

CORPORATISM AND RELATED SCHOOLS, 1870-1918

WHILE the Social Catholics under the leadership of La Tour du Pin and Albert de Mun were formulating and propagating a corporative doctrine, other contributions were being made to the development of corporatism in France. For the most part, these contributions came from various schools of social and political thought. There were, it is true, certain isolated corporatists who were unaffiliated with any particular group, but their number was small and their influence limited.

MAZAROTZ

The Parisian furniture manufacturer, Jean Paul Mazarotz, who wrote chiefly in the eighteen-seventies, was an example of an individual corporatist.¹ As measured by direct evidence, the effect of his doctrines and plans upon corporative theory was not very great. La Tour du Pin made disparaging mention of them in passing. Occasionally, his name appeared in the works of corporatists of the era after World War I. Moreover, Mazarotz' works were replete with anti-clerical tirades,² Masonic and Hindu terminology, and digressions on reincarnation and spiritualism.³ Nevertheless, there is a marked parallel between

1 Mazarotz' corporative ideas were expressed mainly in the trilogy, *La Revanche de la France par le travail, les besoins et les intérêts organisés*: Vol. I, *Histoire des corporations d'art et de métiers* (2^{me} ed.; Paris: Germer Baillièrre, 1878). Vol. II, *Les Chaines de l'esclavage moderne. Guide pour les élections générales suivi de la liberté du prochain* (Paris: Imprimerie et Librairie Centrale des Chemins de Fer, 1876); Vol. III, *Les Cabales et conspirations de la politique et des politiciens laïques et religieux organisées contre les patrons et les ouvriers* (2^{me} ed.; Paris: privately printed, no date).

2 He encouraged Gambetta's anti-clericalism, demanded that the state religious budget be distributed among the professions for mutual aid funds, and urged that priests become lay teachers. *Ibid.*; III, 405-406, 526-536.

3 He believed in the concept of trinity existing throughout the world. The Father was fire, the Mother water, the Son the fruitful element. In another

Mazaroz' ideas on production and those of Georges Valois, and between the non-political aspects of his corporative scheme and those of earlier theorists like Buret, and later ones like the royalist Bacconnier.

In the opinion of Mazaroz, two contrary forces were at work in the world—productive force and brute force. The latter emphasized class differences and brought about revolution and civil war. Its law was Roman law, its philosophy that of individualism, the Declaration of the Rights of Man, physiocracy, and positivism. It had provided France with a governing corporation or clique which was interested in its own self-advancement and not in the welfare of the people. Economically, it replaced professional organization with laissez-faire and thus brought about an improvident proletariat, multiple bankruptcies, speculation, law suits, business dishonesty, and class struggle. Morally, it caused the disintegration of the family, and increase in juvenile delinquency, suicide, and indigence, and a decline in the physical health and vigor of the mass of French people.⁴

Productive force, on the other hand, followed the laws of nature "which have mutuality for base, solidarity for result, and reciprocity as distributive justice."⁵ To these, wrote Mazaroz, a fourth characteristic could be added—order. "Productive force has on its flag conciliation and mutual protection of all interests."⁶ It sought union, not conflict. Its law was the law of Christ, of the Gallo-Celts. It rejected the "serpent" individualism and the Declaration of the Rights of Man. True liberty consisted of collective liberties. Absolute equality could

passage, he explained that the Father was labor, the Son capital, and the Holy Ghost the family. Still elsewhere, he termed Jehovah the symbol of the eternal law of production and the Son of Man organized interests. *Ibid.*, III, 196-211; II, 417; I, 441, 473. On reincarnation and spiritualism, see: III, 11, 48, 259, 261-263, and *passim*.

⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 9-15, 73; II, 262-269, 286, 292-293.

⁵ *Ibid.*, III, 245.

⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 13.

not exist and should be replaced by a concept of hierarchy. Fraternity was meaningless if not practiced within collectivities. Productive force, through a peaceful revolution, would overthrow the selfish governing corporation of France, which paid no taxes and contributed nothing creative, and it would replace this clique by professional interests themselves, the producers who supported the country. These would be the rightful and best rulers of France.⁷ Mazaroz took the formula of the Revolutionary political philosopher, Sièyes, and changed it to read:

What is the political profession which pays no taxes? Reply: Everything. What should it be? Reply: Nothing. What are the general professions which in France pay taxes? Reply: Nothing. What should they be? Reply: Everything.⁸

Economically, the reign of productive force would bring about professional organization and economic federalism. Workers would find security, while speculation, dishonesty, and class warfare would cease. French family life, morals, and health would steadily improve.

Like so many corporatists before and after him, Mazaroz praised the guilds of the Old Regime, but recognized their inadequacies. He objected to their closed character and to some of their exorbitant pretensions, and hence advocated a reformed and modernized guild system capable of meeting nineteenth century needs and restoring the reign of productive force. Employers and the wealthy should take the initiative in establishing such a system not on the basis of worker subordination to employer patronage, as Le Play advocated, but on the basis of true reciprocity and mutuality.⁹

According to Mazaroz' corporative plan,¹⁰ ten large profes-

⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 70-74; II, 84, 107 ff., 120-121 ff.; III, 189.

⁸ *Ibid.*, II, 144.

⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 432-436; II, 12-21, 41 ff., 68, 243-247; III, 71.

