

Alan Paul FIMISTER

# Robert Schuman: Neo-Scholastic Humanism and the Reunification of Europe

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Philosophy  
& Politics



P.I.E. Peter Lang

**O**n 9<sup>th</sup> May 1950 Robert Schuman (1886-1963) made the historic declaration that would form the foundation of the European Community. What is seldom appreciated is the remarkable degree to which Schuman's actions were the conscious implementation of the Neo-Thomistic project of Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903). Leo sought to employ the intellectual resources of St Thomas Aquinas to achieve "the restoration, both in rulers and peoples, of the principles of the Christian life in civil and domestic society". The resolution of the Church's difficulties with the French Republic and republicanism generally was a central goal of Leo's programme. In the half-century that followed a series of philosophers sought to envisage the concrete conditions under which Leo's vision could be realised. Foremost among them was Jacques Maritain (1882-1973).

Robert Schuman was a close student of Aquinas and committed to the reconciliation of the Church and the Republic. As French Foreign Minister he sought to act upon Maritain's belief that a European federation conceived under the banner of liberty would ultimately lead to the establishment of a new Christendom.

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**P.I.E. Peter Lang**

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***Εἰς τὴν Βερενικὴν***

“...quoniam Deus, qui dixit de tenebris lucem splendescere,  
ipse illuxit in cordibus nostris ad illuminationem scientiae  
claritatis Dei, in facie Christi Jesu.”



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## Preface

The person of Robert Schuman appears, and I emphasise *appears*, familiar to the French speaking public. As one of the “Fathers of Europe” he is numbered among the historical symbols of the European Union. His declaration of the 9<sup>th</sup> May 1950, drafted by Jean Monnet and his entourage, has a secure place among the “founding texts” so much so that in 1985, the 9<sup>th</sup> May was declared “Europe Day” (although the symbols of the community were not enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty as they had been in the proposed Constitution). In short, Robert Schuman is among those names which have become symbolic and yet remain little known in substance. It is the merit of Alan Fimister to have provided us with more than a biography of Robert Schuman in English (the absence of which had become a serious omission), but above all a critical analysis of the intellectual and spiritual path of a man, Robert Schuman, whose social and political engagement was rooted in the great period of spiritual and intellectual debate initiated by Leo XIII in 1879.

The deeper study of the Neo-Thomistic thinkers, particularly of the circle which gravitated around Jacques Maritain, allows the author to unfold for us the personality of Robert Schuman in all its richness. Thanks to a fruitful investigation of the archival sources Alan Fimister has presented us with a vision of a politician and a thinker profoundly engaged with the great issues of his time. Far from the caricature of Robert Schuman with which we are usually presented, we encounter a man who was the bridge between Neo-Thomistic reflection and the Social Magisterium on the one hand and the growing moral recognition of the vital necessity of concrete European Construction on the other.

The present study thus enriches our understanding of the origins and the development of that which is today the European Union. Personally I have encouraged and followed with great interest this painstaking research which was accomplished at the University of Aberdeen and has reached its term in cooperation with the University of Luxembourg. In fact, I defend more than ever the necessity to study the intellectual and spiritual roots of European construction, without which history is reduced to a litany of facts, a gallery of portraits. Alan Fimister here

*Robert Schuman*

provides us with solid proof of the importance of sustained and reasoned reflection upon the intellectual and spiritual foundations of European integration.

*Professor René Leboutte*

*Masters Director of Contemporary European History at the University of Luxembourg*

*Former holder of the Jean Monnet Chair in History at the University of Aberdeen*

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The idea behind this project would never have occurred to me without the inspiration of Mrs J. McReavy and I would never have been able to write it without that of Miss Gloria Cadman. Equally indispensable, though in a different way, have been Professor René Leboutte and my Aunt, Françoise Kunka. Many people have read drafts of the text and patiently suffered my intransigence: Helen Brown, Peter Kwasniewski, David Braine, Brian Midgely, Bettina Tonn, Tony Heywood and Trevor Salmon. My efforts have also been sustained over the years by the influence and example of Barry Robertson and Ian MacInnes.

