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“Solidarity and Solidarność: A Search for the Person in Community”

by

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Undergraduate honors thesis under the direction of

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Abstract

The philosophical tradition of the concept of solidarity attempts to respond to the question: “what is the place of the individual person in the community or society in which he lives?” The search for an adequate answer to this question began in response to the crises of the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution, with theorists rejecting classical conceptions of the person in the search for a new grounding for man’s societal experience. The search for solidarity led authors to embrace utopian socialism, anti-traditional secular religion, positivist progressivism, communism, and democratic socialism. A final tradition which seeks the meaning of solidarity, however, is Christianity. The development of Christian solidarity is most clearly seen in Catholic social encyclicals. Finally, the 1980’s, Polish Solidarność identified their movement with the principles of solidarity. Using Solidarność as a case study offers insight into which understanding of solidarity most adequately encompasses the reality of man’s nature and the relationship between that nature and community.

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“*Opus solidaritatis pax*” –Pope John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*

I. Introduction

Theorists of solidarity, though drawing from widely varying traditions, all attempt to answer one basic question: What is the relationship between the individual person and the community in which he lives? Solidarity’s early proponents wrote in response to two great societal crises: the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution. The first solidarity theorists wrote in reaction to the Enlightenment individualism that culminated in the French Revolution. One of these authors, Charles Fourier, embraced a theory of utopian collectivism in which a new concept of social unity called solidarity plays a part. Pierre Leroux also wrote in the aftermath of the Revolution, trying to use solidarity as a foundation for a religion of humanity, or a religion of the masses, that could replace Christianity’s role as a cohesive bond for society. These authors, reacting to the bloodshed that resulted from the philosophy of radical individualism, introduce solidarity to philosophical discourse.

Later authors develop solidarity as a response to the changes in society spurred by the Industrial Revolution. This tradition observes the tendency of modern industrial society to break down traditional communities, creating completely new urban environments. Theorists, therefore, questioned whether these changes in society affected the individual person in a negative or a positive way. In doing so, they utilize the language of solidarity in developing a philosophical distinction between modern society—*Gesellschaft*—and earlier community—*Gemeinschaft*. German Ferdinand Tönnies maintains the superiority of the community over the association of society, while his French contemporary Émile Durkheim claims the opposite in one of the most famous works on solidarity, *The Division of Labor in Society* (1893).

Other authors who reacted to the changes in society of the Industrial Revolution were Karl Marx and his followers. Marx establishes his philosophy of class struggle, utilizing solidarity on occasion to do so. According to Marx there is no real unity among men; only conflict can bring members of the same class together to fight against their oppressors. Marx's followers firmly established solidarity in the language of Marxism, with solidarity becoming especially important in the social democratic tradition. Some of the earliest associations of solidarity with the struggle of trade unions traces to this tradition.

Christian solidarity finds its expression most clearly in papal social encyclicals. In *Rerum Novarum*, Pope Leo XIII lays the foundation for what eventually becomes Christian solidarity even though he does not use the term. Popes Pius XI, Pius XII, John XXIII, Paul VI, and John Paul II follow in Pope Leo's tradition and expound upon the foundation of his social teaching. Popes Pius XII and John XXIII are the first to use the term solidarity in their teachings. They attempt to provide solidarity, with a history in so many traditions with rival conceptions of the human person, with a proper anthropology and understanding of society. They do so by returning to the philosophical tradition that was abandoned by the first solidarity theorists: that of Aristotle and Aquinas.

The tradition of Catholic solidarity becomes most fully developed during the papacy of Pope John Paul II, who stressed the theological and philosophical importance of solidarity while watching the nation of his birth in its struggle against Communism. Although many movements and organizations in history claim the term of solidarity, Polish Solidarność is perhaps the most well-known and the most successful.

These traditions represent rival genealogies of solidarity. First there is that of the early French socialist philosophers. Solidarity for them is an alternative to the rampant individualism

of the French Revolution. Second, there is the solidarity for the sociologists, which looks at the phenomena of society in the face of industrialization. Third, those in the Marxist tradition see solidarity as a response to the problems produced by a capitalist culture, specifically in the areas of economics and class consciousness. Finally, Christian solidarity attempts to address the same problems as do its rival traditions, but does so by drawing upon a tradition that the others reject. Using Solidarność as a case study, this paper aims to discover which of these traditions provides the most adequate understanding of the person in community, the search for which lies at the heart of solidarity's history.

II. Origins of Solidarity

Solidarity's etymologic heritage begins with the Roman legal term *solidum*, from the Latin *solidus* which means "dense and firm."¹ The word's use had to do principally with "cooperative liability...within civil law."² The most common usage was the *obligation in solidum*, the responsibility of all to resume the debt of a person who cannot pay it. Thus from the very beginning, the origins of the word "solidarity" signify characteristics of the relationship between individuals and their community. These connotations imply also a certain responsibility for others, as well as an interrelatedness and interdependence of all. The French word "*solidarité*" continued this tradition. Entering common use in the 16th century, *solidarité* referred to the common responsibility of family members to pay the debts incurred by one person within that family.³ Solidarity thus had a principally legal connotation during its early history, but it did not assume philosophical and sociological significance until the aftermath of the French Revolution.

¹ Brunkhorst, Hauke. *Solidarity: From Civic Friendship to a Global Legal Community*. Trans. Jeffrey Flynn. Cambridge: Mass MIT Press, 2005. (2)

² Ibid. (1)

³ Stjernø, Steinar. *Solidarity in Europe: the History of an Idea*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. (27)

The French Revolution's cry for *fraternité* became associated with bloodshed, thus necessitating a new word that could encompass its original meaning, a meaning of unity which resembles but does not necessitate familial bonds. Specifically, in the aftermath of the Revolution, French social philosophers saw the emergence of capitalism and the results of liberalism, especially individualism. This spurred many "to find a way to combine the idea of individual rights and liberties with the idea of social cohesion and community" and "[h]ere the concept of solidarity was seen as a solution."⁴ Without wanting to reject the individualism of the Enlightenment, they wanted to remedy the flaws that a notion of the autonomous individual presented to an understanding of social unity. They thus wanted to find a way to embrace the notion of community, found in the classical and Christian traditions, while rejecting the anthropology that allows for this. Enlightenment individualism assumes that man is a self-interested, autonomous individual who comes into community out of necessity or coercion. On the other hand, the classical tradition such as that of Aristotle understands man as a being who is rational, and who lives in a way that allows him to actualize the end or *telos* of his nature. This end, which Aristotle says is a life in accordance with virtue, may only be accomplished within the community. Early solidarity theorists wanted to reject all philosophy that came before the French Revolution, both Enlightenment and classical, while maintaining the conclusions of each: the concept of the individual from the Enlightenment and the concept of communal unity from the classical tradition. However, in this very rejection of tradition, the origins of solidarity remain in the heritage of the Enlightenment, complicating their task from the outset.

1. Rousseau and the Revolution

Jean Jacques Rousseau's radical individualism and denial of man's social and rational nature, as well as his theories of democracy and revolution, set the philosophical stage for one of

⁴ Ibid. (26)

the bloodiest episodes in European history. Although professedly opposed to the Enlightenment and its ideas, Jean Jacques Rousseau builds upon the foundations of Enlightenment individualism. Rousseau concocts an understanding of the state of nature in which man is solitary and isolated. Man is a perfectible animal, an animal “less strong than some, less agile than others, but all things considered, the most advantageously organized of all.”⁵ Man’s perfectibility or changeability alone sets him apart from other animals. Rousseau thus remedies what he sees as Hobbes’s imperfection by going further into the state of nature and arriving at a point where a man is really not a man at all. Rousseau rejects the idea that man is naturally a social being, or that society may allow him to actualize the potential of his nature. He says that regardless of how admired human society may be, “it is nonetheless true that it necessarily brings men to hate each other in proportion to the conflict of their interests, to render each other apparent services and in fact do every imaginable harm to one another.”⁶ Man in nature, on the other hand, inclines not to attack or hurt others. Natural man after he “has eaten, is at peace with all nature, and a friend of all his fellow-men.”⁷ All men are equal, and no one deceives or oppresses another. Primitive man, with no understanding, language, or family, only follows his passions and subsists in radical simplicity. Rousseau claims that primitive man lives according to his passions, a clear rejection of the classical model of rational man. Arts and sciences corrupt man and all of his vices can be traced to his place in society.

Inequality arises among men with the advent of society, and necessitates the establishment of government. First man claims private property, and Rousseau decries the first

⁵ Rousseau, Jean Jacques. *Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality Among Men. The First and Second Discourses*. Ed. Roger D. Masters. Trans. Roger D. and Judith Masters. Boston, New York: St. Martin’s Press, Inc., 1964. (105)

⁶ Ibid. (193)

⁷ Ibid. (195)

man to do so, saying that he sowed the seeds of the decline of man's morality. Next, man establishes government to unite the wills of the people into a general will. He says:

“If we follow the progress of inequality in these different revolutions, we shall first find that the establishment of the law and of the right of property was the first stage, the institution of the magistracy the second and the third and last was the changing of legitimate power into arbitrary power.”⁸

This forms a foundation for Rousseau's connection with the French Revolution. The development of society for man is the development of inequality that moves him further and further from his primitive state. Hereditary monarchy, with no accountability to the people would in the extreme inequality it established among men be utterly groundless.

Rousseau thus completely rejects classical notions of man and society, bringing Enlightenment individualism to conclusions even more radical than those of his philosophical predecessors. Rousseau's revolutionary ideas, inextricably linked to his basic philosophical anthropology, provided an ideological basis for the Revolution. French thinkers who followed in the wake of the Revolution decided to reevaluate the foundational premises of individual man's relationship to society, and they introduced the term solidarity or *solidarité* as an integral element of these formulations.

2. Solidarity and Early French Socialism

a. Fourier and the Phalanx

Utopian theorist Charles Fourier (1772-1837) became a major writer during the French Revolution. Fourier advocates private property and differentiation of social class, yet receives the title of an early forerunner to socialism for his economic and social critiques. Some of his most important concepts are to be found in his understanding of a utopian community called the Phalanx, described largely in his 1808 work *The Theory of Four Movements*. Fourier avidly

⁸ Ibid. (173)

opposed the French Revolution, experiencing it as a young man and then seeing the decadence and abuses of capitalism that followed in its wake. Vehemently describing his aversion to the Enlightenment and the embodiment of its ideas in the Revolution, Fourier says:

“Since the incapacity the philosophes have shown in their first experiment, in the French Revolution, everyone agrees that their science is an aberration of the human spirit; the torrents of political and moral knowledge seem no more than torrents of illusions. Oh! Can one see anything else in the writings of these savants who, after having collected all ancient and modern knowledge, brought with their debut as many calamities as they promised benefits, and made civilized society decline towards a state of barbarism?”⁹

Fourier thus denounces the philosophers of the Enlightenment, yet he also condemns the ancient sources that came before them. Fourier thus implicitly rejects both ancient and modern conceptions of politics and philosophy, intending to formulate a wholly new science of society himself. Fourier bases his theory upon the Law of Attraction in Newtonian physics, using this theory as a means of explaining the individual's role within the utopian Phalanx. Man's social impulse is a result of his “*attraction passionelle*,” a passion which causes him to work even though the associative regime guarantees his basic livelihood.¹⁰ Following the abolishment of the wage system, man works because he is attracted to the task which he must accomplish. A man cannot be forced to work, or indeed to do anything. Yet if he follows his natural passions there is no need for coercion or duty to thwart his will, since the passions tend toward or are attracted to what is useful for man and for society. Man does not choose work or actualize his nature by working. He is merely drawn to work by his passions in a mechanistic manner that precludes the use of his reason. In this conception of the hegemony of man's passions, Fourier closely resembles Rousseau, who also says that man who acts according to his passions lives in a manner most closely in accordance with his nature. In the Phalanx, according to Fourier,

⁹ Charles Fourier. *Théorie des quatre mouvements*, in *Oeuvres complètes de Charles Fourier*. Quoted in “Pierre Leroux on Democracy, Socialism, and the Enlightenment” by Jack S. Bakunin. *Journal of the History of Ideas*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 37.3 (July, 1976). (455)

¹⁰ Fourier, Charles. *Selections From the Work of Fourier*. Trans. Julia Franklin. Introduction by Charles Gide. London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., Lim., 1901. (18, 26)

“collective and individual interest must harmonize, so that the individual will be following the right path in yielding blindly to his passions.”¹¹ The individual person must lose his own sense of individuality and live an unconscious, mindless existence in which his subsistence and his existence simply form a part of a whole of the community.