¹⁰ The following summary of Mazaroz' system was condensed from: *ibid.*, I, 478-485; II, 226-229, 412; III, 351-352, 390-393, 404, 416.

sional groups would be organized under the divisions of arts, industry, commerce, science, and property, and then reapportioned into one hundred corporations. Each corporation would elect a local chamber composed of an equal number of delegates of employers on the one hand, and of representatives of workers, foremen, and clerks on the other. The local corporative chamber would in turn send its president to the departmental chamber of the corporation and the departmental chambers would be federated to form the national municipality or syndicate at the top of the whole corporative pyramid.

The functions of the corporative chambers would include establishment of prices and wages, settlement of employer-employee disputes, and administration of social insurance and technical schools. However, Mazaroz proceeded to endow the local and departmental chambers and the national municipality with broad political functions. In fact, he proposed that the corporations become the state—local corporative chambers administering city governments, departmental chambers governing the department, and the national municipality serving as the national legislature and electing the chief of state.

In thus transforming the state, Mazaroz diverged from the corporatism of the Social Catholics and twentieth century theorists. However, his scheme was in line with the Saint-Simon tradition of government by industrialists and technicians and showed some similarity to the syndicalism of Georges Sorel. The latter, while eliminating the state as such, conferred upon syndicates whatever governmental authority was still necessary.

SYNDICALISM—SOREL AND PAUL-BONCOUR

The syndicalist school as represented by the exponent of its revolutionary orthodoxy, Georges Sorel, and by the leaders of its moderate faction, Paul-Boncour and others, exerted an important influence on French corporatism. Syndicalist doctrine was affected by and in turn stimulated the development of trade unions. From the full legalization of unions in 1884 to

the outbreak of the first World War their growth in France was rapid. In 1895 labor unions joined to organize the *Confédération Générale du Travail* and presented a strong front against the growing unity of employers who formed the *Confédération Générale de la Production Française* in 1919.¹¹

At first glance Sorel's syndicalist theories would appear to be the antithesis of corporatism. In *Reflections on Violence* (1906), he adopted a hostile attitude toward the guilds of the Old Regime which he condemned as not promoting any kind of improvement, or invention in technical matters. He envisaged the syndicate as a class organization composed only of manual workers. Employers, intellectuals, even those engaged in commerce would be excluded. Such a narrow concept was contrary to the corporatist doctrine of a guild composed of all the members of a profession or trade—whether employers, workers, intellectuals, or commercial agents. He looked upon the labor union as an instrument of class struggle, and he preached violence in the form of a general strike as the most effective means of class warfare.¹² Now the general strike

11 By 1890 organizations of employers had a membership of 93,411 which rose to 205,463 in 1903. In the latter year there were 3,634 labor unions containing 643,757 members. The number of mixed unions containing employers and employees was small, reaching only 156 in 1903, with a membership of 33,973. Etienne Martin-Saint-Léon, *Histoire des corporations de métiers* (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1922), pp. 644-800, 823; Gaëtan Pirou, *Les Doctrines économiques en France depuis 1870* (Paris, Armand Colin, 1925), p. 72; Semaines Sociales de France, *Compte Rendu* 1940, pp. 22-31.

In 1902 the *Confédération Générale du Travail* absorbed the *Fédération des Bourses* which had been founded in 1892, by Ferdinand Pelloutier. In 1922 the Marxist branch of the C.G.T. seceded and formed the *Confédération Générale du Travail Unifié* which became affiliated with the Third International of Moscow. Catholic trade unions organized the *Confédération Nationale des Travailleurs Chrétiens* in 1919. In 1936 the name of the *Confédération Générale de la Production Française* was changed to that of *Confédération Générale du Patronat Français*. Shepard B. Clough, *France, A History of National Economics, 1789-1939* (New York: Scribner's, 1939), pp. 293-296, 469-470; Paul Marabuto, *Les Partis politiques et les mouvements sociaux sous le 4^{ème} République* (Paris: Sirey, 1948), *passim*.

12 Georges Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, translated by T. E. Hulme (New York: Peter Smith, 1941—reprint of 1915 ed.), *passim*.

whether as an actuality or as a myth (and Sorel seemed to consider the dream, desire, or goal of a general strike as more beneficial to worker class consciousness and energy than the strike itself), was anathema to the core of corporatist doctrine. The very kernel of corporatism was the doctrine of social peace, of solidarity between classes. Sorel's concept of workers' control of industry was also counter to corporatist doctrine, which upheld private enterprise and employer management of industry.

Nevertheless, certain aspects of Sorel's thought found a place in corporatism. His emphasis upon economic federalism, decentralization of administration, and hierarchy, and his condemnation of egalitarianism, economic liberalism, and parliamentarianism gave comfort to many corporatists.¹³ Even his championship of labor unions reacted upon corporative thought, since corporatism sought not to destroy but to build upon and to complete syndicates. Moreover, during his later traditionalist period (1910-1917),¹⁴ his narrow syndicalism for workers seemed to be transferred to a broader basis more closely approaching the corporative concept. M. Jean Variot, cofounder with Sorel of the review, *L'Indépendance*, declared that:

13 *Ibid.*, *passim*; Georges Sorel, *Introduction à l'économie moderne* (Paris: Jacques, 1903), pp. 63 ff., 163, 173, 238, 243-255. In this latter work, Sorel developed his views on economic federalism. He appeared to appropriate Proudhon's ideas on mutual aid societies and popular credit funds. Like Proudhon, he advocated the establishment of warehouses empowered to issue warrants for goods deposited.

For his early anti-egalitarian and anti-parliamentarian doctrines see: Georges Sorel, *Le Procès de Socrate* (Paris: Alcan, 1889), pp. 44, 158, 184, 192, 386, and *passim*.

