

THE CORPORATIVE DOCTRINES OF LA TOUR DU PIN

THE NEW ENVIRONMENT

IT WAS NOT until after 1870 that the term "corporative regime" came into general usage and that a body of corporative doctrine which rejected laissez-faire developed. The economic, social and political environment became increasingly favorable to corporatism. In the last three decades of the nineteenth century most of the countries of Europe turned away from economic liberalism toward economic nationalism as evidenced by the spread of protective tariffs, social legislation and imperialist policies. A new phase of the Industrial Revolution appeared with steel and electricity supplementing, and often supplanting, iron and steam. Finance capitalism with its huge combines and cartels began to replace competitive industrial capitalism and divorce between management and labor became a common practice. Depressions grew more intense and far reaching. Labor became more self-conscious and the process of forming labor unions proceeded by leaps and bounds, while Marxism and class struggle increasingly disturbed the security of capitalism. In the political sphere, conservative parties wielded greater power, and liberal nationalism gave way to nationalism of a more aggressive type leading to national rivalries which culminated in the conflagration of 1914.

In France the period 1870-1914 saw a trend away from the free trade concepts of Napoleon III, as evidenced in the Cobden Treaty, to the protectionism of the Méline Tariff of 1892. Social legislation, particularly in the eighteen-nineties and early nineteen hundreds, and the imperialistic efforts of men such as Ferry, were further steps in the direction of economic nationalism.

French industry was affected by the new phase of the Industrial Revolution. Steel and steel alloys began to replace iron.

After 1880 French railroads substituted steel for iron rails in the existing tracks, while the new road bed construction which doubled the railroad mileage, used steel rails. Despite the loss of Alsace, the textile industry continued to grow. The rayon process was introduced. Hydroelectric power was beginning to be developed.

Along with this industrial expansion came periodic crises—the depression of 1873-79, the crash of 1882, the economic crisis of 1907. In spite of labor legislation—ten-hour day in 1900, workmen's compensation 1898, optional social insurance 1910, abolition of *livret*, 1890, safe and hygienic conditions of labor 1893, 1903, six-day week 1899, 1906, old age relief 1905, etc.—the workers did not feel secure from the changes of the business cycle nor from the demands and power of the employing class. Successful in winning the full legalization of trade unions in 1884, workers increasingly resorted to association and to strikes. With the establishment of the General Confederation of Labor in 1895, French labor formed a powerful front against the strength of employers who in turn founded an opposing organization—the General Confederation of French Production—in 1919. From 1890 on, strikes became more and more common; between 1905 and 1910 particularly there was a series of violent and bloody ones.

Disturbed by this increasing class conflict and by the threatened position of capitalism, certain theorists formulated a corporative system which they thought would remedy the social and economic ills of the France of their day. They even expected corporatism to transform the government with its cabinet crises and frequent changes into one of stability and strength. Chief among these writers was the Social Catholic La Tour du Pin, who drew together the scattered threads of French corporative doctrine and wove in the realm of thought a firm corporative system.

La Tour du Pin stands out as the foremost French corporatist of the nineteenth century by virtue of the great authority which he wielded in the corporative movement and by the indelible stamp which he laid upon it. Soldier, diplomat, landowner, social reformer, and philosopher, he devoted his active life to practicing and preaching the ideal of Christian solidarity, which he placed at the heart of his corporative system.

CAREER

Charles Humbert René, Comte de la Tour du Pin Chambly, Marquis de la Charce, was born on April 1, 1834 in the ancient Château of the Douglasses at Arrancy-en-Laonnois. He was brought up in the traditions of the French nobility. On his mother's side he came of a family of magistrates; on his father's side of a line of soldiers. One ancestor, Pierre de Chambly, fought at Bouvines under Philip Augustus; another, Philis de la Tour du Pin, although of the fair sex, was commissioned a colonel by Louis XIV for having successfully led an army of peasants against the forces of the Duke of Savoy, invading Dauphiny in 1662;¹ yet another, Jean-Frédéric de la Tour du Pin Gouvernet, was Minister of War under Louis XVI, and spoke in favor of the Queen at her trial—a boldness which led to his arrest and death in 1794.²

René's early education was undertaken by his parents on the family domain of Arrancy. In later years he declared that, as a boy, he learned from his father the notion of property as a trust. Often, as he accompanied his father on the rounds of the estate, visiting all the peasants, the father would admonish: " ' Always remember that you will be nothing more than the administrator of this land for the benefit of its inhabitants. ' " ³

1 M. Pennelier, *La Conception corporative de la Tour du Pin* (Paris: Editions Domat-Montchrestien, 1937), p. 11.

2 René de la Tour du Pin Chambly de la Charce, *Feuillets de la vie militaire sous le Second Empire, 1855-1870* (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1912), pp. 8-9; Leo Joubert, *Dictionnaire de Biographie depuis les temps les plus anciens jusqu'en 1870* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1870), p. 423.

3 René de la Tour du Pin, *Vers un ordre social chrétien, jalons de route, 1882-1907* (Paris: Gabriel Beauchesne, 1929), p. 4.