I would like to thank the University of Luxembourg and the staff of the Queen Mother and Taylor Libraries at the University of Aberdeen, of the British Library and of the Bodleian Library. I owe a special debt to the staff at the Departmental Archives of Moselle and of the Maison Robert Schuman. In particular the assistance and encouragement of Eric Necker of Conseil Général de la Moselle have been invaluable.

An unpayable debt of love and gratitude is owed to my parents Anne and Geoff and my sister Katherine.





## Note on Abbreviations

AAS	<i>Acta apostolicae sedis</i>
ADM	<i>Archives départementales de la Moselle</i>
D	Henry Denzinger, <i>Enchiridion Symbolorum</i> (30 <sup>th</sup> edition)
MRS	Maison Robert Schuman
L&S	C. T. Lewis and C. Short, <i>A Latin Dictionary</i> (1963)
OED	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i> (Revised 2 <sup>nd</sup> edition)
Sent.	St Thomas Aquinas, <i>Scriptum super libros Sententiarum</i>
SCG	St Thomas Aquinas, <i>Summa Contra Gentiles</i>
ST	St Thomas Aquinas, <i>Summa Theologiae</i>



## Introduction

The purpose of this work is to demonstrate that the character of that European community which emerged from the declaration of 9<sup>th</sup> May 1950 resulted from the self-conscious application by French foreign Minister Robert Schuman of the Papal Social Magisterium and of Neo-Thomistic political philosophy to the relations of European states.

In order to establish that this was the basis of Schuman's actions, it is necessary to undertake four investigations. In the first place, it is necessary to examine the social teaching of the five popes whose pontificates spanned the Neo-Thomistic period and who provided the movement with its inspiration and principle goals: Leo XIII, Pius X, Benedict XV, Pius XI and Pius XII. Of these the most significant are Leo XIII, who launched the Thomist revival in 1879, and Pius XII, whose pontificate coincided with the creation of the European communities. In the second place, it is necessary to examine the reception of this social Magisterium by the writers of the Neo-Thomistic period, specifically in regard to the concept of supranational society. Pre-eminent among these writers (for our purposes) is the philosopher Jacques Maritain. Thirdly, it is necessary to examine the person and achievements of Robert Schuman, and his engagement with Neo-Thomism and with the Political Catholicism of his day. Finally, it is necessary to examine the explicit statements of Robert Schuman concerning political and social philosophy, in order to trace the origin of these conclusions and their place within the context of Neo-Scholastic Humanism. This book is accordingly divided into four parts, each of which is devoted to one of these tasks.

The literature on the life of Robert Schuman in English is virtually non-existent. He is often alluded to as a symbol of the role of Christianity and Catholicism in the origins of the European Union/Communities but this is usually as far as it goes. Further elaboration, when it does occur, is almost always misinformed. In his 1996 history of Europe, Norman Davies mistakenly assumes that Maurice Schumann and Robert Schuman were brothers.<sup>1</sup> Indeed his brief treatment of Schuman is replete with errors of chronology and fact. It is a humiliating treatment in a history of the continent for a man who was declared by the European Parliamentary Assembly "Father of Europe."

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<sup>1</sup> Davies, 1997, p. 1072.

Schuman earns but two passing references in Michael P. Fogarty's *Christian Democracy in Western Europe*,<sup>2</sup> which for years was the standard English work on the subject. He fares better in more recent contributions such as *Christian Democracy in Europe Since 1945*<sup>3</sup> edited by Michael Gehler and Wolfram Kaiser. In their introduction they acknowledge that "the current EU, its institutional structure and its continuous tendency to strengthen its 'core' after progressive enlargements ... is probably the most important legacy of Christian democratic politics – and one that the EPP<sup>4</sup> still draws on in its repeated references to the so-called 'founding fathers' such as Robert Schuman, Konrad Adenauer and Alcide De Gasperi."<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, the remaining references are also passing and marred by inaccurate or questionable assertions.

