A COMPARISON OF THE SOCIAL THOUGHT OF CHARLES PÉGUY AND THE ENCYCICAL RERUM NOVARUM OF POPE LEO XIII

A Thesis Presented for the Degree of Master of Arts

by

Sister M. Florita Bentz, O.P.

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

1947

Approved by:
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Leo XIII and Charles Péguy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Charles Péguy and the <em>Rerum Novarum</em></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. The Conflict of the Times</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. The Problem of &quot;la Misère&quot;</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Common Ownership of Property</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. Private Property</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. &quot;Notre Socialisme&quot;</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. Philosophical Aspects of Work</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX. Material Aspects of Work</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X. Family Life</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI. Middle Ages</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII. &quot;La Vie Intérieure&quot;</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIII. Certain Social Virtues</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

The following thesis offers a comparison of the social thought of Charles Péguy and that of Leo XIII as expressed in the *Rerum Novarum*, first published on May 15, 1891. Needless to say, such a study affords some interesting contrasts as well as similarities. It has not been possible to cover all of Péguy's prose works because of their abundance. We regret also that time did not permit a more careful study of his poetical works. These, because they were written when Péguy's Catholic thought was at its peak, would contain added material for our study.

At the time that the encyclical was first published, Péguy was in the army, but the years of schooling which followed brought him in rather close contact with the papal document. One cannot doubt that Péguy saw in Leo XIII a man who was striving for the same high social principles as he himself. Nevertheless, he was at variance with the remedy advocated, and, besides, the Supreme Pontiff insisted on elevating the question to the supernatural plane of Christianity.

We recognize here a singular paradox. Leo XIII, who would have all men be one in Christ, sets forth a practical material program - the recognition of private property and a more equal distribution thereof. Péguy, on the other hand, deliberately plans only for a "vie humaine" but uses as the basis of his reform the early Christian idea of voluntary surrender of wealth.

To the end, Péguy remains true to his "Cité Socialiste,"
but the inner spirit of the city gradually approximates that of Leo XIII so that it is often called "la Cité de Dieu." It would however be presumptuous to postulate that this elevation resulted from devotion to the encyclical. Rather it was due to an awakening in Péguy's soul of the graces of his Christian heritage which he had suffered to lie dormant while he fruitlessly struggled for a perfection in things of time.

I. Leo XIII and Charles Péguy

Before entering upon a comparative study of the works of the two authors, it is of interest to note and compare their background, education and position in life. While the thought of Charles Péguy and Leo XIII will very frequently run parallel, the exterior circumstances of their lives afford a striking contrast.

Pope Leo XIII was born of noble parentage, being the sixth son of Count Lodovico Pecci of Carpineto. The young Gioacchino Pecci received his early education at the Jesuit school in Viterbo. He excelled in his studies at the Collegio Romano. At graduation he was chosen to give the Latin address. His choice of topic was "Pagan and Christian Rome." In 1832 he received a doctorate in theology and in the same year was admitted to the Academy of Noble Ecclesiastics, continuing his studies of canon and civil law at Sapienza University. Thus we note that the education of the future author of the encyclical Rerum Novarum was definitely Catholic in its philosophy. All that he mastered during those long years of study was of value to him in his magnificent career.

Charles Péguy, too was born of noble lineage, but of a different sort. Child of Orléans born in 1873, he inherited as ancestry all of ancient France:

"On peut dire dans le sens le plus rigoureux des termes qu'un enfant élevé dans une ville comme Orléans, entre 1873 et 1890, a littéralement touche l'ancienne France." 1

1 L'Argent, 1913, III, 334. Quotations from Péguy’s works are taken from Oeuvres Completes unless otherwise indicated. Those writings of considerable length or whose importance
Péguy never knew his father who died before his birth. Consequently, his early years were under the direction of a fond mother and grandmother who taught him valuable lessons. To his mother, who earned a living by mending chairs, he owed his love of work well-done. To his grandmother, who loved to tell "la belle histoire" of old France, he attributed his appreciation for the French language.

His first formal schooling took place in a grammar school at Orléans where he frequently was taught by "élèves-maitres" who formed a part of the system of lay education.

"C'était en 1880. C'était donc dans toute la fureur et la gloire de l'invention de la laïcisation." 2

But this formal education was supplemented by weekly catechism classes given in the parish of Saint-Aignan. This mixed program, though the children were too young to perceive it, was bound to have harmful effects. Péguy, turned forty, spoke from the wisdom of experience:

"Nos jeunes vicaires nous disaient exactement le contraire de ce que nous disaient nos jeunes élèves-maitres.......Nous ne nous en apercevions pas: La République et l'Eglise nous distribuaient des enseignements diamétralement opposés.......Nous absorbions intégralement la métaphysique de nos maîtres, et également intégralement la métaphysique de nos cures. Aujourd'hui.....nous n'en croyons plus un mot de ce qu'enseignaient, des métaphysiques qu'enseignaient nos maîtres. Et nous croyons intégralement ce qu'il y a dans le catéchisme et c'est devenu et c'est reste notre chair." 3

justifies their taking on the nature of a complete work are underscored. The shorter ones are enclosed in quotation marks. The roman numeral indicates the volume cited; the arabic numeral indicates the page.

2 Ibid., p.407
3 L'Argent, 1913, III, 407,408,410
So speaks Péguy, once more in the fold, but we cannot forget that it was this lay education, which grew into anti-clericalism, that colored much of his social and political thought. At the age of twelve he was sent to the Lycée at Orléans, and six years later he went to the Lycée Lakanal in Paris to prepare for the École Normale. However, one year later, he failed in his entrance examination. After a year of army service he entered the Lycée Sainte-Barbe. In 1894 he entered the École Normale Supérieure, but his attendance was somewhat sporadic. He left it the following year in order to return to Orléans to write the first Jeanne d'Arc. The year 1896 found him again at Normale, but early in 1897 he withdrew and in October of that year married. The next month he returned to his school but was soon so immersed in the Dreyfus Case and his socialist bookshop that he failed his final examinations at Normale. Thus ended the formal education of Charles Péguy.

We return to Leo XIII. Soon after his ordination, he received the title of Monsignor Pecci and was given positions in Benevento and Spoleto where he was engaged in successful social works. As Bishop of Perugia he gained a wealth of experience in the spiritual, social, and political fields. Due to the influence of Leopold of Belgium he was welcomed wholeheartedly at the Parisian and London courts. During his

4 The Jewish captain Dreyfus had been arrested on a charge of treason which later turned out to be imaginary. The case was to be retried in 1897. People took sides; some were willing to see him condemned rather than cast aspersions at a military tribunal. Others, and Péguy among them, insisted that if he was innocent he should be freed immediately.
pontificate, which began February 20, 1878, he succeeded in promoting a spirit of harmony between the Vatican and foreign powers. His was a long life and an influential pontifical reign! 5

For Péguy, only sixteen years of life remained after the unsuccessful completion of his education. His first venture, the founding of the socialist bookshop, May 1898, with the financial help of Madame Péguy, proved a failure, as it was not long before he felt the constraint placed upon his thought by certain dominant members of the "Parti Socialiste" who had gathered round him. 6 Rather than submit or even compromise his thought, Péguy called those of his friends who had remained loyal and founded Les Cahiers de la Quinzaine, the notable organ through which he independently and persistently advocated "le socialisme pur." This organ played a major rôle during the early twentieth century. It was probably the most influential publication on the younger generations of France's literary élite. It is not so much Péguy the writer as Péguy the soul and animation of a group of promising young writers and thinkers that has caused his name to live on. So the years went by. Péguy's thought mellowed under the influence of a refound faith so that he gave to the world poetic masterpieces which lifted the "Cité Harmonieuse" from its pagan

5 Leo XIII was born March 2, 1810 and died July 20, 1903

6 Among the group were such personalities as Lucien Herr, Charles Andier, Albert Thomas, Jaures. These were deliberately concerned with parlementary and administrative politics. They counseled tolerance of the dogmas of Jules Guesde, active member of the Parti ouvrier who advocated "la lutte de classe" and the necessity of revolutionary action.
level to a supernatural plane. Péguy's life closed in true heroic fashion. Though old enough – he was now forty-one – to be held in reserve, he answered the call to the colors. Placing himself at the head of his regiment, he went forth to the first Battle of the Marne; fearlessly he encouraged his men to continue the struggle until a German bullet forced him to the ground. It was the way he had wanted to die.

"Heureux ceux qui sont morts dans les grandes batailles ---
Heureux ceux qui sont morts dans une juste guerre."  

During this critical period of the world's economic crisis brought on by the magnitude of the industrial revolution, two voices rang out strong and clear. But who heard? Because of the universality of the Catholic Church, the medium through which Leo XIII spoke, the voice of the Supreme Pontiff was heard immediately by the entire Catholic hierarchy and from it spread not only to the whole Catholic world but to many other sincere Christians interested in their fellowman.

But Charles Péguy was heard only by his immediate circle of friends, critics, subscribers and admirers (the importance of this latter group we must not underestimate), plus the wider field of those who read his articles reprinted in other periodicals. Julian Green in his introduction to Basic Verities writes: "The modern world cared little whether Péguy

---

7 Le Mystère de la Charité de Jeanne d'Arc, 1910;
Le Porche du mystère de la deuxième vertu, 1911;
Le Mystère des Saints-Innocents, 1912.
8 September 5, 1914
9 Eve, 1913, VII, 162,163.
hated it or not and scarcely knew his name." 10

What vision had Leo XIII and Charles Péguy in mind? Were they looking into the future or concerned only with the immediate present? They were not idle dreamers; the work must begin at once. But peaceful revolutions do not happen overnight. Péguy loved to say he was writing for the next generation. His city must be prepared by young men:

"Après quarante ans, sans risque et sans violence mauvaise, on est devenu l'humanité même, l'humanité enfin sauve du mal bourgeois, de tout le mal, et instituée en cité harmonieuse." 11

The number forty is a happy coincidence. On the fortieth anniversary of the Rerum Novarum Pius XI issued his Quadragesimo Anno, a striking tribute to Leo XIII's incomparable work. Had the passage of time outmoded the doctrine of Leo XIII? Decidedly not. Rather it was the times that were slowly catching up with it. The purpose of Pius XI was"to develop more fully some of its points."12 We quote from Pius XI to show the extent of his predecessor's vision:

"The noble and exalted teaching of Leo XIII ... was so far and so unexpectedly in advance of its time, that the slow of heart ridiculed the study of the new social philosophy, and the timid feared to scale its lofty heights. Now were there wanting those who, while professing their admiration for this message of light, regarded it as a utopian ideal, desirable rather than attainable in practice."13

Thus it was that each looked into the future and saw there

10 Green, Ann and Julian; Basic Verities, p.32
11 "Pour ma maison," 1900, I, 272.
12 Quadragesimo Anno, 4. The translation used is that given in the Christian Social Manifesto by Joseph Husslein, S.J. who divided the encyclical into sections similar to those of the official division of the Rerum Novarum.
13 Ibid., 3.
a better world. Varied as were the exterior circumstances that fashioned their lives, they were one in the ardor with which they espoused the cause of suffering humanity. The fire that burned within each heart was enkindled by a spark of the same Divine Flame.
II. Charles Péguy and the *Rerum Novarum*

It is probable that Charles Péguy first became acquainted with the *Rerum Novarum* during his days at Sainte-Barbe. He entered there in 1892. The encyclical (May, 1891) was first published during his year of service in the army. It may be that he read it at that time, but there is no indication of that fact. In any event, we are assured by Joseph Lotte that a three months' course was given at Sainte-Barbe.

"Au moment où il achève son service militaire une immense espoir traverse l'Eglise et le monde: c'est l'encyclique *Rerum Novarum* que Mgr. Battifol a commenté trois mois aux élèves de Sainte-Barbe; ce sont les triomphes du "catholicisme social"; c'est le renouveau des hautes études religieuses; c'est l'apothéose de Rome et de Léon XIII. Il est assez de mode aujourd'hui d'oublier tout cela, mais la vérité de l'histoire ne dépend ni de nos passions ni de nos caprices. Et sans doute, je sais bien qu'à cette date Péguy a perdu la foi. Mais il est déjà le poète impressionnable, l'esprit inquiet, méditatif et très réceptif." 1

Interest in the course was carried beyond classroom walls, for Halévy tells us:

"Les jeunes élèves de Sainte-Barbe écoutaient leur intelligent aumônier qui leur parlait de l'encyclique *Rerum Novarum* et ils allaient tous ensemble porter leurs charités dans les faubourgs." 2

There was an intense reality about all this; they had begun to reform society. The chaplain looked upon these charitable enterprises from the common-sense spiritual point of view while young Péguy and Lotte felt themselves inspired

---

2Halévy, Daniel, *Charles Péguy*, p.20
by a new socialism which lived of its own pure vitality; inclining toward Christianity, inclining toward the people, and little attentive to the double reality that behind Christianity there is a Church and behind the people a political party.\(^3\)

Péguy writes to Lotte concerning these days of their youth:

"Tout était pur alors. Tout était jeune. Un socialisme jeune, un socialisme nouveau, un socialisme grave, un peu enfant - (mais c'est ce qu'il faut pour être jeune), - un socialisme jeune homme venait de naître, Un christianisme ardent, il faut le dire, profondément chrétien, profond, ardent, jeune, grave yêrait de renaitre. On le nommait lui aussi assez généralement catholicisme social"\(^4\)

It seems that the future impressionable poet with his meditative and receptive mind\(^5\) had imbibed much of the spirit of the Rerum Novarum even though he refused to accept it in form. This refusal we postulate from the information the Tharaud brothers give us concerning student days at l'Ecole normale supérieure:

"Je crois bien qu'ils se proposent surtout d'interroquer M. Olle-Laprune, notre maître de philosophie, dont le socialisme chrétien à la mode de Leon XIII exaserait ces disciples de Karl Marx."\(^6\)

Later, when writing of Péguy's conversion, Tharaud reflects on these early days of Marxian influence:

"Il me semblait alors déraisonnable de penser que ce Péguy, socialiste et ahée, qui hier encore poursuivait à l'Ecole d'une animosité particulière le philosophe des talas, l'excellent M. Olle-Laprune

\(^3\) Ibid., see pp.19-20 
\(^4\) Ibid., p.19 
\(^5\) See quotation, Chapter II, p.10 
\(^6\) Tharaud, Jean et Jerome, Notre Cher Péguy, 1926, I, 85 

The "talas" were Catholics, true to all the traditions of their faith. Those who opposed them were called "anti-talas."
There are but few direct references to the encyclical in the writings of Péguy. In the first cahier of the first series, wishing to pay tribute to the house he had founded and the book he had printed Péguy reprints certain articles and a page of *Action Socialiste* by Jean Jaurès. This page lists under the heading "Le Socialisme et l'enseignement" items of instruction, education, and culture. One among these is "La question religieuse; Léon XIII et le catholicisme social." 11

Another citation occurs in "Toujours de la Grippe" when the doctor visiting Péguy praises universal knowledge; he lists innumerable documents, books and historical personages but Péguy grows weary of listening so the doctor discontinues reading. His closing words, however, are of interest in our present study:

"Nous aurons fini par la Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen, des bourgeois révolutionnaires de 1789, et par le pape Léon XIII, dans sa fameuse encyclique sur le sort des ouvriers." 12

These two citations which we have just made, the first by Jaurès; the other, by Péguy, do not argue for or against Péguy's acceptance of the encyclical. They simply show that he remained aware of its existence beyond student days and that it is listed among important social documents.

---

3 Notre Cher Péguy, II, 70
9 Le librairie *Socialiste*.
10 *Action Socialiste* by Jean Jaurès.
11 "Pour moi," I, 300
12 "Toujours de la grippe," 1900, I, 160-161
After delving somewhat deeply into Péguy's social thought, one finds it rather surprising that he did not give more recognition and even some words of praise to the *Rerum Novarum*. The temporal ends for which they strove were fundamentally the same: the relief of misery, the betterment of the workingman and the removal of the evils of capitalism. The spiritual freedom of the sons of God should have fitted well into Péguy's "vie intérieure". Why then the opposition of youthful days and the silence of maturity?

We do not hesitate to classify as quite revolutionary, at least for church-circles, the encyclical of Leo XIII, coming as it did at a time when free competition threatened to draw all wealth into the hands of a few. But for young enthusiasts like Péguy and his friends it was not revolutionary enough. Recognizing as it did the right of private property, it set at naught common ownership, which to the young socialists of the time seemed the answer to the economic problem. And did not Leo XIII advocate state intervention when things went wrong? That presupposed authority of a group. But all authority must be in the hands of the proletariat - better still, there should be no authority - so on this point, as on property, the policies of Leo XIII failed to satisfy Péguy and his radical friends.

However, there is another dominant reason for the antipathy displayed by Péguy toward this encyclical. He was decidedly anti-clerical:

"Nous sommes de ces singuliers révolutionnaires qui n'admettons pas l'autorité de la tradition. Nous
sommes de ces singuliers libre-penseurs qui n'acceptons aucune Eglise," 13

Suggestions coming from clerics would immediately be
looked upon with suspicion and therefore would receive but a
biased study.

Now, it was the clerics who introduced Péguy to this docu-
ment in pursuance of its author's urgent request:

"Every minister of Holy Religion must throw into the
conflict all the energy of his mind, and all the
strength of his endurance, .... they must never
cease to urge upon all men of every class, upon the
high as well as the lowly, the Gospel doctrines of
Christian life; by every means in their power they
must strive for the good of the people; and above
all they must earnestly cherish in themselves, and
try to arouse in others, Charity, the mistress and
queen of virtues." 14

Clerical interference! Recognition of class! Derogatory
Charity! So concluded Péguy. The Church had compromised
with the powers of wealth and oppression:

"C'est pour cela qu'il l'atelier lui est fermé, et
qu'elle est fermée à l'atelier. Elle fait, elle
est la religion officielle, la religion formelle
du riche." 15

Such a conclusion seems to argue a prejudiced study of the
encyclical, or at least a failure to understand its full
import.

