du Congo, 22 avril

Saigon, France-Asie, mars

Montreal, Le Devoir, 12 avril  
Montreal, Le Devoir, 15 avril  
Montreal, Notre temps, 22 avril

#### f) Reviews

NOTE: Most of Mounier's works were widely reviewed in the French press. Some are included in the contemporary material bibliography below. Most are of limited interest, and have been omitted. One set of reviews, however, is particularly interesting: the publication of Mounier et sa génération provoked a number of reminiscences and reassessments six years after Mounier's death. The name of the publication is followed by the date, the year being 1956 in all cases, the place Paris unless otherwise stated. The author's name is in brackets where available.

Arts, 28 mars (P. Andreu)  
Les beaux-arts, Brussels, 11 mai (H. Clouard)  
Le Bulletin, mai (Jean Verlhac)  
Bulletin critique du livre français, juin  
Bulletin des Lettres, Lyon, 15 juillet (V.-H. Debidour)  
Carrefour, 11 juillet (J.-J. Marchand)  
Carrefour, 15 août (Paul Serant)  
Christianisme sociale, août (Anne-Marie Goguel)  
Christus, octobre (Jacques Guillet)  
La cité, Brussels, 16 mai (Jean Leirens)  
Combat, 11 juillet (H. Juin)  
La croix, 10 mars (Lucien Guissard)  
Demain, 26 avril (Georges Suffert)  
La Dépêche du Midi, Toulouse (Jean Peyrade)  
Echo du centre, La Louvière, Belgium, 10 juin (J.-L. Bruch)  
Esprit, juin (Louis Bodin)  
Etudes, juin (Henri Holstein)  
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