It was natural that La Tour du Pin should follow in the footsteps of his father's family and embark upon a military career. At the age of eighteen, after a year of preparation at a college of Versailles, he entered Saint Cyr. There began the lifelong friendship with Bossan de Garagnol, whose daughter was to be René's companion and amanuensis during the last twenty years of his life. After Saint Cyr and the Staff School, La Tour's military life began in earnest. He became a captain at twenty-four and fought in the great campaigns of his time—in the Crimean War, in the Italo-Austrian War of 1859, in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. Taken prisoner with the army of Metz, he was interned by the Germans at Aix-la-Chapelle, and it was there that his friendship with Albert de Mun was sealed. Upon his release from captivity, he participated in the suppression of the Paris Commune. In 1880, when serving in Austria-Hungary as French military attaché, he was promoted by the French War Ministry to rank of lieutenant-colonel.⁴

But a definite break with army life was soon to come. In 1881, La Tour du Pin proposed to General Billot, the Minister of War, a *coup d'état* in favor of the Comte de Chambord, the legitimist pretender. The general was unsympathetic to such a proposition and La Tour had no alternative but to offer his resignation.⁵ Nevertheless, his years of military training and experience exerted a profound influence upon his thought. He devoted two books to his army experiences—*L'Armée française à Metz* (1871), and *Feuillets de la vie militaire sous le Second Empire* (1912), and his other writings often contain military allusions. Yet La Tour du Pin was not a typical militarist. He disliked compulsory military service⁶ and even proposed international disarmament to reduce the French government's burden of debt. He did admire, however, the chevalier

4 Charles Baussan, *La Tour du Pin* (Paris: Flammarion, 1931), *passim*.

5 Jean Rivain, *Un Programme de restauration sociale—La Tour du Pin précurseur* (Paris: Le Livre, 1926), p. 10.

6 La Tour du Pin, *Jalons*, p. 123.

who "to the valor of the soldier added the generosity, justice, continence, and faith of the Christian,"⁷ and felt that war was a noble art to be practised skillfully but sparingly.

More important for posterity than La Tour du Pin the soldier was La Tour du Pin the moralist and Social Catholic corporatist. Indeed he was one of the first to use the term "corporative regime". He first became preoccupied with the social question during his captivity at Aix-la-Chapelle. Through Father Eck, a Jesuit, La Tour and his fellow officer, Albert de Mun, made the acquaintance of Doctor Liegen (later a Center Party member of the Reichstag). The latter in turn introduced them to the Social Catholic movement in Germany inaugurated there by Kolping and Ketteler.⁸

On their return to France, La Tour du Pin and De Mun came into contact with Maurice Maignen, a lay brother who had founded a small Catholic club of young workingmen on the Boulevard Montparnasse. After attending a meeting of this club, the two officers, in cooperation with Maignen, decided to form a whole network of Catholic workingmen's clubs. Thus on December 22, 1871 the *Oeuvre des Cercles Catholiques d'Ouvriers* was born. Among the other founders were Emile Keller, deputy from the Haut Rhin and author of the book above mentioned, and Léon Gautier, Professor at the *Ecole des Chartes* and an enthusiastic admirer of the Middle Ages. This aristocratic and intellectual élite was to direct the *Oeuvre* for the benefit of its members who were workingmen. The aim of the founders was not to rouse laborers to independent action for the furtherance of their interests, but to unite them in Christian corporations with employers and to place them under the guidance of directive committees recruited from the upper classes. In addition the leaders were to formulate a clear social doctrine through their *Section d'Etudes*. This doctrine was

⁷ *Association catholique*, VI, 10. These words, although not composed by La Tour du Pin but by another bearing the name of La Tour, nevertheless seemed to reproduce his sentiments exactly.

⁸ Baussan, *op cit.*, p. 88.

propagated by means of congresses, provincial branch clubs, and a journal, *Association catholique*, which was founded in January, 1876. The number of members and of branches steadily mounted. By 1884 there were 50,000 members and 400 committees, although subsequently the organization seemed to lose some of its power.⁹

Until his retirement from the *Oeuvre* about 1893, La Tour du Pin was the moving spirit behind its doctrines. It was he who most vigorously insisted upon the corporative reorganization of society. It was he who stressed, more than any of the other leaders, the necessity for a well-prepared doctrine as the prerequisite for any social action.¹⁰ In his numerous articles in *Association catholique* he captained the attack against liberalism in all its forms, even Catholic liberalism, and he led the defense for Christian corporatism. Although he supported numerous vain efforts of his friend, Albert de Mun, to have parliament enact a law on corporations, he had more faith in the spontaneous growth of associations, especially mixed associations of employers and workers, than he had in reforms dictated by a parliamentary government.

During these years, La Tour du Pin was instrumental in encouraging the efforts of such Social Catholics as Louis Milcent and Gailhard Bancel to form agricultural associations in the Jura, Alpine, and Dauphiny valleys. Léon Harmel's work in building at Val-des-Bois in Champagne a model spinning guild was, according to Charles Baussan, inspired to a large degree by La Tour du Pin.¹¹

The years 1877-1881 were important ones for La Tour du Pin, for these were the years of his sojourn in Austria-Hungary as French military attaché. There he came into intimate association with the leaders of the Austrian Social Catholic

9 Parker T. Moon, *The Labor Problem and the Social Catholic Movement in France* (New York: Macmillan, 1921), pp. 82-85.

10 René de la Tour du Pin, "Letter to Louis Milcent" (March 2, 1877) in *Revue universelle*, March 25, 1941, p. 334.

11 Baussan, *op. cit.*, pp. 112-123.

movement—Baron Karl von Vogelsang, Rudolph Meyer, Count Blöme, and von Loewenstein. The influence of Vogelsang upon La Tour was particularly marked. Vogelsang was the director of the Social Catholic journal *Vaterland*, and wrote about problems of labor, property, and political reconstruction.¹²

La Tour's stay in Austria also permitted him frequently to visit Frohsdorf, the home of the French legitimist pretender, the Comte de Chambord. Since the Count himself was interested in guild ideas, having advocated guilds in his *Letter on Labor* of 1865, he was well disposed toward the doctrines of La Tour du Pin and the activities of the *Oeuvre des Cercles*.

After his return to France in 1881, and his subsequent retirement from the army, La Tour founded an agricultural society in his own department of the Aisne, and soon afterwards joined the *Société des Agriculteurs de France*. Throughout the rest of his life the problems of agriculture and the peasants were of special interest to him.

