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The political theory of personalism: Maritain and Mounier on personhood and citizenship

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This article shows that the work of Jacques Maritain and Emmanuel Mounier contains a distinct political theory. Despite the differences in the foundations of their thought, Maritain and Mounier were both Catholic philosophers looking for the task of man in society. They both came to the conclusion that the vocation of man necessarily implies a social and political aspect. The integral development of the human person requires a societal framework, which is the common good that politics is supposed to realize. However, both Maritain and Mounier point to the intrinsic dangers of the required exercise of political power. Alert and active citizens are necessary to keep political authorities from going astray. A lot of personalists' concrete ideas on the organization of democracy are no longer viable, but the core of their political theory is a particular vision on individual political responsibility. What personalism makes clear is that politics concerns each one of us. This is not the case because politics would be a distinguished occupation in the Aristotelian sense, since the personalists focus on the dark side of politics; the power struggle, the façade of democracy, the tendency towards oppression and totalitarianism. Politics is, however, a necessary means to build and protect the framework that allows us to develop ourselves as human beings. The only way to ensure that politics lives up to this task (or at least tries to do that) is when citizens take political responsibility. This call for a generally vigilant and active citizenry remains an important warning with regard to a liberal concept of man and society.

Keywords: personalism; Maritain; Mounier; democracy; responsibility; power

French personalism did not make it into the canon of Western philosophy. As a loose collection of Christian philosophers who reflected on modern society, however, the movement did set its mark on the Europe of today. The social ethics of personalism was an important source of inspiration for the politicians responsible for the reconstruction of the old continent after the Second World War, not only in the material sense of the word, but also on moral and cultural levels. Even if the historical achievements of personalism are beyond dispute, the personalist social ethics is outdated. Today we have to be able to look behind their particular social views in order to discover a political theory with a timeless message. To this end the article will address the political thought of Jacques Maritain and Emmanuel Mounier, who together constitute an adequate cross-section of the broader personalist movement.

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Christian thinkers in their time

In early twentieth century France, the reactionary nationalism of the *Action Française* exerted a great attraction on the Catholic elite. Charles Maurras (1868–1952), the atheist leader of the movement, tried to approach Catholicism after the First World War, in order to realize a nationalist and monarchist alliance of believers and non-believers. The Neo-Thomist political philosophy that was fashionable at the time was supposed to provide the theoretical justification for Catholics to chant ‘*la France d’abord*’ and ‘*politique d’abord*.’¹ In 1926, Pope Pius XI (1857–1939) put an end to this alliance by means of a doctrinal condemnation of Maurras and the *Action Française*, because of the implied separation of politics on the one hand and faith and ethics on the other. This condemnation came as a bombshell to French Catholic intellectuals, of whom the greater part sympathized with the *Action Française*. The condemnation compelled them to rethink their Christian vision of man and society and their position and task as Christians in the modern era. This was the setting for the development of French personalism in the 1930s.²

The change provoked by the condemnation of the *Action Française* implied that the heart of Catholic social and political thinking became occupied by a vision of man as a creature that could only develop itself within communities, although the individual is invested with absolute dignity. This made it possible to navigate between individualism, which neglects the importance of communities, and collectivism, which subordinates man to a collective. This intellectual movement was called personalism, after Charles Renouvier (1815–1903), a French moral philosopher, had coined the term at the beginning of the century to refer to similar ideas.³ French personalism of the 1930s was unified by the search for the vocation of man in modern society, in opposition to the dominant ideologies of those days: communism, fascism, and so-called *bourgeois*-capitalism. This in itself was definitely not an exclusively French phenomenon. More or less the entire continent during the interbellum was involved in a search for a ‘Third Way’ between the American and Russian paths. Instead of another ideology, personalism was supposed to provide a broad ethical perspective on civilisation.⁴ The central point of departure of that perspective stated that man is not an atomic individual, but a communal creature with an absolute individual value. In addition, personalists looked for an integral vision of man in society, a vision that recognized the human person in its totality instead of reducing man to a productive element, a citizen of a particular nation, or any other subordinate part. The spiritual and the material dimension of the person had to be balanced in an ‘integral humanism.’⁵ As a consequence, the political dimension and the religious and ethical dimensions of personhood were placed in line, in explicit contrast to the ideology of Maurras and the *Action Française*.

In spite of this common project, personalism had many faces. It is, therefore, more accurate to talk about *personalisms* instead of an unambiguous personalism.⁶ The common project was interpreted in different ways, depending on several factors. An important factor was the vision of Christian philosophy, a subject of fierce debate in those days. In opposition to a mainstream movement that stated that Christian philosophy was a contradiction in terms, there were two important interpretations of Christian philosophy: on the one hand, a Neo-Thomist camp and on the other hand a modern camp. Neo-Thomists considered medieval philosophy to be the authentic Christian philosophy. A contemporary Christian philosophy, hence, had to be a loyal re-adaptation of medieval thought. The advocates of a modern Christian philosophy looked for more contemporary inspiration, particularly in the spiritualism of Henri Bergson (1859–1941). They criticized the Neo-Thomist’s focus on the past and stated that a contemporary

Christian philosophy should be grafted onto modern philosophy as a philosophy of failure that puts up a barricade against the naturalisation of the supernatural.⁷ Personalism was developed from within these differing theoretical frameworks. Jacques Maritain (1882–1973) was the most important representative of Neo-Thomist personalism. Emmanuel Mounier (1905–1950) was rather influenced by the modern Christian philosophy of Jacques Chevalier (1882–1962), and thus developed a more existentialist personalism, with a Bergsonian and phenomenological mark.⁸ These different outlooks don't alter the fact that Maritain and Mounier came to similar conclusions on the political responsibility of the human person.

Jacques Maritain

From antimodernism to integral humanism

Jacques Maritain was the captain of Catholic social and political thought in the middle of the twentieth century. Brought up as a non-believer and converted to Catholicism in his younger years, he would eventually become one of the most important mentors of Christian democracy and the Second Vatican Council. Despite his later status as helmsman of the Catholic *aggiornamento*, Maritain was initially one of the Neo-Thomists that sympathized with the reactionary *Action Française*. His early main work *Trois Réformateurs* (1925) was a Neo-Thomist attack on modernism and democracy, in which he pointed to Luther, Descartes and Rousseau as the sources of everything that went wrong in Western societies since the sixteenth century. As such, this constituted a Catholic complement for the profane antimodernism of Maurras. On many levels, they were in agreement: their identification with France, Catholicism and Western civilization, their rejection of the existing social order, their criticism of the idea of progress and the imputation of individualism and collectivism as the essential illnesses of the modern world. The papal condemnation of the *Action Française* provoked a revolution in his thinking. Eventually, he was even asked by the Pope to explain the reasons for the condemnation to the French people. Whereas Maritain's initial philosophy combined apocalyptic, reactionary and reformist elements, this was no longer possible after the condemnation. Hence, he evolved in the direction of a more empirical and less ideological perspective on society. It forced him to distinguish between the essential and the non-essential elements of Catholic doctrine, diluting the most conservative and reactionary components of his thought leading him to search for a more positive relation between Catholicism and contemporary democracy.⁹ Ten years after the Vatican intervention, his refreshed philosophy was embodied in his magnum opus *Humanisme Intégral* (1936).