In the second volume of his *Christian Social Witness and Teaching*,<sup>6</sup> Rodger Charles S.J. acknowledges the importance of Schuman, Adenauer and De Gasperi in laying the foundations of post war Europe. He underlines the importance of Jacques Maritain's socio-political philosophy for the Christian Democrats of the late 1940s and 1950s and correctly identifies the loss of philosophical and doctrinal substance in Christian Democracy after the 1950s. However, Charles's work, which aspires to be a standard reference for the study of Catholic Social Teaching, is marred by a neo-conservative selectivity which leads him to ignore encyclicals of which he is not enamoured and to dodge the serious consideration of such questions as usury and the separation of church and state. Furthermore, his treatment of Schuman is brief and marred by a fanciful claim that the Christian Democratic triumvirate had been formed in 1924 in Paris under the auspices of Don Luigi Sturzo: "Already in 1924 they had plans for a Common Market and European integration with the prevention of future wars in mind."<sup>7</sup> This meeting is unknown to the biographers of the three men, is contrary to their own public statements, and is not alleged in the sources he footnotes at this point.

Schuman also appears briefly in a recent work by another Neo-Conservative, John Paul II's biographer, George Weigel. *The Cube and*

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<sup>2</sup> Fogarty, 1957.

<sup>3</sup> Gehler, 2004.

<sup>4</sup> The European Peoples Party – the Christian Democratic group in the European Parliament and successor to the "black international" of the late 1940s and 1950s.

<sup>5</sup> Gehler, 2004, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Charles, 1998, pp. 130-131.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 130.

*the Cathedral – Europe, America and Politics without God*<sup>8</sup> is directed towards convincing a European readership that the abandonment of the sort of Atlanticist Christian Democratic tradition that originated the European communities is literally fatal to the survival of a non-Islamic Europe. But here, though Schuman merits a couple of mentions, one of them is part of an extended list and the other falsely classifies his colleague Jean Monnet as a Christian Democrat.

A much more accurate and well-informed account is found in chapter six of Alan Milward's *The European Rescue of the Nation State*. It is however brief and pervaded by the sarcasm of its title, "The Lives and Teachings of the European Saints." A considerably longer and more sympathetic appraisal of Schuman is given in R. C. Mowat's 1973 work *Creating the European Communities*, and an insightful portrait is offered by Dean Acheson in his 1959 *Sketches from Life*,<sup>9</sup> but by now we have well and truly entered into the region of personal reminiscence.

In French there is one major critical biography, the invaluable *Robert Schuman homme d'État 1886-1963*<sup>10</sup> by Raymond Poidevin, published in 1986. Also indispensable is Christian Pennera's *Robert Schuman, La jeunesse et les débuts politiques d'un grand européen, de 1886 à 1924*.<sup>11</sup> This was published two years earlier as a thesis produced under the supervision of Poidevin. The remaining material concerning Schuman falls into two broad categories: hagiography and personal reminiscence. Much of it falls into both, which may be a good sign that the hagiography is not misplaced. The most important of these works is the 1968 biography by Robert Rochefort,<sup>12</sup> though the many works by René Lejeune are also useful.<sup>13</sup> The recently published proceedings of a conference of scholars, ecclesiastics and persons involved in Schuman's beatification process, *Robert Schuman – Homme d'État, citoyen du Ciel* makes an excellent starting place for the study of many important themes in Schuman's life and thought.<sup>14</sup>

Honourable mention must also be made of one other work, *Values in a Time of Upheaval*, the last work of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger to be written prior to his election as Benedict XVI.<sup>15</sup> It consists of a number of occasional addresses which touch (albeit briefly) upon many of the same

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<sup>8</sup> Weigel, 2005, pp. 70 & 91.

<sup>9</sup> Acheson, 1959.

<sup>10</sup> Poidevin, 1986.

<sup>11</sup> Pennera, 1985.

<sup>12</sup> Rochefort, 1968.