14 Sorel's economic and political beliefs underwent a remarkably circuitous evolution, in which syndicalism was only one phase. From 1889 to 1893 he was a traditionalist, from 1901 to 1910 a syndicalist, from 1910 to 1917 a traditionalist again, and from 1917 to his death in 1922 a supporter of the Russian Revolution. Frédéric D. Cheydeur, *Essai sur l'évolution des doctrines de M. Georges Sorel*. Thèse (Grenoble: Imprimerie Saint Bruno, 1914), pp. 30-35.

Sorel in 1911 conceived a syndicalism which would not be exclusively concerned with workers and which would put the working class in its true place "in relation to the other classes who should also work and develop themselves."¹⁵

The traditionalist phase of Sorel's development furnishes evidence of his kinship with corporatism. Then, like most corporatists, he supported the family, Christian morality, and nationalism and opposed women's rights, state intervention in the industrial domain, and pacifism.¹⁶ It was during the 1910-1917 traditionalist period that Sorel came into contact with the royalist *Action Française*, which accepted corporatism. His disciple, the corporatist Georges Valois, tried to bring Sorel into the movement, but Sorel disliked the classicism, positivism, and intellectualism of Charles Maurras, its chief theorist. For Sorel, economics came first, while the motto of Maurras was "politics first."¹⁷ While Sorel's flirtation with the *Action Française* was of short duration, he encouraged its stress on an élite and its use of violence.

A study of the influence of Sorel upon Mussolini and the Italian corporative system is not within the scope of this work. Yet mention should be made of the fact that Mussolini was a disciple of Sorel. When Mussolini was asked whose influence was most decisive upon him, that of Nietzsche, Jaurès, or Sorel, he replied :

That of Sorel. For myself the essential was action. But I repeat, it is to Sorel that I owe the most. He is the master of

¹⁵ *Eclair*, September 11, 1942, cited in Gaëtan Pirou, *Georges Sorel, 1842-1922* (Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1927), p. 55, note 1.

¹⁶ Although a Dreyfusard during his Marxist and syndicalist periods, with his return to traditionalism in 1910, Sorel became anti-semitic, declaring that "the French should defend their state, their customs, and their ideas against the Jewish invaders." *L'Indépendance*, 1^{er} mai—1^{er} juin, 1912. Sorel's anti-semitic statements were very similar to those of the corporatist, La Tour du Pin.

¹⁷ Pirou, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-47; Perrin, Pierre-Louis-Marie-Joseph, *Les Idées Sociales de Georges Sorel*. Thèse. (Alger: Imprimerie P. Angélics, 1925), *op. cit.*, pp. 110, 174.

syndicalism, who by his rude theories on revolutionary tactics, has contributed the most to the discipline, the energy, and the power of the fascist legions.¹⁸

Sorel has always been more widely read in Italy than in France. He admired Mussolini, and many of his articles were written in Italian and published in Italian journals. However, most French corporatists of the twentieth century interbellum period regarded Italian corporatism as too *étatiste*. Also, Sorel's syndicalism was fundamentally different from Mussolini's corporatism. Sorel emphasized class struggle and opposed statism, while the Italian system imposed class peace and state control.

Joseph Paul-Boncour's moderate syndicalism had an equal, if not greater, effect than Sorel's revolutionary syndicalism upon corporative doctrine. Interbellum corporatists frequently quoted his works and expressed agreement with his theories. Certainly his thought more nearly approached corporatism than that of Sorel.

Unlike Sorel, Paul-Boncour did not view syndicates as exclusively class organizations and instruments of class conflict. He denied Sorel's notion of a homogeneous working class, maintaining that the problems of workers varied according to the trade or profession. In his doctoral thesis, *Economic Federalism* (1900), he studiously avoided the term "syndicate" substituting for it "professional grouping." This he defined as an organization comprising "all or a part of the members of the profession . . . united in a goal of general professional interest,"¹⁹ and expressing a "veritable solidarity."²⁰ The term

18 Quoted in Pirou, *op. cit.*, p. 53. Sorel admired Mussolini and about 1914, declared of the young Italian: "This young man will be spoken about in the world." Cited in Perrin, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

19 Joseph Paul-Boncour, *Le Fédéralisme économique, étude sur les rapports de l'individu et des groupements professionnels. Préface de M. Waldeck-Rousseau* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1900), p. 3. This book was devoted primarily to a discussion of the development of professional groupings of workers, although Paul-Boncour intended to write about associations of consumers and employers in succeeding works.

20 *Ibid.*, p. 8.

applied also to consumer and employer associations and even to general organizations comprising the whole profession. Occasionally, it seemed to be a synonym for corporation.²¹ Thus it was a much broader term than that of trade union and more in harmony with the corporative concept.

These "professional groupings," Paul-Boncour believed, should be endowed with many of the powers of the corporations of the Old Regime which in the past "represented the interests of all and united in compulsory organization the entrepreneur, worker, and consumer."²² Organized on a local, regional, and national basis for each trade, they would bring about the economic decentralization of France.²³ Such economic federalism, or "*synarchie*," as Paul-Boncour named it, was already in the process of being established. Whenever an association included the majority of workers in a specific trade, it tried to make its rules apply to the entire trade, and exerted pressure on the government to this end. Since, in Paul-Boncour's view, the government was incompetent in the administration of the details of economic life, it should encourage this trend and relinquish economic sovereignty to "professional groupings." It should only intervene in the activity of these "groupings" when they interfered with national defense or public welfare or when they could not settle conflicts between themselves.²⁴ Paul-Boncour's whole stand on decentralization was identical with that of the Social Catholics, royalists, and most corporatists.