In May and September, 1882 there appeared in *Association catholique* articles by La Tour du Pin lauding Frédéric le Play and Wilhelm von Ketteler, Bishop of Mainz. In the first article, La Tour called Le Play founder of the "School of Social Peace", our contemporary master, our friend.¹³ Even before Le Play, wrote La Tour, Maistre, Bonald, and Blanc de Saint-Bonnet had fought "glorious" advance guard battles for the defense of "healthy" traditions. But these men had aimed too high. Le Play, on the other hand, fought the principles of 1789 with its own weapon, "scientific method", and by this means defended the sacred rights of the Church, family, and association. In the second article, La Tour praised von Ketteler, who fifteen years before had viewed the labor question as essentially one of subsistence, and who had indicated a guild regime as a solution.¹⁴ Again in 1883, La Tour wrote that years before the

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 98.

¹³ *Association catholique*, XIII (May 15, 1882), 559-580.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, XIV (September 15, 1882), 259-261.

formation of the *Oeuvre*, von Ketteler had defined the mission of just such an organization.¹⁵

La Tour du Pin was soon to influence the Pope himself. In 1884 he was sent by the *Oeuvre* to Leo XIII to explain its work and aims and to disprove the liberal Catholic accusation of socialism. The Pontiff is supposed to have said to La Tour: " ' My son, that is not Socialism, that is Christianity. ' " ¹⁶

On his return trip, La Tour met the Austrian Social Catholic leader, Count Blöme, and proposed to him the formation of an international federation of socially minded Catholics. Out of this suggestion grew the organization for economic and social studies known as the Catholic Union of Freiburg. The *Memo-rial* of this international body, presented to the Pope in 1888, directly influenced the drafting of Leo XIII's famous encyclical of May 15, 1891, *Rerum Novarum—On the Condition of Labor*.¹⁷

Rerum Novarum, therefore, was at least indirectly or partly inspired by La Tour du Pin. The Pope hoped to see the former guilds adapted to the requirements of the time. Workmen's societies and mixed organizations of employers and workers were recommended in the document. Especially was the idea of class conflict condemned and that of class solidarity and peace supported by the Pope.¹⁸

However, a year after the promulgation of *Rerum Novarum*, Leo XIII caused dismay to the monarchist La Tour du Pin by directing the French Catholics to rally to the support of the Republic. La Tour remained true to the royalist cause but his comrade-in-arms, Albert de Mun, became a *rallié*, thus making irreparable the breach which had been constantly widening between the two old friends. As a result of the schism, La Tour

¹⁵ La Tour du Pin, *Jalons*, pp. 36-37.

¹⁶ Pennelier, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

¹⁷ Moon, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

¹⁸ Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum—On the Condition of Labor* (New York: The Paulist Press, 1939), *passim*.

du Pin retired from the *Oeuvre* which remained in the hands of De Mun and his fellow *ralliés*. He continued to write for *Association Catholique* which in 1891 had severed its connection with the *Oeuvre*, remaining independent until 1909 when as the *Mouvement social* it became the organ of *L'Action Populaire*.¹⁹

The blow from Rome and the defection of many of his closest friends did not weaken La Tour's royalism. On the contrary, it made him even more royalist. Already in 1888-1889, before the *Ralliement*, La Tour had organized a counter-manifestation to the nation-wide centenary celebration of the fall of the Bastille. This manifestation consisted of the meeting of provincial assemblies, the drawing up of *cahiers* by the three estates, and the convocation of an "Estates General" at Paris.²⁰ La Tour's opposition to the *Ralliement* served to increase his royalist activities. In 1896 he was one of the most active participants in the Congress at Paris for the celebration of the fourteenth centenary of Clovis' baptism, and he drew up the report of the Congress, summarizing his principles of political organization.²¹ The same year he helped to organize the royalist journal, *Reveil français*, and for the next ten years contributed numerous articles to it. About this time also, La Tour drew closer to Charles Maurras and after 1901 wrote several articles for the Royalist journal, *Action française*. According to Jean Rivain who knew both men at this time, Maurras

had never ceased to render homage to La Tour du Pin for the social ideas which he [Maurras] has since propagated; and La Tour du Pin has often recognized his most fertile heritage in the doctrine of Maurras.²²

19 Moon, *op. cit.*, p. 328.

20 Baussan, *op. cit.*, pp. 126-136.

21 La Tour du Pin, *Jalons*, p. 421; Pennelier, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

22 Rivain, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

During all these years, La Tour had published only a book on the Army of Metz and numerous articles in *Association catholique*, *Reveil français*, and other journals. Finally, under the influence of Mlle. Bossan de Garagnol, the daughter of one of his oldest friends, La Tour set about collecting in one work the most important of his writings. These were published in book form in 1907 under the title *Vers un ordre social chrétien; jalons de route 1882-1907* (Toward a Christian Social Order; Landmarks Along the Way). The work was subdivided into four sections—Social Economy, Social Politics, the Counter-Revolution, the French Restoration. Within each section articles were arranged chronologically. Yet the line separating the four divisions was very thin, for some of the same subjects were discussed under each heading. La Tour himself admitted that the reader would certainly not find this book a systematic treatise, but would nevertheless observe the continuity of the major ideas.²³

Of all the articles included in the *Jalons*, one, namely the article "Capitalism", an attack upon usury, was the object of episcopal censure. Written in 1889, it was denied publication by *Association catholique*, and appeared subsequently in some other journal. However, La Tour refused to retract a word of this article, feeling that his views were in "full accord with St. Thomas and the doctrine of the Church",²⁴ and he accordingly insisted upon including it in the *Jalons*.

Two years after the publication of the *Jalons*, another work of La Tour du Pin appeared—the *Aphorisms of Social Politics*.²⁵ This was a very small volume containing two series of definitions of such terms as historic right, aristocracy, property, rent, hearth, commune, corporation and others. The first series

²³ La Tour du Pin, *Jalons*, p. ix.