Despite his anti-clericalism, Raïssa Maritain states that

13 "Pour moi," 1901, I, 327.
14 Rerum Novarum, 45. Henceforth the symbol RN will indicate
Rerum Novarum. The arabic number indicates the particular one
of the forty-five sections of the official division of the
Leonine encyclical as found in the latest Vatican edition; Joseph Husselein, SSJ, applies them for the first time to the
English version in The Christian Social Manifesto. (1931) The
translation employed in this text was used in the present study.
15 Notre Jeunesse, 1910, IV, 171.
he was conscious of the mission and the dignity which belonged to lay persons in the Church and in Christendom. Several years before his conversion he said to Jacques Maritain:

"If Catholics only knew! They alone are able to answer the needs of the world; they could take the lead in temporal history, nothing could stand against them; but they are too dumb for that!"

What answer does Péguy mean? Could it be that he accepted at least in part the principles set forth in the Rerum Novarum? Here we see Péguy, characteristically minimizing the work of the clergy, and at the same time bewailing the apathy of the laity in applying clerical principles to temporal Christendom.

In 1913, Péguy calls the following citation from a criticism by M. Lansan "une grosse stupidité:"

"On y verra d'ailleurs aussi, dans les pages paradoxales où le génie grec est rabaisssé, le vrai sens et toute la portée, pour un certain parti, de la campagne en faveur du latin, et par quelles équivoques on essaye de faire servir le culte de la Rome antique à la restauration de l'autorité d'une autre Rome. Tout ce morceau, d'une malice naïve et pleine d'illusion, est fort instructif et vraiment savoureux."

The Péguy of 1913 senses here an anti-Catholic attitude as a consequence of the anti-Latin thought. At this date the restoration of papal authority does not seem so criminal and why worry about the introduction into France of "des pièces du pape." This may be an indication of a more friendly attitude toward papal pronouncements, such as the Rerum Novarum. Péguy's retort is sarcastic:

---

Péguy revealed his conversion to Maritain in 1908. The above conversation must have taken place sometime in 1905. We owe the translation of this book to Julie Kernan.
"Ainsi, si je comprends bien, quand nous faisons du de Viris, c'est peut-être pour retablir les États du pape; et qui sait pour introduire frauduleusement en France des pièces du pape; c'est du moins pour asseoir en France l'autorité du pape. Je ne soupçonnais pas que nous fussions si criminels. Je commence à me demander si contre le latin M. Lanson n'est pas un peu monomane, et comme dit M. Langlois 17 un peu fou."

In the following chapters we shall both compare and contrast the leading tenets of the Supreme Pontiff and the editor of Les Cahiers de la Quinzaine. One can not say that Péguy's social thought developed in conformity with the plan of Leo XIII as his basic material program holds fast to his early idealism. There is, though, an evolution in the spirituality of the inner life. However, there is no evidence to prove that this can be traced directly to the Rerum Novarum. It is rather a result of the soul of Péguy awakening to a realization that all human assuagement is worthless if the soul is not in harmony with its God.

17 M. Charles-Victor Langlois, professor at the Sorbonne.
III. The Conflict of the Times

The status of the working man, though far from perfect, has advanced by leaps and bounds during the last fifty years, thanks to the sincere efforts of such lovers of men as were Pope Leo XIII and Charles Péguy. In their day, economic life was in a state of chaos. Competition was given full sway, and as a result uncontrolled capitalism crushed under its heavy yoke millions of the masses, unable to rise, anxiously waiting for leaders to fight their cause; and so comes the youthful Péguy to fulfill his vocation as Jeanne, his heroine, had done:

"Le chef de guerre a décidé qu'il s'en irait dans la bataille."¹

And Leo:

"The responsibility of the Apostolic Office urges Us to treat the question (the Condition of Labor) expressly and at length."²

Living then in a period of revolutionary change, naturally these two were themselves revolutionaries. Wise, in a way that set them apart from Lenin and Marx, they realized wherein true revolution lay:

"If Society is to be cured now, in no other way can it be cured but by a return to the Christian life and Christian institutions. When a Society is perishing, the true advice to give to those who would restore it is, to recall it to the principles from which it sprung; for the purpose and perfection of an association is to aim at and to attain that for which it was formed; and its operation should be put in motion and inspired by the end and object which

¹ Jeanne d'Arc, 1897, XV, 135.
² RN, 1
originally gave it its being. So that to fall away from its primal constitution is disease; to go back to it is recovery." 3

In one brief statement Péguy defines his theory of revolution:

"La Révolution sera morale ou elle ne sera pas." 4

Emmanuel Maunier, speaking of Péguy's indignation on witnessing the misery that Paris knew in the late nineteenth century, describes his plan for reform as:

"moins une tactique intellectuelle qu'un redressment morale; Volonte de propreté interieure et de rajeunissement spirituel, Une technique de la probité."5

Such a position strengthened through the years. In 1913:

"Rien n'est aussi anxieusement beau que le spectacle d'un peuple qui se releve d'un mouvement interieur, par un ressourcement profond de son antique orgueil et par un rajaillissement des instincts de sa race."6

"Ces grands révolutionnaires veulent bien révolutionner le monde. Mais ils ne veulent pas révolutionner un meeting, ni se révolutionner eux-mêmes. C'est trop dangereux."7

A moral revolution does not, can not mean inactivity. Péguy resorts to paradox in order to explain this. Ill because of too much work, he explains to his friends:

"Je me suis couché de mon long dans mon lit et tenu tranquille.... La methode revolutionnaire consiste ici a constater que l'on ne porte remede aux maux.

3 Ibid., 22.
4 Cover of Cahier, II, 11. In citing a Cahier the roman numeral indicates the series number; the arabic numeral indicates the number of the issue.
5 La Pensee de Charles Péguy, p.23. This book is composed of three parts. The first, by Emmanuel Maunier is entitled "La Vision des Hommes du Monde"; the second, by Marcel Péguy, "La Pensee Politique et Sociale"; the third, by Georges Izard, "La Pensee Religieuse."
6 L'Argent (suite), 1913, XIV, 213
7 Ibid., p.148
utilement qu'en s'attaquant aux causes réelles des maux. --- La méthode révolutionnaire consiste à changer de vie." 8

Leo too attacks the real cause of the evil:

"It (the Church) strives to influence the mind and heart so that all may willingly yield themselves to be formed and guided by the commandments of God.... courageously to break down every barrier which stands in the way of a virtuous life." 9

In agreement that the practical remedy is a moral reform, both the author of the encyclical and the editor of the Cahiers bring forth a definite plan of attack. This will be discussed at length in later chapters. For the present, we will study those elements of conflict which characterize this period of revolutionary change. The column at the left contains the elements as Leo lists them in the first paragraph of Rerum Novarum. The column at the right shows that Péguy was also aware of these same causes of conflict:

Growth of industry

"Fécondité est le livre de la guerre. Parcequ'ils possèdent les biens de ce monde à titre de propriétaires individuels, tous ces Fronton sont des hommes de guerre et non pas des hommes de paix." 10

Surprising discoveries of science

"Quand on invente une machine qui supprime la moitié de travail dans un métier, les consommateurs, en général, en tirent un certain bénéfice parce que les prix baissent, mais la moitié des producteurs sont mis à pied, et ces malheurs individuels ont souvent de telles et si lointaines répercussions que l'ensemble du mal cause au citoyen

8 "Casse-cou," 1901, XI, 178
9 RN 22
10 "Récentes œuvres de Zola", 1902, II, 122
Changed relations of masters and workmen;  

Enormous fortunes of individuals and poverty of the masses;  

Increased self-reliance and the closer mutual combination of the working population;  

A general moral deterioration.  

Leo XIII tells us that such an ensemble of serious problems "fills every mind with painful apprehension; wise men discuss it; practical men propose schemes; popular meetings, legislatures, and sovereign princes, all are occupied with it - and there is nothing which has a deeper hold on public attention. .... The discussion is not easy, nor is it free from danger. .... And the danger lies in this, that crafty agitators constantly make use of these disputed to pervert:

est pire que n'est avantageux le bénéfice donné aux consommateurs."

"De mon temps tout le monde chantait.... Aujourd'hui on renâcle. Il n'y avait pas cette espèce d'effroyable strangulation économique."

"Et tant d'argent rouler pour le luxe et l'argent se refusent à ce point à la pauvreté."

"Déjà les présages laissent voir que les travailleurs sont las du gouvernement des théâtres. Et il se peut que cet affranchissement le plus vaste, fasse toute l'histoire de la période ou nous entrons."

"Par le jeu, par l'histoire des événements, par la bassesse et le péché de l'homme la mystique est devenue politique, --- ou plutôt la politique s'est substituée à la mystique, la politique a dévore la mystique."

11 "De la cité socialiste", 1897, I, 269. In Volume I of Oeuvres Complètes, "De la cité socialiste" is incorporated in the work entitled "Pour ma maison." "De la cité socialiste" first appeared in Revue Socialiste, Aug.15,1897, under Pégy's pseudonym Pierre Deloire.

12 L'Argent, 1913, III, 389

13 Ibid., p.421

14 "De Jean Coste," 1902, II, 43

15 RN, 1

16 Notre Jeunesse, 1910, IV, 71.
men's judgment and to stir up the people to sedition." 17

Charles Péguy - wise man, practical man, or crafty agitator? The reader may judge for himself, after perusal of this study, whether Péguy falls into the category of wise men, practical men, or both. Even should he hesitate to classify the editor of the Cahiers as wise or practical, there can be no doubt of his sincerity. Péguy was not a crafty agitator seeking to cheat the people by lying promises. Mounier says of him that: "la passion de la vérité et la passion de la justice s'unissent chez lui en une même fidélité dont toute son oeuvre frémit." 18 And this is the program he set for the Cahiers:

"Dire bêtement la vérité bête, ennuyeusement la vérité ennuyeuse, tristement la vérité triste." 19

Truly a natural outcome of that impulse from which the Cahiers were born. Péguy relates it almost vehemently:

"Quand en décembre 1899 je, sortis écouté du congrès de Paris, du premier congrès national, écoute de mensonge et de l'injustice nouvelle qui s'imposeraient au nom d'un parti nouveau, la resolution me vint, en un coup de revolte spontané de publier ce que mes amis sentaient, disaient, pensaient, voulaient, croyaient, savaient." 20

And so throughout the life of the Cahiers Péguy gave his "abonnés" the truth as he saw it even though at times it meant casting arrows which wounded to the point of separation those of his own household:

"Car il fut sévère pour tous, et d'une sévérité

17 RN, 1
18 La Pensée de Charles Péguy, p.14
19 "Lettre du provincial", 1899, I, 35-36
20 "Pour moi", 1901, I, 296
The problems that confronted sincere leaders during the industrial revolution can be read in any fair history of the period. Their solution called for the best that was in the best of men. Unfortunately, there were not a few who saw in this crisis an opportunity for personal advancement either in wealth or politics. Among these latter groups, we do not find Leo XIII nor Charles Péguy. Instead, the following pages will show that we may well class them among the best of men.

IV. The Problem of "Misère"

Nothing so stirred the hearts of Pope Leo XIII and Charles Péguy as the misery endured by so many of their fellowmen. To bring about an effective remedy was a basic part of their social programs. We quote again from the opening section of the Rerum Novarum:

"All agree, and there can be no question whatever, that some remedy must be found, for the misery and wretchedness which press so heavily at this moment on the vast majority of the very poor."

From De Jean Coste we sense the depths of Péguy's anguish for the miserable:

"Sauver tous les citoyens, sans aucune exception de la misère; sauver tous les miséreux de la misère est un problème imperieux, antérieur à l'institution véritable de la cité ...... nous devons le resoudre ... c'est un problème sans relâche."

Both cried out against the new slavery:

"A small number of very rich men have been able to lay upon the masses of the poor a yoke little better then slavery itself."

"Religion teaches the rich man and the employer that their work-people are not their slaves;"

"La misère....est un instrument de servitude sans défaut.....Nous devons libérer...tous les miséreux des servitudes économiques."

"La misère est toute sa vie; c'est une servitude sans exception."

It is an obvious fact that those persons who are ceaselessly harassed by temporal worries are thereby hampered, to some

1 RN, 1. 2 "De Jean Coste", 1902, II, 50 3 RN, 2. 4 Ibid., p. 16. 5 "De Jean Coste", 1902, II, 46 6 Ibid., p. 59
extent, in the pursuit of a spiritual life.

"... in all well-constituted States it is by no means an unimportant matter to provide those bodily and external commodities, 'the use of which is necessary to virtuous action'" 7

Hence it is that the Church

"does not neglect their (its children's) interests, temporal and earthly. Its desire is that the poor, for example, should rise above poverty and wretchedness, and should better their condition in life, and for this it strives." 3

Péguy at this early period of his life is not concerned with man's developing within his soul a spiritual life. He is, however, decidedly preoccupied with man's advancement in an intellectual and moral life. This, he realizes, cannot be promoted during a ceaseless struggle for a bare economic existence:

"Je constate que la vie économique est l'indispensable soutien de la vie mentale. Je crois que l'on doit assurer loyalement la vie économique pour assurer loyalement la vie intellectuelle." 9

"La misère altère, oblitère les vertus, qui sont des filles de force et filles de santé. ... La misère rend les misérables mauvais, laids, faibles ... nous savons que la misère économique est un empêchement sans faute à l'amélioration morale et mentale." 10

Péguy is more positive in drawing a line between misery and poverty than is Leo:

"On (Leo included?) confond toujours la misère avec la pauvreté; cette confusion vient de ce que la misère et la pauvreté sont voisines; elles sont voisines sans doute, mais situées de part et d'autre d'une limite; ... tout est misère en deça, misère du doute ou misère de la certitude misérable; la première

7 RN., 27. Leo XIII here quotes St. Thomas Aquinas.
8 Ibid., 23.
10 "De Jean Coste," 1902, II, 45-46.
Young Péguy compares at great length the sufferings of "les misérables" with the eternal pains of hell, claiming that it is damnation off earth; hence, his passionate hatred for it:

"La misère correspond pleinement à l'enfer; l'enfer est l'éternelle certitude de la mort éternelle; mais la misère est pour la plus grande part la totale certitude de la mort humaine, la totale penetration de ce qui reste de vie par la mort." 12

Leo, on the other hand, though he neither condones nor justifies the evils of extreme poverty, sees in them no fundamental hindrance to salvation:

"God has not created us for the perishable and transitory things of earth, but for things heavenly and everlasting; He has given us this world as a place of exile, and not as our true country. Money and the other things which men call good and desirable - we may have them in abundance or we may want them altogether; as far as eternal happiness is concerned, it is no matter; the only thing that is important is to use them aright." 13

The Church ever desirous of improving the condition in life of her children

"calls men to virtue and forms them to its practice. Christian morality when it is adequately and completely practiced conduces itself to temporal prosperity, for it merits the blessing of that God Who is the source of all blessings; it powerfully restrains the lust of possession and the lust of pleasure - twin plagues ..... It makes men supply by economy for the want of means, teaching them to be content with frugal living, and keeping them out of the reach of those vices which eat up not only merely small incomes, but large fortunes, and dissipate many a goodly inheritance." 14

It was this frugal living supported by Christian morality

---

11 Ibid., p. 46
12 Ibid., p. 53
13 Num. 18. II Corinthians, IV:17.
14 Ibid., 23
that Péguy recognized when reminiscing on the days of his youth at Orléans:

"Les bons ouvriers travaillent de leur mieux pour faire plaisir au patron et pour faire plaisir aux clients; ils ne manquent jamais l'ouvrage ... "travailler, c'est prier," ... Tout leur travail était une prière. Et l'atelier était une oratoire.) ... ils ne s'agissaient jamais, parce qu'un homme saoul est dégoûtant, et parce que cela dépense encore de l'argent; ... les bons ouvriers gagnant le plus qu'ils peuvent et dépensant le moins qu'ils peuvent, font des économies qu'ils placent à la masse d'épargne; ils achètent avec leurs économies une petite maison avec un petit jardin et ils vivent heureux comme des petits bourgeois."

The serious-minded young socialist was to discover that even this seemingly peaceful mode of existence was not invulnerable for it tolerated that which his whole social philosophy forbade: "Misère."

"Les mauvais ouvriers sont malheureux et finissent mal. ... Les indigents ont besoin d'aller à l'hôpital."

In "la cité socialiste" there will be few "indigents" because only a few hours' work will be necessary to assure "la vie corporelle." If there still remain some lazy persons, these "malades," as Péguy classifies them, will not die of hunger but they will be reduced to what is strictly necessary.

The state of "Pauvreté" itself was to undergo a deformation under the "règne d'or":

"Le mariage de l'homme avec la pauvreté n'avait jamais été rompu. Et au commencement des temps modernes, il ne fut pas seulement rompu, mais l'homme et la pauvreté entrèrent dans une infidélité éternelle. ... C'était le principe même de la sagesse

15 L'Argent, 1913, III, 391.
17 "Ibid., p,24.
18 "De la cité socialiste," 1897, I, 270,271.
And so the poor, through no fault of their own are crushed by the great capitalist machine into the ranks of misery itself. To remedy this condition Leo XIII and Péguy devote themselves wholeheartedly, even while they recognize the persistence of poverty: "il y aura toujours des pauvres parmi nous." 20

As Péguy's wisdom ripens with the years he recognizes new depths to his socialism:

"Notre socialisme était un socialisme mystique et un socialisme profond, profondément apparente au christianisme, un tronc, sorti de la vieille source, littéralement déjà, (ou encore), une religion de la pauvreté." 21

"Tout le monde sent bien que les pauvres et les obscures sont les favoris dans le royaume de Dieu." 22

"Jésus ... est essentiellement le Dieu des pauvres, des misérables, des ouvriers...." 23

How like the Holy Pontiff all this sounds:

"As for those who do not possess the gifts or fortune, they are taught by the church that, in God's sight poverty is no disgrace;..... This is strengthened by what we see in Christ Himself, Who 'whereas He was rich, for our sakes became poor'; Jesus Christ calls the poor blessed; He lovingly invites those in labor and grief to come to Him for solace; and He displays the tenderest charity to the lowly and oppressed." 24

The recognition of these truths did not render Leo XIII

---

19 L'Argent, 1913, III, 422
20 Ibid., p. 421; "St. John"
21 Un nouveau theologie, 1911, XIII, 196
22 Ibid., p. 46
23 Ibid., p. 30
25 "St. Matthew", V: 3: "Blessed are the poor in spirit."
26 Ibid., XI: 28: "Come to Me all you that labor and are burdened, and I shall refresh you." 24 RN, 20
inactive in combating injustice wherever it threatened the
rights of man; so too, in the case of the Christian Péguy as
Georges Izard so plainly expressed it:

"Et s'il a montré le prix surnaturel de la misère, s'il a ainsi incline le peuple à ne pas se révolter contre les riches et à gémir son éminente dignité de pauvre, il n'a pas cessé en même temps d'attaquer les "capitalistes" qui ne vivent que pour l'argent, qui oppriment la pauvreté, et de combattre temporellement la misère." 28

This chapter reveals to us the deep appreciation entertained by Leo XIII and Charles Péguy for the dignity of the human personality, for never did God destine His image to remain forever in deep misery. Nevertheless, they are far from scorning poverty, so admirably practiced by the Master Himself. Imitating Him, they utter words of reproach to the rich and strive unceasingly to alleviate the sufferings of their fellowmen.