Maritain based his dissociation from Maurras on the so-called 'primacy of the spiritual.'¹⁰ In opposition to Catholic nationalism, from the 1920s onwards he stressed the universality of Christianity, elevated above any particular civilization. Moreover, he rejected the separation between Faith and world that was characteristic of the ideology of Maurras.¹¹ The socio-political domain and the spiritual domain are distinct, but should not be separated. Politics is autonomous and has its own order, but only God is sovereign and the Christian also has a worldly task to fulfil. In this way, Maritain opposed the Machiavellianism of modern politics. Machiavelli was supposed to have made politics into an art of gaining and retaining power, an art that is completely detached from ethics. Maritain, however, considered politics in the Neo-Thomist sense, as a matter of practical wisdom in the service of the *bonum commune*. Hence, there was a need for a Christian social and political philosophy that would give a closer interpretation of that *bonum*

commune. Maritain took up this task by means of the formulation of a ‘concrete historical ideal’ for the new Christianity.¹²

The concrete historical ideal had three central characteristics. Maritain started by describing the ideal as a ‘communitarian’ ideal: it is aimed at a material and moral common good that is more than the sum of the individual interests. The liberal notion of common good was, hence, rejected in favour of the Neo-Thomist notion of a substantive *bonum commune*. Moreover it is also a ‘personalist’ ideal, by which he meant that the political community is subsidiary to the person and her full development as a free spiritual being: ‘The political society is essentially aimed...at the development of the environmental conditions that bring the people to a level of material, intellectual and moral life that corresponds to wellbeing and peace for everyone in such a way that every person is positively assisted in the continuing conquest of a complete personal life and spiritual freedom.’¹³

On the basis of these first two characteristics, we can talk of a typically personalist tension. Every person participates in the common task of a society, to which she is, hence, subordinate. On grounds of her personal vocation, however, the person is also superior to that common task. The person is at the service of the common good, but the common good is at the service of fostering the individual’s pursuit of their vocation. Maritain sought for the foundation of this view in Thomas Aquinas’ portrayal of mankind: ‘Every individual person is related to the community as a part to a whole,’ and he continues, but ‘man is not subordinate to the political community on the basis of all that he is and possesses.’¹⁴ A human being is by nature a social animal, but he is – on the basis of the supratemporal destination of the soul – at the same time bearer of an absolute dignity that has to remain out of the grasp of the collective.¹⁵

The third and last central characteristic shows the concrete historical ideal as a ‘pilgrims’ ideal,’ an ideal that is by definition eternally unfinished. The realization of our vocation here and now is underway in pursuit of a higher goal. The worldly ideal is an important but subordinate goal, for the completion of our humanity is unattainable on earth.

Next to these three characteristics, Maritain also underlined the historical nature of the ideal. The Christian vision on twentieth century politics can not be identical to the medieval vision. Although the essence remains the same, the interpretation is outdated. The main difference is that a twentieth century vision has to be pluralist, hence a matter of ‘profane Christianity,’ as Maritain used to call it. There is no longer a need for a unity of faith, but only for a ‘unity of friendship,’ based on a shared practical vocation: the actualization of a communal life in accordance with values of an implied Christian nature, such as human dignity and love.¹⁶

After the interpretation of the content of the ideal, the next question is how to realize it. The pursuit of a better society is a worldly task for every individual Christian, and by extension for every human being. That is why the concrete commitment of every person is required. For the structural embedding of the *bonum commune* Maritain counted, however, especially on politicians with the necessary ‘*prudentia politica*.’ The politician has to be a good person, but he also has to dispose of the necessary understanding of the dynamics and capacity of the society. ‘*Prudentia politica*’ refers, therefore, to a way of political action that links politics to ethics, but in a human way, taking into account the possibilities of the historical circumstances at hand. Usually, the lesser evil is then to be preferred above the absolute good.¹⁷

From integral humanism to a personalist theory of democracy

With regard to the practical realization of his concrete historical ideal, Maritain experienced a further development in his thinking during the Second World War. While he was in exile in the United States, he was impressed by American society. There he discerned a reasonably faithful reflection of his view of society: a classless and religiously inspired society on the basis of a pluralist ideal of the living together of communities and persons. That impression moved him even further away from his criticism of modern society and ever closer to a reconciliation of his Christian convictions and liberal democracy, based on a democratic interpretation of the teachings of Thomas Aquinas. Neo-Thomists usually interpreted Aquinas as an opponent of democracy, because of his political treatise *De Regno* (1979, originally published in 1267), in which he defended a mixed constitution with not only democratic but also aristocratic and oligarchic elements. Maritain, however, came gradually to the conclusion that Aquinas could not be said to have been for or against modern democracy, because that would be an anachronism. What Maritain did read in the spirit of Aquinas' work was that political legitimacy rests with the people. How that is to be institutionalized is subject to historical evolution.¹⁸ This development of his thought culminated in a reformulation of his political philosophy in *Man and the State* (1998, originally published in 1951) that would become a standard book of Christian democratic theory.¹⁹ In this text, Maritain sketches out the terms of a personalist democracy as a political means to pursue an ideal society. This idea was not entirely new. In *Humanisme Intégral* he already made a brief reference to the idea of a personalist democracy as an implication of his philosophy. This personalist democracy would be characterized by equal political rights for everyone, with participation that is not restricted to the right to vote, but that involves every citizen in an active way in the political life of the community.²⁰ After the war, personalist democracy became a central concern in Maritain's political philosophy.

The systematic construction of Maritain's argumentation in *Man and the State* starts with some distinctions.²¹ The first distinction is between communities and societies. Communities are a given with a certain natural fact (language, region, class, etc.) as object. Societies are a product of human reason, freely constituted in order to realize a certain goal, even when the pursuit of this goal is a natural necessity, like it is the case for a family, but also for a political society or *body politic*. Maritain had a very lofty idea for political society. The primary condition for the existence of a body politic is justice, but the essential constitutive element is friendship, a feeling of devotion and mutual love as the foundation of shared citizenship.²²

Within the *body politic* is a pluralism of many kinds of communities and societies that all have their autonomy while the entire *body politic* is, at the same time, directed toward a shared *bonum commune*. This *bonum commune* consists of all public goods – material, juridical, moral as well as spiritual – that support the person in the development of his freedom. Next to the *body politic* the state also comes under the heading of 'society.' If the *body politic* is the whole, then the state is the superior part, a collection of institutions aimed at the interests of the whole; the state has an instrumental status. It serves the public interest, in the service of persons. As such, it has an irreplaceable task. Given the complexity of modern society, the growth of the state machinery is a normal phenomenon in light of its task, hence a necessary evil. However, Maritain stated that the problem of the twentieth century was the fact that this process underwent a degeneration through which the state became overpowering and meddling in domains that were supposed to be beyond its limits. That totalitarian tendency of the modern state can only be kept in reign

by a truly democratic re-evaluation of the state that arms the citizens to keep the state under control. The people have to dispose of the will and the means to exert control. Only then can they talk about true democracy.