²⁴ Robert Guillermain, *La Doctrine sociale de la Tour du Pin* (Paris: Cercle de la Tour du Pin, 1937), p. 89.

²⁵ *Aphorismes de politique sociale* (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1909).

was written in preparation for the "Estates General" of 1889, and appeared in *Politique sociale* from 1887 to 1889, while the second series was composed in 1909.

In March 1918, when the Germans evacuated the village of Arrancy, which they had occupied,²⁶ the octogenarian La Tour du Pin was taken with them and found himself for a second time a prisoner in Germany. Upon his release, he settled in Switzerland, spending his last days at Lausanne on the shore of Lake Geneva. It was there that he composed an article for *Le Correspondent* in which he suggested that Frenchmen be reintegrated in the war regions not by masses but by families, and that syndicates and corporations be encouraged among these people.²⁷ He died at the age of ninety on December 4, 1924.

ATTACK ON INDIVIDUALISM

Although La Tour du Pin occasionally reversed his opinion on a question, he was steadfast in his principle doctrines. Three general subjects seemed to run through his numerous essays and articles: his attack upon individualism, his corporative scheme, and his conception of the state.

La Tour described individualism as an abnormal state of mind—"abnormal and against nature because the nature of man is essentially social"²⁸—which was increasingly prevalent and which was characterized by systematic contempt for social ties and duties. It betrayed a spirit of materialism and lust for gain inherited from the Reformation²⁹ and a tendency to per-

²⁶ During the German occupation of Arrancy, until the evacuation of the inhabitants by the conquerors, La Tour du Pin defended the interests of the inhabitants against the demands of the German forces. Mlle. Bossan de Garagnol noted these efforts of La Tour in *Le Correspondant*, March 23, April 10, and April 12, 1919.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, October 25, 1919.

²⁸ René de la Tour du Pin, "Individualisme," *Dictionnaire apologétique de la foi catholique* (second edition, 1914), II, 176.

²⁹ La Tour du Pin, *Jalons*, pp. 450, 173, 99, and *passim*.

petuate the "rupture of historical continuity"³⁰ accomplished by the French Revolution. In particular the French Revolution was condemned for breaking away from religious society without resolving the problems of the relations of state and church; for breaking away from the monarchical constitution without achieving a firm foundation for a political state; and lastly for breaking away from "the ancient organization of property and of trades without solving the social question, nor even making progress toward a solution."³¹

La Tour regarded individualism as responsible for bringing forth liberalism and socialism. Liberalism was

the philosophic doctrine according to which good and evil have equal rights in society. In other words, the political doctrine according to which the social power emanates from the sovereignty of the people; or the economic doctrine according to which interests are regulated by natural laws which suffice to harmonise them.³²

These doctrines were the negation of all ties in religion, politics, economics, for all bonds were essentially constraints.

"Liberalism," wrote La Tour, "contains in germ all the doctrines of socialism"³³ which was not merely a reaction to laissez-faire but actually an extension of the principles of liberalism. Socialists, he affirmed, believed in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and in the religion of progress as much as any good liberal. They would establish economic as well as political equality. Under socialism the individual would, however, be considered as an irresponsible cog in society and would become a slave to the state. Socialism even more than liberalism destroyed the historic and natural ties which bound man to man and group to group. Therefore social conservatives opposed state socialism

³⁰ La Tour du Pin, *Aphorismes*, pp. 20-21.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

³² *Aphorismes*, p. 43.

³³ *Loc. cit.*

because they know how much the social body, being not an artificial creation but a natural one, possesses within itself varied organisms [i.e., family, commune, region, professional association, etc.] to accomplish its diverse functions.³⁴

One of the many evil heads which La Tour accused the hydra of individualism of having raised was that of democracy and parliamentarianism. He particularly deplored the fact that parliament did not represent permanent forces or interests but "only the caprice of the mob." Emanating "from a more or less universal suffrage," parliamentary action "is as ephemeral and changing as are the impressions of the masses."³⁵ Ministerial responsibility in reality meant instability and irresponsibility. Only social conservatives realized that representative bodies should represent the various social and professional organisms existing within the nation, and that the true function of representation was consultation and acceptance or rejection of laws, *not* legislation.³⁶

In addition to infecting political life individualism had attacked the very bulwark of society, the Church. The resulting secularization and liberty of conscience were to be condemned and religious dissidents should be tolerated only as foreigners. The Church alone should have the mission of teaching and the clergy should possess its own courts and judges and should be exempt from lay jurisdiction.³⁷

Family society was no less menaced by individualism than religious society, attested La Tour du Pin. In accord with Le

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

³⁵ La Tour du Pin, *Jalons*, p. 253.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, *passim*.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 69, 116, 181, 185, 213, 235, and *passim*. "Individualisme," *Dictionnaire apologétique de la foi catholique*, II, 716-717. La Tour du Pin especially detested the influence of the Free Masons upon the political, religious, and educational life of France. To his mind, the masons wielded a pernicious power and their society, as well as other secret societies, should be suppressed. See: *Jalons*, p. 179. Such organizations were dissolved by the Pétain government which also sought to strengthen the Church.