28 *La Pensée de Charles Péguy*, p.345.
V. Common Ownership of Property

The socialism of Péguy, though different in many respects from socialism, as ordinarily understood, possessed its one leading tenet - the common ownership of property:

"La cité harmonieuse pour assurer sa vie corporelle, cueille tous les produits naturels qui lui sont disponibles, parce qu'il ne convient pas que des produits disponibles soient soustraits au bien de la cite; en particulier il ne convient pas que des produits disponibles soient distraits, et ainsi soustraits au bien de la cité par un parti de citoyens ou par un citoyen, par un peuple ou par un individu." 1

"La cité harmonieuse, pour assurer sa vie corporelle, travaille, s'il faut, toute la matière naturelle proposee à l'activité des citoyens." 2

"Tous les produits naturels et tous les produits du travail que les ouvriers de la cité harmonieuse font pour assurer la vie corporelle de la cité sont à la cité." 3

It is this collective ownership and production that Leo condemns on the basis of a right to private property which is relative to man's right "for the preservation of life and for life's well-being." 4 Now God has so arranged that man can satisfy this need from:

"...inexhaustible fertility of the earth. Nor must we, at this stage, have recourse to the State. Man is older than the State. And he holds the right of providing for the life of his body prior to the formation of any State. And to say that God has given the earth to the use and enjoyment of the universal race is not to deny that there can be private property.

---

1 De la cité harmonieuse, p.93. Complete title: Marcel, le premier dialogue de la cite harmonieuse. The ideas of this work were first formulated on June 7, 1896 during a visit to Orleans by Marcel Baudouin. See p. 85. Péguy finished writing them in April, 1898. In this study we shall use the early date because it is significant for points of comparison.
2 Ibid., p.94.
3 Ibid., p.114.
4 RN, 7.
For God has granted the earth to mankind in general; not in the sense that all without distinction can deal with it as they please, but rather that no part of it has been assigned to anyone in particular and that the limits of private possession have been left to be fixed by man's own industry and the laws of individual peoples."

Thus if man changes a wild and barren land into fertile soil he is entitled to that which his labor produced and so too, if in industry his labor produces products, he is entitled to a remuneration in the form of a wage which enables him to secure property if he so desires.

"The law, therefore, should favor ownership, and its policy should be to induce as many people as possible to become owners. Many excellent results will follow from this; and first of all, property will certainly become more equitably divided."

Thus without foregoing the right of private ownership of productive property, society will gradually find the breach between its two widely different castes disappearing because everyone will have his own invested capital. In meeting the claims of the working classes the Church "acts on the decided view that for these purposes recourse should be had, in due measure and degree, to the help of the law and of State authority." Pope Leo expressly states:

"...the individual or the family ... should be allowed free and untrammelled action (only in so) far as is consistent with the common good and the interests of others... rulers should anxiously safeguard the community and all its parts; the community, because the conservation of the community is so emphatically the business of the supreme power, that the safety of the commonwealth is not only the first law, but is a government's whole reason of existence."
If the State had acted on these wise words of Leo XIII, uttered over fifty years ago, there would have been less economic domination by a few; there would have been less ruthless exploitation of natural resources. It is in conformity with Catholic teaching that the nearer a particular industry approaches to a public utility the more likelihood may possibly exist for favoring public ownership. Had Péguy understood the encyclical in its full import, it seems he would have agreed at least in part. Were not he and Leo XIII striving for the same goal?

"It cannot but be good for the commonwealth to secure from misery those on whom it so largely depends." 11

"Nous ne cherchions pas moins que le salut temporel de l'humanité par l'assainissement du monde ouvrier." 12

It is difficult either to compare or to contrast the basic idea of Leo XIII and Charles Péguy concerning the regulation of "biens". The policy of seizure by the State or socialist multitudes is repudiated by both men:

"Neither justice nor common good allows anyone to seize that which belongs to another, or, under the pretext of futile and ridiculous equality to lay hands on other people's fortunes." 13

Daniel Halévy speaks of Péguy as condemning this very policy in his criticism of the socialists and radical parliaments.

"La protection des enfants, la lutte contre l'alcoolisme, le relevement des métiers par l'enseignement professionnel, voilà, au gre de Péguy, des tâches républicaines. Mais les socialistes et radicaux

---

13 RN., 30.
parlementaires ne savent que se venger de leurs adversaires et faire main basse sur leur biens."

Both agree that there should be a change in the existing division of property. Leo XIII advocates a more equitable division and maintains that it should be the policy of the law to induce as many people to become owners as possible. Péguy, as we mentioned above, would have the means of production belong to "la cité, l'ensemble des citoyens." The division of the products, however, follows a two-fold plan. In "la cité harmonieuse":

"Le partage des produits est fait selon l'harmonie:... Chaque citoyen choisit les produits qu'il voit les mieux faits pour lui parmi ceux qui lui sont disponibles, et il y en a au moins une part qu'il peut choisir, parce que les produits ne sont pas insuffisants aux consommateurs. ... Les consommateurs ne choisissent pas des produits qui ne leur conviennent pas, parce qu'ils sont les citoyens de la cité harmonieuse et non pas les rivaux de la cité" 16

But this is "la cité parfaite!"

"La cité socialiste" is still "la cité imparfaite" so its members have not reached that disinterested state wherein they do not so much as know what the bourgeois society means when it speaks of equality, justice, and charity. These sentiments of reparation "supposent des manques et la cité harmonieuse ne laisse manquer de rien les citoyens!" 17

Therefore, while Péguy awaits the realization of the ideal he offers the alternative program of "la cité socialiste." On

14 Charles Péguy, p.57.
15 FN, 35. For a fuller development of this point consult Quadragesimo Anno, an encyclical by Pius XI written on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of Rerum Novarum; May 15, 1931.
16 De la cité harmonieuse, 1896,X,116-117. 17 Ibid., p.117.
what basis, then, will the division of products be made in "la cité socialiste"? Equality:

"Les moyens de consommation seront laissés à la libre disposition des citoyens en quantité autant que possible égales entre elles." 18

And who will make the division? In the system of Leo XIII, amplified by Pius XI, distributive ownership would be born from the action of the workers and employers themselves; the latter, welcoming as owners into their plants their own laborers by opening to them fair shares of stock; the former, by means of economy and industry, using this opportunity to better their condition in life. If they wish, they can obtain a share in the land.

The rôle of the State is primarily "the safeguarding, by legal enactment and policy, of private property." 19

"The gift of authority is from God, ... and it should be exercised as the power of God is exercised - with a fatherly solicitude which not only guides the whole but reaches to details as well. Whenever the general interest of any particular class suffers, or is threatened with evils which can in no other way be met, the public authority must step in to meet them." 20

Thus it is within the powers of the state to prevent exploitation of the workers by "the callousness of employers and the greed of unrestrained competition" 21 - "for it is the province of the commonwealth to consult for the common good" 22 "but the law must not undertake more, nor go further, than is required for the remedy of the evil or the removal of the danger." 23

18 "De la cité socialiste," 1897, I, 264. 19 RN, 30 20 Ibid., 28. 21 Ibid., 2. 22 Ibid., 26. 23 Ibid., 29.
In "la cité harmonieuse" the division of products among the citizens is considered as being but another type of work. Those workers engaged therein do not lord it over the others as the inhabitants of that "cité" do not think of classifying works into major works and minor works.

"Les produits ne sont pas partagés aux citoyens de la cité harmonieuse par les marchands, ni par des gouvernements, mais par ceux des ouvriers qui font le métier de partager des produits. Ainsi les produits sont bien partagés aux citoyens de la cité harmonieuse." 24

As for the rôle of the government, we must remember that for Péguy there should be no government as such. "La cité" is "l'ensemble des citoyens" and the only bond that unites them is "la mystique de la cité."

In "la cité socialiste" there is recognition of a socialist government which regulates the division of work in measures as equal as possible, as it does the division of the products for consumption. Such a measure is a necessity until men have reached the perfection of choosing according to harmony.

24 De la cité harmonieuse, 1896, X, 120.
VI Private Property

For Péguy, the founding of "la cité harmonieuse" by way of "la cité socialiste" is to be a gradual emancipation brought about by the development through instruction of the young men who have not yet been contaminated by bourgeois sentiments.

Consequently, while still living in a society based on recognition of private property, it is necessary that Péguy evaluate this doctrine even though he does not favor it. He is too big a man to overthrow a policy without weighing its relative merits. However, before he will recognize its justification, the "cité" must not harbor one miserable person:

"Aussi longtemps qu'il y a un homme dehors, la porte qui lui est fermée au nez ferme une cité d'injustice et de haine. ... Jean Coste a le droit de nourrir sa femme et ses enfants..." ¹

This situation must be remedied before society can rest on a moral foundation:

"C'est donc ici une question très grave ... c'est vraiment une question de droit commun. C'est une question d'un certain malheur commun, d'une grande misère commune. C'est une question de la vie générale de la nation et de disponibilités budgétaires." ²

This was written in 1913. In 1902 he had been even more specific:

"... avec cent mille francs bien administrés on peut organiser, émanciper un assez grand nombre de travailleurs." ³

Leo too demands state aid in such cases:

¹ "De Jean Coste," 1902, II, 69.
² L'Argent, 1913, III, 435.
"...it is right that extreme necessity be met by public aid; for each family is a part of the common wealth." 4

Once having eliminated all "misère", Péguy admits that there is no strict obligation to form a "cité harmonieuse":

"...quand tout homme est pourvu du nécessaire, du pain, et du livre, que nous importe la répartition du luxe." 5

After all, "la cité harmonieuse" is not to know equality as it is a "sentiment malsain":

"C'est un sentiment composé, mêlé, souvent impur, où la vanité, l'envie, la cupidité contribuent." 6

Leo's censure is no less forceful:

"...that ideal equality of which so much is said would, in reality, be the leveling down of all to the same condition of misery and dishonor." 7

Therefore equality will be tolerated in "la cité socialiste" only as a stepping stone between "la plus monstrueuse inégalité économique que l'on ait jamais vue dans l'histoire du monde" 8 and "le partage des produits fait selon l'harmonie." 9

Thus it is that in the present economic system it is not simple ownership of property that Péguy condemns but monopolistic ownership, as is indicated in the following passage where he is commenting on the nèvèr: Pécondité:

"Mathieu et sa race finissent par exercer le droit d'us et d'abus sur un nombre incalculable de moyens de production." 10

4 RN, 11.
5 "De Jean Coste," 1902, II, 70.
6 Ibid., p.70.
7 RN, 12.
8 L'Argent, 1913, III, 401-402.
9 De la cité harmonieuse, 1896, X, 118.
10 Récentes oeuvres de Zola, 1902, II, 113.
"Aussi longtemps que Mathieu fait sa terre et sa ferme avec ses bras, le roman peut sembler invraisemblable, il énonce un travail légitime, une production légitime, une vie légitime. Aussitôt que Mathieu réalise des bénéfices sur le travail de ses serviteurs et de ses servantes, - et cela ne manque pas d'arriver, bien que le roman sait apparemment la-dessus, puisque Mathieu achète une immense étendue de terres et fournit de l'argent pour acheter l'usine, - aussitôt que Mathieu devient un patron, tout ce travail devient illégitime, toute cette vie devient illégitime." 11

"La fortune d'Ambroise s'était découpée en dix ans... Les frontières n'existaient pas pour lui ... Je demande simplement quelle différence il y a entre cet Ambroise et un homme de proie." 12

"Loin que l'Bookit soit un livre d'humanité, de solidarité, c'est le livre de la conquête de l'humanité par les Froment." 13

We recognize here a difference in degree of intensity in the attitudes of the two concerning private property. Péguy acknowledges reluctantly the justification of its existence, while the Supreme Pontiff stresses repeatedly that "Private ownership...is the natural right of man; and to exercise that right is not only lawful but necessary." 14

On the other hand, both are in accord concerning its misuse. We have just quoted some of Péguy's denunciations. Among the evils of existing society, as already seen, Leo lists "the concentration of so many branches of trade in the hands of a few individuals, so that a small number of very rich men have been able to lay upon the masses of the poor a yoke little better than slavery itself." 15

11 Ibid., p. 115.  14 FN, 19.  
12 Ibid., p. 117, 118.  15 Ibid., 2.  
13 Ibid., p. 124, 125.
"It is essential in these times of covetous greed, to keep the multitude within the line of duty; for if all may justly strive to better their condition, yet neither justice nor the common good allows anyone to seize that which belongs to another." 16

In estimating Péguy's recognition of the right to property ownership by first occupancy, we again refer to his criticism of Zola's novel:

"En admettant qu'il y ait un droit du premier occupant, le premier occupant n'a le droit d'occuper que sa part, il n'a pas le droit de préoccuper des plaines." 17

This is basically the same principle as that of Leo XIII:

"Now, when man thus spends the industry of his mind and the strength of his body in procuring the fruits of nature by that act he makes his own that portion of nature's field which he cultivates - that portion on which he leaves, as it were, the impress of his own personality;" 18

Note that Pope Leo XIII speaks of "that portion of nature's field which he cultivates." Certainly this does not justify a man's claiming title to unlimited fields only to let them lie idle. Rt. Rev. John A. Ryan in his Distributive Justice explains this position quite clearly:

"There seems to be no good reason to think that the first occupant is justified in claiming as his own more land than he can cultivate by his own labor, or with the assistance of those who prefer to be his employees or his tenants rather than independent proprietors. 'He has not the right to reserve for himself alone the whole territory, but only that part of it which is really useful to him, which he can make fruitful'." 19

16 Ibid., 30
18 RN, 7.
While this passage limits the extent of first occupancy, it at the same time justifies a certain amount of productive property. Thus a middle position is taken opposed at one and the same time to concentration of productive wealth and communal ownership alone.

Péguy in the "Préparation du Congrès," 5 fev.1900, cites a long passage from Action Socialiste by Jaurès. Since Péguy was an ardent admirer of the early Jaurès may we not suppose that these are also his views?

"...Propriété, c'est-à-dire rapport étroit et personnel de l'homme et de la chose, de l'homme et d'une portion de la nature transformée par lui, - et voilà que la propriété devient de plus en plus une fiction, monstrueuse qui livre à quelques hommes des forces naturelles dont ils ne savent même pas la loi et des forces humaines dont ils ne savent même pas le nom!"

While we have here an acceptance of the right of private property so long as it remains individual alone, the latter part of the quotation indicates an immediate rejection of that right as soon as it becomes productive. On the other hand, let us not presume that Pope Leo XIII would countenance those forces referred to by Jaurès. It is because of the imminence of such evils that he adds the second part to the following quotation:

"...the limits of private possession have been left to be fixed by man's own industry and the laws of individual peoples," 21

By this we recognize the obligation of the State to prevent men from exploiting both natural and human forces by means of wise legislation against monopolistic control and labor

21 RN, 7.
injustices.

It is of interest to note to what degree Péguy carried out his theories in his own life. Writing to his friends and subscribers he acknowledges having undergone a natural temptation of young socialists:

"Et pouvoir travailler. C'était aussi la tentation du travail. Travailler pour soi, comme nous disions naïvement à l'Ecole. J'avais la tentation de travailler pour moi." 22

He did not, however, succumb to the temptation. Only once in his life did he have at his disposal any sizeable amount of money; and that was his wife's dowry! Wholeheartedly he plunged it into the cause - founding that short-lived enterprise "La Librairie Socialiste." 23

"Ma nouvelle famille était d'accord avec moi sur ce que je devais lancer dans l'action socialiste ces quarante mille francs. Ma famille pensait avec moi qu'un socialiste ne peut garder un capital individuel" 24

Certainly, Péguy never intended to grow rich through founding Les Cahiers and he never did. The more numerous his subscribers became the more pages did he put in each copy. Many of his subscribers could pay but little; there was no set subscription price:

22 "A nos amis, à nos abonnés", 1909, III, 323.
23 Later, Péguy was to regret this step as the ill-fated "Librairie" dominated by politically minded socialistes prevented him from expressing his own views. Had he invested this money at that time in Les Cahiers de la Quinzaine, he would have been able, by the publicity gained through the Dreyfus case, to establish his project on a firm financial foundation. Capitalistic reveries? Péguy hesitated founding Les Cahiers because he was afraid of becoming "autoritaire."
24 "Pour ma maison", 1900, I, 277.
"Il s'abonne à vingt francs. Il était riche."
"Il s'abonne à huit francs, parce qu'il n'est pas riche." 25

"Justement parce que nous sommes un essai d'institution communiste et non pas une réussite d'entreprise capitaliste individuelle, nous envoyons nos cahiers à ceux de nos amis qui nous les demandent." 26

Idealistic as this may be, Péguy realized that in this capitalist society even would-be socialists must depend upon money as a means of exchange. He must pay his workers and in order to pay them he must be paid!