On the question of participation of "professional groupings" in the government, Paul-Boncour, unlike Mazaroz, remained rather vague. In the introduction to *Economic Federalism* he merely remarked that the "professional grouping" might be

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 375-376, footnote 1.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 162.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 351.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 341-346, 354, 357-358, 360, 364.

the germ and embryo of a grouping destined to possess the same attributes as political groupings and which sociologists have already imagined as possessing in the future jurisdiction over territorial divisions, going beyond their limits, perhaps their frontiers, and breaking the old social framework by a decentralization up to then unknown.²⁵

Paul-Boncour's writings and political activities in the years subsequent to the publication of his doctoral thesis showed the evolution of his thought in the direction of corporatism. In a debate with Charles Maurras in 1903, published as *The Republic and Decentralization*,²⁶ and in the preface to selections from *Lamennais* published in 1928,²⁷ he continued to defend economic federalism. As prime minister in 1933 he attempted to put some of his ideas into effect by proposing a strengthen-

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

²⁶ In this debate, Paul-Boncour declared: "To be a federalist is to desire that social groupings, both regional and corporative, become liberated from the control of the state and achieve their full autonomy." Quoted in Odette de Puiffe de Magondeaux, *Les Ententes industrielles et les corporations en France* (Paris: Librairie générale de droit et de jurisprudence, 1937), p. 62. See also the memoirs of Paul-Boncour, *Entre deux guerres* (Paris: 1946), I, 146-147.

²⁷ In this work, Paul-Boncour paid his respects to Saint-Simon, Fourier, and Proudhon. To Saint-Simon he attributed fruitful ideas on political and economic organization and hierarchy; to Fourier the instigation of the cooperative movement, to Proudhon the encouragement of mutualism, hierarchy in the workshop, and order and discipline in production. He particularly admired the "solid good sense and realism of the latter." Joseph Paul-Boncour, *Lamennais* (Paris: 1925), p. 5. Paul-Boncour continued to urge in this book as he had done in 1900, the delimitation of the state's powers by professional groupings: "The strong state, following the Jacobin conception cannot remain so, if it does not incorporate in its mechanism [thus] delimiting its powers and theirs, groupings, born on the ruins of those destroyed by the Revolution, because they are the permanent and necessary frameworks of social activity. . . ."

I mean syndicates, a democratic and rejuvenated form of the old professional bond; consumers' cooperatives, a new and fruitful idea, and groupings of producers which, controlled and coordinated by the state, should re-establish between production and needs, the equilibrium destroyed by the anarchy of the present regime." *Ibid.*, p. 2.

ing of the National Economic Council which had been created in 1925. Objecting to the fact that this council had remained purely consultative and had represented only scattered organizations, he proposed to transform it into an organ having power to regulate matters and conflicts in which the political state should not intervene, and representing organized professions.²⁸ Although the measure was rejected and his ministry collapsed, his suggestions were partly carried out in the legislation of 1936. Paul-Boncour's interest in corporatism did not die. In his memoirs, *Between Two Wars*, published after the liberation of France in 1946, he paid homage to the ideas of Marcel Déat and the Neo-Socialist Party, only recommending that their trilogy "Order, Authority, Nation" be completed by the word democracy.²⁹ He praised the economic and social measures of the Vichy government, although condemning its undemocratic and dictatorial features. Certain of the principles of the Pétain regime—a strong executive, regionalism, and organized professions—he hoped to see carried out in a democratic manner by the Fourth Republic.³⁰

SOLIDARISM AND DURKHEIM

Solidarist principles were an important ingredient of corporatism although the exact debt of corporative doctrine to the solidarist school is difficult to measure. Twentieth century corporatists praised certain principles of the solidarists, in particular those of Emile Durkheim who is often associated with the group.

The solidarist school had its origins early in the nineteenth century. Pierre Leroux, a follower of Saint-Simon, and a few of the disciples of Fourier, as well as the economist Bastiat, had comprehended something of the value of the doctrine of

²⁸ Paul-Boncour, *Entre deux guerres*, II, 280-282, 322.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 322. He considered Déat as a "fine brain, possessing a remarkable faculty of assimilation of economic questions and an extreme richness of expression . . .", *loc. cit.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*, III, 326, 304-327.

solidarity and of the appropriateness of the term. Auguste Comte had realized its possibilities in his *Discours sur l'esprit positif*.³¹ In the last quarter of the nineteenth century the idea of solidarity was enlarged and elevated into a philosophy. Under the leadership of Léon Bourgeois, French politician and writer, one branch of solidarists developed a legal interpretation of *solidarisme* and encouraged the social legislation of the Radical Socialist Party with which they were associated.³² Other solidarists under the economist, Charles Gide, strove for solidarity through advancing the cause of consumer cooperatives. Still another branch of the school sought solidarity through mutual associations. In common with corporatists they proposed the decentralization of workmen's pension schemes and other forms of state aid, which they felt should be under the jurisdiction of mutual societies.

The various groups of solidarists agreed that a fundamental solidarity existed between all members of the human race and that political, social, and economic systems should acknowledge and encourage this human solidarity. They strove to substitute the principle of "each for all" for that of "each for himself."³³ Such beliefs and aims were approved by corporatists, though they disagreed with certain solidarist methods for their realization. They regarded Bourgeois' program as leading toward statism, and claimed that mutual associations were inferior to corporations.