Play, he urged that the divorce law be repealed, the freedom of bequest reestablished, and family domains reconstituted, for the family was the "primordial element of society."³⁸

Individualism had also left its mark on agriculture. As in the case of the family, the compulsory division of property among heirs brought about the parcelization of domains and a decrease in the birth rate. Competition and speculation rendered the peasant's fate deplorable. To improve his lot, La Tour recommended the restoration of testamentary freedom, the inalienability of family domains, the prohibition of absentee landlordism, the establishment of high tariffs, and the encouragement of *métayage* or sharecropping. Likewise, he advised agricultural association, preferably mixed, containing proprietors, tenants, *métayers*, and agricultural workers, but he admitted that unilateral organizations were better than none. He felt that local, provincial, regional, and national syndicates possessing cooperative purchasing societies, as well as mutual credit and mutual aid societies could accomplish much toward the alleviation of the farmers' plight and the final solution of the agrarian problem. And the problem must be solved, he argued, because "history shows us the prosperity and endurance of nations in relation to their rural economy."³⁹

Yet another effect of individualism which was evident to La Tour du Pin, as it had been to Deseine, Levacher-Duplessis and La Farelle, was the unrestrained industrial and commercial competition which resulted in economic waste and the manufacture of inferior products. To restrain such injurious competition, he wished to impose high tariffs and to organize guilds or corporations which would maintain a strict supervision over quality as well as a just price.⁴⁰

³⁸ *Dictionnaire apologétique*, II, 717; *Aphorismes*, p. 22, *Jalons*, pp. 48-71, 281-291. See the statements and decrees of Pétain regarding the family which paralleled the sentiments of La Tour.

³⁹ *Jalons*, p. 63. On agriculture, see also: pp. 284-285, 299, 321, 362-369, 494, 48-71, 281-296, 89-91, 58, 66-69, 291. Cf. Pétain pronouncements and legislation concerning agriculture.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 33, 55, 56, 327, and *passim*.

The pernicious doctrine of class struggle and the actual existence of hostility between classes were also products of individualism, according to La Tour du Pin. Under the impulse of Darwinism and socialism, the belief was propagated that class war was inevitable. Nothing could be more false, he believed, since man was by nature a social being, and any well-organized society reposed upon the solidarity of men. True, until 1884 workers were practically at the mercy of the free functioning of the "law" of supply and demand in the labor market and thus they hated employers to whose advantage the "law" operated. But the legalization of trade unions in 1884 was a step in the right direction as it helped to equalize the position of worker and employer. Nevertheless, it would remain an incomplete step until unilateral unions of workers and employers were joined together into mixed organizations or corporations. With an ardor equal to that of Buret, La Tour called for the rapprochement of employers and employees. Associations should be formed to complete, or better still, to supplant class unions, for "the principle of an organization of classes is antisocial or at least anti-Christian."⁴¹ Moreover, "Christian social justice . . . is not possible with the absence of ties of solidarity between men united by the same social function."⁴² A functional rather than a class organization would bring "agreement instead of a struggle for life."⁴³

One of the worst forms which individualism had assumed, in the eyes of La Tour du Pin, was usury. Influenced by St. Thomas, La Tour considered usury an interest charged where the object loaned did not suffer deterioration. It constituted a levy on production and was one of the principle causes of the inequality of wealth which was increasing according to geometric progression.

⁴¹ *Jalons*, p. 115.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 117.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 9. "Entente pour la vie en place de la lutte pour la vie."

The chief types of usury, therefore, should be eliminated. This would entail the abolition of the *rentes d'état* (government bonds) through the diminution of the administrative and military apparatus, the levying of consumption taxes on luxury goods and on goods of foreign origin. Likewise farm-tenancy (*fermage*), another form of usury, should be eradicated through the reconstruction of inalienable hereditary family domains, the granting of privileges to proprietors who themselves exploited their lands, and the encouragement of *métayage*. Also, the *sociétés anonymes* should be reconstructed. La Tour proposed to accomplish this through the prohibition of the issuance of bonds or preferred stock, the placing of unlimited liability on common stock, the granting of shares of stock to workers, and the general corporative or guild organization of large as well as of small scale industry. Usury in the form of loans for consumption could be prevented through corporative organization providing mutual aid and credit societies, a measure reminiscent of Proudhon. Likewise speculation should be ended through legislation and corporative organization.⁴⁴

Still one final head of the hydra of individualism remained, in La Tour's view, to be struck down, or at least rendered harmless—namely, the Jewish nation. La Tour du Pin was an anti-Dreyfusard and an admirer of Drumont. He did not refer to the Jews as a race but as a nation, as the "yellow international, that gigantic octopus whose tentacles hold all the oceans, and which renders all people tributaries of the Jewish nation."⁴⁵ The Jews, therefore, La Tour accused as the principal

⁴⁴ On usury, see particularly: *Jalons*, pp. 71-105; *Aphorismes*, pp. 54-60. Cf. the proposals of Chanson and other interbellum corporatists for reforming the *sociétés anonymes*.

⁴⁵ *Jalons*, p. 472. See also pp. 315, 317.

Robert Guillermain, one of the commentators on the *Jalons*, correctly states that La Tour du Pin was not a racist. See Guillermain, *op. cit.*, p. 215. Many royalists of the nineteen thirties and early forties, while accepting La Tour's other doctrines, repudiated his ideas about the Jews. Roger Sémichon, *Les Idées sociales et politiques de la Tour du Pin* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1936), p. 22. La Tour's anti-semitic sentiments were, however,

usurers and propagandists of liberalism, socialism, and feminism. They should be treated as foreigners and segregated into ghettos. Further, their philosophical, political, social, and economic doctrines should be abjured and the corporative regime should be reconstructed in economic and political life "to render us independent of them and masters of ourselves."⁴⁶

Such were the aspects of individualism which La Tour du Pin attacked and wished to eliminate. One of the chief methods which he propounded for wiping out this evil and bringing about the reign of solidarity was the establishment of a guild or corporative regime.

CORPORATIVE PLANS

"Social conservatives," affirmed La Tour,

insist on the corporative regime because of the character of stability which it communicates to the institutions of which it is the basis, and which seems to enable them to maintain social justice and social peace.⁴⁷

This necessity for social peace and solidarity between classes was stressed repeatedly by La Tour. To him,

the organization of labor most favorable to social peace is the corporative regime, first because it best lends itself to the amiable fixing of the conditions of labor; then because it creates resources for the time when workers are not earning; then finally because it can function as a regulator of industrial forces⁴⁸

The corporative regime would restore the dignity and security of the worker and at the same time protect the employer in his

shared by the royalist, Charles Maurras. The Pétain government took certain steps against the Jews, although it is difficult to determine how large a part the Germans played in inspiring its anti-semitic actions.