"Ce serait une erreur de s'imaginer que l'on ne doit pas nous payer parce que nous sommes socialistes. Nous sommes assurés que la plupart de nos camarades les ouvriers compositeurs, les correcteurs, et les imprimeurs sont socialistes aussi." 27

Péguy was willing to admit that the possession of a small amount of property need not vitiate one's attitude. Thus in 1913 when writing words of praise concerning the élèves-maîtres who taught in the local schools while he was a boy, he includes this tribute:

"...fils...de petits propriétaires, souvent petits propriétaires eux-mêmes, de quelque lopin de terre quelque part dans le département, ils restaient le même peuple, nullement endimanchée, je vous prie de le croire...." 28

26 "Réponse provisoire", 1900, I, 78.
27 "Deuxième série au provincial", 1900, I, 251.
28 L'Argent, 1913, III, 406.
VII. "Notre Socialisme"

We have said that Péguy's socialism was different from socialism as ordinarily understood. It was almost personal - "notre socialisme," and by "notre" he meant those chosen few who like himself loved humanity so disinterestedly that they refused to contaminate their high ideals by party politics. This was the reason that he estranged himself so soon from "Le Parti Socialiste" (1899), that he denounced so vehemently the dogmas of Jules Gesde and that he abandoned the "Librairie Socialiste", (1899). This meant that he must isolate himself from those who had been closest - a hurt keener than most politicians realize because the community bond of friendship was such a precious thing to Péguy. But he insisted on being always true to principle: - "Mais je dois faire ce que je dois et non pas ce que j'aime le mieux." 3

Péguy with his peculiar penetrating characteristic of pushing a point to its ultimate conclusion saw in his associates engaged in party strife men who sought favor with the

---

1 Daniel Halévy, in Charles Péguy reveals the sentiments entertained by Péguy in the environment of his little socialist bookshop - a rendezvous for active members of "le Parti Socialiste": "Mais dans le Parti Socialiste on respire trop souvent la lourde odeur des masses qui votent, quemandent, menacent l'État pour avoir son argent et la faveur de ses lois; on coude trop souvent, aussi, ces plébéiens intellectuels qui rôdent autour des masses pour s'élever par elles, sur elles, pour flatter et trahir. Péguy sent tout cela. Il s'en va. Il veut le grand air, la camaraderie, l'amitié, toutes libres. Il renonce pas à socialisme, mais il s'écarte des socialistes..." p.49. Péguy was somewhat unfair toward his associates, Jaures, above all, who was sincere in his efforts to better the conditions of the masses.

2 See Chapter I, note 6.

masses by flattery and betrayal. Of that type Leo had said:

"They cheat the people and impose upon them, and their lying promises will only make the evil worse than before." 4

Péguy's "grand cousin" reveals some of the cunning policies of "le Groupe d'études sociales d'Orléans":

"Ce ne sont pas des mensonges, répondit vivement mon cousin. Ce sont des consolations. Et des encouragements. Il faut bien consoler le peuple. Il est si malheureux. Et il faut bien l'encourager. Il est si mou."

Pierre Delaire 5 replies briefly but in a tone of finality:

"Mais quand on dit un mensonge on est un malhonnête homme." 6

The "grand cousin" speaks again:

"Nous semons à pleines mains la suspicion. C'est beaucoup plus facile que de semer l'éducation. Nous piquardons les gens que nous aimons le mieux. Pour leur bien. ... Nous les étouffons de tendresse. Quand c'est de tendresse feinte, le résultat est déjà remarquable. Mais quand c'est de tendresse vraie que nous étouffons les gens que nous aimons, nous touchons à la politique sublime." 7

Without doubt, here is a crafty agitator who perverts men's judgments and stirs up the people to sedition. 8

The coming generation must be taught true socialism. They must not be the victims of the deplorable tutelage practiced everywhere on the weak by the strong:

"Car ces jeunes gens ignoraient à peu près tout du personnel qui se passait déjà sous le nom de socialistes. On les avait en effet soumis aux deplorables moyens d'élevage ... On leur mentait pour leur bien."

---

4 RN, 14.
5 Péguy frequently enlivens his articles by a conversation, using as personnages his two pseudonyms: Pierre Deloire and Marcel Baudoin.
6 "Compte rendu de mandat," 1901, I, 373, 375.
7 Ibid., p. 359.
8 See RN, 1.
Péguy's strict adherence to the truth persists through the years. In 1913 he writes:

"On frémit ... quand on voit des hommes instruits et chargés d'une aussi lourde responsabilité, (car enfin ils se sont chargés de leur peuple), mentir aussi délibérément à leur peuple." 10

Thus it was that he who sought to wage war on "le mal" found "l'esprit révolutionnaire était atteint dans ses sources les plus profondes." 11

With the great Pontiff, he struck at the roots of the trouble:

"Nous sommes en effet de ceux qui ne peuvent nullement distinguer la révolution sociale de la révolution morale, en ce double sens, que d'un côté nous ne croyons pas, que l'on puisse, opérer profondément, sincèrement, sérieusement la révolution morale de l'humanité sans opérer toute la révolution de son habitat social et qu'inversement nous croyons que toute révolution formelle serait vaine s'il ne comportait pas le labourage et la profonde eversion des consciences." 12

Even so, will the moral reform foreshadowed by the economic policies of the Rerum Novarum fail to materialize unless "all men be persuaded that the primary thing needful is to return to real Christianity, in the absence of which all the plans and devices of the wisest will be of little avail." 13

Péguy is constantly at odds with the socialists who find it easier to fanatacize the crowd by promoting an anonymous dictatorship of the proletariat, by urging them to crush the

9 "Pour ma maison," 1900, I, 272.
10 Le Argent (suite), 1913, XIV, 154.
12 "Deuxième série au provincial," 1900, I, 253.
13 RN, 45.
few who they say are responsible than to promote by peaceful means the inauguration of a better city. Péguy is definitely opposed to violence. His "cité socialiste" will be promulgated by the explanations of teachers, writers, artists, philosophers, etc. It must be freely accepted to be effective.

He is far from glorying in his quotation from Léon Blum:

"En dépit des fautes, des rancunes, des violences, l'unité socialiste était en marche." 14

Péguy sees in this campaign of violence a striving for power:

"Chacun vend sa part de juste liberté pour une part d'autorité injuste qu'il exercera." 15

Each division of the party has its "Chef de bande," jealously seeking advantages for himself and his group, entirely forgetful of "la mystique de la Cité" so that Péguy ironically writes:

"Irons-nous vanter au peuple, qui est en général simple et droit, la dictature impersonnelle du prolétariat? Mais le premier citoyen libre à qui nous adresserons la parole nous dira simplement et droitement: 'Pardon, monsieur, mais je voudrais seulement savoir quelles personnes exerceront la dictature impersonnelle de la classe ouvrière.'" 16

This "citoyen libre" of whom Péguy speaks - is he not a representative of that group which Leo describes?

"It is most true that by far the larger part of the people who work prefer to improve themselves by honest labor rather than by doing wrong to others." 17

Distrustful of authoritarian groups as we see Péguy to be

14 Compte rendu de mandat, 1901, I, 372. Léon Blum also was opposed to violence. He strongly advocated unity in the Socialist Party.
16 "Reponse provisoire," 1900, I, 84-85.
17 RN, 30.
we cannot call him an anarchist for, except in "la cité harmonieuse" a government is always recognized. Even "la cité socialiste" must have a government. But since the men there will be free from misery, they will more easily be governed. Above all, their souls must remain free. The essential tasks of the government are the division of work to be done and the distribution of products to be consumed.

Since "la cité harmonieuse" was to be "la cité parfaite" there would be no need of government other than "la mystique de la cité." Where there is an absence of hatred, lying, jealousy and rivalry, where love of work removes its natural repugnance, where products are divided by disinterested citizens according to harmony, what need is there for a governmental organization? It was a magnificent goal and one which Péguy kept before him constantly, although he soon saw the impossibility of realizing it. The Tharaud brothers, who remained loyal friends from the days of "la cour rose" to the battle of the Marne, give us this testimony:

"Mais lui ne s'est pas résigné à abandonner le vieux rêve. Hors du monde, hors de la vie, il est alle le demander aux réalités invisibles." 18

It is good to know that there he would find it in "the inheritance of the Kingdom of Heaven. 'If sons, heirs also; heirs indeed of God, and coheirs of Christ.'" 19 for "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him." 20

Péguy, in common with fellow socialists, was well aware of the existence of class distinctions and of the importance of the discussion and solution of this problem. It is in the execution of "la lutte de classe" that he differs from the more radical members of the party. This aspect will be discussed later in the chapter. At present, we note his preoccupation with the problem itself:

"Je ne suis pas suspect d'oublier les classements sociaux, ni d'en oublier, ni d'en meconnaitre l'importance... dans le monde moderne. J'en ai parlé, j'en ai traité plusieurs fois dans les cahiers, je viens d'en parler, non sans une certaine amertume. Je fais presque trop profession, métier d'en parler, d'en traiter dans les cahiers." 21

So, too, the whole tone of the encyclical recognizes the existence of this struggle and the importance of its discussion and solution:

"The elements of a conflict are unmistakable, ... It is not easy to define the relative right and the mutual duties of the wealthy and of the poor, of Capital and of Labor.... All agree, and there can be no question whatever, that some remedy must be found, and quickly found...." 22

Both authors are vivid in their description of conditions in the modern economic world. Leo is concise and penetrating; Péguy, naturally, more rhetorical and fluent:

"On the one hand there is the party which holds the power because it holds the wealth; which has in its grasp all labor and all trade; which manipulates for its own purposes and its own benefit all the sources of supply, and which is powerfully represented in the councils of the State itself. On the other side there is the needy and powerless multitude, sore and

22 RN, 1, 2.
suffering, always ready for disturbances." 23

"Nous avons le guichet discriminant. Il y a celui qui est derrière le guichet, et celui qui est devant, ceux qui défient, devant, comme à la parade, en on ne sait quelle grotesque parade de servitude, librement consentie. La est la grande, la vraie séparation du peuple de France." 24

L'Argent est tout, domine tout dans le monde moderne à un tel point, si entièrement, si totalement que la séparation sociale horizontale des riches et des pauvres est devenue infiniment plus grave, plus coupante, plus absolue si je puis dire que la séparation verticale de race de juif et des chrétiens." 25

...il y a un abîme entre elles, un abîme d'ignorance et de méconnaissance, de l'une à l'autre, un abîme de non-communication. Le dernier des serfs était de la même chrétienté que le roi. Aujourd'hui il n'y a plus aucune cité. Le monde riche et le monde pauvre vivent ou enfin font semblant comme deux masses, comme deux couches horizontales séparées par un vide, par un abîme d'incommunication." 26

"Et jamais l'argent n'a été à ce point, le seul maître et le Dieu. Et jamais le riche n'a été aussi couvert contre le pauvre et le pauvre aussi découvert contre le riche." 27

Yet apart from these vast differences between the two classes a relationship exists which is fundamental, as appears in the following basic point of Pope Leo's program:

"Each requires the other; Capital cannot do without Labor, nor Labor without Capital." 28

The same idea is found in Péguy's criticism of the modern world:

"Mais outre l'un et l'autre, outre ces antagonisme et solidarité, ... il y a entre l'ouvrier et le patron une certaine parenté profonde, une certaine consonance profonde, que je nommerais industrielle...." 29

Both men see in the vice of envy a deep seated cause of the struggle.

"...ils se croyaient socialistes parce qu'ils étaient envieux..." 30
"...the Socialists, working on the poor man's envy of the rich..." 31

Here it is that Péguy's socialism comes close to the Christian principles of Leo XIII:

"...comme si le socialisme au contraire n'était pas l'ignorance même de toute concurrence, et ainsi de toute jalousie, de toute envie;" 32

Recognizing, then, the existence at present of a conflict between the ranks of society, is a violent world revolution a necessity? Both Leo XIII and Péguy say, No.

"The great mistake ... is to possess oneself of the idea that class is naturally hostile to class; that rich and poor are intended by nature to live at war with one another. So irrational and false is this view, that the exact contrary is the truth. Just as the symmetry of the human body is the disposition of the members of the body, so in a State it is ordained by nature that these two classes should exist in harmony and agreement, and should, as it were, fit into one another, so as to maintain the equilibrium of the body politic." 33

"Nous pouvons encore penser librement que l'histoire ne sera pas servilement conforme aux suppositions logiques du présent; nous pouvons espérer librement que la révolution ne se fera pas en éliminant brutalement de la cité les bourgeois capitalistes et tous ceux qu'une audacieuse démagogie aurait plaisir à nommer anarchistes ou bourgeois mais en incorporant à la cité prochaine les éléments démocratiques, travailleurs, et profondément socialistes élaborés un peu partout, très peu partout, dans les classes de la précédente société bourgeoise." 34

30 "Préparation du congrès," 1900, XI, 82.
31 RN, 3.
32 RN, 15.
33 "Préparation du congrès," 1900, XI, 82.
34 RN, 15.
Péguy's prophecy seems to be coming true in two ways. First, in the spirit of Péguy, modern society is gradually assimilating into itself a common ownership of public utilities, without violently destroying capitalism; secondly, in the spirit of Pope Leo XIII, modern industry through the policy of distributive ownership in said industries is peacefully breaking down here and there the wide breach between the two classes.

"Classes should exist in harmony and agreement," says the Pontiff. How like "l'harmonie" of Péguy's delightful city where each worker does that for which he is best suited, and the ugly sentiments of jealousy, hatred, rivalry and revenge do not exist. How like the days of his youth when no one so much as thought of a social equality or inequality:

"Une inégalité commune, communément acceptée, une inégalité générale, un ordre, une hiérarchie qui paraissait naturelle ne faisaient qu'étager les différents niveaux d'un commun bonheur. On ne parle aujourd'hui que de l'égalité. Et nous vivons dans la plus monstreuse inégalité économique que l'on n'ait jamais vue dans l'histoire du monde."

We have already quoted Pope Leo as saying:

"The great mistake ... is to possess oneself of the idea that class is naturally hostile to class; that rich and poor are intended by nature to live at war with one another."

Péguy, too, outlaws class struggle:

"Car non seulement la lutte de classe n'a aucune valeur socialiste, mais elle n'a même aucun sens qui soit socialiste. Toute guerre est bourgeoise, car la guerre est fondée sur la compétition, sur la rivalité; sur la concurrence; toute lutte est bourgeoise, et la lutte des classes est bourgeoise comme les autres luttes."

35 L'Argent, 1913, III, 402.
36 RN, 15.
It is this refusal of Péguy to advocate the "lutte de classe" that puts him at odds with his fellow socialists. Criticisms come from various sides - the Second Provincial in a letter written in Nyons, January 13, 1900 warned him to conform himself to the "Parti":

"Que chacun combatte pour le socialisme, et toujours et exclusivement contre le capitalisme." 38

A socialist critic writes:

"Je retrouve ce ton de persiflage, ce dilétantisme, que je t'ai déjà reproché, en d'autres occasions. Je n'y trouve pas cette vigoureuse critique de la société capitaliste que j'attendais. Je n'y trouve pas cette sommation adressée aux bourgeois de redevenir hommes. Je n'y trouve pas surtout ces chaudes paroles d'encouragement répandues sur les bonnes gens de province qui luttent, solitaires contre l'oppression qui les étreint." 39

It was for this same reason that Péguy lost the election for delegate of the "groupe d'études sociales d'Orléans."

The charges brought against him by his rival, "citizen" Roland, were related to Péguy by his "grand cousin":

"Le citoyen Roland n'eut pas de peine à nous démontrer que mon petit cousin n'était qu'un de ces vils intellectuels, un dreyfusard, un bourgeois, qui, veulent commander au prolétariat, duper le prolétariat, le détourner de ses devoirs et de ses intérêts propres, lui faire oublier la lutte de classe." 40

To sum up, "Notre Socialisme" must have its origins in the heart. Based on a sincere love of one's neighbor, it can have in it no taint of deception; hence, Péguy's condemnation of self-seeking party politics. Opposed to a violent revolution, he ceaselessly strove to inaugurate a better city by

38 "Du second provincial," 1900, I, 77.
the peaceful means of a moral regeneration. Such selfless devotion won for him the tribute so often quoted:

"Ce socialisme de Péguy ressemblait beaucoup plus au socialisme de Saint François qu'à celui de Karl Marx."

VIII. Philosophical Aspects of Work

The preceding chapters, because of their very nature, have already treated the "question of the hour - the condition of the working people." It is not the purpose of the present study to repeat what has been said concerning the economic misery of so many persons. The intent is rather to present a few philosophical aspects related to the universal law of work. That it is universal, linked as it is to original sin, both Pope Leo XIII and Charles Péguy are sure:

"As regards bodily labor, even had man never fallen from the state of innocence, he would not have been wholly preoccupied; but that which would have been his free choice, his delight, became afterwards compulsory, and the painful expiation of his sin. 'Cursed be the earth in thy works; in thy labor thou shalt eat of it all the days of thy life.' In like manner, the other pains and hardships of life will have no end or cessation,... for the consequences of sin are bitter and hard to bear, and they must be with man as long as life lasts."