Fourier introduces solidarity to his descriptions of his harmonious utopian society. He uses the term solidarity to describe legal issues of society, including the common responsibility that people have to repay debts and have insurance. He also uses solidarity to refer to a readiness to give resources to those in need, and also to feelings of community, which he called *solidarités sociales* and *solidarités collectives*.¹² Finally, *la garantie familiale solidaire* obliges society to ensure a minimum income and sufficient means of family support for those within the community.¹³ The first meaning of the term continues in the tradition of the term *solide* from Latin, which has to do with common responsibility for debt. It also harkens to the use of *solidarité* in its early French signification. With the second meaning comes more of the influence of solidarity's French predecessor “fraternity,” with its understanding of familial responsibility for all in a society. However, the last two meanings clearly depart from the first two, and begin to show some of the meaning commonly associated with more modern philosophies of solidarity. Feelings of community and also wage requirements reflect more modern ideas of solidarity, even into the Catholic tradition. Pope Pius XI writes that wages are only just when they can sufficiently support a family. However, despite these similar themes, Fourier's ideas in general defy traditional Christian thought or a traditional understanding of the person, especially his basic anthropology in which man's passions are hegemonic as well as his

¹¹ Ibid. (48)

¹² Ibid. Stjernø (28)

¹³ Ibid. (28)

collectivist utopian conclusions. Fourier further distances himself from traditional accounts of man by rejecting institutions such as traditional marriage and the family.

b. Pierre Leroux and the Religion of Humanity

Pierre Leroux (1797-1871), another French philosopher, claimed to introduce solidarity into philosophy. Leroux was an early communist thinker and one of the many French who were trying to discover whether Christianity was adequate to explain the world of the nineteenth century, especially in post-Revolution France. In opposition to his predecessor, Fourier, Leroux thought that the Enlightenment and the Revolution should not necessarily be discarded insofar as they offered clues to the desires of men. He said that “the Enlightenment and the French Revolution reflected ‘immense unfulfilled desires’ of the modern man which could be realized only by a social transformation and the organization of a new egalitarian religion.”¹⁴ His understanding of solidarity rejects three premises: “Christian charity, the idea of a social contract as a foundation for society, and the conception of society as an organism.”¹⁵ Leroux thus essentially rejects Christianity, classical liberalism, and political theory rooted in the Greek tradition as insufficient to explain reality. Rather, he thinks that “socialism” is “the organization of greater and greater solidarity in society.”¹⁶ Following in the tradition of fellow French author Jean Jacques Rousseau, he affirms that developed man must live in community with others, rejecting self-interest. However, in order for this to become a reality, men need a religion “based on the notion of human solidarity” to persuade them to orient their actions in accordance with their community.¹⁷ Thus, religion for Leroux is a means of coercing society into abandoning pursuit of self-interest in favor of the interest of society, rather than seeing it as a good for man

¹⁴ Bakunin, Jack. “Pierre Leroux: A Democratic Religion for a New World.” *Church History*. 44.1 (March, 1975). (61)

¹⁵ Stjernø. Ibid. (29)

¹⁶ Ibid. (29)

¹⁷ Bakunin. Ibid. “Socialism.” (466)

as a man. It therefore still sees man as a being who is essentially an individual, yet who can be forced through the ideology of the “religion of humanity” into the pursuit of the interest for his community as opposed to his own individual interest. Leroux was not, however, necessarily in favor of revolution to create this new society based upon an egalitarian religion, thinking that such a transformation could take place gradually, and this sets him apart from pre-Revolutionary theorists.

Leroux and Fourier thus both reject Christian and classical foundations, as well as certain Enlightenment principles, although their works still reflect Enlightenment principles. Both see a form of socialism as the answer to the problem of holding society together, of bringing men’s self-interest into line with that of the societal whole. Although solidarity maintains its ties to its earlier political tradition and meaning, Leroux and Fourier introduce its signification to new areas of study and thought.

3. Solidarity becomes part of German Thought and Sociology

The Industrial Revolution served as the second important event which spurred the development of the concept of solidarity. This unprecedented development irrevocably changed societal structures and altered the relationship between man and his labor. These changes led to a reevaluation of the assumptions about basic human relationships and social bonds. Auguste Comte, Ferdinand Tönnies, Émile Durkheim, and Max Scheler pondered these changes, coming to differing conclusions about the nature of society and solidarity. Industrialized society for authors like Comte and Durkheim represents a progression from earlier societies, which derived their foundations from religion and culture. In these conceptions, solidarity serves as a means to accommodate the innovative nature of modernity and industrialization by claiming it as a triumph of man’s nature in its progression from older societies and their traditions. On the other

hand, Ferdinand Tönnies favors the unity of earlier societies to the new societies. Max Scheler draws upon these traditions and formulates a personalist phenomenological account of man in society which comes closest to addressing the problems of understanding the person in the new industrialized society.

a. Auguste Comte

The philosopher that is credited with introducing solidarity into sociology, where it has had its most well-known advocates, is positivist thinker Auguste Comte (1798-1857). Comte attempts to understand the implications of industrialization for society. Distressed by the prevalence of individualist theories of economics, he wants to formulate a “religion of humanity,” one that would “tame egoistic instincts” without sacrificing the individual.¹⁸ In this way his goal resembles that of Pierre Leroux. Comte outlines three integrative mechanisms of society, mechanisms which correspond to three modes of solidarity. The three mechanisms are: reflection or intellectual activities, moral affections, and practical activities.¹⁹ The three corresponding forms of solidarity are obedience, union, and protection. These in turn correspond to three altruistic instincts: veneration, attachment, and benevolence.²⁰ Solidarity also follows from the notion of continuity, in which the successive generations of society imprint their collective experiences upon each other. There is a sense of interdependence of persons, especially those of the past.

Comte’s theories about the division of labor clearly precede those of Durkheim. Comte says that the division of labor found in industrialized nations is “eminently suited to develop...the social instinct, by spontaneously inspiring in each a just sense of close dependence

¹⁸ Stjernø. Ibid. (30)

¹⁹ Ibid. (31)

²⁰ Ibid. (31)

toward all others.”²¹ The abundance in modern societies of specialized work signifies that “social organization tends increasingly to rest upon an exact appreciation of individual diversity.”²² The division of labor, however, serves as a mere expression of solidarity rather than as the foundation for relationships in society. The true foundation for unity is the religion of humanity. This religion provides a common set of ideas and values that hold individuals together in society.

b. Tönnies

Although he does not necessarily write about solidarity, the work of Ferdinand Tönnies (1855-1936) and his delineation of the terms *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* are essential for the theories of society of the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. His work proves especially important when considered alongside that of Émile Durkheim. Tönnies, writing about four years before Durkheim, writes about the difference between community and society, and traces the development that associations undergo as they move from one form to another. Tönnies’s *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* differentiate community and society, or community and association, largely according to the relationship between the individual and the community.

Tönnies calls primitive societies *Gemeinschaft*, or community. Communities derive their foundation from similarity. The whole holds greater importance than does the part. The theory of *Gemeinschaft* “starts from the assumption of perfect unity of human wills as an original or natural condition which is preserved in spite of actual separation.”²³ The individual has no real significance in itself within the *Gemeinschaft*. Family relationships form the basis of *Gemeinschaft*. This causes a certain concern for the weak on the part of the strong, as well as for

²¹ Quoted in Cohen, David. “Comte’s Changing Sociology.” *The American Journal of Sociology*. 71.2 (September, 1965). (173)

²² Quoted in Ibid.

²³ Tönnies, Ferdinand. *Community and Association (Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft)*. Trans. Charles P. Loomis. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1955. (42)

the strong to protect the weak. In other words, there is no individualism or mere pursuit of private interests in the community, the *Gemeinschaft*. Rather, each is responsible for others, and there is a common social will. The community may be based upon blood, place, or friendship. Friendship in particular, is the bond within the community that transcends the ties of family and physical proximity. It results from “similarity of work and intellectual attitude.”²⁴ The bond of *Gemeinschaft* is consensus, or a reciprocal, binding sentiment. Religion, custom, and tradition are key characteristics, and property is also largely held in common.

Gesellschaft, on the other hand, which comes out of the more primitive society, is the result of the enlargement of community. With this growth, the state gains more power and the individual becomes the primary focus. Tönnies says that an understanding of *Gesellschaft* deals with “the artificial construction of an aggregate of human beings which superficially resembles the *Gemeinschaft* in so far as the individuals peacefully live and dwell together.”²⁵ However, while in the *Gemeinschaft* people are essentially united even though there are separating factors, in *Gesellschaft* “they are essentially separated in spite of uniting factors.”²⁶ *Gesellschaft* is a unity of persons characterized by individualistic self-interest. Where *Gemeinschaft* is old, *Gesellschaft* is new; *Gemeinschaft* is organic and *Gesellschaft* is an artificial aggregate.

Tönnies sees modern industrialized society as an embodiment of *Gesellschaft*. This society can only be held together by contract, by mutual fulfillment of the interests of individuals rather than by consensus. Each person looks out for the interest of others only insofar as doing so serves his own interest. Since contract serves as the basis of the relationships, this necessitates a strong state to ensure that the terms of these relationships are fulfilled. The introduction of capitalism to a community means changing from a community into a society,

²⁴ Ibid. (49)

²⁵ Ibid. (74)

²⁶ Ibid.

from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*. This shift from one form to the other naturally occurs with the expansion of the territory on which the society is based. The more “extensive the area, the more completely it becomes an area of the *Gesellschaft*, for the more widespread and freer trade becomes.”²⁷ In his understanding of development, Tönnies shares with Marx the opinion that largely economic factors should be considered, resulting in an “economic interpretation of history.”²⁸

Tönnies says that the *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* reflect two different kinds of attitudes that may be held regarding society. He says: “the entirety is perceived and considered as goal, that is, as a natural whole; or the entirety is perceived and considered as a means for individual goals and consequently as an intentionally devised tool.”²⁹ Tönnies clearly prefers the organic *Gemeinschaft* to the *Gesellschaft* of the modern industrialized society that he witnessed. The principal weakness of Tönnies’s arguments is the reactionary nature of his formulations. In so clearly preferring less developed societies, he fails to provide an adequate account of how to improve the flawed conditions of modern society. His account represents a clear desire to return to the old, or at least only to see goodness in the older forms of society.

c. Durkheim

One of the most prominent early theorists of concepts of solidarity is French sociologist Émile Durkheim (1858-1917). Durkheim owed a debt to Comte’s understanding that solidarity results from the division of labor. Rather than claiming—as did Marx—that the division of labor causes the alienation of humans from the products of their labor, Durkheim formulates a new social and political theory of solidarity. He proposes that men actually grow closer in

²⁷ Ibid. (90)

²⁸ Ibid. Introduction. “Translator’s Introduction.” By Charles P. Loomis. (xii)

²⁹ Aldous, Joan, Émile Durkheim, Ferdinand Tönnies,. “An Exchange Between Durkheim and Tönnies on the Nature of Social Relations, with an Introduction by Joan Aldous.” *The American Journal of Sociology*. The University of Chicago Press, 1972. (1199)

community as a result of the division of labor in industrialized society. In his earliest major work *The Division of Labor in Society* (1893) Durkheim delineates two kinds of social solidarity: mechanical solidarity and organic solidarity. He separates these two notions of solidarity according to the relationship between the individual and the collective consciousness. Durkheim does this primarily by showing what kind of law most characterizes the societies in which he finds solidarity.

The dialogue between Tönnies and Durkheim highlights the differences between their respective understandings of community. The key difference, of course, is Durkheim's insistence that "group life" in economically developed societies "was as natural as in pre-commercial societies" and that the individual assumes a much more prominent place in developed society.³⁰ In his review of Tönnies' *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, Durkheim recognizes the importance of the work and regrets that the words of the title are untranslatable from the German. He disagrees with Tönnies, though, in saying that "Beyond purely individual actions there is in our contemporary societies a type of collective activity which is just as natural as that of the less extended societies of former days."³¹

Durkheim's task is thus to explain society in a way that preserves the autonomy of the individual while ascertaining how he can also be firmly connected to society. In the preface to his work, Durkheim explains this saying:

"The question that has been the starting point for our study has been that of the connection between the individual personality and social solidarity. How does it come about that the individual, whilst becoming more autonomous, depends ever more closely upon society? How can he become at the same time more of an individual and yet more linked to society...It has seemed to us that what resolved this apparent antimony was the transformation of social solidarity which arises from the ever-increasing division of labor."³²

³⁰ Ibid. (1192)

³¹ Ibid. (1198)

³² Durkheim, Emile. Preface. *The Division of Labor in Society*. By Lewis Coser. Trans. W.D. Halls. New York: The Free Press, 1984. (xxx).