In his explanation of what he then means by the notion of democracy, Maritain started with a distinction between democracy and popular sovereignty.²³ The notion of sovereignty was according to him incompatible with democracy. Sovereignty, as it was defined by Jean Bodin (1530–1596), implies that the sovereign is transcendent with regard to the political society. The sovereign is not a part of society – not even the superior part – but is a whole in itself, above the whole, indivisible and irresponsible. The state can not be sovereign, because that would shut the door on accountability, while democracy demands that the people are able to pass the ultimate judgment. But neither are the people sovereign, because they have to be accountable to themselves as opposed to transcendent and irresponsible. Therefore, democracy is not equal to popular sovereignty. Maritain described democracy rather as a matter of the moral rationalisation of politics, in opposition to a technical, Machiavellianist rationalisation of politics. In the latter case, politics is a technique of obtaining power that in the long run comes at the expense of the *body politic*. In a moral rationalisation of politics, the relation between the goal of politics (the *bonum commune*) and the means to attain that goal is not a technical matter, but rather a moral matter that takes into account the moral foundations of the *body politic*, namely justice and mutual friendship. Democracy is the only possible translation of such a moral rationalisation of politics, a politics that pursues freedom and justice by moral means. Hence Maritain used a moral interpretation of the notion of democracy, but he clearly distinguished his interpretation from ‘political hypermoralism’ and ‘Pharisaical purism.’ Democracy should not break the distinction between public ethics and personal ethics, neither should it be afraid of dirty hands. The means have to be good and proportionate, but one should not fail to act out of fear of doing something wrong.²⁴

Personalist democracy and active citizenship

The message of Maritain’s post-war political philosophy was quite simple up to this point: Politics is oriented towards the *bonum commune*; democracy is the only good way in that direction and democracy demands that the citizen checks whether the state does what it is supposed to do and does not do what it is not supposed to do. The question is how one can put this into practice. Since the nineteenth century, most European political regimes were democratic in name, but this did not prevent the socio-political catastrophes of the twentieth century. The then-prevailing interpretation of democracy was, hence, largely insufficient. The core of the failure of ‘bourgeois democracy’ was, according to Maritain, to be found in the liberal focus on neutrality. This neutrality concerned even the recognition of freedom and democracy itself, which sowed the seeds for totalitarianism. Therefore Maritain’s personalist democracy questioned this neutrality. This does not mean that he disputed the separation of church and state. In *Humanisme Intégral* he already underlined that the pursuit of the common good is necessarily a secular matter in the modern age. However, he argued that this does not imply that a democratic society does not need a shared faith. Only this faith can no longer be a religious faith, but rather a Christianly inspired ‘secular faith’ in a democratic charter that can be shared by non-believers as well. This ‘creed of freedom’ was described by Maritain in quasi-Rawlsian terms, as practical conclusions that are to be distinguished from their divergent theoretical justifications.²⁵ The content of that creed is a collection of rights, liberties and responsibilities, but also

values such as equality, justice, fraternity, sense of public responsibility and solidarity with mankind as a whole.²⁶

The enforcement of this democratic charter was something Maritain considered to be threatened by two sides. On one hand there was the totalitarian inclination of the state, while on the other hand there was the threat of antidemocratic political agents. In both cases active citizenship offers the way out. Only the citizenry's vigilance and willingness to act can force the state to fulfil its duties and to decline the assumption of illegitimate domination.²⁷ The state itself can stand up to the enemies of liberty, but there is a serious threat that in so doing, the state strengthens itself, endangering democracy for its own purposes. Here also the citizens are the first and most important enforcers of the democratic charter when they direct their political action against antidemocrats.²⁸ The person is, hence, the axis of a personalist democracy: politics is in service of the people and the people have to place themselves in the service of democracy. As a person they have a vocation that transcends politics, while it is also based on politics because politics is responsible for the framework that allows people to develop their personal vocation. Therefore, Maritain's democracy is humanist and Christian at the same time, since it attributes an autonomous importance to the political, while the Christian, as a citizen, eventually has to regard politics in light of his ultimate ends. The worldly duty of the Christian is the realization of freedom as a binding but subordinate goal, for man is more than a political creature.²⁹ Freedom, however, has to be given the right interpretation. The personalist conception of freedom is not the negative freedom of choice of liberalism but positive freedom: the liberty to find and do what is good; the liberty to discern and pursue one's own vocation in life.

The crucial role of the citizenry requires that they dispose of the necessary structures and means to fulfil their task. First and foremost this demands a virtuous civic education. Maritain argued that education is, in the first place, a responsibility of the family, while the state and the education system have an additional task. This additional task goes beyond the gathering of knowledge and capabilities. The youth also has to be educated to responsible citizenship. According to Maritain, this required education on a religious or philosophical basis. He was convinced that young people would commit themselves to democracy in a more firm manner when they were not only equipped with practical knowhow, but also with the theoretical understanding.³⁰

Yet although citizens must enter the political forum with the necessary tools, the proper institutions must be in place in order to fulfill their role. In that regard, Maritain stressed the insufficiency of conventional channels of participation.³¹ In his time, he had learned that elections and parliamentary representation are important but inadequate and that lobbyists and other non-institutional means of subgroups within the *body politic* can also make a valuable contribution. However, these groups present a risk of political agitation and propaganda, particularly when a subgroup claims to represent the voice of the people. Inspired by the American radical activist Saul Alinsky (1909–1972), among others, Maritain pled for grassroots politics and active involvement from all citizens. The key word in the elaboration of his personalist democracy is 'subsidiarity,' the principle that all that can be done by the free initiative of organs smaller than the state has to be left to these organs and that politics has to be structured from the bottom up instead of the top down.³²

Maritain also emphasized the importance of spiritual means in politics, denoting Gandhi (1869–1948) as an ultimate example. Spiritual means refers to the courage to endure suffering in defence of just claims. Maritain also talked about the role of 'prophets' in democracy, individuals or small communities that constitute catalysts of emancipation

during pivotal moments in time by awakening people to their social responsibility. At the same time, he warned of the danger of false prophets who deceive the people. Prophets have an important role to play in history, but they can never be a replacement for generalized, active citizenship. The difference between false and real prophets can only be revealed in a thriving, participatory democracy.³³

In sum, Maritain's political philosophy turns out to be a singular reconciliation of traditional Christian thought and modern society. The person and her integral development as a unique social and spiritual being are at the centre. Gradually, Maritain came to recognize liberal democracy as the appropriate political framework to support the development of every human being. However, liberal democracy was given a personalist interpretation and a Neo-Thomist foundation. Democratic politics is, hence, revealed as the striving of a *body politic* for the *bonum commune* by means of a state that exercises delegated power and active citizens that vigilantly supervise.