Eve, one of Péguy's last literary efforts, contains numerous passages recognizing the foregoing truth. Here are but a few:

"Et moi je vous salûte ô première ouvrière.
Première assujettie à la loi du travail.
Vous avez tant levé vers le premier portail
Des yeux tout alourdis d'un morne prière." 4

"Et je vous aime tant ô la plus sérieuse
Et la plus prosterne aux genoux du travail." 5

"Aïeule aux maigres doigts, seule laborieuse." 6

In Nouveau Théologien, Péguy stresses the universality of this law:

1 RN, 44.
3 RN, 14.
4 Eve, 1913, VII; 120.
5 Ibid, p. 40.
6 Ibid, p. 41.
"Nous avons tous reçu la commune loi de travail ...
Le commandement du travail procédait comme toute servitude de la chute d'Adam. C'était un châtiment de justice. 'Tu mangeras ton pain à la sueur de ton front.'" 7

Leo XIII uses the same quotation from the Old Testament when speaking of the personal and necessary character of man's labor:

"To labor is to exert oneself for the sake of procuring what is necessary for the purpose of life, and most of all for self-preservation. 'In the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat bread.'" 8

Since it is fundamentally true that work is a universal chastisement, must man for all time feel its galling yoke? Not at all. As there is an Old Law and a New Law, so too, is there an Old Work and a New Work. Péguy expresses it so beautifully that we quote him at length:

"Jésus endossant pour ainsi dire cette loi et la loi d'humilité en a fait une redevance d'amour. Ainsi est né le Travail nouveau. Des lors des milliers et des centaines de milliers d'ateliers chrétiens n'ont plus été, ne sont plus que des imitations de l'atelier de Nazareth. L'homme aujourd'hui, telle est la loi nouvelle, tel est le statut nouveau l'homme aujourd'hui qui travaille n'est plus un forçat qui fait son temps. L'homme aujourd'hui est un homme qui fait comme Jésus, qui imite Jésus. Le travail quotidien n'est plus une peine, il n'est plus uniquement une peine, il n'est plus que premièrement une peine. Il est aujourd'hui une imitation d'un auguste travail quotidien. L'homme qui fait sa journée est bon. Il n'a que ça à faire. Comme tout, autre et au premier chef il est, sur ainsi d'imiter Jésus, L'homme qui fait sa journée imite au premier rang Jésus qui faisait sa journée." 9

Similarly, the Holy Pontiff points out that the advent of Christ has given to labor a certain dignity:

---

7 Un nouveau théologien, 1911, XIII, 33,34. The perfection required of the citizens of the "Cité Harmonieuse" would argue that the early Péguy disregarded the importance and consequences of this doctrine.
8 RN, 34. "Genesis," 311.
9 Un nouveau théologien, 1911, XIII, 34.
"There is nothing to be ashamed of in seeking one's bread by labor. This is strengthened by what we see in Christ Himself, Who, 'whereas he was rich, became poor'; 10 and Who being the Son of God, and God Himself chose to seem and to be considered the son of a carpenter - nay, did not disdain to spend a great part of His life as a carpenter Himself. 'Is not this the carpenter, the Son of Mary?' 11 From the contemplation of this Divine example, it is easy to understand that the true dignity and excellence of man lies in his moral qualities, that is, in virtue." 12

Perhaps it was this Christlike attitude toward work, hidden in deep recesses of his soul, unknown to Péguıy himself, that the Tharaud brothers saw as they watched the would-be socialist at work:

"J'ai vu là, certains jours, éclater tout naïvement une joie, un orgueil d'atelier qui, plus que tout ce qu'on pourrait dire, m'a fait sentir ce que Péguıy comprenait sous le mot de joie socialiste: c'était le contentement du coeur, cette satisfaction absolue quand la besogne est faite et bien faite, cette activité joyeuse qui semblait, rue Pierre Dupont, animer jusqu'aux machines, cette communion du travail intellectuel et manuel qui était pour lui l'idéal de la cité harmonieuse dont nous jetions les fondements autrefois dans la cour rose." 13

It was the special characteristic of that idealistic city that the work be chosen according to harmony:

"Chaque citoyen choisit le part de travail pour quoi il se sent le mieux fait parmi celles qui lui sont disponibles, et il y en a une au moins qu'il peut choisir, puisque les parts de travail ne sont pas excessives aux travailleurs. Si un citoyen, se faisait illusion sur ses aptitudes, avait mal choisi sa part, il n'aurait qu'à faire son choix parmi les parts de travail qui lui seraient a nouveau disponibles" 14

This recognition of individual abilities in the choice of work is not too far removed from the following reflections of

11 "St. Mark," VI:3.
12 RN, 20.
13 Notre Cher Péguıy, II, 21-22.
14 De la cité harmonieuse, 1896, X, 104.
the Pope of the workingman:

"There naturally exists among mankind innumerable differences of the most important kind; people differ in capability, in diligence, in health, and in strength; and unequal fortune is a necessary result of inequality in condition. Such inequality is far from being disadvantageous either to individuals or to the community; social and public life can only go on by the help of various kinds of capacity and the playing of many parts, and each man, as a rule, chooses the part which peculiarly suits the case." 15

We have already seen that the program of the Rerum Novarum for the improvement of conditions for the working man will be conducive to the well-being of the State. Here is another statement of the position:

"Men always work harder and more readily when they work on that which is their own; nay, they learn to love the very soil which yields in response to the labor of their hands, not only food to eat, but an abundance of the good things for themselves and those who are dear to them. It is evident how such a spirit of willing labor would add to the produce of the earth and to the wealth of the community." 16

Can we conversely say that Péguy's program for la Cité will bring with it a personal satisfaction to the laborer?

Péguy would say, Yes:

"Les citoyens de la cité harmonieuse ne sont pas les rivaux de la cité." 17

"Les ouvriers de la cité harmonieuse aiment leur métier; ils aiment le travail qu'ils font pour assurer la vie corporelle de la cité, parce qu'ils sont les citoyens de la cité; d'ailleurs ils savent que rien de leur travail n'est soustrait au bien de la cité." 18

Je suis un économ, un gérant, un intendant, un ouvrier, un employe, un commis. Mais je me suis

15 RN, 14.
16 Ibid., 35.
17 De la cité harmonieuse, 1896, X, 104.
18 Ibid., p.109.
laissait dire que le socialisme revenait à restaurer dans leur dignité morale ces modestes fonctions de la vie économique sans quoi l'univers de la pensée s'arrêterait de fonctionner aussi.  

"Comme ces noms de métier sont beaux, comme ils ont un sens, une réalité, une solidité."  

Halévy says of him:

"Il est tout peuple, ce Péguy, peuple et non plébe; peuple artisan ou peuple paysan, maître de son outil et de sa subsistance, fier d'être ainsi."  

Now, in what manner shall this work be done? Leo XIII, taking in both sides of this economic problem, states:

"Religion teaches the laboring man and the workman to carry out honestly and well all equitable agreements freely made."  

The worker must be conscientious in the accomplishment of his task; he must give a full day of work well-done in order to receive the day's wage. If the worker has been forced into the agreement through extreme necessity of securing a livelihood, the contract can not be called equitable and the laborer is not morally bound to accomplish the entire task.

For Péguy, the manner of working was colored by the rosy hue of the guilds of the Middle Ages as their spirit was to be seen in the Orléans of his youth. Both by the word and example of his mother and grandmother he had imbibed the religion of "l'ouvrage bien fait":

"On peut dire dans le sens le plus rigoureux des termes qu'un enfant élevé dans une ville comme Orléans,

20 "Le Triomphe de la République," 1900, I, 58.
21 Charles Péguy, p. 49.
22 EN, 16.
23 For a discussion of Péguy's devotion to the Middle Ages, see Chapter XI.
entre 1873 et 1880, a littéralement touché l'ancienne France, l'ancien peuple, le peuple tout court, qu'il a littéralement participé de l'ancienne France, du peuple." 24

Young Charles watched with enthusiasm as the lesson was put into practice by the hard-working people of his home town:

"Il fallait qu'un bâton de chaise fût bien fait.... Il ne fallait pas qu'il fût bien fait pour le salaire ou moyennant le salaire. Il ne fallait pas qu'il fût bien fait pour le patron ni pour les connaisseurs ni pour les clients du patron. Il fallait qu'il fût bien fait lui-même, en lui-même, pour lui-même, dans son être même.... C'est le principe même des cathédrales." 25

"Les bons ouvriers sont ceux qui travaillent bien, qui travaillent vite, qui travaillent beaucoup, qui sont actifs, intelligents, qui ne sont pas bêtes, qui sont patients, qui ont du courage, qui ne sont pas paresseux, qui n'ont pas peur de leur peine, qui ne sont pas mauvaises têtes; les bons ouvriers travaillent de leur mieux pour faire plaisir au patron et pour faire plaisir aux clients." 26

The young student who enthusiastically describes the future "cité harmonieuse" demands the same disinterested work of its "citizens":

"Comme ouvriers ils ne pensent qu'à travailler de leur mieux pour le mieux du métier et ainsi pour le mieux de la cité." 27

The lesson was not forgotten; the man had been formed before he was twelve. 28 The devoted editor of the Cahiers exemplifies the devotion to duty that was characteristic of

24 L'Argent, 1913, III, 384.
27 De la cite harmonieuse, 1896, X, 106.
28 "Rien n'est mysterieux comme ces sourdes preparations qui attendent l'homme au seuil de toute vie. Tout est joué avant que nous ayons douze ans." L'Argent, 1913, III, 381.
If a social revolution is to be brought about in the economic field, it will require a steady, persistent application of the principles of charity and justice to all phases of the working world. The tower of labor emancipation can be built only on such a foundation. This will require the modest, slow, definitive work of which Péguy speaks in the following quotation and which Leo XIII likens to the gradual revolutionary influence of the early Christians:

"Le génie exige la patience à travailler, - et plus je vais, - moins je crois à l'efficacité des soudaines illuminations qui ne seraient pas accompagnées ou soutenues par un travail sérieux, ... et plus je crois à l'efficacité du travail modeste, moléculaire, définitif, Plus je vais, ... moins je crois à l'efficacité d'une révolution sociale et extraordinaire soudaine, improvisée, merveilleuse, avec ou sans fusils et dictature impersonnelle, - et plus je crois à l'efficacité d'un travail social modeste, lent, moléculaire, définitif." 30

"It is not rash to conjecture the future from the past. Age gives way to age, but the events of one century are wonderfully like those of another; for they are directed by the Providence of God, Who overrules the course of history in accordance with His purposes in creating the race of man. We are told that it was cast as a reproach on the Christians of the early ages of the Church, that the greater number of them had to live by begging or by labor. Yet, destitute as they were of wealth and influence, they ended by winning over to their side the favor of the rich and the good will of the powerful. They showed themselves industrious, laborious and peaceful, men of justice, and above all, men of brotherly love. In the presence

30 "Encore de la grippe," 1900, I, 113.
of such a life and such an example, prejudice disappeared, the tongue of malevolence was silenced, and the lying traditions of ancient superstition yielded little by little to Christian truth." 31

Characteristic of the seriousness with which Péguy regarded the idea of work was his dismissal of Etienne, the errand boy. Etienne had other faults, but principally he was reluctant in accomplishing his task. The words employed in his dismissal contain the keynote of Péguy's philosophy of work:

"Etienne, we must part. It has been brought to our attention that you do not quit yourself of your duty with the necessary intensity." 32

31 RN, 43.
32 Green, Ann and Julian, Basic Verities, "Introduction," p. 28.
IX. Material Aspects of Work

Needless to say, in modern industrialism Peguy did not find the idealism of work which he had lauded as characteristic of the Middle Ages and the future "cité harmonieuse." What had happened? Peguy had positive theories on the situation. It was primarily the fault of the capitalistic bourgeoisie who sabotaged the idea of work itself. Losing all sense of the honor of work, of joy at a task, of the proper relationship between master and workmen, the employer began in the words of Rerum Novarum to "treat men as chattels to make money by, or to look upon them as merely so much muscle or physical power." 1 The competitive war between large companies, as the encyclical states, placed the worker at the mercy of "grasping speculators, who use human beings as mere instruments for making money. It is neither justice nor humanity so to grind men down with excessive labor as to stupefy their minds and wear out their bodies." 2 Small wonder that Peguy accuses such exploiters of ceasing to love work, of failing in their social obligations:

"Il est de toute evidence que ce sont les bourgeois et les capitalistes qui ont commence. Je veux dire que les bourgeois et les capitalistes ont cesse de faire leur office, social, avant les ouvriers le leur, et longtemps avant. Il ne fait aucun doute que le sabotage d'en haut est de beaucoup anterieur au sabotage d'en bas, que le sabotage bourgeois et capitaliste est anterieur, et de beaucoup, au sabotage ouvrier; que les bourgeois et les capitalistes ont cesse d'aimer le travail bourgeois et capitaliste longtemps avant que les ouvriers eussent cesse d'aimer le travail ouvrier. C'est exactement dans cet ordre, en

1 RN, 16. 2 Ibid., 33.
commençant par les bourgeois et les capitalistes, que s'est produite cette désaffection générale du travail qui est la tare la plus profonde, la tare centrale du monde moderne.”

"C'est le sabotage bourgeois, le même, le seul, qui par contamination de proche en proche descend par nappes horizontales dans le monde ouvrier. Ce n'est point le monde ouvrier qui exaspère des vices propres. C'est le monde ouvrier qui s'embourgeoise graduellement.

Whence and by what means came this contamination of the workers' world? The conditions described above by Leo XIII left the field open for socialist radicals. How easy to "work upon the poor man's envy of the rich" when those same poor were being forced to the limit of all endurance. Thus by their "seditious arts" these disturbers held out to a "hard-pressed people freedom from pain and trouble, undisturbed repose, and constant enjoyment." These men of evil principle fomented discord, encouraged the striker to injure Capital, even to outrage the person of the employer, to employ violence in representing his own cause and to engage in riot and disorder. Unionism of this type which impregnated the working class with the bourgeois vices of injustice and greed must be condemned.

We return now to Péguy and find that he too blames the more radical socialists for passing the bourgeois tactics on to the worker:

"Le socialisme qui était un système économique de la
saine et de la juste organisation du travail social est devenu sous le nom de jaure" 8 et sous le nom identique et conjoint de sabotage un système de désorganisation du travail social et en outre et en cela une excitation des instincts bourgeois dans le monde ouvrier, un entraînement des ouvriers à devenir à leur tour de sales bourgeois." 9

"Le parti politique socialiste est entièrement composé de bourgeois intellectuels. Ce sont eux qui ont inventé le sabotage et, la double désertion, la désertion du travail, la désertion de l'outil.... Tout ce monde-la est jaure". C'est-à-dire qu'au fond tout ce monde-la est radical. C'est-à-dire bourgeois." 10 — —

"C'est parce que la bourgeoisie s'est mise à traiter comme une valeur de bourse le travail de l'homme, que le travailleur s'est mis, lui aussi, à traiter comme une valeur de bourse son propre travail. C'est parce que la bourgeoisie s'est mise à faire perpétuellement des coups de bourse sur le travail de l'homme que le travailleur, lui aussi, par imitation, par collusion et rencontre, et on pourrait presque dire par entente, s'est mis à faire continuellement des coups de bourse sur son propre travail. C'est parce que la bourgeoisie s'est mise à exercer un chantage perpétuel sur le travail de l'homme que nous vivons sous ce régime de coups de bourse et de chantage perpétuel que sont notamment les grèves." 11

In the days of "la cour rose" and "l'Ecole Normale" Péguy had been among the most ardent supporters of every strike. He had but to extend a hand and his enthusiasm reached the pockets of his fellow students. The man of forty, however, reverts to the days of his youth at Orléans and looks upon these disturbances with the eyes of the artisan who considered his work almost a sacred thing:

"Ils eussent été bien surpris, ces ouvriers ... si on

8 Jaurés, Auguste Marie (1859-1814) French socialist leader. Péguy accuses him of having used the Dreyfus case as a means of securing a dominating position in the Socialist party.
9 L'Argent (suite), 1913, XIV, 151.
10 L'Argent, 1913, III, 395, 396.
11 Ibid., p. 394.
leur avait dit que quelques années plus tard, dans les chantiers, les ouvriers - les compagnons, - se proposaient officiellement d'en faire le moins possible; et qu'ils considéraient ça comme une grande victoire." 12

"L'idée qu'on aurait pu abîmer ses outils exprès ne leur eût pas même semblé le dernier des sacrilèges. ... Elle leur eût semblé le supposition la plus extravagante. C'etait comme si on leur eût parlé de se couper la main. ... Un ouvrier abîmer un outil, pour eux, c'eût été, dans cette guerre, le conscrit qui se coupe la pousse." 13

"Ils n'avaient point inventé cet admirable mécanisme de la greve moderne à jet continu, qui fait toujours monter les salaires d'un tiers et le prix de la vie d'une bonne moitie et la misere de la difference." 14

Péguy's sympathies; however, remain loyal to the worker who is at heart true to his task but has found himself a victim of circumstances and "crafty agitators":

"Notez qu'aujourd'hui au fond ça ne les amuse pas de ne rien faire sur les chantiers. Ils aimerait mieux travailler. Ils ne sont pas en vaine de cette race laborieuse .... La main qui dérange, qui a envie de travailler. ... Et au fond ils se dégoutent d'eux-mêmes, d'abîmer les outils. Mais voila, des messieurs très bien, des savants, des bourgeois leur ont explique que c'etait ça le socialisme, et c'étais ça la révolution." 15

A vexing problem, indeed. Must it remain unsolved? Condemning the excesses on both sides, cannot our leaders find a plan in this industrial world which will safeguard the rights of all? It is on these very rights that both Leo and Péguy build their social reform:

"To enter into "society"... is the natural right of man; and the State must protect natural rights, not destroy them; and if it forbids its citizens to form associations, it contradicts the very principle of

12 Ibid., p. 391.
13 Ibid., p. 392.
14 Ibid., p. 402.
15 Ibid., p. 393.
its own existence; for both they and it exist in virtue of the same principle, viz., the natural propensity of man to live in society." 16

"La révolution sociale, au sens où nous la préparons, peut seule donner à tous les hommes le véritable exercice de tous les droits humains, peut seule instituer une cité humaine où tous les hommes soient accueillis comme des citoyens veritables." 17

On the platform of the natural right of man to enter into particular societies or associations, Leo XIII builds his program - a multiplication of workingmen's associations. But he warns:

"...there is a good deal of evidence which goes to prove that many of these societies are in the hands of invisible leaders, and are managed by principles far from compatible with Christianity and the public well-being; and that they do their best to get into their hands the whole field of labor and to force workmen either to join them or starve. Under these circumstances the Christian workmen must ... unite their forces and courageously shake off the yoke of an unjust and intolerable oppression." 18

"History attests what excellent results were affected (sic) by the Artificer's Gilds of a former day. They were the means of not only many advantages to the workmen, but in no small degree of the advancement in art, as numerous monuments remain to prove. Such associations should be adapted to the requirements of the age in which we live - an age of greater instruction, of different customs, and of more numerous requirements in daily life. It is gratifying to know that there are actually in existence not a few societies of this nature, consisting either of workmen alone, or of workmen and employers together; 19 but it were greatly to be desired that they should multiply and become more effective." 20

16 RN, 38;  
17 "Deuxième série au provincial", 1900, I, 254.  
18 RN, 40.  
19 "By the latter, of course, are not meant those shop unions in which workers are morally forced to join in the interests of the employers themselves, while made to sign the obnoxious and illegal documents known as "yellow-dog contracts", intended to prevent them from entering a free labor union." Husslein, J., The Christian Social Manifesto, p. 197.  
20 RN, 36
Péguy strikes this same note of inaugurating improvement by the working man himself. It is the politicians who have prevented the improvement. Are Péguy’s politicians the invisible leaders referred to by Leo?