Thus, Durkheim clearly displays his reliance upon the heritage of Enlightenment individualism, in which the autonomy of the individual is of paramount importance for any conception of a properly ordered society. Yet he also wants to explain how the seeming increase in this autonomy that he witnesses in the coming of modernity through division of labor may become reconciled with the concept of society.

The first kind of solidarity is mechanical solidarity, or solidarity that is based upon similarity. To understand this, Durkheim explains two kinds of consciousnesses. The first is that which “comprises only states that are personal to each one of us, characteristic of us as individuals” and the second “comprises states that are common to the whole of society.”³³ In other words, the two kinds of consciousness are of the individual personality and of the collective consciousness. The collective conscience differs from individual consciousness but becomes realized nonetheless in individuals. Mechanical solidarity is a state of society at its maximum when “the collective consciousness completely envelops our total consciousness, coinciding at every point,” and at this point “our individuality is zero.”³⁴ Mechanical solidarity, in which there is this sort of collective being rather than a group of individuals, characterizes primitive societies and also communism. Durkheim calls this kind of solidarity mechanical because it is analogous to the elements of raw materials rather than the unity of parts that characterizes living organisms. The kind of law that characterizes societies in which there is mechanical solidarity is penal law, since this has to do with punishment for those who violate the collective values of the society. This form of solidarity causes “the entire psychological life of

³³ Durkheim. *Ibid.* (61)

³⁴ *Ibid.* (84)

society” to “assume a religious character.”³⁵ Mechanical solidarity characterizes the form of society under despotism, under which the individual personality cannot thrive.

The second kind of solidarity for Durkheim is organic solidarity, which characterizes the more advanced societies in which there is division of labor. Where mechanical solidarity is a mixture of homogenous parts, organic solidarity is more analogous to a “system of different organs, each one of which has a special role and which themselves are formed from differentiated parts.”³⁶ This has to do more with individual relationships than with the values of the collective consciousness. Man depends upon others because he is distinguished from them more than that he is like them, and the society is based upon these different persons coming together, each with his own function. Contracts are only possible with the differentiation of labor within society. Thus, for Durkheim, as opposed say to John Locke, society precedes contracts, and indeed contracts depend upon society. He says that “the contract is not sufficient by itself, but is only possible because of the regulation of contracts, which is of social origin.”³⁷ He thus affirms the importance of contracts, since they cannot even exist except in more advanced society, but sees society as the basis for contract as opposed to seeing contract as the basis for society.

Thus, although Durkheim is an individualist, he places great importance upon the role of society. Primitive societies are those in which the person is wholly absorbed into the collective consciousness. When the individual personality emerges with the division of labor, society becomes stronger. However, he fails to address Marx’s critique about the alienation that accompanies division of labor. Durkheim’s analysis relies heavily upon the notion that man is a being who constantly progresses and becomes perfected. He thus claims that modern man’s

³⁵ Ibid. (130)

³⁶ Ibid. (132)

³⁷ Ibid. (162)

society is more perfect than the older societies based upon tradition, family, religion, and culture. Durkheim thus cannot respond to the imperfections of industrialization. Industrialization effectively atomized men by removing them from more natural society, and capitalist bureaucrats often saw man as a mere cog in the mechanical system. These are the flaws that provided Marx with the fuel to kindle the fire of revolution for the proletariat. A further problem with Durkheim's analysis is that he reduces man's worth and individuality to his function within society, reflecting a sort of mechanistic utilitarianism.

d. Weber

Max Weber (1864-1920) uses the term solidarity—*Solidarität* or *Solidaritätsbeziehungen*—in a way which generally signifies “mutual responsibility.”³⁸ He says that “within a social relationship...certain kinds of action of *each* participant may be imputed to *all* others, in which case we speak of ‘mutually responsible members.’”³⁹ This kind of responsibility, in which the actions of one member of the community became the responsibility of all those in the community, applied to a number of situations. These included blood revenge or a covenantal relationship with God.⁴⁰ However, Weber's followers did not use the term much in their writing. Solidarity is further implied, however, in his differentiation of the *Vergemeinschaftung* and the *Vergesellschaftung*. Following the roots of the words, *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft*, these terms represent actions based either upon either interest or upon community and solidarity with others. Weber suggests that both are needed in individual action.⁴¹

³⁸ Swedberg, Richard. *The Max Weber Dictionary: Key Words and Central Concepts*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005. (171)

³⁹ Weber, Max. *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. Ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. University of California Press, 1978. (46)

⁴⁰ Swedberg Ibid. (171)

⁴¹ Stjernø. Ibid. (37)

4. Communism and Solidarity

a. Marx

In the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Karl Marx (1818-1883) says that class struggle characterizes the history of all societies. He believes that ultimately such struggle can only result in the working class proletariat taking power from the bourgeoisie, usually by means of revolution. The bourgeoisie, because of capitalism and wage labor, has “left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous ‘cash payment.’”⁴² However, Marx sees this as a positive development, since the family and religion are mere bourgeois institutions that are imposed upon the exploited proletarian class rather than foundations for true relationships.

Capital causes self-alienation, or *Selbstentfremdung*, among members of both classes. The possessing class experiences this self-alienation as a sense of power and control, while the proletariat experiences it as destruction. Like other authors like Tönnies and Durkheim, Marx wants to analyze the changes in society that result from modern technology, specifically that of the Industrial Revolution. With the development of industry, says Marx, the proletariat increases in number and therefore in strength. This culminates in the formation of trade unions, which form against the oppression of the bourgeoisie. Marx says that the most important element of this development of the proletariat is the “ever-expanding union of the workers.”⁴³ This is where his limited use of the word solidarity comes in.

In *The Possibility of Non-Violent Revolution*, a speech delivered in Amsterdam, Marx says that it is possible in some countries for the revolution of the proletariat to occur without violence, although in most countries this is not possible. In this address, Marx speaks of the goal

⁴² Marx, Karl. *The Manifesto of the Communist Party. The Marx-Engels Reader*. 2nd ed. Ed. Robert C. Tucker. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978. (475)

⁴³ Ibid. (481)

of union of all workers across national borders. In this context he says that “Solidarity” is the “basic principle of the International” and that the revolution of the proletariat must be carried out with solidarity across borders.⁴⁴ Thus, Marx’s solidarity has to do with the international union of workers who revolt against bourgeoisie oppression.

b. The Social Democrats

As time passed after Marx and Engels wrote of the imminent downfall of capitalist society, some Marxists began to question the immediacy of such a revolution. They thus began discussing the possibility of non-violent means of implementing socialism. In doing so, these revisionists believed they were not necessarily acting against the ideals of Marxism, despite the inherent contradictions between their ideas. Revisionist theories downplayed revolution and focused upon social reform, relying upon governments and other societal structures as means of change. The revisionist school played a relatively important part in the history of solidarity, especially in their adoption of Marxist class solidarity, and applied it to structures such as political parties and trade unions.

Karl Kautsky (1854-1938) was the executor of Marx’s writings. He remained faithful, at least theoretically, to Marxist ideology throughout his life. However, his work tended to support the social democratic movement despite his vocal opposition to revisionism. Kautsky, considered one of principal early interpreters of Marx, was largely responsible for introducing solidarity to common Marxist thought. In his work, Kautsky used *Solidarität* to describe a general feeling of community, as well as that which holds together groups formed by a common interest.⁴⁵ Under capitalism, according to Kautsky, industrialization creates solidarity among workers, and as capitalism grows solidarity grows across class barriers. This ultimately leads to

⁴⁴ Marx, Karl. *The Possibility of Non-Violent Revolution. The Marx-Engels Reader*. 2nd Ed. Ed. Robert C. Tucker. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978. (524)

⁴⁵ Stjernø. (48)

Marx's revolution of the proletariat. Kautsky is thus significant for introducing solidarity to post-Marxist socialism and also for departing from Marx's strict understanding of pure class solidarity. His focus still remains, however, upon the inevitable revolution, denying that socializing actions of government can contribute to a socialist end. He says "The state will not cease to be a capitalist institution until the proletariat, the working class, has become the ruling class; not until then will it become possible to turn it into a cooperative commonwealth."⁴⁶

Eduard Bernstein (1850-1932) is known as the most famous revisionist Marxist, and one of the primary founders of democratic socialism. Bernstein began his career as an avid Marxist in who served as a spokesman for the German Social Democratic Party. Forced to leave the country for twenty years, Bernstein became exposed to British parliamentary practices. Reevaluating his Marxist convictions, he embraced the belief that socialist ideals could become actualized by state intervention and not necessarily only by class revolution. Following Marx and Kautsky, Bernstein thought that class interests were certainly an element of societal life, but he departs from them by saying that all classes have a common interest in the values held by the society.⁴⁷ These values could transcend class conflict, since they were in the interest of all. In this way, Bernstein rejects Marx's idea that all societal values are merely the product of bourgeois institutions. This embracing of the idea of social unity based upon cross-class interest reflects the influences of traditional liberalism. Indeed, Bernstein says that "with respect to liberalism as a historical movement, socialism is its legitimate heir, not only chronologically but also intellectually."⁴⁸ He sees socialism's goal as intending to "*increase* the sum total of liberty

⁴⁶ Kautsky, Karl. "The Commonwealth of the Future." *Essential Works of Socialism*. 3rd ed. Ed. Irving Howe. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986. (102)

⁴⁷ Bernstein, Eduard. *The Preconditions of Socialism*. Introduction. Ed. and Trans Henry Tudor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993. (xxx)

⁴⁸ Bernstein, Eduard. *The Preconditions of Socialism*. Ed. and Trans. Henry Tudor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993. (147)

in society” and “give *more* freedom over a *more extended* area than it takes away” through the power of the state, even if that goal must be met through the use of coercion.⁴⁹ For Bernstein, solidarity is most evident in trade unions. Unions are a way of uniting individual strengths to reduce dependence upon the leaders of the capitalist system. Bernstein’s contribution to the social democratic tradition and his theory of solidarity of trade unions greatly influenced European socialism, especially in offering socialism the ability to work within government and societal structures.

5. Max Scheler’s Phenomenology

Max Scheler (1874-1928) formulates considerations of solidarity which rely upon the work of his earlier predecessors, yet which depart from them because of his approach of personalist phenomenology. This allows him to depart from earlier German theorists and indeed to more successfully reconcile the place of the person and solidarity within community. Karol Wojtyła, later Pope John Paul II, wrote his habilitation thesis on Scheler’s work, attempting to determine if Scheler’s phenomenological personalist approach could offer some insight into Christian teaching. Although Wojtyła ultimately concluded that Scheler’s approach was not reconcilable with Christianity, Scheler did influence Wojtyła’s philosophical work.

Scheler bases his philosophical analysis of solidarity upon a differentiation between a person and a human. A person is one who is sound of mind, and has reached a certain level of development. This formulation is potentially problematic, as Kevin P. Doran points out, because it denigrates the personhood of those who have not fully developed, such as children. However, this distinction between human and person nonetheless proves very important in Scheler’s scheme because of its significance for personal responsibility. This “concept of responsibility has its roots in the experience of the person himself and is not formed on the basis of external

⁴⁹ Ibid. (148)

consideration of his actions.”⁵⁰ Responsibility is a personal experience. A person knows that he is author of a deed, and he also knows the act’s moral relevance. This is the experiential basis for responsibility. The “experience of ‘self-responsibility’ as an absolute experience is the presupposition of all responsibility ‘before’ someone (man, God), i.e. of all relative responsibility.”⁵¹ Responsibility is thus based upon relationships that a person has with others, whether other men or God. Scheler uses this relative responsibility as part of his understanding of solidarity in community.

Another important aspect of Scheler’s philosophy which relates to his concept of solidarity is what he calls the “collective person” or “spiritually collective individuals,” which are “cultural units, nations, peoples, tribes and families.”⁵² These relationships help the person to develop morally and come to a greater understanding of his own responsibility. The person is a unity of acts, acts the relative and moral significance of which he is aware.

