



His voice was like yeast fermenting to form Christian men, able to rebuild society
Emmanuel Mounier and "The Personalism"

I am like a calm force, willing not to conquer, but to persuade, not to attack, but to testify.

Emmanuel Mounier was born in Grenoble, France, on April 1st, 1905. During his youth, he militated in the Catholic Action and the conferences of Saint Vincent of Paul.

For three years he studied philosophy with Jacques Chevalier, his great lifelong teacher. In October 1927 he settled in Paris to continue his studies. He is one of the great promoters of PERSONALISM; he had a combative and original spirit.

Installed in Paris he got in touch with a group of young Christians and sought the collaboration of Jacques Maritain. In 1930 he collaborated with «Le Rossau d'Or», a publication directed by Maritain.

That same year he worked in a team with Georges Hoistd and Marcel Péguy; they wrote a work titled «The Thought of Charles Péguy». He was an admirer of Péguy for his authenticity and for the imperturbable harmony of the same life, between the man who thinks and the man who acts.

Mounier collaborated in 1932 with the Christian teachers' movement "Les Davidées", especially in his magazine. That organization was directed by Jean Guitton and Mlle. Silver. At that time Mounier wrote: "How many times have I felt painfully divided between these two perspectives: being a retiring man, whose work does not transcend the paper where it is printed, or act and be imprisoned in

pictures or parties where it is necessary to lie and sacrifice to agitation and eloquence, which is a precious gathering. "

In the residence of Jacques Maritain formed, he a group of young Christians who decided to dedicate themselves to the publication of a magazine. In that group were Georges Izard and André Deléage. The magazine had initially been called "Univers", but at the suggestion of Mounier was titled THE MAGAZINE ESPRIT. (Spirit); they also decided to launch a movement that would be called "Third Force".

The Director of the Magazine "Esprit" was Mounier who would be the official organ of the tendency of the personalism, the editor-in-chief was Georges Izard. "Third Force" was directed by Izard. Both groups (a magazine and the movement) had different ways of acting, although it was teamwork.

Mounier implanted the thesis: "Distinction in Cooperation"

"Esprit" was conceived as a journal that would serve for research, as a laboratory in search of new solutions to current problems; while "Third Force" was a movement for political and social affairs, with its strategy and tactics, between them there had to be coherence in thought and action.

"Esprit" was presented from the beginning as a radical magazine in its approach. It was not an exclusively Christian magazine; it was open to various tendencies in search and confrontation.

"Esprit" sought for young signatures, new faces willing to encourage action, which was in the disposition of an understanding, based on the concept of society, with the fundamental basis of the Human Person.

The first issue of the magazine came out in October 1932, the theme of that edition was "the Revolution will be moral, or it will not be"

In March 1933 on the occasion of the appearance of the number six (6) of the monthly magazine, its contents were blunt: «Rupture between the Christian Order and the Established Disorder».

This position raised many weals, even among Christian sectors advocating for a moderate position, however, "Esprit" began to set in sectors committed, with groups of young people dissatisfied with the prevailing situation.

But the position of "Third Force" went further, considered that the revolution was around the corner, that the collective revolution should first be made in unity with the communists, then the personalist revolution.

Mounier had a different position; he didn't think a revolutionary process was so

easy. He was supported by Jacques Maritain who branded the position of Third Force as nonsense. This situation began an internal confrontation.

In July 1933 the contradictions between the direction of *Esprit* and the Third Force were exacerbated. Georges Izard resigned as editor-in-chief of the magazine, remaining Mounier only in the direction of *Esprit*.

Since 1939, Mounier had to devote himself to teaching to earn his livelihood; he was a professor at the French Lyceum of Brussels in Belgium. He had to be traveling continuously, to be able to run the magazine, live in Paris, and at the same time maintain his role as professor of philosophy in Brussels. Mounier was a defender of democracy as a basis for any political and social activity.

"We call democracy with all the qualifying and superlatives you want, so as not to confuse it with your tiny counterfeits, the regime that rests on the people who constitute the social community. Then we are on the side of democracy. We add that, diverted from its origins by its first ideologues, then strangled in its cradle by the world of money, this democracy has never been realized in the facts, but only in the spirits. »

This conception appeared in "Opposition Lines", in 1934.

"Democracy is a form of government that articulates on the spontaneity of the masses, to ensure the participation of the subjects in the objective order of power."

«Third Force» was dissolved in 1934 by joining the «Common Front», which led by Bergerie, formed a new political movement called «SOCIAL FRONT». Mounier refrained from being part of that new movement.