Emmanuel Mounier

A personalist and communitarian revolution

Emmanuel Mounier was probably the most popular personalist in France. This is largely explained by the fact that he was more of a public intellectual than an academic. Quite some years younger than Maritain, Mounier was strongly influenced by the elder's integral humanism. It was, however, mainly Henri Bergson and Charles Péguy whose mark became most prominent in Mounier's brand of personalism. The example of Péguy led Mounier to abandon his academic career and to devote his life to changing society by means of the journal *Esprit*, of which he was founder and editor-in-chief.³⁴ Hence, the personalism of Mounier was less a philosophical doctrine than a philosophical 'matrix,' an overarching project of a personalist civilisation in the making that allowed for different philosophical elaborations.³⁵ Compared to Maritain, Mounier's personalism was also less exclusively Christian in nature.³⁶ *Esprit* attracted both believers and non-believers, since Mounier explicitly stated that a new civilisation could only come about through the agency of believers and non-believers working together.³⁷

Esprit saw the light of day in 1932. After a tentative starting phase, in which he sometimes came close to totalitarian and purist ideas and neglected the autonomy of the political from the spiritual,³⁸ Mounier came forward with a manifesto five years later. This *Manifeste au service du personnalisme* stated the purified foundations of the 'personalist and communitarian revolution' that the *Esprit* community intended. It was a plea for the dignity of the person and against the ideologies that threatened the person.³⁹ A criticism of bourgeois capitalism, fascism and communism was the starting point. Each in its own way, these doctrines were accused of oppressing the human person. Bourgeois capitalism was, according to Mounier, the result of the growing individualisation of society since the Renaissance, which gradually perverted spiritual values. Human beings without love or meaning, solely driven by a desire for property and comfort, were the consequence. Fascism did reject these excesses of individualism, rationalism and liberalism, but it did so in the wrong way. Fascism narrowed spiritual values down to vital values, and consequently changed the primacy of the spiritual for the primacy of power. This primacy of power was founded on contempt for reason and the total subjection of the person to the state or the nation. With regard to Marxism, Mounier acknowledged many valuable insights in its social criticism and theory of alienation. However, the materialist

foundations of Marxism deny the autonomy of the spiritual. That is why Marxism ends up just like fascism: in the oppression of the person in favour of the collective.⁴⁰

Mounier considered that the restoration of respect for the dignity of the human person would require no less than a 'new renaissance,' a social revolution to a personalist and communitarian civilisation, a civilisation that enables everyone to live like full human beings and recognizes natural communities in their own finality, although these communities eventually also have to be directed towards the full development of every individual. This personhood was essentially characterized by the positive liberty to discover and pursue one's own vocation in life.⁴¹ The heart of Mounier's manifesto was the description of the institutional preconditions to make this possible. He charged the institutional framework with a tripartite task: eliminating oppression, safeguarding a margin of independence and making responsibility the foundation of life in society. He made this concrete in several domains, like education, family and culture. Special attention was devoted to the economy. He formulated a personalist alternative to capitalism and communism, with orientation towards real needs, primacy of labour above capital and economic democracy as central points.⁴²

Next to the aforementioned domains, Mounier especially expressed ideas concerning the political domain. A first key element was his criticism of statism, which is the coincidence of state and society, the result of which is the absence of an intermediary between the state and the individual, resulting in the subjection of the individual to the state. Mounier tried to describe the problem by referring to the basic elements: The political reality consists of persons and communities. The country is the primary, most instinctive kind of community. The nation is the collection of all communities under an overarching historical tradition and culture. The state, on the contrary, is not a spiritual community and does not stand above country or nation, and definitely not above the person; the state is 'an instrument in service of communities, and through them, or if necessary against them, in service of the persons.'⁴³ Hence, the state is an artificial and subservient instrument, a necessary instance for conflict adjudication, safety and support and coordination of the communities that allow the person to prosper. Consequently, the coercive power of the state has to be restricted to those situations when the material or spiritual freedom of a person is threatened or when someone refuses the social duties that the political community imposes. This restriction of state power has to be guaranteed from the top-down, by the supreme authority of a high court, but also bottom-up, by the social fabric of communities that together constitute the nation.⁴⁴

The bottom-up restriction of power brings us to the second key element in Mounier's reflection on politics in his manifesto, namely his criticism of liberal parliamentary democracy and the joined plea for personalist democracy. He stated that liberal democracy is founded on the idea of popular sovereignty, which in turn is based on the myth of the popular will. The popular will was, for its part, walled in by parliament according to Mounier. The parliamentary will, therefore, took the place of the popular will without any guarantee of an authentic relationship between the functioning of parliament and the interests and convictions of the people that were supposed to be expressed. The source of this problem was the distortion of the meaning of democracy, erroneously equalized to majority rule and, hence, quantitative power. In contrast to this, Mounier argued in favour of an ethical interpretation of democracy: 'Democracy is not the supremacy of the number, which is a kind of oppression. It is nothing but the search for the political means destined to guarantee all persons in a community the right to free development and maximum responsibility.'⁴⁵ On the one hand, this requires that politics be led by a spiritual elite, who can exert power for that purpose with authority. On the other hand,

sufficient guarantees must be built in, in order to prevent the political elite from dominating as Mounier's personalism implies a fundamental distrust of power. Hence, the struggle against domination and the embedding of power in the law constitute the essence of personalist democracy, formulated as 'a systematic resistance to normally exerted power.'⁴⁶

In a personalist democracy, the state is seen as a risky but necessary instrument with a strictly limited task, and under supervision of the people, given the distrust of power. With regard to the supervision of power Mounier held parliament liable. In line with his time, he had lost faith in parliamentary democracy. He recognized that the voice of the people has an important role to play, but one has to ensure that it is really the will of free persons that is expressed, and not agitated passions that lead to dictatorship. On that account, elections have to be paired with independent dissemination of information and direct democracy. Parliament is then still responsible for the nomination of the executive power, but the government is no longer answerable to parliament but directly to the people, by means of referenda on popular initiative. The concrete execution of such a personalist democracy was something Mounier considered only possible in a small political community. Larger nations can only realize this by dividing and mutually balancing power, by means of federalism and subsidiarity. This leaves the state with a limited role, to take care of coordination and adjudication, and to be the external representative of the nation and the internal resort of the person against the abuse of power on lower levels.⁴⁷