<sup>13</sup> Lejeune, 2000.

<sup>14</sup> Clément & Husson (ed.), 2006.

<sup>15</sup> Ratzinger, 2006.

themes as this work. The analysis of the ideas of Maritain, the role of Schuman and the development of the European institutions given in the following pages coincides very closely with that of the former Cardinal even though they were written in complete ignorance of these speeches and sermons.

The archives of the Holy See relating to the papacy of Leo XIII were opened by John Paul II at the beginning of his pontificate. At that time the Centre for Thomistic Studies in Houston published a retrospective on the centenary of *Aeterni Patris* with many important contributors.<sup>16</sup> The political orientation of Leo's programme was not, however, foremost in their minds. Owen Chadwick in *A History of Popes 1830-1914*<sup>17</sup> gives far more time to the interrelation of Leo XIII's political and philosophical goals. Nevertheless, while as scholarly and readable as one would expect, his treatment is marred by an unconscious but significant lack of sympathy with its subject. Alistair MacIntyre has characteristically illuminating things to say in chapter three of *Three Rival Versions of Moral Inquiry*<sup>18</sup> but his concerns are more strictly confined to moral philosophy. There is still no critical biography of Leo XIII in English.

Maritain's political philosophy is far from being un-criticised. His concept of the Common Good was attacked by Charles De Koninck in *On the Primacy of the Common Good: Against the Personalists* which sparked off a controversy most of which was reprinted in 2002 in *The Aquinas Review*.<sup>19</sup> But the most famous attack on Maritain's politics was *De Lamennais A Maritain* by Jules Meinville.<sup>20</sup> It is very much an attack from the right and some, but not all, of his criticisms are tangential to this study. The only major biography of Maritain is the rather gushing *Jacques and Raïssa Maritain – Beggars for Heaven*<sup>21</sup> by Jean-Luc Barré. Though much shorter, Ralph McInerny's *The Very Rich Hours of Jacques Maritain* is considerably more appealing for an Anglo-Saxon temperament.

On the general topic of Catholicism and the European project the most important (and almost the only) work was Philippe Chenaux's *Une Europe Vaticane*?<sup>22</sup> Recently Chenaux has returned to the topic looking in more detail at the work of the three Christian Democratic founders

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<sup>16</sup> Brezick (ed.), 1981.

<sup>17</sup> Chadwick, 1998.

<sup>18</sup> MacIntyre, 1990.

<sup>19</sup> De Koninck, 1997.

<sup>20</sup> Meinville, 1956.

<sup>21</sup> Barré, 2005.

<sup>22</sup> Chenaux, 1990, 1991.

and providing a helpful introduction to their influences and influence.<sup>23</sup> Though the historiography of Christian Democracy and Political Catholicism has revived in recent years there is nothing comparable in English. In regard to Maritain, and to a lesser but still considerable extent Gilson, one is deluged with material written by and about the men themselves. Chenaux has also made an important contribution here with *Entre Maurras et Maritain*,<sup>24</sup> but histories of Thomism as such are less common and often form part of a fierce post-Vatican II debate or series of debates.

In researching Schuman's own ideas there is one treasure house above all: the Departmental Archive of the Moselle where Schuman's own papers are deposited. A few items which are not in the Archive can be found at the Maison Robert Schuman in Scy-Chazelles. This also houses the reminder of Schuman's library for personal reading, as opposed to his huge collection of antiquarian books, which was sold off at his death. It is impossible to say in some cases which volumes were bought and read by Schuman and which found their way to Scy-Chazelles in the years between his death and the acquisition of the house by the Department. However, Schuman has often initialled the books himself and in the case of pre-war editions some or all of the pages have been cut.

The presentation of the life of Robert Schuman in part three concerns events which are a matter of public record. Accordingly, I have generally not supplied archival references for this section. The major French biographical works and the published writings of other protagonists provide an obvious starting point for the reader who wishes to make further investigation on a particular topic and these are referenced throughout. In part four we examine Schuman's own account of his motivation. Although many (but not all) of the addresses, articles and speeches in which he supplies this account were delivered in public they are not generally accessible. In part four therefore archival sources are given for all of Schuman's reflections.