Mounier is one of the Christian thinkers who dealt more deeply with the subject of property. In April 1934 he published in "Esprit" an essay titled: "From Capitalist Property to Human Property" which would later become a book. At the same time, "Personalist and Community Revolution" also appeared. In 1935 Mounier married Paulette Leclerq.

In October 1936 another essay by Mounier appeared in the magazine "Esprit", it was titled: "Manifesto in the Service of Personalism", which served as the basis for a new book with the same title. There appears a concept about society.

"It is an increasingly complex process. Men give birth to societies that, from the family cell, open up to the universal community. "

"Esprit" continued its radical position, its allegations against the "established disorder", were straightforward. It came to the threat that the Church could condemn the magazine. Mounier sought the collaboration of Jacques Maritain, to defend against the accusations; together they wrote a report to the Archbishop of

Paris, which presumably prevented a doctrinal condemnation.

"Esprit's collaborators are children of the Church; they don't want to be semi-catholic or neo-Catholics. They receive fully the deposit of the faith and try to be made with it in an increasingly alive and rigorous way... Within this spirit of filial submission, they carry out a great adventure. »

"They do not conceive at all that, in it, their fidelity to the Church may be questioned; on the contrary, inspiration, and consecration only await this happiness. »

However, the economic situation, the isolation of some sectors and the internal problems caused the interruption of the publication of "Esprit" in 1938.

PERSONALISM

With the magazine "Esprit" suspended, Emmanuell Mounier was dedicated to writing on his own, starting from several essays published in his magazine, without neglecting to write articles for other publications. In 1937 he wrote an interesting article titled "Anarchy and Personalism".

"What is in one form or another, property, should also be used according to personal values. Because society, with all that it possesses and manages, is at the service of the person. It does not exist therefore, according to our opinion, neither the individual property nor collective property in an absolute sense. All property is at the same time, though in different proportions; personal and social. »

Mounier distinguished himself for exposing the PERSONALISM. On many occasions he was asked to define the concept and scope of personalism, on this he wrote:

"PERSONALISM is a philosophy; it's not just an attitude. Not a system. Although it does not flee itself from the systematization. For there should be order in the thoughts; concepts, logic, unification schemes, are not only useful for fixing and communicating a thought that without it would dissolve in opaque and solitary institutions. »

Personalism departs from the person. There are various ways to express the criteria that you can have about the human person. In this sense Mounier made a designation, which is not a complete description:

«The person is a spiritual being constituted as such by a kind of subsistence and independence in its being; it conserves this subsistence by its adherence to a hierarchy of values adopted freely, assimilated and served through a responsible commitment and a constant conversion. »

Mounier was always the commitment of the foundation qualities of the Human

Person. The role of the State was also elaborated by the personalism, and Mounier explained what he considered to be its function:

"The State is a spiritual community or a collective person in the strict sense of the word. It is not about the fatherland, nor the nation, nor about the people. It is an instrument in the service of society, and through it, with them, if necessary, in the service of people. Instrument artificial and subordinate, but necessary. "

Mounier was debated against the "established disorder", as the prevailing situation described, in the face of the danger of Hitler's social-nationalism that threatened Europe, and in the face of an environment where Communism had social, labor union and political strength. The issue of workers needed to be addressed. What was the criterion of personalism in the face of the working class?

Should Personalism raise the global problem of the conquest of the working class? No: neither a class action nor a mass action is proposed. But it must connect in the labor movement...; and it has the specific mission of successfully making the union of discredited spiritual values to their eyes by the use that has made them the world of money, and the real riches, also spiritual, that in the popular soul have been consecrated more authentic than in no other place. "

The man who emphasized the primacy of the Person above all things on earth found in destiny a hard test within his own family. His daughter, Françoise, a few months of age had an incurable disease, was attacked from a collision, caused an atavariolic, which produced encephalitis, and had to live like a vegetable. Mounier referred to her as a girl who had "a little life, rugged." His inner life became turbulent when he had to endure this situation while preaching the value and supremacy of the Person.

Faced with the situation caused by the occupation of France by the Germans, Mounier was cornered.

Maritain had gone, "Esprit" was not being published, and France was busy. In 1940 Mounier is taken prisoner by the Nazis. When released, like an answer in July he resumes the publication of "Esprit", to demonstrate the meaning of the war, not only in its brutality but with all its horrors; in addition to demonstrating that pacifism should be overcome with active resistance.