An existential personalism: portrayal of man and conception of liberty

Whereas Mounier's personalist manifesto was mainly the reflection of a social project for a new civilisation, his philosophy gradually obtained more depth. During the forties, he framed his thought in the rise of existential philosophies, which resulted in the presentation of personalism as a peculiar kind of existentialism. Moreover, he tried to connect it to the human sciences.⁴⁸ The core of Mounier's mature thought was the idea of responsible freedom, in relation to an intrinsic paradox in human existence. This paradox consists of the fact that personhood is the true mode of human existence, while that mode has always yet to be achieved. The realisation of personhood is not a matter of self-centredness, but is something Mounier called—in the name of Gabriel Marcel — *disponibilité*, which we can translate as availability or willingness. The ultimate concept of personhood is, in other words, to exist for another. This implies the cooperative creation of a society of which the norms and institutions are pervaded by mutual emancipation and recognition. In that regard, every human being has to pass through a series of stages. First and foremost one has to learn to step outside of oneself, after which one can learn to imagine oneself in the role of another. That is the necessary condition for empathy, which is the foundation of generosity. The last and ever unaccomplished step is loyalty to this availability for the other, which requires a continuous revival of personal commitment.⁴⁹

The philosophical anthropology of Mounier lacks clarity and rigor, but the continuing thread is clear. It is essentially all about human existence as freedom to commitment. This freedom is no rudderless freedom of choice, but a freedom under conditions, situated in the world and with regard to a horizon of values. Consequently, before we declare freedom with words, we need to guarantee common preconditions for freedom: biological, social, economic, political and moral preconditions that allow people to discern and gradually realize their own vocation. Hence, freedom is a verb and, first and foremost, the public dimension of the human vocation consists of 'the spirit of liberty,' or personal dedication to the safeguarding of liberties, as the foundation of liberty: 'One does not give

freedom to people from outside, by means of living conditions or constitutions: they would doze off in their liberties, and wake up as slaves.⁵⁰ Hence, freedom implies an endless struggle. Fundamental liberties have to be incorporated in the institutional framework of society. That in itself is, however, insufficient. The relation between individual rights and the common good always remains a subject of discussion. That is why Mounier stressed the fact that political declarations, such as the then hot-off-the-press Universal Declaration of Human Rights can only be effective if they are embedded in a society that does not merely provide the necessary institutional guarantees, but also the sufficient commitment and ‘untameability’ of its citizens.⁵¹ Mounier was then fully aware of the pitfalls, if the discourse on human rights would get disconnected from the concern for the common good and a permanent public vigilance. An important motivation behind the journal *Esprit* was precisely the awareness that the adoption of fundamental values is sterile if it is not supported by an open and dynamic debate.⁵²

Mounier’s existential personalism emphasized that freedom is not an obvious given and thus does not have an obvious outcome. Freedom has to be defended and accepted. The free human being is responsible not only for the framework of liberty for herself and others but for what she does with her own freedom. In the midst of a state of uncertainty, each person has the duty to make a creative choice that advances the world and shapes the person. Such a choice is, according to Mounier, only meaningful if it is a total commitment. Hence, the person is essentially marked by commitment and, given the need for the ‘spirit of freedom,’ commitment necessarily implies political commitment. The theoretical development of these core intuitions were based on the outlines of a theory of action and a theory of politics.

A personalist theory of action

Human existence is a matter of action. This core idea of existentialism was of central importance in Mounier’s development of personalism. Consequently, he devoted much attention to the formulation of criteria for authentic human action. His point of departure was the rejection of the prevailing materialist and determinist doctrines of human action, with a view towards the rehabilitation of the free and responsible human being. His own theory of action was based on three pillars: without freedom, action is stuck in fatalism; isolated, action is fruitless in light of the pursuit of truth and justice; without a value pattern, action is directionless, resulting in arbitrariness, inertia or delirium. Therefore, action presupposes freedom, cooperation and a horizon of values if it is to avoid insignificance.⁵³

Mounier’s personalism made four demands on action: to intervene in the external world, to mould the person, to establish rapprochement to others and to enrich our value universe. Not every instance of action contains all of these elements to the same extent, but the whole of our actions is supposed to realize all of these elements in harmony. Mounier made a classic distinction between different kinds of action in that regard, so that every kind of action provides a dominant input on a certain level. First there is economic action (*poiein*). This kind of action concerns our interaction with matter, our industrial activity in order to impose our will upon nature. The core criterion for economic action, its objective and standard, is *efficiency*. The second kind of action is ethical action (*prattein*). This kind of action is not directly aimed at realizing something in the external world, but at the formation of the acting person. Here, the core criterion is *authenticity*. Finally, Mounier also mentioned contemplative action (*theorein*). This kind of action is not only an intellectual or spiritual affair but rather is also concerned with the incorporation of man into the entire community, for it regards the exploration of deeper values and their

dissemination among mankind. The objectives and standards of this kind of action are nothing less than *perfection* and *universality*.⁵⁴

More important than the distinction between these kinds of actions, however, is their mutual dependency and interaction. Economic activity cannot provide satisfaction if one can not find dignity, friendship and higher purpose in one's labour. That is why economy depends on politics, to bridge the gap between economic and ethical action. Ethics can not remain silent in the economic sphere; a relationship among men can never exist solely on technical grounds. If the means that the person applies devalues the person, then the long-term result is compromised as well. Therefore, ethical considerations are as important as technical calculations. Hence, apoliticism leans on the side of economic action to an impersonal technocracy and on the side of ethical action to spiritualism and desertion from reality. In both cases it goes at the expense of the actual purpose of the action. Contemplative action, finally, is in principle not directed at material or social realisations, but a special variant of contemplative action is specifically meant to jolt economic and ethical action awake. Mounier called this 'prophetic action,' which connects contemplation to the economic and ethical practice, just like politics connects economy to ethics. Some examples of this were Émile Zola's intervention in the famous Dreyfus-affair ('*J'accuse*') and the nonviolent resistance of Mahatma Gandhi.