Individual experience thus proves immensely important for Scheler’s anthropology. Writing in opposition to Immanuel Kant, Scheler says that Kant and those in his school of thought fall into the same basic deficiencies. The first of these is the “*disregard of spiritual individualism* and the assumption that only the lived body individualizes the person.”⁵³ Man’s actions as a person have moral significance which necessitate a strong understanding of an ontological individuality, rather than an understanding of individuality based upon mere differentiation from others. The second flaw is the “large-scale *objective uniformity* of the being and lives of these ‘individualists’ to the extent that one can almost predict the nature and actions

⁵⁰ Scheler, Max. *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values*. Tr. Manfred S. Frings and Roger L. Funk. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973. (487)

⁵¹ Ibid. (487)

⁵² Ibid. (493)

⁵³ Ibid. (514)

of others from only *one* example.”⁵⁴ Membership in a community does not negate man’s unique personal and individual experience. The individual must have his own sphere of action, action which is not predetermined by the decisions of the community of which he forms a part.

Utilizing these understandings of individuality and self-responsibility, Scheler delineates four types of society, each characterized by varying kinds and degrees of solidarity. He differentiates among these four types of society according to the relation of the person to the community found in each. The first type is the *masse*, or the mass. In this unit of society, the person does not have any proper experience of his own, and there is therefore no solidarity in this type of group. It is “constituted...in so-called contagion and involuntary imitation devoid of understanding.”⁵⁵ Persons only imitate others without understanding. Their actions reflect no sense of self-responsibility for actions or consciousness of relation to others.

The second type of society is the “life community”, or the *Lebensgemeinschaft*. In this unit, the man possesses a greater degree of understanding than he had in the mass. The man in this kind of community has his own experiences, but they are not yet personal experiences. Representable solidarity characterizes man in the life community. There cannot be true solidarity since “the individual does not exist at all as an experience and therefore cannot possess solidarity with others,” and representable solidarity is only called a form of solidarity because it resembles true solidarity.⁵⁶ In other words, in the *Lebensgemeinschaft* one person can represent another because they share experiences and roles, and there is nothing that sets apart or differentiates one person from others. Scheler’s *Lebensgemeinschaft* shares characteristics of Tönnies’s *Gemeinschaft*, in which common values and traditions hold the members of society together. However, unlike Tönnies’s *Gemeinschaft*, Scheler sees the *Lebensgemeinschaft* as a

⁵⁴ Ibid. (514)

⁵⁵ Ibid. (526)

⁵⁶ Ibid. (527)

negative form of association. It is barely separate from the mass because the man does not yet have his own sphere of action, relation, and responsibility in the community.

Third, Scheler delineates his theory of society or *Gesellschaft*, his analysis again bearing similarities to Tönnies's concepts. Society is based upon self-interest. Solidarity of interest, yet another form called solidarity because of its resemblance to it, characterizes this form of association. In *Gesellschaft* "all responsibility for others is based on unilateral self-responsibility."⁵⁷ The *Gesellschaft* achieves unity principally through the use of force. The "majority principle" functions here in constructing the "fiction that the 'common will' is...the fortuitously identical volitional content of *all as individuals*."⁵⁸ Actually, Scheler says that in a society, the majority force their will upon the minority, and there is no commonly shared value or goal. The society is not necessarily a positive development for Scheler, unlike for Durkheim. This is largely because he criticizes the loss of the values of the Life Community. Indeed, he sees society as the denigration of community, although it is important to note that it is here in the society the individual emerges for the first time. Also, a society necessarily has elements of the life community in its lower groups and associations that constitute it. Scheler says that "there can be *no society without life-community*."⁵⁹

Scheler's highest type of society or association is the Person-Community, or the Collective Person. Christianity strongly informs his understanding of this kind of community. The Christian idea of community "unites the being and indestructible self-value of the individual 'soul'...and the person...by means of the idea of a salvational solidarity of all in the *corpus christianum*."⁶⁰ Spiritual acts constitute this form of society. The person participates fully in the

⁵⁷ Ibid. (529)

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid. (533)

⁶⁰ Ibid.

Person-Community, and he is co-responsible for all. Finally, true solidarity resides in the Person-Community. Solidarity for Scheler rests upon two principles:

“The first is...that the community of persons belongs to the evidential *essence* of a possible person—regardless of the real and, by essential necessity, fortuitous causes of the *empirically real connections* between certain persons and certain others—and that the possible unities of sense and of value of such a community possess an a priori structure independent in principle of the kind, measure, place and time of the realization of these unities. This is the *foundation* that makes moral solidarity *possible*. What makes moral solidarity *necessary* is the formal proposition concerning the (direct or indirect) *essential reciprocity and reciprocal valueness* of all morally relevant comportment and the corresponding non-formal propositions concerning the essential nexus of the basic *types* of social acts.”⁶¹

The community of persons is the potential for any actual connections or relationships between men, since such a relationship is the highest form of relationship possible. Also solidarity, based upon reciprocal relationships, is necessary for moral actions. This goes back to the importance of the realization of responsibility that gives a person’s actions a moral dimension. Finally in the collective person, relationships and actions are both communal and personal. This is problematic because it seems to negate the possibility for moral actions in a less than perfect society.

Unrepresentable solidarity characterizes the Collective Person, since each person fulfills a unique role in the society and shares co-responsibility for others within it.

Scheler says that the collective person is not a result of the combination of community and society, but really takes the best characteristics of each: the “independent, individual person” from society, and “solidarity and real collective unity” as found in community.⁶² Scheler’s analysis proves especially important in its recognition that any understanding of the ideal society or association must allow room for both the individual and for true, relational, communal unity. He thus avoids much more successfully than others the tendency to err either on the side of collectivism or radical individualism.

III. Foundation for Solidarity in Catholic Social Teaching

⁶¹ Ibid. (535)

⁶² Ibid. (539)

Christian solidarity finds its most prominent home in Catholic social teaching, specifically in the papal social encyclicals. Although solidarity figures very prominently in Catholic social teaching during the second half of the twentieth century, the language of solidarity was generally not utilized in Church teaching until that time. The popes employ the language of solidarity yet in doing so do not necessarily formulate an entirely new concept. Rather, they use the language, but place it within the Church's tradition. They take the term solidarity and provide it with a Christian anthropology.

The term solidarity becomes most prominent in Catholic social teaching with the work of Pope John Paul II. In *Centesimus Annus*, the pope claims that solidarity, though only recently articulated as such, draws on themes from as far back as the Greeks. He says:

“In this way what we nowadays call the principle of solidarity, the validity of which both in the internal order of each nation and in the international order I have discussed in the Encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, is clearly seen to be one of the fundamental principles of the Christian view of social and political organization. This principle is frequently stated by Pope Leo XIII, who uses the term ‘friendship’, a concept already found in Greek philosophy. Pope Pius XI refers to it with the equally meaningful term ‘social charity’. Pope Paul VI, expanding the concept to cover the many modern aspects of the social question, speaks of a “civilization of love””⁶³

Thus, the pope implicitly recognizes the novelty of the semantic choice of the word “solidarity” in encompass these various ideas that form so essential a part of Church social teaching, yet says while the term solidarity is new to Church teaching, the significance he assumes for the word draws upon the Church's tradition.

1. Aristotle

In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle outlines his three different types of friendship, with each type differentiated from the others according to the object of the relationship. A friendship may aim at the good, the pleasant, or the useful. In a true friendship a person wishes good for the friend's sake, rather than for any personal benefit. Aristotle further distinguishes incidental

⁶³ Pope John Paul II. *Centesimus Annus*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1991. (10)

friendships, those based upon use and pleasure, from those based upon love for the person himself. According to Aristotle, “those who love for the sake of utility love for the sake of what is good for *themselves*, and those who love for the sake of pleasure do so for the sake of what is pleasant to *themselves*, and not in so far as the person is loved.”⁶⁴ Therefore, relationships based upon use or pleasure are not true friendships, and are only called friendships by analogy to true friendships.

Aristotle says that “perfect friendship is the friendship of men who are good, and alike in virtue; for these wish well alike to each other *qua* good, and they are good in themselves.”⁶⁵ In a true friendship, a man wishes good for another, rather than desiring to use him for a selfish end. Unlike the incidental types of friendship, which end quickly as soon as the need for the other person ends, friendships of good men are long lasting. This points to the naturally communal natures of men, since the best kind of relationship that he can have is one that endures, while those of a lesser kind are those that are not lasting. Notably, Aristotle says further that “friendship is said to be equality” because it is between those who are alike in virtue and mutual goodwill, and therefore “the friends get the same things from one another and wish the same things for one another.”⁶⁶ Furthermore, the friendship must be reciprocal because individual goodwill is insufficient for the relational title of friendship, and mere goodwill is only inactive friendship.

The Aristotelian understanding of human nature is inseparable from life in relation and in community. Man is a teleological being whose end is a life of virtue, an end only accomplished within community. This political quality of man is made possible by his ability to speak and to

⁶⁴ Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics. The Basic Works of Aristotle*. Ed. Richard McKeon. New York: The Modern Library, 2001. (1060)

⁶⁵ Ibid. (1061).

⁶⁶ Ibid (1604-5)

have a sense of good and evil, just and unjust. For Aristotle “every community [koinonia] is established with a view to some good.”⁶⁷ This common end is *homonoia* or like-mindedness, a state of “a community of good men living in harmony with themselves and with others.”⁶⁸ The individual when isolated must be “either a beast or a god” since “a social instinct is implanted in all men by nature.”⁶⁹ Aristotle discusses the notion of a man who lives a solitary life apart from others, and concludes:

“surely it is strange too, to make the supremely happy man a solitary; for no one would choose the whole world on condition of being alone, since man is a political creature whose nature is to live with others. Therefore even the happy man lives with others; for he has the things that are by nature good.”⁷⁰

Interestingly though, Aristotle does not reduce man to mere association or relation to others.

Rather, he acknowledges that man should have a love or awareness of the self, of himself as an individual. He says that “the good man should be a lover of self...for he will both himself profit by doing noble acts, and will benefit his fellows.”⁷¹

Since society is natural, men desire to live with one another and “are also brought together by their common interests in proportion as they severally attain to any measure of well-being,” and this is the end of both individuals and of states.⁷² However, this understanding of men coming together because of interest differs dramatically from a liberal understanding. According to Aristotle, man can only actualize his nature and thus reach his end in society. It is not something artificially imposed upon him, but something natural. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle says that man’s end is happiness or *eudaimonia*, which he writes is “activity of the soul

⁶⁷ Ibid. (1127) Brackets are my own.

⁶⁸ Hallowell, John H. and Jene M. Porter. *Political Philosophy: the Search for Humanity and Order*. Scarborough: Prentice Hall Canada Inc., 1997. (72)

⁶⁹ Aristotle. Ibid. (1130)

⁷⁰ Ibid (1088)

⁷¹ Ibid (1087)

⁷² Ibid. (1184)

in accordance with perfect virtue,” and that virtue is also the end of the community or polis.⁷³

The end of the community and the end of the individual are inseparable for Aristotle. Since man is a naturally political being, he does not separate or delineate any conflict between the good of the individual and that of the community.

However, this does not mean that Aristotle ignores the fact that some states or governments can be corrupt and therefore not conducive to the formation of virtue in citizens.

He says very clearly:

“governments which have a regard to the common interest are constituted in accordance with strict principles of justice, and are therefore true forms but those which regard only the interest of the rulers are all defective and perverted forms, for they are despotic, whereas a state *is a community of freemen*.”⁷⁴

Although Aristotle acknowledges the possibility of a corrupt government that creates an environment that is detrimental to its citizens, he does not advocate revolution, going only so far as to explain causes of revolutions in different types of constitutions. However, he does say that the “good lawgiver” will discover how “states and races of men and communities may participate in a good life, and in the happiness which is attainable by them.”⁷⁵

Aristotle’s understanding of justice is also important, and it greatly influences St. Thomas Aquinas later. He divides justice into universal justice and particular justice. The latter he divides into the categories of distributive, rectifactory, and reciprocal. Equity is the corrective of legal justice, the way to ensure that justice is done when the legal justice fails to ensure this. For Aristotle, “Justice, ultimately, is rooted in friendship or love and in the capacity of reason (*nous*) that enables humans to discover the good.”⁷⁶ This further emphasizes the relationship between the individual rational man and the community.

⁷³ Ibid (950)

⁷⁴ Ibid. (1185) Italics added.

⁷⁵ Ibid. (1281)

⁷⁶ Hallowell. Ibid. (72)

2. Aquinas

For Aquinas, friendship is something that can exist only “towards rational creatures, who are capable of returning love, and communicating one with another in the various works of life.”⁷⁷ God in his goodness loves men with the love of friendship in a way that he does not love irrational creatures. In this way, Aquinas shares Aristotle’s conviction that the *differentia specifica* of man, that which sets him apart from animals and irrational beings, is his reason. Furthermore, Aquinas understands friendship as something not merely between men, but something by which man may share in a relationship with God. Man is no longer just a metaxical being whose *summum bonum* is a glimpse of the divine, but one whose redeemed nature allows him to have a relationship with the divine, and to eventually become incorporated into the Godhead for eternity in Christ. Aquinas emphasizes the fact that the Gospel passage in which Jesus says, “I no longer call you slaves...I have called you friends,” is the same passage in which he commands his disciples to “love one another.”⁷⁸ This implies that in Christianity, men’s relationships with each other are different because man’s relationship with God is different.