Solidarisme as a sociological-psychological basis for corporatism was set forth by the noted sociologist, Emile Durkheim (1858-1925). A native of Alsace, Durkheim was for many years Professor of Sociology and Education at the University of Paris. In fact, he was the first to be officially recognized as a teacher of sociology in France and for a number of years he

31 Charles Gide and Charles Rist, *A History of Economic Doctrines from the Time of the Physiocrats to the Present Day*, translated by R. Richards (New York: D. C. Heath and Co., 1915), p. 589.

32 *Ibid.*, pp. 593-607.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 614.

lectured at the Sorbonne.³⁴ His works, as might be expected, showed the influence of Comte, although his own contributions to sociology were of great significance. Durkheim is especially remembered as one of the leading protagonists of the idea of culture and as an outstanding investigator of the cultural group. In his *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, for example, he studied religious conceptions as symbols of the values of a culture.

The corporative ideas of Durkheim were but a small part of his whole thought and work, but twentieth century French corporatists eagerly seized upon them. It gave prestige to their program to count Durkheim as one of themselves. In only two out of his many works, *Le Suicide*, and *De la division du travail social*, did Durkheim present at length his solidarist arguments for corporatism and more briefly his ideas on the nature of a corporative regime.

Durkheim was particularly interested in the solidarity created by "collective consciousness," the most highly developed form of psychic life to his way of thinking. This "collective consciousness" or group mind had ideas of its own or "collective representations," existing outside the individual and possessing a coercive power over him in the nature of moral, legal, and ethical rules.³⁵ A feeling of solidarity with others, argued Durkheim, of participation in the "collective consciousness," of harmony in social and economic life was necessary for the individual if he were to retain mental health. The principle cause of what Durkheim termed "egotistical suicide" was neither physical infirmity nor disappointment in love, but rather a sense of social isolation.³⁶ Another type of

34 Roger Soltau, *French Political Thought in the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931), p. 481, footnote 1.

35 William Montgomery McGovern, *From Luther to Hitler, the History of Fascist-Nazi Political Philosophy* (Boston): Houghton Mifflin, 1941), pp. 425-426.

36 "Suicide varies in inverse proportion to the degree of integration of the social groups of which the individual is a part." Emile Durkheim, *Le Suicide* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1897), p. 223.

suicide which Durkheim labelled as "*suicide anomique*" resulted from conflicts and disorders in economic life. An economic environment characterized by a state of war and "truces imposed by violence" was contrary to solidarist creed, which sought to subordinate the physical law of the strongest to a higher moral law.³⁷

The solidarity so essential for the elimination of feelings of isolation and of economic anarchy could be most effectively encouraged by a corporative system which expressed the highest level of group consciousness. Composed of individuals who devoted themselves to the same work and who possessed interests which were "*solidaires*,"³⁸ the corporation would constitute a greater force for solidarity than any other social group. Other social groups could effect only an imperfect integration of the individual. The state's action upon individuals was intermittent,³⁹ that of modern religion was incomplete,⁴⁰ and that of the family was present during only a small part of life.⁴¹

The corporation thus has all that is necessary to surround the individual, to draw him out of his state of moral isolation, and, granted the present insufficiency of other groups, it is the only one able to fulfill this indispensable function.⁴²

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 440; Emile Durkheim, *De la division du travail social* (5th ed.; Paris: Félix Alcan, 1926), p. iii.

³⁸ *Le Suicide*, p. 435.

³⁹ Only in time of national or political crisis did the state become a director of conduct.

⁴⁰ Religion was unsatisfactory because it moderated the inclination to suicide only in proportion as it prevented man from thinking freely. Since the natural trend of religion was toward free thinking, it would be unfair, thought Durkheim, to return to outmoded orthodoxies.

⁴¹ "While formerly it maintained most of its members within its orbit from birth to death, and formed a compact, indivisible mass, endowed with a kind of perennity, today it has only an ephemeral duration. Hardly is it constituted than it disperses. . . . We can then say that during the major part of the time, the family is now reduced to a single conjugal couple and we know that it acts feebly on suicide." *Ibid.*, p. 433.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 440.

Harmony in economic life and industrial peace could be established and maintained solely by a corporative regime which would furnish "the system of rules which is at present lacking."⁴³ Syndicates tended to stimulate rather than to alleviate economic chaos. As private institutions they were "deprived of all regulatory power,"⁴⁴ and as class institutions they fed the fires of social war. Employer and employee syndicates resembled two autonomous states of unequal force and the contracts which they concluded were merely treaties representing the respective status of the military forces of the two signatory powers. Durkheim stood on the opposite pole from Sorel in his attitude toward syndicates. He concluded they were a menace unless integrated into a corporative system.

While he was critical of the syndicates of his day, Durkheim commended the guilds of the Old Regime and bewailed their abolition.

If from the origins of the city state to the apogee of the Empire, from the dawn of Christian societies to modern times, they [i.e., the corporations] have been necessary, it is because they satisfy durable and deep needs.⁴⁵

Like Mazaroz, Durkheim recognized guilds' shortcomings. They were too local in character, their rules too troublesome, and their masters too preoccupied with safeguarding their privileges. Yet these defects could be remedied and a corporative system more in tune with modern France could be erected.⁴⁶

Such a corporative system, insisted Durkheim, should be organized on a national basis better suited to the market, which

⁴³ *De la division du travail social*, p. vi.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. vii.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. xi.

⁴⁶ "It is not a question of whether the medieval institution exactly suits our contemporary society, but whether the needs which it answered are not eternal, although in order to satisfy them, it should be transformed according to circumstances." *Ibid.*, p. viii.

had extended its territory far beyond its municipal boundaries of medieval times.