Leo XIII is quite explicit in describing the principles governing the unions, although he does not give complete details concerning the organization of such bodies. Religion must form the foundation of each group:

"Let our associations, then, look first and before all to God; let religious instruction have therein a foremost place, each one being carefully taught what is his duty to God, what to believe, what to hope for, and how to work out his salvation;"

"The foundations of the organization being laid in Religion, we next go on to determine the relations of the members, one to another, in order that they may live together in concord, and go on prosperously and successfully. The offices and charges of the society should be distributed for the good of the society itself, and in such manner that differences in degree or position should not interfere with unanimity and good will. Officeholders should be appointed with prudence and discretion, and each one’s charge should be carefully marked out; thus no member will suffer wrong. Let the common funds be administered with strictest honesty, in such a way that a member receive

22 RN, 22.
assistance in proportion to his necessities. The rights and duties of employers should be the subject of careful consideration as compared with the rights and duties of the employed. If it should happen that either a master or a workman deemed himself injured, nothing would be more desirable than that there should be a committee composed of honest and capable men of the Association itself, whose duty it should be, by the laws of the Association, to decide the dispute."

Féguay, as far as I could discover, does not lay down any rules for unions such as those quoted above. The proposed "journal socialiste" as described in "Pour ma maison" is worthy of study in so far as it approximates the idea of unionism:

"Nous savons en effet que la cité socialiste ne se fera pas sans éléments et que c'est nous qui devons, dès à présent, lui préparer des citoyens. Pour cela, voici quel nous imaginons que serait, dans la société bourgeoise, un journal socialiste."

"Fonder des journaux qui ne seraient plus aux mains d'un financier ou d'actionnaires anonymes, mais qui soutenus par les cotisations régulières d'un parti ou d'un groupe d'hommes se connaissant et professant les mêmes opinions, seraient la propriété et l'expression de ce parti ou de ce groupe."

Judging from this, "la cité socialiste" would be composed of units of varying types of work which could well have their beginnings in modern society. This "journal socialiste" sounds somewhat like a cooperative:

Of course the salary of all workers must be a "salaire socialiste, c'est-à-dire un salaire égal" because all do their best for the journal. Concord among members is insured by allowing each to do that which he can do with most success, thus:

23 Ibid., 43.
24 "Pour ma maison," 1900, I, 261.
25 Ibid., p. 260.
"...les moissonneurs y parleraient du blé, les maçons de la bâtisse; les professeurs y parleraient de l'enseignement et les philosophes de la philosophie." 26

Since the bookkeeping of this paper was in the hands of Péguy, we can assume that "officeholders were appointed with prudence and discretion" and that "the common funds were administered with the strictest honesty." This little organization also had its committee to guarantee the confidence of the distant persons who had subscribed. However, "cette institution de jeunesse ne prospéra pas." Péguy attributed its failure to the Dreyfus case which so absorbed them that they had time for no other enterprise. The State in these organizations plays practically the same rôle as we saw in Chapter V. To show the attitude of the Rerum Novarum, we give one brief quotation:

"Let the State watch over these Societies of citizens united together in the exercise of their rights; but let it not thrust itself into their peculiar concerns and their organization, for things move and live by the soul within them, and they may be killed by the grasp of a hand from without." 27

The organisms of workmen in "la cité socialiste" will be governed by "la cité" for we read such strong words as these:

"Et enfin, si, malgré cette compensation, 28 les travailleurs volontaires désartaient certains métiers, il suffira pour assurer le service de ces métiers, d'en faire un service commandé, obligatoire, universel et personnel. - Mais, dira-t-on, c'est là de la contrainte! - Sans doute, c'est là de la contrainte, mais c'est une contrainte juste et officielle." 29

And finally, in "la cité harmonieuse" we have "les âmes

26 Ibid., p. 262.
27 RN, 41.
28 That is, shorter hours for the difficult types of labor.
29 "De la cite socialiste," 1897, I, 270.
collectives." Certainly, each group of workers falls into this classification. There is now no need for constraint:

"Rien d'extérieur aux âmes collectives ne commande les volitions de ces âmes dans la cité harmonieuse. Personne aussi n'a commandement sur les volitions des âmes collectives dans la cité harmonieuse."

Another important problem in connection with either organized or unorganized labor is that of machinery. As seen in a previous chapter, Leo XIII lists the surprising discoveries of science as one of the elements of conflict. The Supreme Pontiff does not oppose such discoveries, but he bemoans the fact that these increased inventions have, because of the irreligion of the employer, added to the dependence of the worker. What should have been a blessing in the form of shorter hours has resulted in unemployment and consequently increased misery of the poor. Organizations founded on the principles set forth by Leo XIII would solve this problem:

"Among the purposes of a society should be to try to arrange for a continuous supply of work at all times and seasons." 31

"De la cité socialiste" has very specific remedial measures for coping with this particular difficulty:

"Il amortira autant que possible les a-coups individuels.... Par exemple, quand on invente une machine qui supprime la moitié du travail dans un métier... il suffira... de réduire sans a-coup le nombre des travailleurs intéressés, soit en faisant moins d'apprentis de ce métier-la, soit en donnant à certaines de ces travailleurs le temps d'apprendre un nouveau métier; en attendant d'ailleurs, que les mesures prises aient leur plein effet, on en sera quitte pour diminuer le nombre des heures ou travailleront les

30 De la cité harmonieuse, 1896, X, 193.
31 RN, 43.
Ouvriers de ce métier, ce qui ne sera pour personne un malheur dans la cité." 32

Leo XIII and Charles Péguy are in perfect accord concerning a compensation of shorter hours to be given to those persons who must perform the heavier, sacrificial tasks:

"How many and how long the intervals of rest should be will depend upon the nature of the work, on circumstances of time and place, and on the health and strength of the workman. Those who labor in mines and quarries, and in work within the bowels of the earth, should have shorter hours in proportion, as their labor is more severe and more trying to health."

"Remarquons ensuite que dans "la cité socialiste" on pourra toujours compenser par des avantages de ce que les métiers sacrifires auraient encore de penible ou d'ennuyeux." 34

The question of salary in this study runs true to form. Leo XIII, advocating as he does distributive ownership, does more than simply recognize that "the remuneration must be enough to support the wage earner in frugal and reasonable comfort." 35 Apart from this the worker:

"acquires a full and real right, not only to the remuneration, but also to the disposal of that remuneration as he pleases. Thus, if he lives sparingly, saves money, and invests his savings, for greater security, in land, the land in such case is only his wages in another form; and, consequently, a workingman's little estate thus purchased should be as completely at his own disposal as the wages he receives from his labor. But it is precisely in this power of disposal that ownership consists, whether the property be land or movable goods." 36

There is also to be considered the family wage, which like

32 "De la cité socialiste," 1897, I, 268-269.
33 RN, 33.
34 "De la cité socialiste," 1897, I, 269-270.
35 RN, 34.
36 Ibid., 4.
the personal wage goes beyond immediate necessities of food and living to look into the future:

"If a workman's wages be sufficient to enable him to maintain himself, his wife, and his children in reasonable comfort, he will not find it difficult, if he is a sensible man, to study economy; and he will not fail, by cutting down expenses, to put by a little property: nature and reason would urge him to do this." 37

Péguy, as a member of a capitalistic society, also recognizes the right of private remuneration:

"D'ailleurs Lavergne a, comme tous les auteurs, comme tous les ouvriers, le droit et le devoir de vivre en travaillant. Nos cahiers sont malheureusement trop misérables eux-mêmes pour payer des droits d'auteur; le temps n'est pas venu où dans cette institution, florissante enfin, tous les ouvriers auront un salaire normal, un salaire minimum." 38

"D'âge en âge la fraternité ... fait établir pour des ouvriers un minimum de salaire." 39

The family wage is not neglected by Péguy; he has no patience with young teachers of history who avoid contact with disagreeable realities:

"Réalités de tous ordres et surtout réalités économiques et budgétaires. Difficultés budgétaires du simple père de famille moyen français." 40

It is on the question of disposal of this wage (and note that it is almost always a minimum wage) that Péguy is silent. Even while living under the capitalistic régime, he does not encourage the acquisition of property. For are they not, by way of "la cité socialiste" where all salaries are equal, on the road to "la cité harmonieuse." There "la cité donne à

37 Ibid., 35. 39 Ibid., p. 69.
38 "De Jean Coste," 1902, II, 91.
40 De la situation faite, 1906, III, 49.
tous les citoyens le pain de chaque jour," 41 and no one thinks to work for "le salaire" because they are not the rivals of the city. To such a policy can be applied the words of Leo XIII:

"The Socialists, therefore, in endeavoring to transfer the possessions of individuals to the community, strike at the interests of every wage earner, for they deprive him of the liberty of disposing of his wages, and thus of all hope and possibility of increasing his stock and of bettering his condition in life." 42

One final point. The societies of workmen organized on this Leonine plan should "create a fund from which the members may be helped in their necessities, not only in case of accident, but also in sickness, old age and misfortune." 43 It is of interest to note that one of the complaints brought against combinisme 44 by Péguy was the withdrawal of workers pensions:

"...comment la loi des retraites ouvrières fut ajournée." 45

41 "Réponse Brève," 1900, XI, 133.
42 Ibid., 4.
43 Ibid., 43.
44 Combes, Emile, 1835-1921. French statesman charged with the formation of a cabinet in 1903. Devoted himself to the struggle with clericalism.
X. Family life

References to family life occur often enough in Péguy's works to convince us that he was deeply interested in this vital subject. Although the family has remained a strong unit in France, Péguy regretted that it was losing some of its vitality. Looking back on childhood days almost wistfully, he writes:

"Il y avait dans les plus humbles maisons une sorte d'aisance dont on a perdu le souvenir.... Et on pouvait elever des enfants. Et on en elevait.... On vivait alors." 1

When he wished to praise the teaching profession, he could think of no higher tribute than "le plus beau metier du monde apres le metier de parent." 2 By reason of his description of the Christian family he may well be listed among our spiritual authors:

"Toute famille chrétienne a les yeux fixés sur la famille de Nazareth.... Depuis ce jour tout pere chrétien et toute mere chrétienne est une image de Joseph et Marie, tout fils et toute fille chrétienne est une image de Jesus." 3

In his encyclical on the christian family 4 Leo XIII has set forth the nobility and privileges of that great institution. In Rerum Novarum he points out that man's indisputable right to enter into marriage and found a family serves to intensify his right of property:

"No human law can abolish the natural and primitive right of marriage, ordained by God's authority from the beginning: 'Increase and multiply.' 5 Thus we

---

1 L'Argent, 1913, III, 387, 402. 2 Ibid., p. 433.
3 Un nouveau théologien, 1911, XIII, 36,37. The entire passage pp.35-38 is recommended as a beautiful meditation of the Christian family.
have the family; the 'society' of a man's household; a society limited in numbers, but a true 'society,' anterior to every kind of State or nation, with rights and duties of its own, totally independent of the commonwealth.

That right of property, therefore, which has been proved to belong naturally to individual persons must also belong to man in his capacity of head of a family; nay, such a person must possess this right so much the more clearly in proportion as his position multiplies his duties."

The question of family and property rights is much bound up with inheritance Leo says:

"nature dictates that a man's children ... should be provided by him with all that is needful to enable them honorably to keep themselves from want and misery in the uncertainties of this moral life. Now, in no other way can a father effect this except by the ownership of profitable property, which he can transmit to his children by inheritance." 7

Péguy, basing his reasoning on the farming peasantry of France, admits the inheritance of material property but sees no importance in it. There are other values which outweigh perishable house and land that a man can pass on to his sons:

"Est-ce que le père aurait du coeur à travailler s'il n'y avait pas ses enfants.
Si ça n'était pas pour ses enfants.

Ses trois enfants qui lui succéderont et qui lui survivront.
Sur terre.
Qui auront sa maison et ses terres.
Et s'il n'a point de maison et de terres qui auront du moins ses outils-
(S'il n'a point de maison et de terres il n'a n'en auront point non plus.
Voilà tout.)
(Il s'en est bien passé pour vivre
Ils feront comme lui. Ils travailleront.)

Au moins ils hériteront ses outils.

6 RN, 9.
7 Ibid., 10.
Ses bons outils.

Au manche de ses outils, ses fils retrouveront, ses fils hériteront la dureté de ses mains. Mais aussi leur habilité, leur grande habilité.

Et avec ses outils ses fils hériteront, ses enfants hériteront. Ce qu'il leur a donné, ce que nul ne pourrait leur ôter. ---
La force de sa race, la force de son sang. Car ils sont sortis de lui et ils sont Français et Lorrains.

Et par dessus tout ce qui est par dessus tout avec ses outils et avec sa race et avec son sang ses enfants hériteront ---
La bénédiction de Dieu qui est sur sa maison et sur sa race.
La grâce de Dieu qui vaut plus que tout." 8

As for inheritance in "la cité harmonieuse," it will not exist:

"Ainsi les citoyens de la cité harmonieuse n'héritent pas de leurs parents morts ou de leurs camarades morts, ils ne reçoivent rien de leurs parents ou de leurs camarades vivants, parce que cela serait soustrait au bien de la cité." 9

The welfare of a nation has its roots in the family. This link that binds the personality of the father to that of the son is the great chain of civil society stretching down through the ages. Pope Leo XIII and Charles Péguy are strikingly one in setting forth this fact; the former in prose, the latter, in poetry:

"Paternal authority can neither be abolished by the State nor absorbed; for it has the same source as human life itself; 'the child belongs to the father,' and is, as it were, the continuation of the father's

---

8 These lines have been gleaned from La deuxième vertu, 1911, V, 271, 273, 274, 275. This theme of a father's musings concerning his wife and children is continued throughout pp. 271 - 306.
9 De la cité harmonieuse, 1896, X, 124.
personality; and to speak with strictness, the child takes its place in civil society not in its own right, but in its quality as a member of the family in which it is begotten." 10

"Ses deux gars le remplaceront, ses enfants tiendront sa place sur la terre,
Quand il n'y sera plus
Sa place dans la paroisse et sa place dans la forêt;
Sa place dans l'église et sa place dans la maison....
Sa place de Lorrain et de Français.
Car c'est des places, grand Dieu, qu'il faut qui soient tenues.
Et il faut que tout cela continue ...
Il faut que France continue." 12

"Ensemble ce sera de lui et ce ne sera pas de lui, puisque ce sera de ses fils....
Et il en est fier dans son coeur et comme il y pense avec tendresse.
Que lui-même ne sera plus lui-même mais ses fils." 13

The following lengthy quotation would seem to place Pégy on middle ground; can we not say that there too stands Leo XIII? The very fact that the socialistic reasoning offers a "difficulté redoutable" to Pégy's mind indicates that he does not stand with those "Socialists" who, "in setting aside the parent and introducing the providence of the State, act against natural justice, and threaten the very existence of family life." 14 Neither, judging from his criticism of Zola, does he stand with those who would allow free and untrammeled action to the 'individual or the family at the expense of the common good and the interests of others. 15 Rather does he take the attitude that "all citizens, without exception, can

10 RN, 11.
11 De la deuxième vertu, 1911, V, 275-276.
12 Ibid., p. 282.
13 Ibid., p. 277. For a related passage, see: L'Argent (suite) 1913, XIV, 208.
14 RN, 11.
15 See Ibid., 28.
and ought to contribute to that common good in which individuals share so profitably to themselves." 16

"Je dis: "Si nos enfants ne produisent pas, comme ils consommeront quand même, ils seront des parasites: mieux vaut n'en pas avoir. Si nos enfants produisent, et consomment une égale valeur, ils deviennent socialement indifférent. Si nos enfants produisent et consomment un peu moins, s'il produisent beaucoup et ne consomment guère, ils enrichiront le domaine commun de l'humanité." Je donne ce raisonnement pour ce qu'il vaut; il est provisoirement, grossièrement, moyennement exact. Si on admet ce raisonnement provisoire, la difficulté redoutable apparaît: l'enfantement ne se justifie socialement que par ce que les enfants seront dans la cité. Or on est rigoureusement assuré que les enfants demanderont à la cité les moyens de leur éducation, mais on ne sait pas quel travail les enfants donneront à la cité, Il y a là évidemment un crédit accordé par la cité aux générations naissantes et croissantes.