⁴⁶ *Jalons*, p. 317.

⁴⁷ La Tour du Pin, *Aphorismes*, p. 10.

⁴⁸ *Jalons*, p. 209.

functions, thus maintaining a necessary, but not iron-bound social hierarchy. Likewise, it would accomplish wonders in removing many of the forms of extreme individualism such as unrestrained competition and usury. Indeed, the "corporative regime is the only way to avoid going from liberalism to socialism."⁴⁹

In explaining his concept of a corporative regime, La Tour du Pin defined the terms syndicate, corporation, and *corps d'état*.

We term professional association or syndicate, the society formed with the object of defending professional interests, between people of the same status and condition; corporation, the society which unites the diverse elements of the same profession, i.e., its employers, its white collar and manual workers, in a society perfect from the professional point of view; finally, *corps d'état*, the ensemble of all the workshops where the same profession is practised.⁵⁰

The ideal corporation was one in which syndicates were mere component parts or categories of a mixed union or corporation.⁵¹ According to such an ideal system, the corporation would be synonymous with the *corps d'état*, since there would be only one corporation in the *corps d'état*, and all members of the corps would become members of the corporation. But La Tour knew how few mixed associations were actually being formed. Moreover, he wished to conciliate those of his Social Catholic colleagues who were opposed to one corporation for each *corps d'état* and believed in a multiplicity of associations freely formed within the *corps d'état*. Therefore, while not forgetting his ideal conception, he evolved the scheme of allowing all the different existing associations, whether mixed or not, in a given *corps d'état* to send delegates to a corporative chamber.

⁴⁹ *Aphorismes*, p. 10.

⁵⁰ *Jalons*, p. 499.

⁵¹ *Jalons*, p. 141 and *passim*.

In 1883 La Tour sketched his ideal system of corporations, and in many subsequent articles⁵² he discussed his plan for corporative chambers. The corporation of his ideal scheme would be organized by profession or industry. It would not be a purely private institution but rather "a social institution which holds a determined place in the organization of the commune and more or less directly in that of the state."⁵³ The corporation should not be created in detail by state decrees, but the state should give legal existence and force to pre-existing free corporations. Then

from a free body which it ought to be in order to be formed, the corporation tends by the force of things to become obligatory, which it ought to be to exercise a political function.⁵⁴

The corporation would comprise all the elements which constituted the profession, such as employers, clerks, and workers in large industry; masters, workers, and apprentices in the trades; proprietors, tenants, and cultivators in agriculture. In large industry, La Tour would give representation to capital as well as to management and labor. In the arts and crafts, consumers as well as masters and companions would have a voice in the governing body. La Tour insisted upon giving only one vote to each of the elements or orders in the corporative council.⁵⁵

What, then, did La Tour du Pin consider as the functions of his ideal corporation? First, it would constitute and manage a corporative patrimony or fund. This patrimony, which had figured so largely in the schemes of Keller and earlier corporatists,

⁵² Such as those of 1891, 1904 and 1905.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁵⁵ He was probably influenced by the voting procedure in the Estates General of 1789.

could be raised by a tax on production.⁵⁶ In the rate to be established, an equal part could be shared by enterprise and by labor. The contribution could be measured in terms of tools and raw materials in the case of enterprise, and labor in the case of workers; or the amount could be determined on the basis of time—for example, the production of a half-day each week.

In industrial stock corporations, there could be contributed to this reserve fund, a certain number of shares of stock, by including a sum withheld from the normal wage, which is always easy to evaluate in shares of stock. . . .⁵⁷

Whatever the procedure might be, the system was one of a participation of the corporative fund in the prosperity of the industry. La Tour pointed out that the system already had been applied in agriculture where workers permanently employed in cultivation received a percentage of the fruits gathered. He declared: "it is only a question of capitalizing this levy instead of distributing it individually."⁵⁸ Such an indivisible, inalienable patrimony would be used for unemployment compensations, pensions, professional schools, and similar purposes.

A second major function of the corporation would be the verification and protection of professional capacity, a duty ascribed to it by earlier corporatists, particularly La Farelle. To La Tour, as to these earlier corporatists, capital was not the only form of property. "The possession of a career, of a trade can also partake of the character of property when it is guaranteed by law. . . ."⁵⁹ La Tour found the essential features of possession of a career in the system of the

⁵⁶ *Jalons*, p. 27. The tax was to be levied not on the profits from production "which are a result of the commercial activity of the entrepreneur," but on the "quality" of production "evaluated at cost price."

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁵⁸ *Loc. cit.*

⁵⁹ *Jalons*, p. 29.

brevets of professional capacity delivered according to certain rules to all the agents of production, to the engineer as well as to the worker.⁶⁰

He would debar anyone without such a *brevet* from being an active member of the corporation, or from rising above the lowest grade of the professional hierarchy. However, the simple laborer did not really possess a trade; his forces rather than his skill were employed.⁶¹ As soon as the manual laborer acquired a skill, he really possessed a status which "ought to be guaranteed to him by the ensemble of institutions which we understand under the designation corporative regime."⁶² The worker should be able to rise in the profession, to pass from journeyman to master, through skill and good conduct as attested in the *brevet*. The same system would apply to the status of engineer in an industrial corporation. The corporation would give access to this career through professional schools,

if not to simple workers, at least to their children, thus offering to the most humble of its members healthy and legitimate prospects of progression in social rank.⁶³

The third function of the corporation would be the possession of its own jurisdiction, i.e., of legislative, judicial, and executive powers. The corporation would enact its own rules, judge disputes between its members and administer its patri-mony.