This unitary organization for a whole country, moreover, in no way excludes the formation of secondary organs comprising similar workers of the same region or locality . . . Besides, between the divers corporations of the same locality or region, there will necessarily be special relations of solidarity which will demand at all times an appropriate organization.⁴⁷

The corporation should consist "of all the agents of the same industry united and organized in the same body."⁴⁸ These "agents" would be divided into a syndicate of employers and another of employees for the purpose of electing representatives to the corporative assembly, the ruling body of the corporation.

The functions of the corporation and of the corporative assembly would include in the economic sphere regulation of production and remuneration, and settlement of conflicts between different branches of the same profession. Among the important social functions would be the administration of insurance, assistance, and retirement funds, and of technical schools. Recreational activities such as concerts and plays could be fostered by the corporation.⁴⁹ Like La Tour du Pin, Durkheim believed that these economic and social powers of the corporation would create a feeling of solidarity between different classes and would help to bring about distributive justice.

In common with most corporatists before and after him, Durkheim abhorred *étatisme*. He characterized the state as

a heavy machine which is made only for general and simple tasks. Its action, always uniform, cannot be bent and adjusted to the infinite diversity of particular circumstances. Consequently, it is necessarily oppressive and leveling.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. xxviii-xxix, xxxiii, footnote.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. vi.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. xxxi.

⁵⁰ *Le Suicide*, p. 436.

In even more vehement terms, he declared that:

a society composed of an infinite dust of unorganized individuals, which a hypertrophied state strives to encompass and to restrain, constitutes a veritable sociological monstrosity. For collective activity is always too complex to be expressed by the sole and unique organ of the state.⁵¹

Durkheim, like Paul-Boncour, found the only antidote for the leviathan state in decentralization through professional organizations.⁵² He did not exclude territorial decentralization but considered it secondary in importance.⁵³

In order to effect this decentralization, the state should recognize the corporation as a semi-autonomous public body and endow it with the function of diversifying the general principles of industrial legislation which it (the state) laid down.⁵⁴ However, corporations should not be allowed to become states within the state, but should be subordinated to the general action of the state which would "oppose to the particularism of each corporation the sentiment of general utility and the necessities of organic equilibrium."⁵⁵ Nevertheless, state action should not degenerate into a narrow interventionism.

Should the corporations be restricted to economic and social matters, or should they also participate in political life? Durkheim, although in less specific terms, definitely favored the latter. "Is it not legitimate," he demanded,

to think that the corporation should also become the elementary division of the state, the fundamental political unit? Society, instead of remaining what it has today become, an

⁵¹ *De la division du travail social*, p. xxxiii.

⁵² *De la division du travail social*, p. xxxiii. "A nation can only maintain itself if between the state and individuals is interposed a whole series of secondary groups." See also: *Le Suicide*, p. 436.

⁵³ *Le Suicide*, p. 449.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 436; *De la division du travail social*, p. xxviii.

⁵⁵ *Le Suicide*, p. 440.

aggregate of distinct juxtaposed electoral districts, would become a vast system of national corporations. Demands are heard from divers quarters that the electoral colleges be formed by professions and not by territorial circumscriptions, and it is certain that in this way, political assemblies would express more exactly the diversity of social interests and their relations; they would be a more faithful resumé of social life in its ensemble.⁵⁶

In one respect, however, Durkheim tended to wander from the corporative fold. While he considered corporatism as the prime condition of other reforms, he did suggest that after the organization of the corporative system, further reforms should take place, particularly the abolition of inheritance of wealth. Then the corporation would own and transmit property, since it possessed a perpetuity equal at least to that of the family.⁵⁷ Did this proposal mean the abolition of private property to a large extent? If Durkheim implied this conclusion, then his program could be classed as guild socialist in nature, and would be contrary to that of most corporatists who desired the preservation of private ownership and enterprise. Durkheim, however, did not stress the abolition of inheritance, mentioning it only in passing, and placed his emphasis upon corporatism. Therefore, it does not seem amiss to consider him among the number of French corporative theorists. Certainly the latter have regarded him as one of themselves.

Durkheim's influence on French corporatists of the period between the two World Wars was significant and his name was often mentioned in their works. His arguments for corporatism based upon psycho-sociological *solidarisme* added grist to their mill and lent an air of scientific scholarship to the cause for which they labored.

⁵⁶ *De la division du travail social*, p. xxxi.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. xxxiv-xxxvi.

PLURALISM AND DUGUIT

As in the case of solidarism, it is difficult to ascertain to what extent corporatists were influenced by pluralists or arrived at pluralist nations independently. Although interbellum corporatists quoted pluralist authors, they may also have derived pluralist concepts from medieval political theory and other sources. In any event, pluralism became an important element in French corporative thought.

The Pluralist school flourished in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries under the leadership of Maurice Hauriou, Dean of the Faculty of Law of the University of Toulouse, and Léon Duguit, Dean of the Faculty of Law of the University of Bordeaux. While these men did not originate any startlingly new ideas, they systematized various beliefs long current in French political thought. Pluralists taught that the state was merely the chief among several groups or institutions—professional associations, regions, etc.—acting as public service corporations. They divested the state of its personality, of its existence as an independent force external to society. Rather, the state was regarded as no more than an agency, an instrument through which the necessary laws were made and enforced, an authority existing *de facto* but not *de jure*.⁵⁸ This, therefore, was a direct attack upon the “Jacobin” and “totalitarian” concept of the state with its own will, consciousness, needs, and aspirations. Law was not the will of the state but the sanction of custom, of the usages of social institutions and groups. This concept of the importance of secondary autonomous institutions and the function of custom had been dear to the hearts of many nineteenth century corporatists, including La Tour du Pin, and was a legacy which twentieth century French corporatism did not hesitate to accept. It was to be found in the denunciation of *étatisme* expressed even by French Fascists like De la Rocque and in the declarations of the Pétain regime. However, these corporatists for the most part did not

⁵⁸ Soltau, *op. cit.*, pp. 474-475.

go so far as to deny to the state a separate personality. The state was for them an organic being in which secondary institutions had their essential place.

