

Kurze Zusammenfassungen in französischer Sprache folgen den Texten aller Vorträge.

Ich bin überzeugt, daß das hier besprochene Buch verdiene, in andere Sprachen übersetzt zu werden.

Jan SIEG SJ

Wojciech SŁOMSKI, *Personalistyczna wizja wolności. Wokół koncepcji wolności osoby ludzkiej Emmanuela Mouniera* [The Personalist Vision of Freedom: Examining Emmanuel Mounier's Concept of Personal Freedom], Wydawnictwo MIX, Warszawa 2000, 158 p.

There is considerable discussion in contemporary philosophical inquiry concerning the problematics of personalism. Among these inquiries is the book of Wojciech Słomski, a professor of philosophy at the Higher Institute of Psychotherapy and Rehabilitation in Warsaw, entitled *The Personalist Vision of Freedom: Examining Emmanuel Mounier's Concept of Personal Freedom*. This is the second edition (corrected and enlarged) of the book which once appeared under the title *Personal Freedom According to Emmanuel Mounier* in 1996. The new additions are the first chapter, in which the author introduces E. Mounier as a man and philosopher, as well as chapter five, which deals with the role and significance of freedom. This is rounded off by the remaining chapters. The book, therefore, is composed of six chapters and the bibliography.

The aim of the author's analysis is to examine the philosophical foundations of personalism, whose main trait is the recognition of the individual character of a person. This fact permits a deeper perspective on contemporary man and society at the turn of the millenium. In conclusion, the author quite aptly notes that, "...Every thought and every deed which aims at bettering mankind must reckon with the problem of the human personality" (pg. 146).

In chapter one, *Emmanuel Mounier – The Man and the Philosopher*, the author introduces us to E. Mounier as a man and a philosopher. E. Mounier lived in France from 1905-1950. He left behind fifteen books in addition to the 165 issues of the periodical „Esprit”, which he edited from 1930 onward. His name and philosophical programme became associated with this periodical. His most important book received the title *Qu'est-ce que le personalisme?*, and first appeared in 1947. It was published in Polish under the title *Co to jest personalizm?* (Paris-Warsaw, 1960). It includes the most precise and compact lecture on E. Mounier's views on personalism.

The author aptly emphasizes that all of what E. Mounier achieved and wrote stemmed from his christian faith. He was a politician, sociologist, philosopher, polemicist, but above all he was a man of faith, and a member of the community of the Roman Catholic Church. It was from this that sprang the idea of a personalist civilization, as opposed to systems that limited human freedom. He worked to create a study on a newly-shaped civilization which supported first and foremost the individual, in cohesion with Christian tradition (pg. 20). The author stresses the fact that Mounier was the first Christian thinker who, rather than fighting with marxism, sought to find a point of reconcillation with it (pg. 26). Despite his numerous dismissals of Marx, Bergson, Freud, Heidegger, Buber, and Bierdiajew, Mounier searched for a validation of his own religious convictions, though not his philosophical ones. The author asserts that for the first time since the era of St. Thomas Aquinas, Christian philosophy has turned entirely toward the person living „here and now”, toward his or her most fundamental and immediate problems. Mounier saw in mankind the living essence in the earthly sphere, and in this world working toward eternal life (pgs. 42-43).

In chapter two, *The Idea of Personalism*, the author uses a synthetic method to capture the idea of personalism, the development of that idea, the basic outlooks and aspirations, and the most significant offshoots and figures. All of this uncovers the primary aspects of personalism, which, according to E. Mounier, make up the commitments and dynamism contributing to the development of the individual and the community. Personalism, in accordance with the Mounier tradition, needn't be a philosophical system, but an intellectual movement, taking on the most vital problems of the contemporary world. Respecting all the opinions set before him, the author chooses the teachings of the church, which serve as assumptions from which one draws all conclusions involving human beings. From this rises the third chapter: *The concept of the Person in Christian Personalism*. It is divided into two parts. The first addresses „objectivized” personalism, as well as personalism as a humanistic tendency. The second part points to the Christian origins of personalism, to its theological basis. Awareness of what Christian personalism is and its message pertaining to the concept of the human being – of the existence of the blessings of reason and free will, which in the material world is the only direct access to the existence of the divine (*perfectissimum ens*) – allows him to explain the depiction of man's freedom in Mounier's personalism (pg. 64).