The nature of the friendship that men can have with God is seen in Aquinas’s discussion of *caritas*, or charity. Building upon Aristotle’s understanding of friendship, Aquinas says that true friendship is love together with benevolence, that is, when “we love someone so as to wish good to him.”⁷⁹ When a person instead loves because of what is good for himself this is love of concupiscence rather than friendship. This parallels Aristotle’s friendships of use and pleasure, which are not true friendships, and his friendship of virtue in which one wishes good for the

⁷⁷ St. Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Theologica*. Ia. Q. 20. Art 2. Christian Classics. New York: Benziger Bros, 1948. (115)

⁷⁸ *New American Bible*. Iowa Falls: World Bible Publishers, 1990. John 15:15.

⁷⁹ Aquinas. IIa IIae Q. 23 Art. 1 (1263)

other. Aquinas also follows Aristotle in saying that friendship must be mutual well-wishing based upon a kind of communication. The friendship of charity is based upon the communication of God and man; it is “the friendship of man for God.”⁸⁰

Aquinas departs from Aristotle by saying that one can exercise charity not only with one’s friends, but also with one’s enemies. This is because an aspect of friendship is loving all who are connected to your friends. Therefore all men should be loved because God loves all men. There is still room for friendships of use and pleasure within this schema, but they cannot properly be called an exercise in charity because they are “founded principally on the virtue of a man” instead of upon God.⁸¹ Virtue in this context signifies some excellence or perfection. Aquinas goes on to agree with Aristotle that friendship involves a love of self, that “the love with which man loves himself is the form and root of friendship,” and that the specific nature of this friendship of man for himself is charity.⁸²

Aristotle’s view of man in community is limited somewhat to his ideal of the polis. The good man cannot have a friendship or be a part of community more perfect or more extensive than that of the polis. Also, while he makes some allowances for unequal friendships, the true friendships and best relationships are between equals, implying that a horizontal relationship is preferable to a vertical one. St. Thomas Aquinas’ view of charity is based upon the vertical friendship of God for man. God’s friendship for man, *amicitia*, allows for a personal, loving, and radically new encounter between man and God.

Another important element from the classical and Christian tradition that is important for Christian solidarity is the notion of the common good. In his discourses about law in the *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas deals extensively with the notion of the common good while still

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid. Art. 3 (1265)

⁸² Ibid. Q. 25 Art. 4 (1282)

maintaining the existence of an individual good, one that is within and yet distinct from that common good. Aquinas says that God is the “common good of all,” yet he also addresses common good of communities.⁸³ The law for Aquinas is always directed towards the common good. Although, like Aristotle, Aquinas’s focus seems to be on the community, he also says that:

“the common good of the realm and the particular good of the individual differ not only in respect of the *many* and the *few*, but also under a formal aspect. For the aspect of the *common* good differs from the aspect of the *individual good*, even as the aspect of *whole* differs from that of *part*.”⁸⁴

Every man has his own proper good, and this is separable from the good of his community. Thus “every man’s proper good is desirable to himself, and consequently it is a grievous matter for anyone to yield to another what ought to be one’s own.”⁸⁵ To lead others to the common good is the task of those who rule over a society. Indeed, “Aquinas viewed society as an organism with the individual subordinate to, or developing within, the community,” a community which is hierarchical.⁸⁶

Like Aristotle, Aquinas understands man as a being who exists naturally in community, yet he extends this understanding to become more encompassing than simply life within a polis. Disagreeing with St. Augustine, Aquinas says that in the state of innocence there would have been a social order, since “man is a naturally social being.”⁸⁷ In this way, Aquinas recognizes that man exists in communities other than those of the polis. By “adding ‘social’ to Aristotle’s famous dictum that ‘man is by nature a political animal,’ Aquinas means to accent the natural sociality of human beings apart from the dimensions of law, decision making, power, and

⁸³ Ibid. Q. 26 Art 3 (1290)

⁸⁴ Ibid. IIa-IIae Q 58 Art. 7

⁸⁵ Ibid. Ia Q. 96 Art. 4 (488)

⁸⁶ Hallowell and Porter. Ibid. (207)

⁸⁷ Aquinas. Ibid Ia. Q. 96 Art. 4

governmental institutions.”⁸⁸ Other institutions such as the family are necessary for the development of the human being.

Aquinas’s treatment of the virtue of justice is also important. He says that justice directs man in his relations with others because the virtue “denotes a kind of equality.”⁸⁹ Within these relationships with other men, justice demands that he render to each his due. Aquinas thus says that justice is “a habit whereby a man renders to each his due by a constant and perpetual will,” comparing it to Aristotle’s definition which says that “justice is a habit whereby a man is said to be capable of doing just actions in accordance with his choice.”⁹⁰ Particular justice is oriented towards the individual, who is part of the whole community. There are two species of justice: commutative and distributive. Commutative justice deals with the relations of the parts to each other, while distributive deals with the relation of the whole to the parts. Distributive justice deals with the distribution of common goods to all.⁹¹

Also under his discussion of justice, Aquinas formulates the concept of the universal destination of goods, which forms a central place in later Catholic social teaching, especially in the area of economics. Aquinas says that external goods are subject to man insofar as he can use them, and he agrees with Aristotle’s proposal in the *Politics* that “the possession of external things is natural to man.”⁹² Also, he points to Genesis when man was given dominion over all the earth. Aquinas considers two aspects of man’s possession of external goods. He says:

“One is the power to procure and dispense them, and in this regard it is lawful for man to possess property. Moreover this is necessary to human life for three reasons. First because every man is more careful to procure what is for himself alone than that which is common to many or to all: since each one would shirk the labor and leave to another that which concerns the community, as happens where there is a great number of servants. Secondly, because human affairs are conducted in more orderly fashion if each man is charged with taking care of some particular

⁸⁸ Hallowell and Porter. Ibid. (206)

⁸⁹ Aquinas. Ibid. II-II Q. 57 Art. 1

⁹⁰ Ibid. Q. 58 Art.

⁹¹ Ibid. Q. 61 Art. 1

⁹² Ibid. Q. 66 Art. 1

thing himself, whereas there would be confusion if everyone had to look after any one thing indeterminately. Thirdly, because a more peaceful state is ensured to man if each one is contented with his own. Hence it is to be observed that quarrels arise more frequently where there is no division of the things possessed.”⁹³

This passage points to the evils of collectivization, and is indeed a prominent part of why communism simply does not work. The nature of man necessitates private property in order for a proper use of those goods, man’s own satisfaction with his lot, and for peace in the society. The second aspect regards man’s use of external goods. Thus, “On this respect man ought to possess external things, not as his own, but as common, so that, to wit, he is ready to communicate them to others in their need.”⁹⁴ Thus, although it is proper that man have private property, this does not mean that he has license to use that property in whatever way he desires. Rather, Christian charity and Christ’s command to love one’s neighbor demands that external goods be given to those in need, that if a person has more than he needs and another has nothing, the external goods rightfully belong to him who has not enough. This principle, with its balance between individual ownership of external goods and collective use of them, forms a key foundation for later Catholic doctrine which rejects both unregulated capitalism and communism.

3. Christianity’s View of the Person in Community

Etienne Gilson writes about Christian personalism, and its ability to combine Greek philosophy, which allows for the integrity of the individual, with the Christian understanding of the dignity of the person. He says that:

“The modern mind is quite sufficiently familiarized with the ideas of individuality and personality. We might well ask ourselves whether their importance has not been somewhat exaggerated—no doubt as a kind of reaction against the evils of mass production. Whenever the collective comes to be regarded with a kind of religious awe, as if a suppression of the individual soul was all that was needed to attain the divine, the individual and personal, in their turn, begin to lay claim to a kind of sanctity and are even put forward as the sole possible bases of any

⁹³ Ibid. Art. 2

⁹⁴ Ibid.

genuine religion. Men seem to be incapable of facing antimony without worshipping the terms.”⁹⁵

In this introduction to writing about the concept of the individual person in classical Greek and medieval Christian thought, Gilson highlights the reactionary tendency towards the opposite extremes of individualism and of collectivism that characterize so much of the philosophy and sociology of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Enlightenment individualism and reactionary socialist and communist collectivism depreciate the importance of a proper understanding in which the person and the community exist in harmony. The seeds of this understanding may be found in the writings of the Greeks, especially Aristotle, and this is developed in the Christian tradition. Thus, the reactionary philosophies of individualism and communism backtrack from a theme that Christians developed in the medieval times. Gilson says that rather than swinging to one of these two extremes:

“We might be permitted to dream of a philosophy which would recognize the collective where it exists without holding itself bound to sacrifice all the individuals to the collective, or the collective, for that matter, to the individuals.”⁹⁶

Gilson thus emphasizes why Christianity offers the best explanation for the place of the individual person in the community of which he is naturally a part. This explains by extension why Christianity can succeed in providing an adequate account of solidarity. Other traditions such as socialism and Marxism reject the understanding of the person and of the community found in the Christian tradition, and thus reject Christianity’s insights into the balance that must be found between individual action and communal unity if the person is to flourish. The Christian tradition takes the term solidarity from these traditions and provides it with the anthropology of its own rich history.

4. Pope Leo XIII

⁹⁵ Gilson, Etienne. *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991. (189)

⁹⁶ Pope Leo XIII. *Rerum Novarum*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1891. (189)

In *Rerum Novarum*, largely acknowledged as the first major social encyclical which addresses the political and social conflicts characteristic of modernity, Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903) writes about the problems that capitalism and specifically industrialization present to society. He also notably condemns the Marxist response to these problems. Pope John Paul II says that Pope Leo's use of the word friendship, with its heritage in Greek philosophy, contributes to the principle later articulated as solidarity.

Rerum Novarum claims that despite the reality of injustice towards the working class, socialism is not the answer that it claims to be. Socialism denies the fact that "every man by nature has a right to possess property as his own" and that this is one of the most important distinctions between man and beast.⁹⁷ Therefore, right away Pope Leo XIII sets his ideas about politics and society in opposition to those contributors to the concept of solidarity who do so within a socialist framework. The Pope goes on to say that private property is part of the natural law which man as a rational creature may discover. He says of the state that it must allow freedom for the family. This is primarily where he lays the groundwork for what becomes known in Catholic social theory as the principle of subsidiarity. Christian solidarity relies upon subsidiarity, or a proper ordering in which institutions such as the family or the city have more control over their immediate affairs than have higher institutions such as the state. The state cannot infringe upon the rights of the individual, for example with regards to the freedom of worship, or other lower levels of society in their own endeavors. Pope Leo points to a great flaw in socialism, saying that socialists "in setting aside the parent and setting up a State supervision, act against natural justice, and destroy the structure of the home."⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Ibid. (6)

⁹⁸ Ibid. (14)

Another interesting aspect of *Rerum Novarum* is that the pope affirms differences among persons as not only a part of social reality, but a thing properly attending a rightly formed society. He says:

“There naturally exist among mankind manifold differences of the most important kind; people differ in capacity, skill, health, strength; and unequal fortune is a necessary result of unequal condition. Such inequality is far from being disadvantageous either to individuals or to the community. Social and public life can only be maintained by means of various kinds of capacity for business and the playing of many parts; and each man, as a rule, chooses the part which suits his own peculiar domestic condition.”⁹⁹

Pope Leo affirms the difference and even social inequality of men, and differs from socialists by saying that these differences are part of what maintain a properly ordered society. Pope Leo condemns the “great mistake” of socialism, which says that “class is naturally hostile to class, and that the wealthy and the working men are intended by nature to live in mutual conflict.”¹⁰⁰ The foundation for Christianity, unlike for socialism, cannot be mere conflict.