In his article on capitalism published in 1889, La Tour seemed to add another function to the corporation. The *sociétés anonymes* were to be reorganized under corporative control or in a corporative direction. Workers in these companies were gradually to become part owners of the instruments of

⁶⁰ *Loc. cit.*

⁶¹ La Tour believed that with mechanical progress the need for skilled labor would increase, and for unskilled labor would decrease.

⁶² *Loc. cit.*

⁶³ *Jalons*, p. 30.

production.⁶⁴ La Tour's vagueness on the methods of achieving such a reform of the *sociétés anonymes* has led some commentators on his doctrine to infer that he desired ownership of the *sociétés* by the corporation.⁶⁵ In most of his other articles he supported private enterprise and conceived of the corporation as an agency to regulate but not to manage or own industries. In the article on capitalism he may have been thinking merely in terms of extensive corporative regulation of the *société anonyme* and of the constitution of a large corporative patrimony whose funds would benefit the workers of the *société*.

Such were the structure and functions of La Tour's ideal corporation. He considered his plan for a corporative chamber more realistic and easier to put into operation. In an article published in *Association catholique* in 1891, he explained that the corporative chamber for the profession or industry would contain an equal number of delegates from worker and employer associations. Its jurisdiction would be limited to the members of the professional associations constituting it, but could be extended to the whole profession if the majority of the members of the profession entered the constituent associations.

In explaining a slightly different system, namely the "corporative union", La Tour gave a specific illustration. Suppose, for example, the town of N contained two hundred carpenters forming different associations, one of forty members, one of thirty, one of twenty, while one hundred and ten carpenters remained outside of any association. Each association would send delegates to the corporative chamber in the ratio of four, three, two, making a total of nine. These delegates would establish measures and regulations and would submit them to a vote of

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

⁶⁵ See, for example, Pierre Andreu, "Le Vrai visage de la Tour du Pin," *Esprit* (June 1, 1934), p. 410. Andreu's whole article attempts to show that La Tour was a socialist. Our studies have revealed that he was nothing of the sort. Moreover, the article on usury is only one of his many writings which should also be taken into consideration.

all members of the profession "without other distinction than that of their condition of employer or worker."⁶⁶ In an article published in 1905 in *Action française*, La Tour du Pin made clear that only members of associations would have the right to elect delegates to the corporative chamber. Later, he stated that since most of the worthy members of the profession would belong to syndicates, election to the chamber could be on the basis of an indirect universal suffrage in two stages.⁶⁷

The functions of the corporative chamber would be to

fix the conventions relative to work, to its method of remuneration, and to the rate of this remuneration within certain limits, in such a way as to favor the establishment of good customs of the trade and their successive modification corresponding to the industrial and economic situation.⁶⁸

It would render justice and exercise police duty within the *corps d'état* for the observation of the rules it established. This could be done by the institution of councils of discipline of a composition analogous to that in use in the military tribunals, where all ranks were represented. It would create and administer institutions of common interest such as aid, retirement, sickness, unemployment funds, accident insurance, and cooperative societies. It would study and proclaim professional interests and "represent the *corps d'état* every time it has the right to appear or be heard."⁶⁹ Yet another duty of the corporative chamber and of the ideal corporation as well, would be the performance of a political function, in the state.

CONCEPTION OF THE STATE

La Tour du Pin defined the state as "the ensemble of the powers and forces of a nation organized for the common good,

⁶⁶ *Jalons*, p. 143.

⁶⁷ *Jalons*, pp. 399, 400.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

which is called the national interest.”⁷⁰ In his view the ideal form of government was monarchy. The king, he felt, could set himself above partisan interest and thus protect and reconcile the interests of his people. France needed a king to stem the tide of anarchy; and monarchy was in conformity with the French national tradition.⁷¹ La Tour wanted neither an absolute king, nor a king who reigned but did not rule. The king should possess real authority but should govern according to custom and the unwritten constitution of France, and should respect the semi-autonomous character of such constituted bodies as the corporation and the commune. La Tour du Pin’s royalist ideas were not very original, for he quoted from almost all the royalists from Maistre and Bonald to Blanc de Saint-Bonnet.⁷²

More original was La Tour du Pin in his conception of the role of the corporation or corporative chamber in the state. He outlined what he considered a truly “representative regime”, that is a “representation of rights and interests.” His system can be schematized as follows:

In later articles, La Tour du Pin made some changes and amendments. In 1898, he desired the commune in urban districts to be the first degree of professional organization. Above the commune would be the canton which would be the first degree of organization for rural districts, whether agricultural or industrial. Above these again would be the regional chambers.⁷³ In 1900 he proposed under the regional chambers the following circumscriptions: the department for liberal professions, the *arrondissement* for industrial professions, the canton for agri-

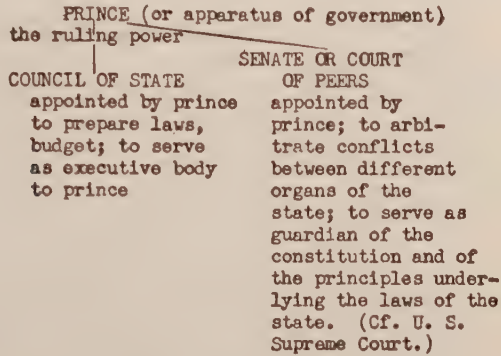
⁷⁰ *Jalons*, p. 502.

⁷¹ La Tour was against divine right, but claimed that the king was sanctified.

⁷² For a more detailed analysis of La Tour’s political doctrines see: Charlotte T. Muret, *French Royalist Doctrines Since the Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1933), pp. 200-216.

⁷³ *Jalons*, p. 276.