Based on the necessary interaction between different kinds of action, Mounier described the appropriate society as an interplay between a political pole and a prophetic pole. The political pole stands for an inclination to settle and compromise, the prophetic pole for guts and reflection. Not everyone can unify these two poles in a single personality. That is why society needs a mix of persons with different qualities, in accordance with the entire spectrum between the political and the prophetic pole. The general result of this interaction is then a state of critical vigilance, where people are willing to dirty their hands, knowing that perfection is not of this world, but where at the same time the dignity of the person and the underlying values are monitored. In harmony with the work of Paul-Ludwig Landsberg,⁵⁵ a pupil of Max Scheler who joined the *Esprit* movement as a political refugee in Paris, Mounier used commitment as a key term in this context, referring to the tragic dimension of action in concrete situations, where reality forces us to look for the golden mean between fanaticism and opportunism.⁵⁶

The required interplay between the political pole and the prophetic pole implied, according to Mounier, no misunderstanding of the autonomy of the political. What he tried to do by means of the development of his theory of action was in fact to provide every sphere with its proper place and role in human existence. Nevertheless he maintained a clear asymmetry between the political and the spiritual, in the sense that the spiritual was to be seen as a metapolitical sphere, the horizon that orientates the political questions and incorporates a critical dimension into political practice.⁵⁷ That is why, for Mounier, citizenship is intrinsically linked to personhood. The concept of citizenship belongs to the political sphere. As a citizen, I carry part of the responsibility for the functioning of the state. However, it is only as a person that I can make a full value judgment, according to the criteria of the good and the just that transcend the political. Hence, the political judgment of a citizen has to be understood as an ethical judgment situated by and for the person.⁵⁸ The framework from wherein the person has to employ his political capacity to judge is something Mounier further explored in a political theory.

A personalist political theory

A personalist vision of politics, in the first place, implies that politics serves the person. In Mounier, this came to the fore in a severe distrust of the state and an extended criticism of parliamentary democracy. These are elements that Mounier already underlined in his manifesto but they received further elaboration in his mature philosophy. A politics that is at the service of the person can impossibly be an ultimate goal in itself. The first matter that brings this to the surface is the place and role of the state. Mounier envisioned a pluralist state.⁵⁹ This was supposed to be a state that does not put itself in the place of the nation and that does not centralize all of its power, a state that, on the contrary, works through a diversity of communities and institutions that together constitute the political community and that balance each other. In elaborating this idea, Mounier appealed to the definition of the French sociologist Georges Gurvitch (1894–1965). Gurvitch put the sovereignty of the state in perspective with regard to the plurality of smaller and bigger communities where people live together. The limited, but important task of the state was described as a powerful and concentrated objectification of the justice that spontaneously stems from the social life of communities in which the law serves as an institutional guarantee for the person.⁶⁰ Hence, the state is there for the person, and not the other way round.

The state can only fulfil its task if it has the necessary power at her disposal. On the basis of this task, this power can only be legitimate if it is at the service of the respect for and the promotion of the human person. Inspired by the French anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865), Mounier emphasized that the person always needs protection against power because every unchecked power provokes abuse. He thought that anarchism throws out the baby with the bathwater, since the common good can not be realized without placing restrictions on people, but he retained from anarchism the important lesson that power always leans on oppression and that a legitimate personalist politics is a fragile undertaking accordingly:

The borderline is always uncertain, the measure always difficult, between the restriction that serves the person and the one that begins to torment her, between the freedom that expresses itself, and the one that compromises itself: the personalist city is a fragile city, like a living body, like grace is fragile, and *it is her greatness*.⁶¹

As part of the theoretical elaboration of the fragility of politics, Mounier introduced a distinction between three kinds of power: authority, power, and force.⁶² Authority (*autorité*) refers to the actual foundation of power: the superiority of the human person and the spiritual values. Power (*pouvoir*) is the tangible instrument of authority that, if necessary, restricts people. Force (*puissance*) is what is left of power when it is detached from authority. Legitimate exercise of power therefore requires that power remains subjected to authority. But at the same time there is a continuous threat to the contrary, a threat that power tears itself loose of authority and is relegated to mere force. Authoritative exercise of power means that politics is directed by values and aimed at the promotion of humanity. What power can never oppress is the person and her liberty. This liberty is, however, not indifferent: ‘To be free is to free oneself by taking up the ways that liberate.’⁶³ Authoritative exercise of power has to safeguard and indicate the ways of freedom, i.e. of the full development of every human person. In other words, politics has to create the appropriate framework for human freedom, without ever taking over the person.⁶⁴ That is the *bonum commune* that is the goal of politics, different from the mere sum of individual interests. Hence power is allowed to step over individual

interests, but never at the expense of the spiritual freedom of the person. Once that happens, power loses its authority and degenerates into an oppressive and alienating force.

The question that was left for Mounier to answer was how the authoritative exercise of power could be checked given its inclination to perversion. His answer, the outlines of which were already present in the personalist manifesto, contained two components, namely constitutional restrictions and pressure by the people. The first component implies the safeguards of a constitutional state, such as habeas corpus, independent administration of justice and strict regulation of the police force. Moreover, it also concerns the basic structure of the political system, for which Mounier consulted Proudhon and Gurvitch. From these authors, he used the federalist ideas based on subsidiarity and mutual checks and balances. Based on these principles the polity was to uphold a dynamic balance between freedom and authority, by means of a decentralized, pluralist hierarchy in which the components govern themselves. This concerns territorial (e.g. municipalities) and functional (e.g. trade unions) unities, as well as free associations. The central government then only retains a coordinating and arbitrating role. It has to protect the person from abuses of power by lower political entities, but it also needs functional division itself, so that the different institutions can control each other and as such guarantee that power does not betray its own goal, which is the person.⁶⁵

As already became clear in his concept of freedom, Mounier was convinced that constitutional safeguards for the autonomy of the person are fruitless if they are not supported by the vigilance and willingness to act on the side of the citizens. If the constitutional control on power is like a horse collar, the people are also needed as a whip. This implies the framework of the personalist democracy that Mounier had already sketched out in his manifesto. As we have stated above, this personalist conception of democracy does not rest on the right of the majority, but on the legitimacy of the exercise of power as the collective establishment of liberties and institutions that support every human being in taking on their responsibility as a person. The people have to direct this undertaking, with two channels at their disposal. The primary channel is indirect. It is the normal democratic representation, which has to be serious and efficient, in contrast with the parliamentary regimes that Mounier knew. As preconditions for the success of representation, Mounier mentioned profound political education for all citizens, but also guaranteed respect for minorities. However, the possibility that representation might still fail has to be kept in mind continuously. In that case, citizens have to be prepared to put pressure on the government in a direct fashion. Next to the conventional forms of direct democracy suggested in his manifesto, he also explicitly talked about manifestations, strikes, and even civic rebellion as control mechanisms in the hands of the citizens. After all, the participation and control of the people are inalienable rights of the person as a citizen, since the person is supposed to be the purpose of politics.⁶⁶

Conclusion

The personalists did not stop at the formulation of this abstract ideal of the human person, but they translated their vision into a blueprint for a better society. Next to their pleas for social, economic, moral and spiritual reform in function of the human person, they aimed to a large extent at the political dimension of the envisioned new renaissance. In the context of the failing democracies of the interbellum period, the *Esprit* movement saw the need for a personalist democracy. What that exactly meant and how far this is in line with what we understand today under the notion of a liberal democracy were subject to

evolution, but it is clear that Mounier was less favourable towards liberal democracy than Maritain eventually was. In any case, democracy received an ethical interpretation, beyond the right of the majority. Personalist democracy was, in essence, a political system that creates the framework of freedom, responsibility and justice from wherein every human being can find out what her vocation is in life and how to realize it so that she can develop into a fully fledged person. That is the *bonum commune* politics has to aspire to. Hence, democracy has an exalted mission, but at the same time, personalism was pervaded by the awareness of the fragility of such a system. That is why personalist democracy is also characterized by a fundamental distrust of power. All personalists warned that political power without boundaries lapses from support of the person into oppression.