In the fourth chapter, entitled *The Philosophical Basis of Personalism*, the author first portrays the concept of the person and the individual in Thomistic philosophy, emphasizing the basic characteris-

tics of a person's individuality by employment of a metaphysical depiction. In this way he demonstrates the principle of the unity of man, the significance of the factor of the material body, reason and freedom as manifestations of spiritual sovereignty, and finally the idea of transcendence (pg. 76). Following this, the author introduces Mounier's relationship to existentialism, as well as his personalist concept of man. E. Mounier was convinced that the philosophy of mankind ought to be linked to Christian thought, and above all to Christian axiology. This would allow human activity to be endowed with its complete sense, and would shape social institutions in such a way that they would serve the development of humankind (pgs. 83-84). At the end of this chapter, the author puts forward the theme of *The Existentialist Interpretation of Thomism and Personalism*. Christian personalist humanism as represented by E. Mounier is comprehended as the wisdom of theoretical reason as well as a guideline for the practical progress of reason. He derives his premises and strength from an experienced perspective on socio-historical reality, subscribing to the autonomy and auto-teleology of man, while simultaneously accenting the separateness and uniqueness of the human being. It is well worth adding that this Christian separateness of mankind also relies on the fact that it should build its own world of truth and virtue, while simultaneously applying itself to work for the secular and church communities (pg. 97).

In the fifth chapter, *Freedom – Its Meaning, Role, and More Important Concepts*, the author presents the model for freedom in the Middle Ages, the idea of freedom „licenced” by the collective, the liberal-individualistic model of freedom from the 19th century, and the philosophical basis of personalism. Wojciech Słomski gives a similarly extensive introduction reflecting on chapter six's personalist concept of freedom. In the first part of this chapter, freedom is portrayed as an existentialists value. The second part introduces freedom as an affirmation of man; an anthropological and conditional-freedom approach. The author weighs here the problematics of decision and free will as well as the categories of liberty and freedom. E. Mounier didn't address the issue of human freedom directly, but rather on the margins of the central flow of his work. According to his ideas, freedom does not allow itself to be confined to definitions or descriptions. One must experience it as a person's awareness of „his own actions”, in choosing one's path and way of being (pg. 121). The author situates the problem of freedom in an anthropological context, grading by various yardsticks the individual and social activities of man. To E. Mounier's mind, the key to defining the essence of freedom is the human being. Before man

stands the task of implementing various historical possibilities, and through this is the discovery of its essential character. Freedom is bound to and contingent upon the human condition. It is not a guilty verdict for man, but an alleged gift, a proposition set before human existence, which one may accept or cast aside. E. Mounier wrote that, „Freedom of personality is the freedom to independently discover one's own penchants and the liberty to take steps towards implementing one's own will. It is a freedom that does not call for restraint, it is a freedom to commit oneself” (pgs. 129-130). Freedom in self-commitment is a characteristic feature of the attitude of mankind, which personalism aims to explore. Freedom of will, being a component of natural human reason, can be, according to E. Mounier, perfected.

The final results of the author's analysis of personal freedom are laid out in four points: 1) Freedom as an existential value is tightly bound up in the process of continual growth and becoming; 2) Freedom appears in a twofold manner: as a fundamental awareness determining oneself, and as a power in the implementation of new states of things; 3) The power and strength of personal freedom must subordinate itself to the nature of existence, which it must respect; 4) Freedom is evaluated, it always establishes a vision of the world's values, which motivate goals and activities (pg. 147).