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<sup>23</sup> Chenaux, 2007.

<sup>24</sup> Chenaux, 1999.





## CHAPTER I

# **The Social Magisterium and Supranational Society from Leo XIII to Pius XII**

### **1. After Bonaparte**

In this section we shall examine the Papal Social Magisterium from the time of Leo XIII to the death of Pius XII. We will look first at the challenges faced by the papacy at the beginning of Leo XIII's reign and how they gave rise to the Neo-Thomistic project. We will then examine the formal and material scope of the Papal Social Magisterium, why the period 1878-1958 is so distinctive, the main points of Leo XIII's social vision, its application to the concept of Supranational society by Pius XII and finally, the connection between this last topic and the idea of the perfect governmental form.

After the French Revolution, and even more urgently after 1870, the Papacy was forced to address three key theoretical questions in regard to politics: What is the relationship between Church and state? What is the relationship between Catholicism and Democracy? And what are the social and geographical frontiers of the state's moral obligations? The three questions were, from the perspective the Papacy chose to address them, closely interrelated. In regard to the last point it was the social question which most concerned the Holy See in the years immediately after the election of Leo XIII in 1878. However, as the age of the World Wars commenced, the supranational<sup>1</sup> question, of the unity of human society across political, national and racial boundaries, came to the fore.

In the year 800 Alcuin of York wrote to his master Charlemagne, "We would not listen to those who were wont to say the voice of the people is the voice of God, for the voice of the mob is near akin to

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<sup>1</sup> The *Oxford English Dictionary* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1989) defines the word "supranational" as "Having power, authority, or influence that overrides or transcends national boundaries, governments, or institutions." The first use of the word cited by the *OED* comes from 1908 and refers to the Catholic Church. According to *Le Grand Robert de la Langue Française* (augmented 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2001), the word did not appear in French until 1911.

madness.”<sup>2</sup> A millennium later on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1804 a self-styled new Charlemagne would defy the Northumbrian scholar to claim the imperial dignity upon the dual title of popular acclamation and Papal consecration. In defence of Alcuin, the experiment was not a happy one, but it nevertheless represented an ideal. In many ways it represented the same ideal as Charlemagne’s own coronation, and it was an ideal as dear, perhaps dearer, to the papacy as to the two very different recipients of its temporal sword.

This ideal presented a vision of a political order in which the voice of the people could and would coincide with the voice of God. It was a neo-mediaeval ideal, but not one which sought to resurrect the sociological realities of the Middle Ages: only to apply the ideals which the greatest of mediaeval theologians believed should obtain in all ages. The elaboration of this ideal was the work of Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903) and in relation to France it was known as the *Ralliement*.

The last of the eighty “Modern Errors” condemned by Leo’s predecessor Bl. Pius IX<sup>3</sup> in his celebrated Syllabus of 8<sup>th</sup> December 1864 was that “the Roman Pontiff can and should reconcile and adapt himself to progress, liberalism and modern civilisation.”<sup>4</sup> Definitions of modernity differ, and this is not the place to choose between them or indeed to add to their number, but it can be said with some confidence that many, perhaps most, historians of 12<sup>th</sup> century political Catholicism have judged its success precisely on how far it *has* been able to reconcile and adapt itself to progress, liberalism and modern civilisation.

The point might profit from an obvious comparison. If Marxism is true it cannot but be a “progressive” force but it is still possible, while prescinding from the question of its truth or falsity, to attempt an answer to the question of how successful Marxism is or has been in a given era or place. This can be attempted because Marxism is generally accepted to be, to at least some extent, an internally consistent ideological system and programme of action. The implication of Pius IX’s condemnation is that insofar as the same can be said of Catholicism it is intrinsically incompatible with liberalism, modernity and the concept of progress.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> [Lat., *Nec audiendi qui solent dicere “vox populi, vox dei,” cum tumultuositas vulgi semper insanie proxima sit.*] Duemmler, 1895, p. 199.