The sustainability of true democracy is not only dependent on a constitution that formulates boundaries and checks and balances, but especially on a vigilant and active citizenry that reins political power in. This focus on the political responsibility of every individual is characteristic of the political theory of French personalism. It is part of the positive conception of freedom that constitutes the guideline of the personalist discourse. Freedom is, according to personalists, not the negative freedom to do whatever you want as long as you do not harm anyone, but rather the liberty to do good, that is to say the liberty to find your personal vocation in life and to commit yourself to its actualization. Personalist democracy is responsible for the conditions of this liberty, but every human being is as a citizen responsible for the functioning of democracy. We can also state it the other way around: the person has to serve the common good, but the common good serves the person and her liberty. In that way, person and community are related in a personalist and communitarian ideal that establishes an inextricable link between freedom and commitment for the common good. Freedom presupposes taking on responsibility in the struggle against political domination and abuse of power. Only then is it possible for the political community to approach a state where everyone can truly live in freedom.

The need for active citizenship inspired personalists to a radical reformulation of political practice, on the institutional as well as on the ethical level. On the institutional level, Mounier and Maritain pled for federalism and subsidiarity. Classic parliamentary representation was under fire. Most personalists acknowledged the role of the parliament, but they considered the events of their time as an indication of its shortcomings. The citizens had to be able to contribute to the political process in a more active manner. Therefore, personalism wanted to establish extensive forms of bottom-up politics and to keep politics close to the people by giving communities the greatest amount of political autonomy as possible. As such, they sought to guarantee maximal participation and control by the citizenry. On the ethical level, the personalists of *Esprit* emphasized the need for commitment. In light of the build-up to the Second World War, this also implied resistance against naive pacifism. Throughout the personalist political theory is the idea that we should not be paralyzed by a desire for purity. Politics is a risky but necessary occupation. Although we have to be led by the good, in practice this easily amounts to choosing the lesser evil.

We have to commit ourselves to the good despite the shortcomings of every historical attempt to put values into practice. That is why the political ethics of both Mounier and Maritain contained an essential bipolarity. Emmanuel Mounier talked about a prophetic and a political pole and Jacques Maritain referred to *prudentialia politica*. In each case, the same interpretation of historical commitment is in play, an interpretation that underlines on the one hand that we have to aim at certain values, but on the other hand that we have to take the possibilities and limitations of the historical situation and the risks implied in

political power into account. Given the need for generalized active citizenship, this is not a dilemma reserved for political leaders, but a task for every human person. Nobody escapes this rather tragic responsibility.

Despite clear differences in the foundation and elaboration of their philosophy, Maritain and Mounier were remarkably concordant in their personalist social and political thought. Both philosophers were as Catholic intellectuals involved in the quest for the task of man in society and they both came to the conclusion that the vocation of man always implies a social and political component. The complete development of the human person requires a social framework, which is the common good politics is supposed to realize. Both Maritain and Mounier refer, however, to the intrinsic danger of the requisite political power. Sound personalist politics needs, therefore, alert and active citizens that keep the political authority on the right track. Whereas Maritain gradually sympathized with liberal democracy as the adequate political constitution for this civic component of personhood, Mounier's interpretation of personalist democracy retained a more radical nature.

Shaped by the historical context, the personalism of *Esprit* was very influential in the middle of the twentieth century. The political theory remains relevant, however, also in contemporary society. The concrete ideas on the development of democracy are perhaps outdated, but the core of the theory is a particular perspective on individual political responsibility. What personalism clarifies is that politics concerns us all, but not because politics is a lofty affair in the Aristotelian sense. Mounier and Maritain focused on the dark side of politics, the power play, oppression and pretence of democracy, but recognized that politics is necessary to build and safeguard the framework for our development as human persons. The only way to make politics live up to its task is for citizens to assume their own role. This duty of vigilant and active citizenship remains an important corrective for the hegemony of a liberal concept of man and society that dissociates liberty from responsibility and that gives democratic civic duties a conditional character. Personalism teaches us today as well that meaningful freedom is dependent on an institutional context that we ourselves have to contribute to, out of self-interest and in the interest of the others.

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Notes

1. Chenaux (1999), *Entre Maurras et Maritain*, 17–47; Perreau-Saussine (2011), *Catholicisme et démocratie*, 191–206.
2. Calvez (2000), “French Catholic Contribution,” 312–315.
3. Personalism as a term is not only used for the French—and by extension European—personalism that begins with Renouvier. Next to a broad reference to any philosophy that aims at the absolute value of the person, it also specifically refers to an American current in metaphysics, with Borden Parker Bowne (1847–1910), Albert C. Knudson (1873–1960) and Edgar Sheffield Brightman (1884–1953) as main representatives. This American personalism differs from French personalism by means of its focus on metaphysics, rather than on social and political philosophy, and by its outspoken idealism, in contrast to the realist assumptions of French personalists. See Bouckaert (1992a), ‘Een personalistisch vademecum,’ 313–323; De Tavernier (2009), “Historical Roots of Personalism,” 361–392.
4. Landsberg (1952), *Problèmes du personalisme*, 13–27; Mounier (1961), *Oeuvres: Tome I*, 483–488.
5. Maritain (1936), *Humanisme intégral*.