However, Pope Leo XIII writes *Rerum Novarum* in response not only to the flawed answers of socialism and Marxism, but also in response to the problems of modern industrialization that spurred those responses in the first place. The pope recognizes that the wealthy often exploit the working class, and when he elaborates upon the duties of both classes he spends far more time on the duties of the wealthy towards the poor. Economic inequality is not an excuse for class conflict because money cannot be seen as the ultimate end of man, as that which makes him happy. This is in opposition to the Marxist reduction of man to a mere economic being. Rather, inequality necessitates the greatest Christian virtue, that of charity. Indeed, Pope Leo speaks of charity more in *Rerum Novarum* than he does of friendship, which Pope John Paul II focuses upon in *Centesimus Annus*. This makes sense because Christianity develops the philosophical basis for charity upon the earlier foundation of friendship. The

⁹⁹ Ibid. (17)

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. (19)

inequality of society also necessitates that the state protect the common good, affording all persons with the society the same protection while recognizing that not all members are going to contribute in the same way. For example, he denounces child labor and the unjust expectations for working women. A just wage and a proper understanding of the relationship between the individual and the state are essential. Ultimately, private property is necessary because of the connection between property and man's labor, a theme that Pope John Paul II takes up in *Laborem Exercens*.

Pope Leo XIII says that class conflict is not natural. The Church lays down precepts and "tries to bind class to class in friendliness and good feeling."¹⁰¹ He says that "if Christian precepts prevail, the respective classes will not only be united in the bonds of friendship, but also in those of brotherly love."¹⁰² In this the pope emphasizes the hegemony of charity over friendship, pointing to the example of the early disciples who shared all they had with the poor. He says that "since the end of society is to make men better, the chief good that society can possess is virtue."¹⁰³

In general, *Rerum Novarum* sets the stage for later Catholic social encyclicals in which solidarity is a key focus. He says that "justice should be held sacred" in society and by the state, and this notion of justice includes subsidiarity and recognition that inequality in society is a reason for rather than a reason against justice.¹⁰⁴ *Rerum Novarum* places the Christian firmly against the hardships of the poor and working class, while affirming social integration based upon fraternal charity and friendship. The encyclical contains the roots of what becomes

¹⁰¹ Ibid. (21)

¹⁰² Ibid. (25)

¹⁰³ Ibid. (34)

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. (36)

Christian solidarity, especially in its rejection of natural class conflict and its affirmation of friendship, charity, and justice.

5. Pius XI

In *Quadragesimo Anno*, Pope Pius XI (1922-1939) uses another term that Pope John Paul II attributes to the heritage of solidarity: social charity. While affirming Pope Leo XIII's notion of the goodness of private property, he addresses some of Pope Leo XIII's criticisms of socialism and capitalism, of individualism on the one hand and collectivism on the other, in more detail. He admonishes that in the face of doctrines that preach complete economic freedom and unregulated free competition, it is necessary to avoid "twin rocks of shipwreck," for:

"as one is wrecked upon, or comes close to, what is known as "individualism" by denying or minimizing the social and public character of the right of property, so by rejecting or minimizing the private and individual character of this same right, one inevitably runs into "collectivism" or at least closely approaches its tenets."¹⁰⁵

However, he distinguishes between owning property and properly using it. In this way, the good of private ownership of goods does not turn into economic license, for men are responsible for using what they have for the common good and engaging in charitable works for the good of society and its members. Also, echoing and developing Pope Leo XIII, Pope Pius calls for just treatment of workers in two ways: "the worker must be paid a wage sufficient to support him and his family" and also that "the amount of the pay must be adjusted to the public economic good."¹⁰⁶ These two aspects of social justice reflect crucial aspects of Christian social teaching which become part of solidarity. The worker, as a person, must be justly provided for according to his nature and his work. Yet the person, with his responsibility for his family, is not the only concern. Economic concerns that affect the individual have an impact on society as well, and

¹⁰⁵ Pope Pius XI. *Quadragesimo Anno*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1931. (46)

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. (71, 74)

Pope Pius discusses the unemployment that can result from wages that are raised or lowered without regard to the effect this will have upon the common good.

It is at this point that Pope Leo discusses social charity, which Pope John Paul II names as a direct influence on his understanding of solidarity. To combat the evils that can arise from “individualist economic teaching” the pope proposes that the “Loftier and nobler principles” of “social justice and social charity” be the guiding principles of economic institutions.¹⁰⁷ Social charity in particular, he says, is to be heart of this order, one which institutions must protect. Justice, especially commutative justice, is necessary for this understanding of the proper relationship between the person and the community or state. Yet justice without charity at its heart is incomplete, and the common good will be best served when the persons involved live according to both virtues.

IV. Solidarity in Catholic Social Teaching

1. Pius XII

In *Summi Pontificatus*, Pius XII (1939-1958) introduces solidarity into the language of the Church’s encyclicals, although it did not become part of the Church’s encyclicals on social doctrine specifically until Pope John XXIII’s *Mater et Magistra*. Pope Pius points to two errors that stand in the way of peace among peoples. The first is a “forgetfulness of that law of human solidarity and charity which is dictated and imposed by our common origin and by the equality of rational nature in all men, to whatever people they belong.”¹⁰⁸ Pope Pius thus makes an appeal for solidarity based upon the equality of men which derives from their rational nature, but also in calling for charity he implies that solidarity relies also upon the transcendent aspect of

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. (88)

¹⁰⁸ Pope Pius VI. *Summi Pontificatus*. Vatican City: Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 1939. (35)

man's nature as well. The pope's call for solidarity also relies upon man's experience as a social being, saying:

“In the light of this unity of all mankind, which exists in law and in fact, individuals do not feel themselves isolated units, like grains of sand, but united by the very force of their nature and by their internal destiny, into an organic, harmonious mutual relationship which varies with the changing of times.”¹⁰⁹

The unity of men within society relies not solely upon abstract considerations of man's common origin and nature, but upon man's personal experience of living in society.

2. Pope John XXIII

Although John Paul II does not specifically refer to his contribution in *Centesimus Annus*, most scholars of solidarity point to Pope John XXIII's (1958-1963) encyclical *Mater et Magistra* as important for his understanding as well. Pope John XXIII and his predecessor Pope Pius XII were the first to include the term solidarity in Catholic social teaching in a predominant way. This is also significant because John XXIII was the pope who initiated the Second Vatican Council, an event that defined John Paul II's papacy and gave direction to his mission. Vatican II declared its purpose of beginning a dialogue with modernity. It is therefore fitting that Pope John XXIII adopted solidarity, with its roots in liberal and socialist political philosophy, to define an aspect of Catholic social teaching that previous popes used only classical and traditionally Christian language to express.

Mater et Magistra begins by tracing its roots back to *Rerum Novarum*, and placing itself in the tradition of Leo XIII's social teaching. He summarizes *Rerum Novarum*, yet concludes his summary by labeling Leo XIII's understanding of Christian brotherhood as solidarity. Referring

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. (42)

to its influence, he calls the Leonine encyclical the “*Magna Charta* of social and economic reconstruction.”¹¹⁰ He says:

“Finally, both workers and employers should regulate their mutual relations in accordance with the principle of human solidarity and Christian brotherhood. Unrestricted competition in the liberal sense, and the Marxist creed of class warfare; are clearly contrary to Christian teaching and the nature of man.”¹¹¹

In this way the pope rearticulates Catholic social teaching’s criticism of liberalism and Marxism as a proposal of solidarity, linked closely with Christian brotherhood. This link to brotherhood hearkens back to solidarity’s origins, coming out of the French call for *fraternité*. Yet it also points to the concept of the brotherhood in Christ that traces back to the earliest days of Christianity.

In discussing some of the challenges that modern society presents, Pope John XXIII also proposes solidarity for those who are involved in agriculture, the importance of which greatly changed with the coming of modernity. Other solidarity theorists also discuss this change, with industrialization leading to the abolition of agrarian communities and the subsequent rise of urban industrial communities. The pope says that “Rural workers should feel a sense of solidarity with one another, and should unite to form co-operatives and professional associations.”¹¹² This continues earlier popes’ affirmation of the importance of mediating organizations such as trade unions. Such organizations are essential for the promulgation of a properly ordered society. Continuing with the topic of agriculture, Pope John XXIII emphasizes the importance of solidarity in a different way, a solidarity that crosses borders to specifically combat hunger. He says that “solidarity of the human race and Christian brotherhood demand the elimination as far as possible of these discrepancies” between countries who are able to

¹¹⁰ Pope John XXIII. *Mater et Magistra*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1961. (26)

¹¹¹ Ibid. (23)

¹¹² Ibid. (146)

produce food in abundance and others that do not have enough.¹¹³ Wealthier nations are responsible for those that are less fortunate.

The pope affirms that the foundation of the Church's social teaching is the individual human person. He says:

“individual human beings are the foundation, the cause and the end of every social institution. That is necessarily so, for men are by nature social beings. This fact must be recognized, as also the fact that they are raised in the plan of Providence to an order of reality which is above nature.”¹¹⁴

It is upon this “sacred dignity” of the person that the social teaching is based.¹¹⁵ This further demonstrates the Church's professed reliance upon the tradition of classical and medieval thought which emphasizes that man is naturally political. Man naturally exists in community, but that community must be oriented to the good of the individuals within its order.

3. Second Vatican Council—*Gaudium et Spes*

A key aim of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) was to initiate a dialogue with modernity. Its use of the term solidarity seems evidence of this, since it denotes an adoption of a term from outside the Church's tradition. The document says:

“Though mankind is stricken with wonder at its own discoveries and its power, it often raises anxious questions about the current trend of the world, about the place and role of man in the universe, about the meaning of its individual and collective strivings, and about the ultimate destiny of reality and of humanity. Hence, giving witness and voice to the faith of the whole people of God gathered together by Christ, this council can provide no more eloquent proof of its solidarity with, as well as its respect and love for the entire human family with which it is bound up, than by engaging with it in conversation about these various problems.”¹¹⁶

While acknowledging that “God did not create man for life in isolation, but for the formation of social unity” the document affirms that God has also given man the brotherly community of the Church, in which men are united to each other and to God in a new way. This community in the

¹¹³ Ibid. (155)

¹¹⁴ Ibid. (219)

¹¹⁵ Ibid. (219)

¹¹⁶ *Gaudium et Spes*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1965. (3)

Church and ultimately in Christ is the basis for solidarity. In the community of men, “solidarity must be constantly increased until that day on which it will be brought to perfection” so that “saved by grace, men will offer flawless glory to God as a family beloved of God and of Christ their Brother.”¹¹⁷ The document also speaks of solidarity in the context of Catholic associations that foster unity across international lines. Associations that give aid to others regardless of international boundaries “form an awareness of genuine universal solidarity and responsibility.”¹¹⁸ This points to the universal scope of the Council’s view, one that reflected the rise of globalization. The universal aspect of solidarity becomes important also in Pope John Paul II’s understanding of solidarity.

4. Pope Paul VI

Pope John Paul II says that Pope Paul VI’s reference to a “civilization of love” contributes to his understanding of solidarity. In his 1975 “Address to Mark the Closing of the Holy Year” and his “1977 Address for World Peace Day,” Pope Paul VI (1963-1978) speaks of the civilization of love, opposing it to the deep distortion of a society based upon hate. In the “Address” the pope prays for a “civilization of love” that is based upon the “wisdom of fraternal love” and says that:

“neither hatred, nor contention, nor avarice shall be its dialectic, but love, love which generates love, the love of man for man, not for any short-term or equivocal interest...but for love of you, you O Christ, found in the suffering and the need of every one of our fellows.”¹¹⁹

A civilization based upon love, and upon true solidarity, is not one of selfishness, but in the friendship of man and God which is founded in the suffering of Christ. This civilization would

¹¹⁷ Ibid. (32)

¹¹⁸ Ibid. (90)

¹¹⁹ Pope Paul IV. “Address to Mark the Closing of the Holy Year.” 25 December 1975. Quoted in Kevin P. Doran’s *Solidarity: A Synthesis of Personalism and Communalism in the Thought of Karol Wojtyla/Pope John Paul II*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1996. (104)

“prevail in the anguish of implacable social struggles.”¹²⁰ This understanding of a civilization of love clearly reflects St. Thomas Aquinas’s notion of charity, of love for others based upon one’s love for God. In the Address for World Peace Day, the pope extols peace, saying:

“Peace can write the finest pages of history, inscribing them not only with the magnificence of power and glory but also with the greater magnificence of human virtue, people’s goodness, collective prosperity, and true civilization: the civilization of love.”¹²¹

Reflected here are Aristotelian and Thomistic notions that society is meant to foster virtue and to allow its citizens to actualize their potential of becoming good, of realizing their *telos*.

Inculcation of virtue is the way to human flourishing, and this takes place within society.