<sup>3</sup> Pius IX was “beatified” (the stage before canonisation) by John Paul II in 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Denzinger, 1957, D1780.

<sup>5</sup> In Vol. IX, page 251, of his vast *History of Philosophy* (London, 1975) Frederick Copleston S.J. notes, without enthusiasm, the similarity between the role of Thomism in pre-conciliar 12<sup>th</sup> century Catholicism and that of Marxism in the Soviet bloc “[...] one can hardly shut one’s eyes to the fact that in many ecclesiastical institutions Thomism, or what was considered such, came to be taught in a dogmatic manner analogous to that in which Marxism-Leninism is taught in communist dominated

An examination of the ancient and mediaeval church ought to show that Catholicism is not incompatible with republicanism or democracy, and yet insofar as they accept Pius IX's understanding of Catholicism modern historians of political Catholicism seem to assume that Catholic republican politics is insofar as it is politically successful that much less Catholic. The idea that Catholicism could be Republican, and an internally consistent ideological system and programme of action, and anti-modern, and politically successful all at the same time is less rejected than not even considered by many of its 12<sup>th</sup> century historians.

Much of this can be attributed to the un-conscious reading of Catholic ecclesiastical history through the lens of Vatican II and through an interpretation of that council as, in the words of no less a figure than Joseph Ratzinger, a "counter-syllabus."<sup>6</sup> And yet this is not the only way of reading the history of 12<sup>th</sup> century political Catholicism; it is not the only way of reading Vatican II; and crucially, it is not the way one of the most important figures behind both 12<sup>th</sup> century political Catholicism and Vatican II read either. The Thomist philosopher Jacques Maritain constructed over the course of his philosophical career a political scholasticism which he believed to be utterly faithful to the Magisterium of the Church, to the tenets of Thomism and to the condemnation of modernism. This political philosophy, which he called Integral Humanism, was undoubtedly a most powerful influence upon the Christian Democratic movement<sup>7</sup> and was seen both by Maritain and by his supporters and enemies as having received vindication at Vatican II.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, Maritain looked with undisguised dismay upon many of the ecclesiastical transformations that followed that event.<sup>9</sup> How he could be both vindicated by the content and devastated by the effects of the Council is another question for another day. But the general agreement that Maritain was vindicated should be enough to give us pause and inspire us to take a second look at political Catholicism prior to the

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education." In Philippe Chenaux's "*Humanisme Intégral*" (1936) de Jacques Maritain (Paris, 2006) he compares the role of *Integral Humanism* to that of Mao's Little Red Book for an entire generation of Catholics.

<sup>6</sup> Ratzinger, 1987, p. 381.

<sup>7</sup> Amato, 1975, p. 149 says of the two thinkers "The Christian Democratic Party (*Mouvement Républicain Populaire*), which was the most unusual political expression of the post-War period and which with no exaggeration can be said to be in great part an indirect result of their intellectual activity in the 1930s." Chenaux thinks that Schuman was unusually enthusiastic for Maritain and, in general, the influence of Mounier was greater in the MRP, Chenaux, 2006, p. 87.

<sup>8</sup> On the preceding controversy see Komonchak, 1999.

<sup>9</sup> His considerable dissatisfaction was most famously expressed in *The Peasant of the Garonne: An Old Layman Questions Himself about the Present Time* (New York, 1968).

Council, and ask whether its success could not be measured by another standard than the degree to which it was able to reconcile and adapt itself to progress, liberalism and modern civilisation: the degree to which it was able to adapt society and the civil order to the “golden wisdom”<sup>10</sup> of St Thomas Aquinas. For this was the standard by which it itself asked to be judged and believed it would be judged, by history and then by the Author of history. For whether or not Aquinas was, as Lord Acton would have it, the “first whig,”<sup>11</sup> he was certainly a republican in the proper and neglected sense of that word; and it was this republicanism that Leo XIII, Pius IX’s successor, hoped to harness in his titanic struggle to rally the Church to the republic and the republic to the Church.