6. Mounier (1961), *Oeuvres: Tome I*, 483–488.
7. See Sadler (2011), *Reason Fulfilled by Revelation*.
8. Amato (2002), *Mounier and Maritain*. This factor is definitely not the only difference within French personalism. It is, however, the crucial factor to understand the difference within the core of French personalism. Nevertheless, there are also side branches of French personalism, such as the more right wing, federalist personalism of Alexandre Marc and Denis de Rougemont or the ecological personalism of Jacques Ellul and Bernard Charbonneau. See Loubet del Bayle (2001), *Les non-conformistes des années 30*; Roy (1999), “Ecological Personalism,” 33–44.
9. Amato (2002), *Mounier and Maritain*, 55–76; Chenu (1999), *Maurras et Maritain*, 133–161.
10. Maritain (1927), *Primauté du spirituel*.
11. Maritain (1936), *Humanisme intégral*, 102–133.
12. Opdebeeck (2000), “Religieus humanisme van Maritain,” 243–49; Schall (1998), *Jacques Maritain*, 1–17.
13. ‘La société politique est destinée essentiellement[...] au développement de conditions de milieu qui portent de telle sorte la multitude à un degré de vie matérielle, intellectuelle et morale convenable au bien et à la paix du tout, que chaque personne s’y trouve aidée positivement à la conquête progressive de sa pleine vie de personne et de sa liberté spirituelle.’ “Maritain [1936], *Humanisme intégral*, 141).
14. ‘Quaelibet autem persona singularis comparatur ad totam communitatem sicut pars ad totum’ (Aquinas [1897], *Summa Theologiae* II–II q. 64 a. 2); ‘Homo non ordinatur ad communitatem politicam secundum se totum et secundum omnia sua’ (Aquinas [1897], *Summa Theologiae* I–II q. 21, a. 4 ad. 3).
15. For the foundation of the personalist portrayal of mankind in the work of Thomas Aquinas, see Maritain (1946), “Person and Common Good,” 419–455.
16. Maritain (1936), *Humanisme intégral*, 134–214.
17. De Jonghe (1992), “Integraal humanisme,” 111–113.
18. Mancini (1987), “Maritain’s Democratic Vision,” 151.
19. Hittinger and Fuller (2001), “Maritain and the reassessment of the liberal state,” 1–8; Perreau-Saussine (2011), *Catholicisme et démocratie*, 203–206.
20. Maritain (1936), *Humanisme intégral*, 180.
21. Maritain, *Man and the State*, 1–27.
22. Maritain, *Man and the State*, 10.
23. Maritain, *Man and the State*, 28–53.
24. Maritain, *Man and the State*, 54–64.
25. Rawls’s ‘political liberalism’ founded liberal democracy in an ‘overlapping consensus’ on fundamental rights and liberties that are a part of everyone’s conception of the good. Every individual can justify his support for the consensus on the basis of their own particular conception of the good, but that conception of the good itself stays out of the public domain (Rawls [1993], *Political Liberalism*). Although Maritain’s formulation of the democratic charter as shared practical conclusions from different philosophical angles displays a resemblance to the ideas of Rawls, there are also significant differences. Maritain underlined the originally Christian nature of the values concerned and, hence, remained much more open to religious input in the public domain. He thought that the Church had a permanent active role to play as spiritual source of democracy (Maritain, *Man and the State*, 141–187). This superficial difference is based on a fundamentally different point of departure. Maritain had a ‘comprehensive’ vision of democracy, which implies that democracy is oriented towards the good, while Rawls stands by a minimal conception of democracy that presumes the priority of the just over the good (Woldring [2001], “Constitutional Democracy,” 73–86).
26. Maritain, *Man and the State*, 108–114.
27. Maritain, *Man and the State*, 18–19, 24–27.
28. Maritain, *Man and the State*, 114–19.
29. Schall, *Jacques Maritain*, 59–63; 99–117.
30. Maritain (1943), *Education at the Crossroads; Man and the State*, 119–126.
31. Maritain, *Man and the State*, 64–68.
32. Maritain, *Man and the State*, 67–68.
33. Maritain, *Man and the State*, 68–71, 139–146.

34. Amato (2002), *Mounier and Maritain*, 91–124.
35. Ricoeur (1955), *Histoire et Vérité*, 138.
36. Opdebeeck (2000), “Religieus humanisme,” 248–249.
37. Mounier (1927), *Oeuvres: Tome I*, 859–869. All the same, Mounier was a devoted Christian with a strong conviction that personalism and the implied notions of vocation and transcendence can only be fully grasped by Christians. See for example Mounier (1962), *Oeuvres: Tome III*, 467–468, 87).
38. Le Goff (2003), “Penser politique,” 172–174.
39. Mounier (1961), *Oeuvres: Tome I*, 479–649.
40. Mounier (1961), *Oeuvres: Tome I*, 491–520.
41. Mounier (1961), *Oeuvres: Tome I*, 523.
42. Bouckaert (1992b), “Mounier en *Esprit*,” 123–142; Bouckaert (2000), “Mounier en economische democratie,” 221–230.
43. Mounier (1961), *Oeuvres: Tome I*, 615.
44. Mounier (1961), *Oeuvres: Tome I*, 615–619.
45. ‘La démocratie n’est pas la suprématie du nombre, qui est une forme d’oppression. Elle n’est que la recherche des moyens politiques destinés à assurer à toutes les personnes, dans une cité, le droit au libre développement et au maximum de responsabilité’ (Mounier [1961], *Oeuvres: Tome I*, 623).
46. Mounier (1961), *Oeuvres: Tome I*, 619–624.
47. Mounier (1961), *Oeuvres: Tome I*, 624–626.
48. Amato (2002), *Mounier and Maritain*, 10–28; Ricoeur (1955), *Histoire et Vérité*, 135–163.
49. Mounier (1962), *Oeuvres: Tome III*, 427–525.
50. ‘On ne donne pas la liberté aux hommes, de l’extérieur, avec des facilités de vie ou des Constitutions: ils s’assoupissent dans leurs libertés, et se réveillent esclaves.’ (Mounier [1962], *Oeuvres: Tome III*, 483).
51. Mounier (1962), *Oeuvres: Tome III*, 470–484.
52. Villela-Petit (2003), “Personne, droit, droit de l’homme,” 155–156.
53. Mounier (1962), *Oeuvres: Tome III*, 498–500.
54. Mounier (1962), *Oeuvres: Tome III*, 500–503.
55. Landsberg (1952), *Problèmes du personalisme*, 28–48.
56. Mounier (1962), *Oeuvres: Tome III*, 503–506.
57. Le Goff (2003), “Penser politique,” 177–178.
58. Villela-Petit (2003), “Personne, droit, droit de l’homme,” 159.
59. Mounier (1962), *Oeuvres: Tome III*, 521.
60. Mounier (1962), *Oeuvres: Tome III*, 518–519; Mounier (1961), *Oeuvres: Tome I*, 616.
61. ‘La frontière est toujours incertaine, la mesure toujours difficile, entre la contrainte qui sert la personne et celle qui commence à la brimer, entre la liberté qui l’exprime, et celle qui la compromet: la cité personaliste est une cité fragile, comme un corps vivant, comme la grace est fragile, et c’est sa grandeur’ (Mounier [1961], *Oeuvres: Tome I*, 680, emphasis in original).
62. Mounier (1961), *Oeuvres: Tome I*, 675–681.
63. ‘Être libre, c’est se libérer en s’engageant dans les voies qui libères’ (Mounier [1961], *Oeuvres: Tome I*, 677).
64. Mounier (1961), *Oeuvres: Tome I*, 693.
65. Mounier (1961), *Oeuvres: Tome I*, 692–695; Mounier (1962), *Oeuvres: Tome III*, 518–519.
66. Mounier (1961), *Oeuvres: Tome I*, 619–626; Mounier (1962), *Oeuvres: Tome III*, 519–521.

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