DIAGRAM OF GOVERNMENT ACCORDING TO
LA TOUR DU PIN (1896) 74



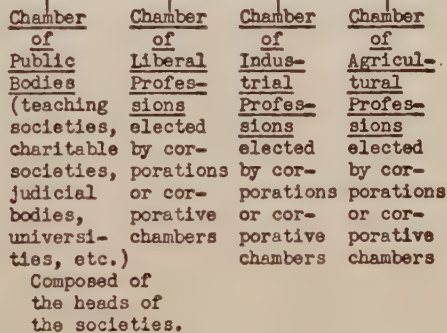
CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES
elected by mass of
taxpaying families;
some appointed by prince;
to consent to taxes;
to participate in
establishment of
budget (i.e., consent
or offer recommend-
ations);
to control use of
public funds.

CHAMBER OF ESTATES,
OR HIGH CHAMBER
elected by regional chambers
composing regional chambers
of estates; some members ap-
pointed by prince (function-
aries, nobles, etc.)
to deliberate on laws pre-
pared by council of state
(i.e., accept or offer
recommendations).

THE TAXPAYING FAMILY

HEAD OF FAMILY
(father or his
widow has vote.)

REGIONAL OR PROVINCIAL CHAMBER OF ESTATES



cultural professions.⁷⁵ In the same article he also pointed out that the regional chambers were to elect national chambers which in turn would compose the chamber of estates.

On the question of a chamber of estates, La Tour du Pin likewise modified his plan of 1896. In 1900 he was against periodic meetings of such a body and endorsed its convocation only in a crisis.⁷⁶ In articles published in 1905 and 1906 in *Action française* and reproduced in *Jalons de route*, he decided that he did not wish such a chamber at all.

A single chamber for all the professions would be a tower of Babel when their representatives wanted to come to agreement and would degenerate immediately into a closed field where no common interest would appear and where particular interests would be in perpetual conflict.⁷⁷

In describing the relations between the state and individual corporative organizations, La Tour maintained that the state should give legal status to such organizations once they were formed, and should sanction their regulations provided they were not contrary to the general interest.⁷⁸ The state would thus be the great arbiter, the defender of the general welfare, the guardian of rights.⁷⁹

La Tour du Pin desired an organic, not a mechanized, state.⁸⁰ He was constantly attracted, like so many corporatists before and after him, by the idea of states within the state, or in other words, the existence of corporative and other organizations such as the commune and the province, which would tend to limit the sovereignty of the central authority and con-

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 475-476.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 486.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 393.

⁷⁸ *Jalons*, p. 144.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 242.

sequently prevent centralization.⁸¹ He persistently advocated decentralization, often quoting from the Comte de Chambord's letter on the subject.⁸²

La Tour du Pin's system of government would, in his opinion, prevent Caesarism, which he classed as non-French and especially abhorrent.⁸³ It is not reading too much into his thought to observe that he would be critical of the totalitarian regimes of Fascist Italy or Nazi Germany.

LA TOUR'S PLACE IN FRENCH CORPORATISM

The importance of the doctrines of La Tour du Pin in the history of French corporative ideas should not be underestimated. Twentieth century French corporatism owes much to him. Among those who called themselves his disciples were: Charles Maurras who referred to La Tour as "my direct master, master, I repeat it, of our social politics, master in the same degree in general and pure politics;"⁸⁴ Firmin Bacconier, economic expert of the *Action Française* and a leading modern exponent of corporatism; the Comte de Paris, present pretender to the French throne, who highly praised La Tour in his preface to Roger Sémichon's book on the Marquis; Robert Vallery-Radot who declared in 1934 that if the right had followed La Tour fifty years before, the C.G.T. (General Confederation of Labor) would be a chamber of trades;⁸⁵ Pierre Chaboche writing in the *Revue hebdomadaire* in 1928;⁸⁶ Pierre Andreu, in an article in *Esprit* of June 1, 1934—these

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 266, 430.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 463, 465, and *passim*.

⁸⁴ *Action française*, April 15, 1934.

⁸⁵ *Revue hebdomadaire*, April 21, 1934

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, October, 1928. Chaboche advocated a corporative regime. La Tour du Pin, he asserted, reacted against the false dogmas of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and strove to protect the family and the workshop from disorganization by means of the corporative system.

are only a few of his direct followers. A *Cercle La Tour du Pin* was founded in Paris by Roger Sémichon and continued after the latter's death by Robert Guillerman. Headquarters were established at 10 Rue de Havre and lectures and courses on La Tour's doctrine were given.

Among those who also came under the influence of La Tour du Pin's ideas, but who were not his direct disciples, were Georges Valois, who combined the doctrines of La Tour and Sorel;⁸⁷ Colonel de la Rocque, one-time leader of the *Croix de Feu*; Jacques Doriot, Communist who turned Fascist; and Brethe de la Gressaye, Professor of Law. The left also felt La Tour's influence. According to Robert Vallery-Radot, Millerand when still a socialist and occupied with labor legislation, admitted that he was impressed by the theories of La Tour du Pin and saw in them "ideas of the future".⁸⁸ Déat and the Neo-Socialist school seemed to entertain notions similar to those of the Marquis.

The regime of Henri Pétain, which attempted to establish a corporative system, acknowledged the importance of La Tour du Pin. In 1941 the *Revue universelle*, published under the watchful eye of the Vichy government, reproduced the correspondence of La Tour du Pin and Louis Milcent. In their preface to this series of letters, the editors of the *Revue* thus characterized the correspondence as well as the Marquis himself:

A life consecrated to an idea and to a work, that is the meaning of this correspondence By his essential ideas, and by the struggle he undertook against the heritage of '89—individualism, freemasonry, liberalism—by his will to bring about a professional representation, one can say that La Tour du Pin merits the title of precursor of the National Revolution.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ G. Jaspar, "Un Maestro del corporativismo cristiano, René de la Tour du Pin", *Rivista internazionale de scienza sociale* (January, 1928).

⁸⁸ *Revue hebdomadaire*, April 21, 1934.

⁸⁹ *Revue universelle*, March 25, 1941, p. 330.