Of the different pluralist writings, those of Léon Duguit had perhaps the most significance for corporatism. Duguit had known Durkheim and according to the corporatist, Gaëtan Pirou, had been profoundly influenced by this "vigorous personality."⁵⁹ He accepted several of Durkheim's solidarist concepts,⁶⁰ particularly the idea that people became more human as they participated in social groups and experienced a feeling of solidarity.⁶¹ While Durkheim considered the corporation as the most important of these social groups, Duguit singled out the syndicate.

In Duguit's view, syndicates were instruments for solidarity both between individuals and between classes. They were not weapons to be used for class warfare but agents of social peace. He even hinted that different class syndicates might be integrated into a larger body. "There is," he stated,

a great movement of social integration which is being extended to all classes [It] is an effort of organization of the

⁵⁹ Gaëtan Pirou, "Léon Duguit et l'économie politique," *Revue d'économie politique*, XLVII (1933), 57.

⁶⁰ In his *Treatise on Constitutional Law*, Duguit testified that he had read Durkheim's book *On the Division of Social Labor* and was favorably impressed by the conception of solidarity to be found in it. Léon Duguit, *Traité de droit constitutionnel* (Paris: Boccard, 1911), I, 14 ff. Also 2nd ed., 1921, I, 22.

⁶¹ "The great error of the French Revolution inspired by Rousseau, was to wish to destroy and forbid all secondary groupings. I will say that the individual is more human, the more he is socialized. I do not say with Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Kant [sic], and Hegel [sic], that man is freer as the state to which he is submitted is more omnipotent. I mean only that individual activity is more intense as man takes part in a greater number of social groups. Since man is by nature a social being, capable of functioning only within a group, his activity will evidently be greater and more fruitful in proportion as he belongs to a greater number of groups." Duguit, *op. cit.*, 2nd ed., 1921, I, 509. Most of the sentiments in the second and third editions are repetitions of those expressed in the first edition of 1911.

different social elements and especially an effort toward the organization of production. Workers' syndicates, employers' syndicates, associations of different categories of government employees, federations of these different groupings, federations of intellectual workers, agricultural associations, associations of small merchants and of small industrialists, syndicates of capitalists—all these groupings are being formed at present perhaps in a disordered manner, but all tend consciously or unconsciously to the same end, an end of social integration.⁶²

Syndicates, argued Duguit, could also help transform the all-powerful "Jacobin" state into a pluralist one. They could perform certain of the economic and social functions of the state, thus bringing about a degree of decentralization. As the state became less omnipotent, and social groups more significant, a greater degree of pluralism would result.⁶³

Duguit firmly believed that syndicates should have a voice in the state itself. Rejecting "the sovereignty of the numerical majority of individuals" as "contrary to social truth,"⁶⁴ he constantly pleaded for professional representation.⁶⁵ In 1908, for example, he wrote that there should be organized

⁶² *Ibid.*, 2nd. ed., I, 509-510.

⁶³ According to Duguit, syndicates would not destroy national unity but would reënforce it by giving it a more complex structure. *Ibid.*, 3rd ed., II, 10.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 511.

⁶⁵ Léon Duguit, "L'Élection des sénateurs," *Revue politique et parlementaire*, III (1895), 463; *L'État, les gouvernants et les agents* (Paris: 1903), pp. 329 ff.; *Droit social et droit individuel* (Paris: 1908), p. 217; *Libres entretiens*, 1910, No. 5; "La Représentation syndicale au parlement," *Revue politique et parlementaire*, July, 1911.

Duguit was only one of many to favor a professional political assembly. Charles Benoist revealed similar ideas in his *Crise de l'état moderne, l'organisation du travail*, Tome II, pp. v, vi, and *passim*. See also La Grosserie in *Revue politique et parlementaire*, III (1895), p. 253; Carrière, *La Représentation des intérêts et l'importance des éléments professionnels dans l'évolution et le gouvernement des peuples* (Paris: 1917). Representation of interests in the government was thus a popular notion.

beside a proportional representation of parties, a professional representation of interests, i.e., a representation of diverse social classes organized in syndicates and a federation of syndicates.⁶⁶

THE ACTION FRANÇAISE—MAURRAS AND VALOIS

The criticisms of Durkheim and Duguit leveled at government centralization and the electoral system were developed in more virulent fashion by the *Action Française*, a group which did not hesitate to call itself corporatist. Organized in 1899 and converted to royalism in 1901, it found a gifted exponent of its doctrines in Charles Maurras.

Unlike the Social Catholics, Maurras, while recognizing the social utility of Catholicism, was skeptical concerning its faith and eventually suffered condemnation by the Pope. In common with many corporatists, however, he inveighed against Jews and parliamentary instability and weakness. France could be saved from the dangers of individualism, egalitarianism, and socialism only by turning to the institutions of family, commune, province, professional organization, and monarchy.⁶⁷ Decentralization was impossible under a republic and could flourish only under the king as "president by birth of all the professions or local republics which compose the nation."⁶⁸ Under him corporations would take their rightful place.