Pope Paul VI also discusses the concept of solidarity specifically, especially in his encyclical *Populorum Progressio*. The focus of his understanding of solidarity in this encyclical is upon the solidarity of the human family, across borders and also across time. He says: “we cannot disregard the welfare of those who will come after us to increase the human family” because “[t]he reality of human solidarity brings us not only benefits but also obligations.”¹²² Following in the steps of his predecessors, he affirms the importance of the family for society, saying that the family “in which different generations live together, helping each other to acquire greater wisdom and to harmonize personal rights with other social needs, is the basis of society.”¹²³ Solidarity, then, is a way of expressing the familial bond that extends to all men. Based upon this, Pope Paul outlines three responsibilities that wealthy nations have with regard to poor ones: mutual solidarity by the giving of aid to developing nations, social justice having to do with trade relations between weak and strong nations, and universal charity.¹²⁴ In these ways, wealthy, strong, developed nations must promote the solidarity of all men, yet must avoid the

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Pope Paul VI. “Address for World Peace Day, 1997.” Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1977.

¹²² Pope Paul VI. *Populorum Progressio*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1967. (17)

¹²³ Ibid. (36)

¹²⁴ Ibid. (44)

ambition of colonizing. One of the goals of such practices is the hope that “[a]n ever more effective world solidarity should allow all peoples to become the artisans of their destiny.”¹²⁵

The duty to promote human solidarity also especially rests upon the shoulders of world leaders. Pope Paul VI thus frames the concept of solidarity in universal terms, linking it to peace for all men and a universal humanity that implies certain responsibilities. This stands in stark contrast to the Marxist call for universal solidarity of the proletariat in the revolution for power.

5. Pope John Paul II

Solidarity in Catholic social teaching reaches its apex with the work of Pope John Paul II (1978-2005). With his background in both Thomism and phenomenological personalism, John Paul II brings a unique philosophical perspective to the writings of his papacy. His writings about solidarity and about social justice take on special importance in the lights of his experiences under both the totalitarianism of the Nazi occupation in Poland during World War II and also the rule of Polish Communism.

a. Interpersonal Relationships and Solidarity in *Acting Person*

Before becoming pope, Pope John Paul II, then Karol Woityła, wrote a book called *Acting Person* or *Osoba I Czyn*. Unfortunately, there is not currently an accurate English translation of this work. However, commentaries on the work provide crucial insights into the importance of Woityła’s discussion of the person in community, and even specifically of solidarity in the work. Woityła basically wants to supplement a Thomistic ontological framework of the person with a phenomenological analysis of the experience of human action.

The central focus of the work is the person in action, but towards the end he spends some time writing about intersubjectivity. Woityła builds upon the foundation of understanding that the human person “experienced in his specifically personal action, is self-knowing, self-

¹²⁵ Ibid. (65)

determining and self-fulfilling, and that these characteristics reflect his transcendence and his integration as a dynamic ontological unity.”¹²⁶ In looking at personal interaction and relationships, Woityła tries to discover whether the integrity of the person can be maintained or even enhanced by relationships with other persons. With regard to inter-personal relationships, he distinguishes “I-You relations” and “We relations.” It is not possible to experience the subjectivity of another person, but it is possible to understand that he is “another *I*, a subject like myself, though not identical with me.”¹²⁷ This “I-You” relationship is the basis for community, the “We” relationship, for participation. These relationships have a moral dimension because man must be not only recognized as a “you” but affirmed as such. The person is seen as a value. Also, while the individual person is certainly responsible for his own self-fulfillment, within the context of interpersonal relationship, “I am responsible, not just with respect to the good that is myself, but also with respect to the good that is the other.”¹²⁸ In community, the many I’s act in common, aiming at the common good. Essentially, “in the *we* profile of participation, the person experiences primarily the duty of responsibility or realizing the good of the community as a whole.”¹²⁹ Here as elsewhere, Woityła’s philosophical approach reflects the influence of Max Scheler. Here the influence is specifically with the idea of personal responsibility and the essential connection between responsibility and true participation in community.

Woityła contrasts participation, consisting of “I-you” and “We” relationships, with the experience of alienation. While Marxism sees all alienation as a result of economics and resulting class-struggle, Christian personalism, especially within Woityła’s work, sees the root of alienation in a distortion of community and interpersonal relationships. Woityła “identifies two

¹²⁶ Doran. Ibid. (141)

¹²⁷ Ibid. (143)

¹²⁸ Ibid. (144)

¹²⁹ Ibid. (145)

principal causes of alienation, namely individualism and totalism (collectivism)” and sees individualism as “the refusal of the individual person to consider any good other than his own.”¹³⁰ Individualism sees community as merely a necessity in order to protect the individual, while Wojtyła says that “we only grow into our humanity through interaction with others.”¹³¹ Collectivism on the other hand sees the individual good as opposed to the good of the individual person. Thus, collectivism relies upon coercion and a violation of the person’s freedom to act, desiring that man take all of his norms from society, and lose himself along with his freedom.

Solidarity is also the result of a recognition of common humanity, of seeing a common good for the humanity. Wojtyła delineates four attitudes towards society: first, conformism “which is inauthentic because it means abandoning my freedom”; second, non-involvement, or isolating oneself from others; third, opposition or resistance to unjust laws “in order to liberate the full humanity of others.”¹³² Among these three, only the third is a valid attitude towards society. Merely conforming to the will of others, or isolating oneself from others are inauthentic ways of existing in society. However, a fourth attitude towards society is solidarity. This is “the primary authentic attitude toward society, in which individual freedom is deployed to serve the common good, and the community sustains and supports individuals as they grow into a truly human maturity.”¹³³ The community is not based upon self-interest. It is not something artificially imposed upon man as a limitation to his freedom. Rather, it is through the interpersonal relationships of solidarity in community that allow man to fully actualize his potential as a person. The influence of Scheler’s understanding of the Person-Community or the Collective Person comes in here as well. For Scheler, the Person-Community is the highest form

¹³⁰ Ibid. (148)

¹³¹ Weigel, George. *Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1999. (176)

¹³² Ibid. (176)

¹³³ Ibid.

of community and the only one in which there can truly be solidarity. In this form of community, people are responsible for their actions and for each other. The person has his own place, his own experiences, but he exists most fully because he is part of the community.

b. The Encyclicals

After his election to the papacy on October 16, 1978, Pope John Paul II dedicated a significant part of his ministry to fostering a proper understanding of solidarity. During the time that he released the following works, the pope also watched the nation of his birth struggle with a peaceful revolution against Communism. He saw himself as formulating a proper Christian theological and philosophical foundation for the actions of Solidarność, and thus ministering to his people and trying to show them how to be witnesses of solidarity for the world.

i. *Laborem Exercens*

Pope John Paul II's encyclical on work, *Laborem Exercens*, highlights the situation of the worker in the modern world. This encyclical was released on August 14, 1981 at the height of its power of Solidarność in Poland, several months before the Communist crackdown and institution of martial law. The pope's focus upon work almost certainly reveals the influence of seeing the Polish workers who, beginning with the strikes at Gdańsk, led the nation in the greatest challenge to Communist power in the history of the Soviet bloc.

The pope calls work a distinctly human activity, one that sets him apart from other creatures. He also recognizes that the nature of work is changing with the coming of modernity. In the changing context of work and of the globalization of economics, he notes the change in the Church's social teaching from "the 'class question'" to "the 'world' question."¹³⁴ The foundation for man's vocation to work may be found in the first chapter in Genesis, when God gives man dominion over the Earth. Particularly interested in the question of the modern worker,

¹³⁴ Pope John Paul II. *Laborem Exercens*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1981. (2)

the pope remarks that both in the industrialization that spurred Pope Leo XIII to first address the “worker question and the subsequent industrial and post-industrial changes show in an eloquent manner that, even in the age of ever more mechanized ‘work’, *the proper subject of work continues to be man.*”¹³⁵ Far from advocating the progressivism of the positivists, the Pope views industrialization and the rise of new technology cautiously, saying that:

“technology can cease to be man's ally and become almost his enemy, as when the mechanization of work “supplants” him, taking away all personal satisfaction and the incentive to creativity and responsibility, when it deprives many workers of their previous employment, or when, through exalting the machine, it reduces man to the status of its slave.”¹³⁶

The person is the focus of work, and work has dignity because the person, for whom work is done, has dignity. He says that:

“The interaction between the worker and the tools and means of production has given rise to the development of various forms of capitalism - parallel with various forms of collectivism - into which other socioeconomic elements have entered as a consequence of new concrete circumstances, of the activity of workers' associations and public authorities, and of the emergence of large transnational enterprises. Nevertheless, the *danger* of treating work as a special kind of “merchandise”, or as an impersonal “force” needed for production (the expression “workforce” is in fact in common use) *always exists*, especially when the whole way of looking at the question of economics is marked by the premises of materialistic economism.”¹³⁷

The pope thus recognizes the collectivist sociologies that have arisen from the development of technology, specifically those in the Marxist line of thought. These see man as a purely economic being who works merely for the good of the collective, in which man becomes not a person but merely a means of production.

The Pope then spends a section in the encyclical writing about “Worker Solidarity.” He recognizes the justice of the “worker question” out of which the proletarian movements arose in response to the industrial revolution. The new exploitation of workers evoked a response, one which upheld the dignity of work and of the person.

¹³⁵ Ibid. (5)

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid (7)

“The call to solidarity and common action addressed to the workers-especially to those engaged in narrowly specialized, monotonous and depersonalized work in industrial plants, when the machine tends to dominate man - was important and eloquent from the point of view of social ethics. It was the reaction *against the degradation of man as the subject of work*, and against the unheard-of accompanying exploitation in the field of wages, working conditions and social security for the worker. This reaction united the working world in a community marked by great solidarity.”¹³⁸

While the associations of workers formed in response to these abuses have allowed for the greater protection of the workers, there have also arisen dangerous ideologies. There is a growing need for “*movements of solidarity of the workers and with the workers*” and “This solidarity must be present whenever it is called for by the social degrading of the subject of work, by exploitation of the workers, and by the growing areas of poverty and even hunger.”¹³⁹

Work is an essential part of human life. It “is a good thing for man-a good thing for his humanity-because through work man *not only transforms nature*, adapting it to his own needs, but he also *achieves fulfillment* as a human being and indeed, in a sense, becomes ‘more a human being’.”¹⁴⁰ Work, with all of its personal and interpersonal connotations, provides as essential means for man to actualize his very humanity.

The pope also focuses upon the problems of ideology when applied to the conflict between labor and capital. This finds its expression in the “*ideological conflict* between liberalism, understood as the ideology of capitalism, and Marxism, understood as the ideology of scientific socialism and communism.”¹⁴¹ The pope focuses especially upon the revolutionary, collectivist ideals of Marxism. Ultimately, man’s labor is more important than capital, a distinction missed by Marxism. Capital cannot be separated from labor. When it is, this leads to the error of “*economism*, that of considering human labor solely according to its economic

¹³⁸ Ibid. (8)

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. (9)

¹⁴¹ Ibid. (11)

purpose,” an error associated with materialist ideology.¹⁴² Commenting on the tradition of universal destination of goods, he says that the Church has always subordinated private ownership to common use, although ownership is important. Work must be considered in the context of the rights of man.

The pope also emphasizes the importance of the right to association for workers, specifically in trade unions. These are an “indispensable *element of social life*, especially in modern industrialized societies.”¹⁴³ However, unions are not just instruments of inevitable class struggle, but rather a means to struggle for social justice and for the common good. Work unites people, and “In this consists its social power: the power to build a community.”¹⁴⁴ This allows them to promote social order and solidarity. He also recognizes the strike as a viable ultimatum against injustice, as long as it is exercised with prudence.

ii. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*

Sollicitudo Rei Socialis is generally looked to as one of John Paul II’s most adamant support of solidarity during his papacy. Written to commemorate twenty years since the writing of Paul VI’s *Populorum Progressio*, the encyclical immediately places itself within the tradition of Catholic social teaching. The encyclical is especially interested in a proper understanding of development, a theme that John Paul II notes is taken up in Paul VI’s encyclical. He also comments that the use of the term “development” comes originally from the social and economic sciences, as does Leo XIII’s reference to the “condition of workers.” Therefore, it follows that the pope does not shy away from admitting that the Church has taken up language and even subject matter in its social teaching that derives originally from other areas of study. This applies of course to solidarity’s origins in sociology and even anti-Christian political philosophy.

¹⁴² Ibid. (13)

¹⁴³ Ibid. (20)

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

Addressing what Paul VI calls the “social question” he says that it has taken on worldwide importance, thus echoing the Second Vatican Council’s *Gaudium et Spes*. However, the increasing global dimension of society makes local and national problems and movements even more important because they have a new aspect of interconnectedness. He writes of interdependence of nations and individuals, to some even in distant countries.