Zola n'a pas voulu, pour ainsi dire, que ce crédit fût demandé. Il n'a pas voulu que les fils de Mathieu fussent rien à la société." 17

Another social problem on which Leo XIII and Charles Pé-guy are in perfect accord is child and woman labor:

"In regard to children, great care should be taken not to place them in workshops and factories until their bodies and minds are sufficiently mature ... Women, again, are not suited to certain trades; for a woman is by nature fitted for homework, and it is that which is best adapted at once to preserve her modesty, and to promote the good bringing up of children and the well-being of the family." 18

In "la Cité harmonieuse" children and women are not required to do the work necessary to assure "la vie corporelle":

"Les femmes ne font pas de ce travail, parce qu'il ne convient pas que la cité soit à la charge des femmes; et ce travail nuirait à la vie des familles, et ainsi à la cité même. Les adolescents ne font

16 Ibid., 27.
18 RN, 33.
Péguy furnishes a striking contrast between the modern world and those golden days when the joy of work well done overflowed into one's personality:

"Un respect des vieillards; des parents, de la parenté. Un admirable respect des enfants. Naturellement, un respect de la femme. (Et il faut bien le dire, puisque aujourd'hui c'est cela qui manque tant, un respect de la femme par la femme elle-même)." 20

"Le monde moderne avilit. Il avilit la cité; il avilit l'homme. Il avilit l'amour; il avilit la femme. Il avilit la race; il avilit l'enfant. Il avilit la nation; il avilil la famille." 21

One can imagine Péguy disapproving heartily of a socialist party program that would keep its members so busy that one was forced to complain:

"Le gouvernement encourage peu la vie de famille." 22

Certainly such an attitude runs counter to Leo XIII:

"The employer is bound to see that he (the workman)... be not led away to neglect his home and family or to squander his wages." 23

This respect for the family was to be one of the most important pillars of the socialist journal planned by Péguy and his friends:

"Enfin et surtout ce journal serait un journal de famille, s'adressant d'abord aux femmes et aux enfants, sans qui toute oeuvre est vaine." 24

19 De la cité harmonieuse, 1906, X, 96.
20 L'Argent, 1913, III, 392.
21 De la situation faite, 1906, III, 230-231.
23 RN, 16.
24 "Pour ma maison," 1900, I, 262.
XI. Middle Ages

Charles Péguy's distrust of the modern world may well have its foundation in his profound appreciation for the ancient world and the Middle Ages. His childhood days at Orleans were spent amid surroundings that closely resembled those of ancient France. These early lessons produced a lasting impression on the young lad, who was more serious-minded than most children:

"Rien n'est mystérieux comme ces sourdes préparations qui attendent l'homme au seuil de toute vie. Tout est joué avant que nous ayons douze ans." \(^1\)

Consequently, we find him censoring in the modern world the self-same weaknesses pointed out by Leo XIII:

"The ancient workmen's Gilds were destroyed in the last century 2 and no other organization took their place. Public institutions and laws have repudiated the ancient religion." \(^3\)

May we not say that Péguy had in mind the great gild system when he called our times barbarous and hurled at them the following invective:

"Ceux qui n'ont pas d'argent font de la saleté sous le nom de sabotage; et ceux qui ont de l'argent font de la saleté, une contre et autre saleté, sous le nom de luxe. Et ainsi la culture n'a plus aucun joint; ou passer. Il n'y a plus cette merveilleuse rencontre de toutes les anciennes sociétés ou celui

---

1 L'Argent, 1913, III, 381.
2 ...that is, the eighteenth, since his own Encyclical on the Condition of Labor was written in 1891. The gilds had at that time vastly deteriorated. They were no longer the same wonderful institutions which we admire so profoundly in the resplendent thirteenth century, when without any question they were man's greatest achievement in industrial relations." Hulselein, J., The Christian Social Manifesto, p. 32.
3 RN, 2.
qu produisait et celui qui achetait aimaient et con-
naissaient la culture." 4

Had the public institutions and laws remained as they were
in the days of Louis IX, they would never have "repudiated the
ancient religion":

"Un homme comme Saint Louis était un homme, un saint
qui gouvernait le royaume de France exactement, direc-
tement, rigoureusement comme un bon pere de famille,
gouverne sa maison, comme un pere de famille chris-
tienne, gouverne sa femme et ses enfants, - sa maison.
- C'est dire que dans la theologie christienne, dans
la realle chretiende le gouvernement de la maison de
France est directement imite du gouvernement de cette
maison de Nazareth. 5

One of the former "grand-maitres de l'universite," M. Fer-
dinand Buisson, drew up for the benefit of his pupils a pre-
tended ancient regime in which he incorporated elements of the
reigns of Louis XI, XIV, XV, XVI. Péguy comments:

"Mais je ne sais pourquoi, on se gardait comme du feu
de mettre a contribution le regime de Louis IX ...
Joinville, Guillaume de Nangis et le confesseur de la
reine Marguerite." 6

He condemns the Sorbonne because it has fallen into mater-
ialism:

"Et l'on perdait a la fois la culture antique et la
culture christiennne, le mystere et les humanites, la
cite et la chretiende." 7

While praising the Christianity of the early fifteenth century,
he rebukes certain modern Catholics for subjecting the eternal
to the temporal:

"...quelques-uns de ces contemporains catholiques,

5 Un nouveau theologien, 1911, XIII, 47-48.
6 De la situation faite, 1906, III, 211. Related passages are
to be found on pp.94,204; L'Argent (suite), XIV, 197. Clio, VIII,
devant une soudaine révélation de l’antique, de la vieille, de la chrétienté ancienne se hâtant de pousser quelques cris, comme de pudeur outragee. Dans un besoin ils renieraient Joinville, 8 comme trop gros-sier, comme trop peuple. Le sire de Joinville. Ils renieraient peut-être bien saint Louis. Comme trop roi de France.” 9

In Notre Cher Péguy, the Tharaud brothers offer this tribute:

”On n’est pas socialiste à la façon dont il l’était, sans toucher le Dieu de l’Evangile. On ne parle pas de ce peuple de France païen et chrétien tout ensemble, conservateur et révolutionnaire, monarchiste et républicain, comme il en avait parlé, sans aller droit au cœur du Dieu de Joinville.” 10

Incidentally, Péguy rarely walked abroad without wearing his long dark cape, and soft narrow hat and carrying in his hand a heavy stick. All this made him look very much like a pilgrim. And Péguy prayed as a pilgrim prayed. When his son lay at the point of death, it was most natural that he should seek our Lady’s aid by making a pilgrimage to her shrine at Chartres.

Since many religious orders had their origin during the Middle Ages, we can include within the scope of this chapter the reactions of Pope Leo XIII and Charles Péguy concerning the policy of the State toward these organizations during their time. The Supreme Pontiff establishes the fact that such confraternities have the sanction of the law of nature. He then firmly asserts:

”It is the State’s duty to respect and cherish them,

8 Joinville, Jean, (1224-1317). Close companion of King Louis IX whom he accompanied on a crusade to the Holy Land. A great writer of history in Old French.
9 Notre jeunesse, 1910, IV, 173.
and, if necessary, to defend them from attack. It is notorious that a very different course has been followed, more especially in our own times. In many places the State has laid violent hands on these communities, and committed manifold injustice against them; it has placed them under the civil law, taken away their rights as corporate bodies, and robbed them of their property. In such property the Church had her rights, each member of the body had his or her rights, and there were also the rights of those who had founded or endowed them for a definite purpose, and of those for whose benefit and assistance they existed. Wherefore, we cannot refrain from complaining of such spoliation as unjust and fraught with evil results."

Péguy devotes pages to a criticism of the administration of Emile Combes, "ministre de gauche." He was particularly vehement because this minister had put into effect a law against the congregations, passed in a previous administration, but remaining until that time (1902) inoperative:

"...comment fut appliquée la loi des congrégations, héritage du gouvernement qui avait précédé; comment elle fut appliquée déloyalement, malgré la grande protestation, étouffée dans un silence convenu, du grand Bernard-Lazare, qu'elle fut appliquée tout autrement qu'elle n'aurait été votée par un forcement de texte; que par consequent son application fut une opération de déloyauté publique." 14

He was no more sparing of M. Clemenceau: 15

"Je n'ai aucune illusion sur la politique de M. Clemenceau. Trois jours après cette séance du mardi 17

---

11 RN, 39.
12 See note 44, Chapter IX; also, "Notre Patrie," II, pp. 277-283.
13 Bernard Lazare - a Jew whom Péguy greatly admired. Although anti-clerical, he denounced the injustice of the laws against the congregations.
15 Clemenceau (1841-1929) French statesman who sat with the Socialist Radicals and vigorously supported the Combes ministry.
novembre, où il avait prononcé ce beau discours pour la liberté, dans la séance du vendredi 20 novembre 1903, M. Clemenceau, répondant à M. Waldeck-Rousseau prononça contre les congrégations un discours, ou plutôt une exhortation, un entraînement ou la tare politique reparait toute, où il n'y a rien absolument que de la politique, c'est-à-dire où il n'y avait littéralement rien, bref un discours politique parlementaire que je déifie le plus audacieux des politiciens de concilier avec le beau discours précédent pour la liberté." 16

That these sentiments meant more to Péguy than mere political verbiage, we judge from this extract of a letter to Louis Baillet, who had been a former comrade at the Collège Sainte-Barbe, and who was now a Benedictine monk:

"Pendant ces persécutions stupides, injustes, je veux te renouveler l'assurance d'une amitié qui demeure entière. Vous, catholiques, rejoignez-vous; les persécutions des radicaux préparent incontestablement une renaissance de la foi catholique en France. Les seules amis de la raison doivent s'attrister." 17

In his conversations with Joseph Lotte as late as 1912 Péguy reveals a slightly changed attitude:

"La République, en somme, ne fait pas si mal. Voici le domaine colonial, les lois de protection ouvrière. Évidemment les expulsions de congrégations, liquidations, confiscations... Mais ça n'a pas une grande importance. Il est évident qu'avec la main-morte, si on les laissait faire, en dix générations les moines posséaderaient un pays. Il y a des réactions. Ce qu'il faut refaire, avant tout, ce qui est capital, c'est la paroisse. Saint Louis était très dur avec les curés et les moines." 18

Péguy is admitting here that the republic which he has so often violently attacked, frequently with complete justice, as in the case of the "congregations," has nevertheless done

16 "Discours pour la liberté," 1903, II, 172.
17 Cahiers de la quinzaine, 1927, 18 série 1-5. This letter was dated: samedi, 26 juillet, 1902.
a great deal for the betterment of political and social conditions. Now, in 1912, the furor about the "congregations" was subsiding and officials had closed their eyes to the fact that they were quickly and effectively getting back to work. And counterbalancing his old love for medieval life, relationship between Church and State, the guilds, etc. was his distrust of mixing property with religion, above all, as he thought of the abuses that wealth within the Church orders had caused at times in the Middle Ages and his own attitude toward property. So without being less devoted to the church, he was not any longer convinced that loss of property was so serious, especially since a renaissance of Catholicism had come about and less attention was being paid to property and more to teaching Christianity.

It is obvious that both Leo and Péguy realized that the guild system of the Middle Ages could not have been preserved in the precise form it then had, suited as it was, to small-scale industry only, but its whole social philosophy could have been preserved. It was a true religious motive that had inspired the hearts of these guildsmen and governed their wills and actions. 19 This was lacking in the modern world and Péguy knew how to bring it back:

"...il faut refaire, avant tout, ce qui est capital, c'est la paroisse."

19 Husslein, J., The Christian Social Manifesto, see pp. 223, 228.
XII. "La Vie Intérieure"

The "vie intérieure" may be regarded as the culminating point, the final objective, of both the Rerum Novarum and De la Cité harmonieuse. According to Leo XIII, private ownership conduces "to the peace and tranquility of human life," so that a man being free from the burden of material strivings may the more freely give himself to the things of the spirit. It is then the obligation of both the employer and the State to safeguard man's spiritual and mental interests:

"Life on earth, however good and desirable in itself, is not the final purpose for which man was created; it is only the way and the means to that attainment of truth, and that practice of goodness in which the full life of the soul consists. ... No man may outrage with impunity that human dignity which God himself treats with reverence, nor stand in the way of that higher life which is the preparation for the eternal life of heaven." 2

The Holy Father explains further that it is not man's rights alone that are in question but those of God. It is imperative, therefore, that a man be given sufficient repose "to turn his thoughts to heavenly things and to the worship which he so strictly owes to the Eternal Deity." 3

Of course, in his early works Péguy nowhere mentions that the "vie intérieure" is for the purpose of achieving the foregoing supernatural union of man with his Maker. Not that it would be impossible, for the citizens were to be absolutely independent and free. Since people of all religions were to be welcome in the city, there was nothing to prevent them from

1 RNN, 8. 2 Ibid., 32. 3 Ibid., 32.
developing their spiritual life according to their own choice. However, Péguy, at this date, is inclined to list the Church among those forces that constrain one's freedom in thought.

"Les vies intérieures sont dans la cité harmonieuse indépendantes et libres de tout, parce qu'il ne convient pas que les vies intérieures soient commandées par ce qui pourrait les déformer; il ne convient pas que même une seule vie intérieure, c'est-à-dire la vie intérieure d'un seul citoyen, soit déformée par tous les citoyens, ou par un parti de citoyens, ou par un citoyen, par un peuple, par un individu. Ainsi les sentiments et les volontions des citoyens sont libres dans la cité harmonieuse." 4

This freedom was an essential part of Péguy's program which was made possible by a wise government of "biens." 5 Thus he held that only a few hours of well-planned work performed daily by the able-bodied members of the city would be sufficient to secure "la vie corporelle de la cité." Consequently, there would be a long leisure for "la vie intérieure" and "le travail désintéressé":

"Les citoyens qui ne sont pas ouvriers ont tout leur temps pour la vie intérieure et pour le travail désintéressé. Les citoyens qui sont ouvriers ont pour la vie intérieure et pour le travail désintéressé le loisir qui leur est laissé par la cité harmonieuse; la cité harmonieuse laisse un long loisir à ses ouvriers."

Chief among "les travaux désintéressés" were science, art, and philosophy. Definitely, this type of employment did not tend "to stupefy minds and wear out bodies." 7 Rather did it

4 De la cité harmonieuse, 1896, X, 131.
5 Péguy looked upon the modern world as a government of soul. Rulers seemed to have but one aim: to imprint their ideas on their subjects. There was no government of things, so possessors of wealth had a right to use and abuse. Land, means of production and labor were squandered because of lack of direction. Vice versa, his government in regulating things, left the souls of men untouched. Consult La Pensée de Charles Péguy, pp.230-234.
6 Ibid., p. 128.
7 RN, 33.
recognize that "it is the mind, or the reason, which is the chief thing in us who are human beings," 8 so that by it man may "comprehend things innumerable." 9

It was this positive adherence to liberty of thought that set Péguy at odds with his fellow socialists:

"On veut lui faire imprimer des livres qui lui déplaisent, et les livres qui lui plaisent, on s'oppose à ce qu'il les imprime. Péguy s'insurge: il n'admet pas un socialisme qui diminue les libertés de sa pensée." 10

"Cité universelle, la cité harmonieuse n'est nullement une cité uniforme et c'est là un point sur lequel il convient d'insister, car l'internationalisme de Péguy s'oppose par la très nettement au marxisme soviétique." 11

"Ma république, donc, est en un sens avant tout une république où on laissera les gens tranquilles." 12

Even as we keep in mind that "la cité harmonieuse" was but an idealism, let us take note that Péguy put as much of his theory as was possible into his own little socialistic corner of a capitalistic world.

"C'est pour nos cahiers d'abord que nous avons remplace le gouvernement des auteurs par l'administration, la saine et libre et vraiment socialiste administration de leurs œuvres." 13

"Le droit de réponse que je maintiens pour tous, dans ces cahiers, je le maintiens autant pour moi." 14

Neither Pope Leo XIII nor Charles Péguy will permit that a man bury his talent in self-seeking. Rather should he, after

8 RN, 5.
9 Ibid., 6.
10 Halewy, D., Charles Péguy, p. 48.
11 La Pensée de Charles Péguy, p. 235.
13 Deuxième série au provincial," 1900, I, 249.
having perfected it in his own soul, share it with his fellow-men:

"Whoever has received from the Divine bounty a large share of blessings, whether they be external and corporeal, or gifts of the mind, has received them for perfecting his own nature, and, at the same time, that he may employ them, as the minister of God's Providence, for the benefit of others. 'He that hath a talent,' says St. Gregory the Great, 'let him see that he hideth not; he that hath abundance, let him arouse himself to mercy and generosity; he that hath art and skill, let him do his best to share the use and utility thereof with his neighbor.'" 15

"Dans la cité harmonieuse les œuvres naissent et croissent aux âmes des artistes en force et selon la beauté qui leur est personnelle jusqu'à ce qu'elles aient fini leur adolescence et qu'elles soient devenues adultes, jusqu'à ce qu'elles soient devenues parfaîtes, jusqu'à ce qu'elles soient devenues conformes à leur beauté personnelle. Quand les œuvres sont devenues parfaîtes aux âmes des artistes, les artistes les donnent aux âmes de leur concitoyens." 16

A word remains to be said concerning the change from this natural mysticism to the truly Christian interior life. Marcel Péguy refers to "la cité harmonieuse" as thriving in a moral and mystical climate, an "héritage chrétien" of the author's youthful days in Orléans. 17 Although Péguy's return to the faith was not made known until 1908, there is a deepening appreciation of Catholic thought in his works prior to this date. Les Tharaud remark this as especially true after De la situation faite. 18 In 1905, he makes this significant statement:

"Mais c'est l'avantage des saints sur nous autres hommes qu'ils ont des paroles qui les dépasse infiniment, qui viennent d'ailleurs, qui ne viennent point d'eux, qui viennent de leur sainteté, non point

15 RN, 19.
16 De la cité harmonieuse, 1896, X, 242-244.
17 La Pensée de Charles Péguy, pp. 228-230.
18 III, 1907.
By 1911, he has applied his principles to the life of Christ:

"La place que tiennent les affaires d'état dans l'enseignement des Evangiles est infime. Les didrachmes, le tribut à Cesar. --- Tellement toute la matière de cet enseignement public est une matière privée: Jesus enseigne publiquement à vivre en pauvre, à vivre privement, en homme non public." 20

It is from the depths of his own "vie intérieure" that he draws forth the magnificent "travaux désintéressés": Le mystère de la charité de Jeanne d'Arc, Le porche du mystère de la deuxième vertu and Le mystère des Saints-Innocents. In these he often reaches mystic heights and we feel assured that in his own soul, at least, la cité harmonieuse has become "la cité de Dieu":

"Toute sainteté vient de Dieu, qui en est la source éternelle. Toute sainteté proéde de Jésus qui en est la source et le premier auteur." 21

"Vous qui êtes de Jésus; à moi qui suis de Jésus." 22

"O douce, ô grande, ô sainte, ô belle nuit, peut-être la plus sainte de mes filles, nuit à la grande robe, à la robe étoilée
Tu me rappelles ce grand silence qu'il y avait dans le monde
Avant le commencement du règne de l'homme.
Tu m'annonces ce grand silence qu'il y aura
Après la fin du règne de l'homme, quand j'aurai repris 'mon sceptre.'" 23

---

20 Un nouveau theologien, 1911, XIII, 58.
21 Le Mystère de la Charité de Jeanne d'Arc, 1910, V, 209.
22 Ibid., p. 214.
23 De la deuxième vertu, 1911, V, 453.
XIII. Certain Social Virtues

Péguy, who devoted himself untiringly for years to combat a single injustice \(^1\) and whose whole life seemed an unbroken act of charity toward the oppressed, banned justice and charity from the "Cité Harmonieuse." Singular paradox! But not to Péguy's way of thinking, for the very idea of justice and charity supposes a "manque," of which there are to be none in "la cité parfaite."