As previously mentioned, Maurras came into contact with La Tour du Pin and adopted many of his ideas. In his *Enquiry on Monarchy*, Maurras called La Tour his "direct master,"⁶⁹ while La Tour approved the declaration of principles drawn up by Maurras under the title of *Dictator and King*.⁷⁰ La Tour

⁶⁶ Léon Duguit, *Droit social et droit individuel* (Paris: 1908), p. 127.

⁶⁷ William Curt Buthman, *The Rise of Integral Nationalism in France: With Special Reference to the Ideas and Activities of Charles Maurras* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), *passim*.

⁶⁸ Charles Maurras in *Action française*, March 24, 1908, p. 1.

⁶⁹ Charles Maurras, *Enquête sur la monarchie* (Paris: 1900), p. 7.

⁷⁰ Charles Maurras in *Action française*, April 14, 1934, p. 1.

contributed several articles to the *Action Française*. His approval of Maurras reached a high point in 1909 when he wrote the latter :

You hold high the flag on which you have inscribed not only the restoration of the throne, that is to say, the liberty of the state, but all the other public liberties which have disappeared since the proclamation of individual liberty; liberty of the Church, of the province, of the commune, of the profession, of the family. In this, you show a fuller conception of the public welfare than you would have if you had demanded separately these essentially *solidaire* benefits; and . . . you have broken with the absurd and supremely antisocial principle of the sovereignty of number I perceive in your work alone the path of salvation⁷¹

Nevertheless, all was not harmony between the Social Catholic corporatist and the theorist of the *Action Française*. La Tour disliked the violence employed by the *Action Française* and Maurras' paganism and emphasis upon politics.

Maurras also counted among his supporters Georges Valois, a disciple of Sorel. From 1907 to 1925 Valois was connected with the *Action Française*, serving as co-director of its publishing house, the *Nouvelle Librairie Nationale*, and founding the subsidiary organization known as the *Union des Corporations Françaises*.⁷² During the period 1907-1914, Valois' ideas could be classified under the heading monarchical syndicalism. In his work *Monarchy and the Working Class*, part of which appeared in 1902 and the remainder in 1907, Valois affirmed the existence of classes denied by the Revolution but claimed that class differences should not cause class struggle. Above the classes, sitting as a sovereign arbitrator, regulating their conflicts would be the king, the chief of production.⁷³ Valois' cor-

⁷¹ René de la Tour du Pin, *Letter to Charles Maurras*, January 21, 1909.

⁷² Buthman, *op. cit.*, *passim*; Georges Valois, *L'Etat syndical et la représentation corporative* (Paris: Librairie Valois, 1927), pp. ix-xxvii.

⁷³ Georges Valois, *La Monarchie et la classe ouvrière* (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1909), pp. 43, 50-51.

poratism did not fully ripen until after the first World War when his *Economie nouvelle* was published.

Differences soon appeared between Valois and Maurras, just as they had between La Tour du Pin and Maurras, but these were of a more serious nature and led to a complete rupture between the two in 1925. By then Valois had veered toward fascism and could no longer brook what he considered the reactionary attitude and intellectualism of Maurras. Valois wanted action and it seemed to him that Maurras, leader of the *Action Française*, was opposed to action. Valois himself explained the controversy in 1927 by stating that:

We (Valois) serve France—He [Maurras] serves the France of yesterday, and especially that of libraries—I serve the France of tomorrow, with automobiles, airplanes, and peasants working with machines. He is the theorist of a narrow, aggressive, exasperating, rational nationalism. I am the man who loves France without any reason than the fact of his birth, and who strives toward a higher formation.

Maurras is a museum guard, an archivist rat; I am an organizer of factories, a road builder, and constructor of a new world. According to the vocabulary of Marinetti, Maurras is a *passéiste*, and I am a futurist.⁷⁴

Although Maurras and the *Action Française* gave lip service to corporatism during the years preceding the first World War, their emphasis was largely on the political aspects of royalism. It was not until the era between the two World Wars that the *Action Française*, through the writings of its economic expert, Firmin Bacconnier, evolved a full-fledged corporative doctrine which drew heavily upon the works of La Tour du Pin.

RECAPITULATION

Corporatists who wrote in the years between the two World Wars could build upon the doctrines of various schools of thought prevalent in the period 1870-1918. Their indebtedness

⁷⁴ Valois, *L'Etat syndical et la représentation corporative*, p. xviii.

to syndicalists, solidarists, and pluralists cannot be measured by exact instruments. However, the interbellum theorists repeated numerous ideas expounded by these groups and revealed an acquaintance with the works of their members. Frequently, they bestowed lavish praise upon syndicalists like Paul-Boncour, solidarists like Durkheim, and pluralists like Duguit.

Syndicalists probably encouraged most interbellum corporatists to give syndicates a place in their corporative system. Solidarists strengthened their desire for harmony and reconciliation between classes. Pluralists confirmed their belief in the importance of secondary institutions as limitations upon the state.

By interbellum corporatist standards, there were few corporatists outside of the Social Catholic school in the period 1870-1918. Mazaroz was a lone corporatist whose influence was limited; Durkheim possessed corporative ideas; Maurras gave lip service to corporatism; Paul-Boncour approached corporatism but did not commit himself. And in the years prior to the first World War, even the Social Catholics laid decreased emphasis upon corporatism. Nevertheless, the current of corporatism, strengthened by contributions from both corporative and non-corporative theorists from 1870-1914, reached flood proportions in the post World War I period.