It seems important to emphasize that for E. Mounier, „Freedom is not personal existence, but the method in which mankind is what it is” (pg. 147). In order for a person to be truly free, he requires a world full of values – to which one might add – Christian values. Mounier's personalism is theocentric – man finds in God his deepest source and ultimate sense of his own existence. „Christianity is not a brake”, writes Mounier, „It is a great madness, a strength bearing violent transformation and progress” (pg. 20). It is worth quoting John Paul II at this point, spoken during the homily at the time of the Holy Mass at Bydgoszcz on June 7, 1999: „...Such a world requires Godly madmen, who will go across the Earth like Christ, like Wojciech, Stanisław, or Maximilian Maria Kolbe and many others. Those who will have the courage to love and not hold back from any offerings in hope that sometime hope will bear the greatest of fruits” (number 4).

Wojciech Słomski's lecture is very valuable for all those who wish to be introduced to the theme of personalism, in particular Christian personalism. At the start of the third millennium Christianity needs a deeper understanding of the role of reason in life, as well as a realization of its own calling towards humanity, belonging simultaneously to the transcendental world and to the world of immanence. The nature human being – the nature Christian, aware of full freedom, values and

dignity, senses the necessity of the full realization of everyone's needs within this world. Their fulfilment lends sense to life, endows us with true peace, and leads us towards happiness.

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Translated from Polish by Søren GAUGER

Stanisław KOWALCZYK, *Filozofia wolności* [Philosophie der Freiheit], Lublin 1999, Katholische Universität, 276 S.

Mit seinem Buch *Philosophie der Freiheit* ist St. Kowalczyk, Professor an der Katholischen Universität Lublin und Priester, der Versuch gelungen, die Entwicklung der Freiheitsideen im Rahmen der allgemeinen Philosophiegeschichte synthetisch darzustellen. Zugleich ist es eine grundsätzliche Stellungnahme zu den Fragen: Was ist Freiheit? bzw. Wie kann der Mensch Sklaverei und Selbstversklavung vermeiden? Die Weise, auf welche die Freiheit begriffen wird, entscheidet darüber, ob man sich in Richtung Theismus oder Atheismus bewegt, ob in Richtung Spiritualismus oder Materialismus, Determinismus oder Indeterminismus. Sie hängt ihrerseits zweifellos davon ab, wie man den Menschen, die Geschichte, Gott und die Gesellschaft begreift. So stellt der Verfasser etliche Philosophen einander gegenüber, die nicht nur in ihren Anthropologien, sondern auch in ihren Konzeptionen von Freiheit sehr von einander abweichen und einander widersprechen.

Das erste Kapitel beinhaltet die Freiheitsvorstellungen der Antike (Plato, Aritoteles, die Stoiker, Plotin). Darauf folgt eine Darstellung der Freiheitsauffassungen führender christlicher Philosophen (Thomas von Aquin, Bonaventura, Duns Scotus, Descartes). In den weiteren Kapiteln finden dann neuzeitliche und gegenwärtige Interpretationen der Freiheit Darstellung: Kant, der klassische Liberalismus, Pantheismus, Marxismus, Lebensphilosophie, Phänomenologie, Existentialismus, Neothomismus und der moderne Liberalismus. In den beiden letzten Kapiteln stellt Prof. Kowalczyk schließlich theologische Freiheitskonzepte vor, die aus der Bibel und der Katholischen Soziallehre entnommen sind. Deren axiomatische und personalistische Implikationen sind von großer Bedeutung, sowohl im Hinblick auf die individuelle, als auch im Hinblick auf die soziale Dimension des Freiheitsbegriffes.

Kowalczyk stützt sich in seiner Analyse des Freiheitsbegriffes auf die christliche Philosophie. Er ermöglicht dem Leser, die grundlegende Bedeutung dieses Begriffs zu erfassen: die Willensfreiheit als einen Teil des menschlichen Daseins, untrennbar verbunden mit der Natur des Menschen, die Freiheit als seine Berufung. Ontologisch gehört die