"Esprit" returned with the same radical content, now in front of the invaders of his country. This situation lasted until August 25th, 1941, when the publication of the magazine was banned. In September 1941, Mounier goes to the underground, however, he considered that disappearing was a setback, it was necessary to fight with the face discovered, the clear things, it was important the objective resist with all the forces against the invaders and the totalitarianism.

On January 15, 1942, again Mounier is taken prisoner by the occupying forces. This

time he is accused of being one of the chiefs of the "Combat" movement. On January 21st he is imprisoned in Clermont-Ferrand, where he is interrogated about involvement with the resistance groups, then confined to a residential prison.

On April 29th, he is arrested again, he is led to Vals. On June 18 he declares a hunger strike and lasts 12 days without eating anything. In July he is transferred to the prison of Saint Paul de Lyon. Being a prisoner he wrote: "Treaty of Character", which was later published. This essay studies the essence of the person through the science of man.

The "Combat" movement was processed from 19 to 26 October 1942. Mounier goes free after six months in prison. Before the persecution went back to the underground, with a false name he escaped his family to Dieulefit, in the Drome; there he could be quiet for some time, dedicating to write: Chosen Pieces of Montelambert, Freedom under Condition and the Christian Affrontation.

When the liberation of France occurred, Mounier returns to Paris. In December 1945, "Esprit" reappears.

"To be committed, solidary, among these men, with this story."

In 1946, his article "Debate in High Voice with Communism" appears. The post-war time was very complicated. The present situation had to be clarified, but also the past.

"The end does not justify the means; a spiritual end cannot ontologically need, nor morally legitimize means that are essentially antispiritual"

In 1947 public Mounier "Introduction to Existentialism" and "What is Personalism?"

Mounier considered that unity of action should be made with different ideological groups that Christians should not be isolated, or work alone.

The revolutionaries are based on the job. When they are based on the job, you have to work with them. We cannot afford to do a job fifty or one hundred years late. »

THE COMMUNITY SOCIETY

Mounier exposed the Community Society as a model, thinking about the future of Christian groups in the social and political environment. The model of Community Society is as follows:

The primary structure of power is the local community (neighborhoods, villages, landscapes, communes, provinces). Hence it is part of, forming Neighborhood

Meetings, Workers' Associations, Cooperatives and other forms of social organization.

The neighbor meetings assume an important role in responsibility and authority.

It is from the primary structure that self-management occurs, where workers can manage themselves small businesses so that this system is given from the bases to the upper level. The Community is thus Personalist, a person of persons.

The State must be limited by the supremacy of the spiritual authority of the Personalist Community, expressed in the existence of a personalistic right. Mounier explained that the Community Society is different from the capitalist system:

"Neither the multiplication of the groups nor the density, ensure that the spirit makes solid and real progress. Abundant wealth can mask a profound organic decay... It has been seen how after the war these colossal bodies, believed to be built with lime and song, have suddenly crumbled."

Mounier distinguished well between Community Society, Capitalism and Communism, classifying Communism as a collectivist society, capitalism as a mass society and Christianity as a community of people.

«Depersonalized in each one of its members, and consequently, depersonalized as a totality, the mass is characterized by a singular mixture of anarchy and tyranny. By the tyranny of the anonymous, the most vexatious of all in that it hides all the forces, those authentically innominate, that are covered of his personality. It is towards the mass where the world of the proletarians tends, lost in the sad servitude of the big cities, of the building's barracks, of the political conformities, of the economic machine. It is towards the mass where a liberal and parliamentary democracy forgetful that democracy was primitively a vindication of the person. »

THE LAST WORKS OF MOUNIER.

In 1948, Mounier wrote "Awakening of Black Africa", and in 1949 «The Small Fear of the Twentieth Century», besides THE PERSONALISM» that is the essence of his philosophical work, where he exposes his basic criteria.

In September 1949 Mounier suffers a cardiac crisis, attributed to the fatigue of overwork. He overcame that stage and continued to work, leading the magazine «Esprit» and writing books.

Emmanuel Mounier died of a heart attack on March 22, 1950.

From the data he wrote in his diary, an essay was made on "The Deceased Christianity", also, he left two unpublished essays titled: The Hope of the

Desperate Ones, and The Difficult Certainties.

Mounier represents within the Social Christianity the promoter of the Personalism and the Community Society. His voice was like yeast that ferments to form Christian men, able to rebuild society, cries out for the need for a new and strong man by