The distorted historiography which has obscured the nature of Leo’s efforts since their passing also served to frustrate them while they still formed the centrepiece of papal policy. Writing in 1948 the French Catholic religious historian Adrien Dansette said of Napoleon,

The illogicality of depending at one and the same time on popular consent and divine right was to be shown by events, but at the time the contradiction was not apparent and by advancing so boldly this double claim Napoleon seemed to achieve his political ideal of a fusion between the various parties in the state, of harmony between religion and the Revolution.<sup>12</sup>

That Dansette could not only dissent so utterly from the political teaching of Leo XIII by calling it illogical but could do so without even noticing that he is doing it shows how dreadful was the task Leo had set himself when he embarked upon the *Ralliement*. Were it not for his *de facto* impiety and decision to make his title hereditary, Napoleon I would have represented the fulfilment of the ideal behind Leo’s *Ralliement*: an elected Monarch who none the less accepts that he rules by the grace of God. Indeed the speed with which Pius VII identified and seized the opportunity represented by the First Consul underlines the fact that Leo’s programme was not personal but an expression of the natural sympathies of the Catholic religion. We might even call the Concordat the first *Ralliement*.

This natural sympathy between republican governmental forms and Catholicism was fittingly most famously observed by a 19<sup>th</sup> century French Whig writing about the United States of America.

America is the most democratic country on earth, while, at the same time the country where, according to reputable reports, the Catholic religion

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<sup>10</sup> Leo XIII’s phrase *Aeterni Patris*, §31.

<sup>11</sup> For an extensive critique of “Whig Thomism” see Rowland, 2003.

<sup>12</sup> Dansette, 1961, p. 149.

makes the most progress. At first sight this is surprising. Two distinctions must be made: equality persuades men to judge for themselves. On the other hand, it gives them the taste for and conception of a single simple social power which is the same for everyone. Men who live in Democratic times are, therefore, predisposed to slide away from all religious authority. But if they agree to such an authority, they insist at least that it is unique and of one character for their intelligence has a natural abhorrence of religious powers which do not emanate from the same centre and they find it almost as easy to imagine that there is no religion as several [...] our descendents will tend increasingly to divide into only two parts, some leaving Christianity entirely and the others embracing the Church of Rome.<sup>13</sup>

It is not the project of this book to examine the career of Napoleon Bonaparte or his concordat with the Holy See. Nor does it seek to re-examine the entire history of post-Leonine pre-conciliar political Catholicism considered as a Thomistic project. Its view is restricted to the specific issue of European integration and to the career of one Thomist politician, Robert Schuman. But it is hoped thereby to lay down a marker for a more just and sympathetic appraisal, in the literal sense of sympathetic, of Neo-Scholastic Humanism and its political achievements.

Politically speaking, Leo XIII died a disappointed man. His vision of a purified and exact Catholic political philosophy and one day social order had found little response in France, where the anti-clerical persecution of the Third Republic was rapidly intensifying. Part of Leo's problem lay in the jolt involved in abandoning the traditional alliance between the Church and hereditary monarchy. This was just too much for politically minded French Catholics.<sup>14</sup> For the most part French Catholics were utterly polarised. The rapprochement that had been achieved between the Church and the Prussian Reich was wholly absent from the Third Republic. It is therefore somehow fitting that, just as the human instrument of the first *Ralliement* was born Italian, so the greatest champion of Leo's vision among Frenchmen should prove to be a man who in 1903 was legally German. Apart from a strong belief in providence, their "foreign" origins are just about the only thing that Robert Schuman and Napoleon Bonaparte have in common. If Napoleon went some way to achieving the Church's political ideal despite himself, Robert Schuman was so perfect an example of the sort of Catholic

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<sup>13</sup> De Tocqueville 2003, pp. 519-520.

<sup>14</sup> The best single study in English of the *Ralliement* and the reasons for its failure is: Sedgewick, 1965.