"Les citoyens de la cité harmonieuse ne connaissent pas le droit amour de la justice, les citoyens de la cité harmonieuse ne connaissent pas la charité penchée, les citoyens de la cité harmonieuse ne connaissent la vénérable pitié; ils ont reçu en héritage, la cité que ces pieux sentiments leur avaient préparée, mais ils n'ont pas reçu en héritage les sentiments qui leur avaient préparé cette cité, parce que ces sentiments devenaient inutiles et vains et desharmonieux à présent que l'oeuvre était parfaite." \(^2\)

It is then necessary that this perfect city be prepared. Every event which will awaken a spirit of justice or charity in the citizens of the still imperfect city is to be welcomed for it will put them on the road to the possession of that "solidarité" which will forestall the deficiencies that these sentiments suppose. We understand then that it was this tending toward his ideal that animated the soul of Péguy in his constant struggle to give to everyone that which was his due:

"La passion de la vérité, la passion de la justice, l'indignation, l'impatience du faux, l'intolérance du mensonge et de l'injustice occupaient toute nos heures, obtenaient toutes nos forces." \(^3\)

---

1 Dreyfus Case
2 De la cité harmonieuse, 1896, X, 138.
3 "L'Affaire Dreyfus et la crise du parti socialiste," Revue Blanche, 15 sept. 1899
These same sentiments drew from the heart and the pen of Leo XIII the encyclical which we are studying:

"...the responsibility of the Apostolic office urges Us to treat the question expressly and at length, in order that there may be no mistake as to the principles which truth and justice dictate for its settlement." 4

Péguy is willing to engage in a moral struggle to bring about that universal condition where justice shall reign without the citizens knowing that it reigns. Péguy realizes that these rights cannot be gained by simple wishing, for the idea of right is a declaration of war against all those forces which contend for the mastery:

"Quelle folie, que de vouloir lier à la Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme une Déclaration de Paix. Comme si une Déclaration de Justice n'était pas en elle-même et instantanément une Déclaration de guerre. Il n'y a qu'une Dame dans le monde qui ait fait faire plus de querelles que l'injustice; et c'est la justice." 6

The very vocabulary (note words we have underscored) employed by Leo XIII in speaking of justice indicates the moral struggle required for its achievement:

"...laws which, as long as they are just, derive their binding force from the law of nature." 7

"His great and principle obligation is to give to every one that which is just." 8

"Justice, therefore, demands that the interests of the poorer population be carefully watched over by the administration." 9

"If through necessity or fear of a worse evil, the

4 RN, 2.
5 Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme, issued in 1814. (It is of interest to note that Art.17 declares the right of property sacred and inviolable.)
6 L'Argent, (suite), 1913, XIV, 139.
7 RN, 8. 8 Ibid., 17 9 Ibid., 27.
workman accepts harder conditions because an employer or contractor will give him no better, he is the victim of force and injustice." 10

The "cité parfaite" cannot be a reality until every individual injustice has been righted:

"Une seule injustice, une seule cruauté, exercée par la cité contre un homme, met pour ainsi dire, tout un pays en état de pêche mortel." 11

So it was that he spent himself and others to bring justice to Dreyfus; that he argued the cause of the Jew; that he insisted on dealing with personalities instead of generalities; that he gave his life in the Battle of the Marne. 12

Even while Péguy bemoans the fact that individual acts of charity are vain, he does not reject them. Rather does he consider them remedies for a sick city, insufficient, to be sure, but better than none at all:

"Quand un bourgeois qui monte s'arrête à la charité, il s'arrête beaucoup trop tôt. Mais cela vaut assurément beaucoup mieux que de rester bourgeois simplement." 13

And Joan of Arc cries out from a heart weighed down with the universal misery:

"Qu'importent nos efforts d'un jour? Qu'importent nos charités? Je ne peux pourtant pas donner toujours. Je ne peux pas donner tout. Je ne peux pas donner à tout le monde." 14

But she acts; she gives of that which she has; she gives beyond the requirements of justice or charity in spite of its

10 Ibid., 34.
11 La Pensee de Charles Péguy, p. 286.
12 First Battle of the Marne, 1914.
13 "Récentes œuvres de Zola," 1902, II, 121.
14 La Mystère de la charité de Jeanne d'Arc, 1910, V, 40.
futility:
"Je leur ai donné mon pain: la belle avance! Ils auront faim ce soir; ils auront faim demain." 15

She gives in the spirit of Péguy, now Christian:
"Je ne reconnais qu'une charité chrétienne, mon jeune camarade, et c'est celle qui procède directement de Jesus... c'est la constante communion, et spirituelle, et temporelle, avec le pauvre, avec le faible, avec l'opprime." 16

Leo XIII also awaits the advent of a perfect city, but it is not of this world. Consequently the citizens of this earthly kingdom must tend toward that heavenly home by achieving a perfection of charity both toward God and neighbor. The Supreme Pontiff becomes very practical in his program - he spends no time bewailing futility, for perfection is not in time:
"...it is one thing to have a right to the possession of money, and another to have a right to use money as one pleases. ... But if the question be asked, How must one's possessions be used? the Church replies without hesitation in the words of the same holy Doctor: 17 "Man should not consider his outward possessions as his own, but as common to all, so as to share them without difficulty when others are in need. Whence the Apostle saith, Command the rich of this world ... to give with ease, to communicate." 18

The Holy Father states that by reflection on the charity of Christ toward the lowly and those harassed by injustice:
"... the proud spirit of the rich is easily brought down, and the downcast heart of the afflicted is lifted up; the former are moved toward kindness, the latter toward reasonableness in their demands. Thus the distance between the classes which pride seeks is reduced, and it will easily be brought to pass

15 Ibid., p. 38.
16 L'Argent (suite), 1913, XIV, 61.
17 St. Thomas Aquinas.
18 RN, 19.
that the two classes, with hands clasped in friendship, will be united in heart." 19

It is the peculiar characteristic of this Christ-like charity that it fulfills the whole Gospel law so that he who practices it is willing to sacrifice himself for love of others in whom he seems the image of Eternal Love. Hence such charity has nothing in it of the modern connotation of the word which sees in "charity" a condescending element so that recipients of the act feel it an affront to their self respect. In economic relations this Christ-like charity - this principle of "love thy neighbor as thyself" - is nothing short of social duty. The employer, seeing in his employee a brother in Christ, opens to him the opportunity to become part owner in the industry. There is no taint of degradation in this system. True, the profits of the original owner are lessened, but since the distribution of said profits is so obviously one of justice, he cannot boast of his "charities."

The youthful Péguay took exception to this term charity, basing, as we have seen above, his opinion on the modern inference of the word. But as Péguay grows older and takes on more and more the spirit of Christ, he too realizes that the charity of Christ can remove the sting of pride so that both the rich and poor are then well on the road to that "fraternité" which are the sentiments of his "cité parfaite."

19 The above passage has been taken from the new translation of the Rerum Novarum sponsored by the Catholic University and published by the National Catholic Welfare Conference. (1942) The above citation is from paragraph 37, p. 17.
"Le christianisme est le grand régulateur, interne, de la misère, de la pauvreté, de la maladie. La misère, la pauvreté, la maladie est certainement un grand ressort, un grand régulateur interne du christianisme." 20

Christianity, therefore, has within it the power to lift "misère" at least to the level of frugal comfort and, on the other hand, to direct the rich to forego their abundance as a duty of social justice toward the needy.

It may be appropriate at this point to speak of Péguy's attitude toward suffering since by its impetratory value it can be classified as a social virtue and thus obtain graces for the souls of men, even to saving them from eternal damnation. Note here, again, the intensity of Péguy's personality. Our sufferings must be an imitation of the sufferings of Christ, even though they reach the peak of "la souffrance extrême."

"Jésus a souffert. Nous devons l'imiter dans toute la mesure de nos forces. Oh! ... nous n'aurons jamais la souffrance infinie... Mais nous devons tâcher de toutes nos forces humaines à souffrir du mieux que nous pouvons, et jusqu'à la souffrance extrême sans nous tuer jamais, tout ce que nous pouvons de la souffrance humaine. Voilà ce que nous devons faire ici-bas, si vraiment nous ne voulons pas lâchement laisser damner les autres, si nous ne voulons pas lâchement nous laisser ainsi damner avec eux... Il y a un trésor des souffrances, un trésor éternel des souffrances. La passion de Jésus l'a empli d'un seul coup; l'a tout empli; l'a empli infiniment; l'a empli pour éternellement. Et pourtant il attend toujours que nous l'emplissions, voilà ce que n'ont pas compris les docteurs de la terre." 21

Leo XIII teaches the same doctrine; namely, our sufferings become meritorious only through the infinite merits of Christ:

20 Un nouveau théologien, 1911, XIII, 88.
"Jesus Christ when He redeemed us with plentiful redemption, took not away the pains and sorrows which in such large portion make up the texture of our mortal life; He transformed them into motives of virtue and occasions of merit; and no man can hope for eternal reward unless he follow in the blood-stained footprints of his Savior." 22

Justice, charity and suffering, "les sentiments malsains," will have no place in the "Cité de Dieu." There is no longer need for justice when all men will have received their due from Eternal Justice. Suffering will be eliminated, for life's daily cross will have become the Glorious Standard. And Charity - charity on earth so often tainted with pride - will have become union, the eternal embrace of man with his God and his fellowman.

But Leo XIII and Charles Péguy knew that the fulfillment of this ideal could be achieved only by dint of daily striving in a city that was still imperfect; and so their voices rang out clear, calling all men to a realization that the universal must be accomplished by a sincere devotion to particulars.

22 RN, 18.
Conclusion

The names of Pope Leo XIII and Charles Péguy live on. Well do they deserve this tribute - a lasting place in the thoughts and hearts of men. On the fundamental principles governing the relationship of man with his fellowman, they are in accord. It is on methods that they differ. Lovers of men as they were, both were alert to the evils of class distinction. The degrading poverty of the masses had issued a challenge that must be answered. Leo XIII and Péguy realized that the answer was primarily a moral revolution. Men must return to a practice of justice and charity in their relations with one another. Not the type of "charity" which so often debases - but the charity that is love which sees in the amelioration of society a social duty that is founded on equity.

At this point, Pope Leo and Péguy part ways; the former, advocating private ownership of productive property; the latter, communal ownership. But we must understand this rightly. Leo XIII attacks bitterly those who accumulate great wealth, for they are the formidable enemies of distributive ownership which is the core of his program. The method is simple; by means of a just wage, the worker can secure shares in the industry or invest his earnings in land. Thus it is not the system of capitalism which is all wrong, but its abuse. Péguy would change the system, but not by violence, for like Leo, he rejects "la lutte de classe." His final goal is a "Cité Harmonieuse" in which all property will belong to
the "ensemble des citoyens." Both the available tasks and products will be distributed according to harmony; that is, the citizens choose the work for which they are best fitted and only those products which they need. This presupposes a perfect city where jealousy and rivalry are unknown. So it is necessary that men be prepared by an alternative program called the "Cité Socialiste" wherein division of work and products will be made according to equality.

Another major difference between our authors is their attitude toward the State. Leo XIII stresses the necessity of a State ever watchful that the interests of employer and employee be protected and condones State ownership only of those utilities that cannot be efficiently managed in favor of the public good by private investment. Péguy is wary of the authority exercised by a State. The "cité Harmonieuse," because of the near perfection of its "citoyens," will need no government; but in the "Cité Socialiste" where men are not yet perfect, there will be a government of "biens"; that is, of tangible property of any kind whatsoever.

Above all, whether we listen to Leo or to Péguy, the souls of men must remain free. One of the principal objectives of Péguy's plan is that men will have many hours of leisure to develop "la vie intérieure," the importance of which in the Leonine sense of man's relations to his Creator becomes dominant only in Péguy's later works.

Unionism, so essential a part of the Rerum Novarum to insure the rights of the workers, will not be necessary in
Péguy's system which recognizes no employer. The "Mystique de la cité," uniting "les âmes collectives" of the various work-organisms is its closest approximation. Naturally, both men censure the evil practices in existing unions.

On such important questions as the inviolability and sacredness of the family, the obligation of doing one's work well, an appreciation of the Middle Ages, and a whole-hearted devotion to truth, Leo XIII and Charles Péguy are in perfect agreement.

Having come to the end of our study, we are grateful that these two men have lived. The world seems to be nobler because of them. Rarely do their ideas strike discord; there is, rather, a harmonizing even on those notes wherein they differ, for nowhere is Péguy the violent socialist who advocates property seizure, and nowhere is Leo XIII the narrow capitalist who advocates the concentration of wealth. In fact, harmony may be considered the keynote of their writings. Was not Péguy's ideal city called "la Cité Harmonieuse" before being called "la Cité de Dieu"? There all men would be free from hatred, rivalry, and jealousy. Leo XIII would have rich and poor join hands in friendly concord. The province of the State would be to safeguard the interests of each and every part so as to form one harmonious whole.

It was not difficult for Péguy to lift his socialism into a Christian atmosphere because of its leading tenet of freedom of souls. It would not be difficult for us now. Marcel Péguy has some definite ideas on this subject:
"La cité socialiste telle que l'entendait, Péguy, la réforme des rouages économiques de la cité pouvait conduire aussi bien à la chrétienté qu'à l'harmonisme, cette réforme étant dirigée contre la toute-puissance de l'argent en les temps modernes, et cette toute puissance étant aussi antichrétienne que mesharmonieuse. Cette réforme devait être poursuivie maintenant par la chrétienté, mais avec la même vigueur qu'elle devait l'être autrefois au nom de la république socialiste universelle." 1

Péguy himself describes the vigor and intensity with which he and his associates gave themselves to the cause:

"Nous avons des soucis et des tristesses, des peines même qu'ils ne connaissent pas; justement parce que notre socialisme est plus plein, à nous fatiguer davantage, nous vieillit plus que ne faisait leur simple républicanisme; ces vieux républicains sont plus jeunes à cinquante que nous ne sommes à trente; ils n'ont pas connu les désillusions, les détournements et les déceptions qui nous attendaient au seuil de l'action socialiste." 2

Leo XIII calls for the same intense vigor when he addresses the ecclesiastical hierarchy:

"Every member of Holy Religion must throw into the conflict all the energy of his mind, and all the strength of his endurance." 3

Are we in the present day realizing at least in part, the fulfillment of the vision of these two apostles for humanity? It seems so. No one can deny that the condition of labor is vastly improved. Here and there employers and workingmen are organizing unions on the principles laid down in the encyclical. Hours have been shortened, wages raised, child labor has been reduced, conditions of work have been greatly improved, and bonuses are given and property owners have

---

1 La Pensee de Charles Péguy, p. 301.
2 "Discours pour la liberté," 1903, II, 165.
3 RN, 45.
multiplied. Thanks to such men as Leo XIII!

And in Péguy's own beloved France, a new political group has arisen from the ruins of World War II. Known as the Mouvement Républicain Populaire, or more familiarly "M.R.P.", it is taking giant steps toward a centralization of control and ownership of public utilities. The process is not radically revolutionary and provision is made for due compensation to former owners. Thanks to such men as Charles Péguy!

Pope Leo XIII, Vicar of Christ on earth and spokesman of the Vatican • Charles Péguy, socialist leader and editor of the Cahiers; these are strange names to be linked, but we link them in all confidence:

"Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill.
Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."  

4 Matthew V:6,2.
A Selected Bibliography

Works by Charles Pierre Péguy


Vol. I.

Lettre du provincial, 1899.
Le Triomphe de la République, 1900.
Du second provincial, 1900.
Réponse Provisoire, 1900.
Encore de la Grippe, 1900.
 Toujours de la Grippe, 1900.
Entre deux trains, 1900.
Deuxième série au provincial, 1900.
Pour ma maison, 1900.
de la cité socialiste, 1897.
Pour moi, 1901.
Compte rendu de mandat, 1901.

Vol. II.

De Jean Coste, 1902.
Recettes œuvres de Zola, 1902.
Discours pour la liberté, 1903.
Notre patrie, 1905.
Louis de Gonzague, 1906.

Vol. III.

De la situation faite, 1906.
A nos amis, à nos abonnés, 1909.
L'Argent, 1913.

Vol. IV.


Vol. V.

Le mystère de la charité de Jeanne d'Arc, 1910.
Le porche du mystère de la deuxième vertu, 1911.

Vol. VII.

Eve, 1913.

Vol. X.

Pierre, commencement d'une vie bourgeoise, 1898.

1 Only the titles that have been used in the thesis are listed here.
Marcel, le premier dialogue de la cité harmonieuse, 1896.

Vol. XI.

La préparation du congrès socialiste national, 1900
Réponse Breve à Jaures, 1900.
Casse-cou, 1901.
Personnalités, 1902.

Vol. XIII.

Un nouveau théologien, 1911.

Vol. XIV.

L'Argent (suite), 1913.

Vol. XV.

Jeanne d'Arc, 1897.

Books about Charles Péguy:

Brodin, Pierre, Maîtres et témoins de l'entre-deux guerres, New York, Bretano's, 1943.


Maritain, Raïssa, We Have Been Friends Together, translated by Julie Kernan, New York, Longmans, Green and Co., Inc.,


Secrétain, Roger, Péguy, Soldat de la liberté, New York, Bretano's, 1941.

Books related to the Rerum Novarum:


Articles about Charles Péguy:


*Les Cahiers de la Quinzaine*, 18 série 1 à 5, "Lettres et entretiens de Charles Péguy."