Like previous popes, Pope John Paul II draws attention to the widespread poverty throughout the world. He distinguishes not only economic poverty, as Marxist critics do, but also points to poverty in education and culture, especially drawing attention to nations in which exploitation and oppression do not allow man to pursue self-fulfillment. Among other things, he distinguishes the importance of the “right of economic initiative” which is “important not only for the individual but also for the common good.”¹⁴⁵ His stance thus stands squarely against attitudes common in Communist ideology in which there is a tendency to pursue a kind of equality that stifles man’s creative subjectivity. However, he also continues to affirm that social man is not merely economic, and that other factors, especially the rights to religious freedom, sharing in the building of society, and forming unions are also important. The pope criticizes both Marxist collectivism and liberal capitalism, especially because of the ideological blocs that they formed. There is a “right of every people to its own identity, independence and security, as well as the right to share, on a basis of equality and solidarity, in the goods intended for all.”¹⁴⁶ He distinguishes “development” from progress, with progress understood as an automatic, limitless, orientation towards an undefined perfection. This understanding of progress has

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. (15)

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. (21)

“philosophical connotations deriving from the Enlightenment” rather than the Christian roots he urges to be seen in development.¹⁴⁷

Ultimately, development depends upon interdependence characterized by solidarity, which he defines in a very distinctive way. He says:

“It is above all a question of interdependence, sensed as a system determining relationships in the contemporary world, in its economic, cultural, political and religious elements, and accepted as a moral category. When interdependence becomes recognized in this way, the correlative response as a moral and social attitude, as a “virtue,” is solidarity. This then is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all.”¹⁴⁸

Here the philosophy of *Acting Person* is quite apparent. Interesting here, though, is that he calls solidarity a virtue. This highlights in a unique way the moral dimension of solidarity for Pope John Paul II. Solidarity is essential for man to actualize his nature because it is the highest form of social attitude, in which man may live most fully. This is so integral to human development because man, going back to Aquinas, is a social being. Ultimately, “Interdependence must be transformed into solidarity,” so that weak and strong, rich and poor give to each other and live in more perfect society.

One of the most importance themes that *Sollicitudo* emphasizes, however, is that

“The Church's social doctrine is not a "third way" between liberal capitalism and Marxist collectivism, nor even a possible alternative to other solutions less radically opposed to one another: rather, it constitutes a category of its own. Nor is it an ideology, but rather the accurate formulation of the results of a careful reflection on the complex realities of human existence, in society and in the international order, in the light of faith and of the Church's tradition.”

Thus, while the Catholic social teaching on solidarity is important philosophically, it is not to be seen as an alternative to a particular political system or institutionally embodied ideology such as Communism in the Soviet Union. It is merely a coherent application of the understanding of individual man’s dignity and the importance of good society to allow him to reach his potential.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. (27)

¹⁴⁸ Pope John Paul II. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*. Vatican City: Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 1987. (38)

Man and society are able to reach their fullest potential when they are free. Men “are totally free only when they are completely themselves, in the fullness of their rights and duties” and the “same can be said about society as a whole.”¹⁴⁹

iii. *Centesimus Annus*

Another of John Paul II’s important encyclicals is *Centesimus Annus*, written to commemorate the one hundred year anniversary of Leo XIII’s *Rerum Novarum*. With regard to solidarity, the pope says that it is “clearly seen to be one of the fundamental principles of the Christian view of social and political organization” before tracing the ideas that are included in his concept of solidarity from his predecessors. He also affirms Pope Leo’s formulation of subsidiarity, saying that the state must uphold this principle while assuring the common good. He again denounces collectivism found often as an embodiment of Marxist ideology, saying that “the social nature of man is not completely fulfilled in the State, but is realized in various intermediary groups” which have their own autonomy but work towards the common good, and that this establishes the subjectivity of society.¹⁵⁰ Communism also destroys this subjectivity because of its inherent atheism,

“The denial of God deprives the person of his foundation, and consequently leads to a reorganization of the social order without reference to the person's dignity and responsibility. The atheism of which we are speaking is also closely connected with the rationalism of the Enlightenment, which views human and social reality in a mechanistic way.”¹⁵¹

Man’s transcendent rational nature must be taken into account in the body of a society. Here again, as in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* the pope rejects the understanding of society and of the individual found in the Enlightenment. Ultimately, solidarity serves as man’s best form of society because it allows him to fulfill his nature as *imago dei*. However, consumerism likewise

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. (46)

¹⁵⁰ John Paul II. Ibid. *Centesimus Annus*. (13)

¹⁵¹ Ibid. (13)

proves an unsatisfactory alternative to collectivism since like Marxism it “totally reduces man to the sphere of economics and the satisfaction of material needs,” while claiming to be superior to it.¹⁵² Communism claims to offer more complete satisfaction to these material needs yet also denies spiritual ones.

Centesimus Annus was written in 1991, two years after the 1989 fall of Communism in the pope’s homeland of Poland. He speaks in the encyclical of the violation of the rights of workers that led to such upheaval in that country. Like so many others he emphasizes the irony of the fact that “the fundamental crisis of systems claiming to express the rule and indeed the dictatorship of the working class began with the great upheavals which took place in Poland in the name of solidarity,” upheavals which were actually led by the working class.¹⁵³ This was a revolution in which the only weapons used were “the weapons of truth and justice.”¹⁵⁴ A country caught in the war of the two blocs, of which he wrote in *Sollicitudo*, he claims Poland’s victory over communism as a victory of Christian solidarity. More of John Paul II’s analysis of Poland and the Communist bloc will be discussed later within the context of Solidarność.

The pope affirms the recognition of the importance of the universal destination of all goods as an integral part of realizing solidarity. However, while private ownership is important, “many goods cannot be adequately produced through the work of an isolated individual; they require the cooperation of many people in working towards a common goal.”¹⁵⁵ Although Pope John Paul II and his predecessors condemn both communism and unbridled capitalism, there are elements of capitalism that may aid in the building of solidarity. The pope says that the “*free market* is the most efficient instrument for utilizing resources and effectively responding to

¹⁵² Ibid. (19)

¹⁵³ Ibid. (23)

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. (23)

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. (32)

needs” yet unbridled capitalism is not the way to build solidarity.¹⁵⁶ Rather, the building of solidarity necessitates a system of capitalism that aims to improve the common good.

Solidarity is also once again contrasted in *Centesimus Annus* with individualism and the attending alienation that results. Pope John Paul II says:

“In order to overcome today's widespread individualistic mentality, what is required is *a concrete commitment to solidarity and charity*, beginning in the family with the mutual support of husband and wife and the care which the different generations give to one another. In this sense the family too can be called a community of work and solidarity.”¹⁵⁷

The state must be oriented towards fostering the solidarity of family. Also, the connection between the virtues of solidarity and charity is established. The link between work and solidarity is found not only in the workplace, but also in the family, the original place of interpersonal relationships and thus solidarity. The pope says that man “is alienated if he refuses to transcend himself and live the experience of self-giving and of the formation of an authentic human community oriented towards his final destiny, which is God” and a society fosters alienation if its forms of social organization make this more difficult, impeding the establishment of “solidarity between people.”¹⁵⁸

6. Christian Solidarity?

Is it possible, therefore, to draw a cohesive understanding of solidarity from these sources within Catholic social teaching? Kevin P. Doran says that, at least with regard to the work of John Paul II, the following definition encompasses the aspects he sees are important for a proper understanding of solidarity:

“Solidarity is a virtue of persons and communities who, in each human situation, are actively committed to the good of each person and of all. It is the attitude which leads persons and communities to seek together the common good, that is peace, along with the material, cultural, and spiritual conditions necessary to live as persons, through engaging in dialogue in a spirit of truth and trust, through seeking justice and respecting rights, through promoting the appropriate

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. (34)

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. (149)

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. (41)

participation of all, and through the gradual achievement of authentic human development. Solidarity is a moral duty based on the fact of human interdependence and fundamental human equality. For believers it finds an additional foundation in communion with God. Solidarity comes into being when that interdependence together with its implications, and that communion, are recognized in a spirit of truth, and translated into action through a free and loving commitment which endures over time. Because of the various individualist attitudes and structures which undermine solidarity, and the conditions that flow from these, solidarity will inevitably involve an element of struggle, which is always for the realization of the persons, and never against other persons.”¹⁵⁹

This definition allows an overview of the many aspects and kinds of activity that solidarity encompasses. It is a virtue, an attitude, a moral duty, a fruit of communion with God, evidence of relationships with others, and a cause of struggle with forces that seek to undermine the dignity of the person and the good of community. The language of solidarity further offers a means of critiquing the problems of modern society, yet solidarity must always be considered in the context of struggling *for* society or *for* the person rather than against other persons.

7. Philosophy and Language of Christian Solidarity

Of central importance to this consideration of solidarity, and specifically to Christian solidarity, is the link between language and a philosophical tradition. Pope John Paul II in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* recognizes the heritages of the language of “development” and of the “condition of workers” that become such an important part of Catholic social teaching. Both are based upon philosophical traditions of the social sciences, traditions which may or may not be consistent with Christianity. Solidarity, with its roots deep in the socialist tradition, is another term that emphasizes this link. These three terms specifically have their roots in socialism.

Catholic social teaching also draws from the language of the liberal democratic tradition. An example of this is the use of rights rhetoric. The strategy of John Paul II especially in regard to adopting language from these traditions involves “evacuating popular concepts such as ‘liberation’ and ‘rights’ of their modern content...and then refilling them with a Christian

¹⁵⁹ Doran. Ibid. (235)

content.”¹⁶⁰ Again rights for example, which are grounded so firmly in the liberal tradition, have taken a central place within social teaching. There is a “deference to the rhetoric of Liberal democracy, particularly the use of the natural rights discourse, coupled with a tendency to attempt to impregnate the democratic ideals and ‘rights’ with a Christian substance.”¹⁶¹

Catholic solidarity attempts to provide a proper understanding of man in society or community. Its foundation clearly draws from classical and medieval sources of political philosophy, from Aristotle to Aquinas. It also draws upon the Church’s own teaching tradition. Yet the language of solidarity borrows from the very traditions, socialism and positivism, that Catholic solidarity opposes. Rather than using language from its own tradition, Catholic social teaching borrows from its rival traditions, impregnating them with new roots. This certainly follows in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, with its desire to dialogue with modernity. Yet it may also prove problematic for those who do not see the distinctions between the solidarity proclaimed by a socialist and solidarity advocated by a pope.

VI. Solidarność: A Case Study of Solidarity

One of the reasons that studying solidarity as a political or philosophical concept proves so interesting is that it is a perfect example of the fact that ideas have consequences—that philosophical concepts affect people’s actions and indeed impact the world. Movements of trade unions came out of the social democratic school of thought after Marx. Marx’s follower Lenin formulated a theory of government that led to the totalitarianism of twentieth century Communism. The Polish Solidarity Movement has been labeled as a triumph of ideas in many diverging senses. Some see it as a triumph of liberal democratic values, since in 1989 leaders of Solidarity became the majority in a representative government. Others have seen it as a triumph

¹⁶⁰ Rowland, Tracey. *Culture and the Thomist Tradition*. London: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2003. (50)

¹⁶¹ Ibid. (40)

of socialist values, with the overthrow of an oppressive system by the worker class. Still others claim it as a victory for Christian solidarity under the leadership of the Polish pontiff. A mobilization unprecedented in Communist Eastern Europe that led to the downfall of oppressive government without initiating a drop of bloodshed, the Solidarity movement provides a fascinating example of solidarity in action. Ultimately though, Solidarność is best seen perhaps as a reflection of the dialogue among these rival traditions. If Solidarność may be considered as an embodiment of solidarity, a consideration of the various aspects and processes of development of the movement prove necessary to understand which tradition of solidarity or which ideology best explains its motivations and actions.

1. Background to Solidarność

As a result of Yalta after World War II, Poland, who fought valiantly on the side of the Allies, was sacrificed to the power of Stalin and communist Russia. Poland was one of the most devastated nations after the War, with its population reduced from 35 million inhabitants before the war to only 24 million in its aftermath. In 1948, the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR) was formed, the body that was to govern Poland until 1989. The government, under leaders such as Władysław Gomułka and Edward Gierek, maintained complete control over jobs, using a system of patronage called *nomenklatura*. However, one of the most obvious examples of the oppression of the Polish state was the vast police and security force that carefully observed the population, so that the "fear of informers stifled all free speech and corroded all natural social relations."¹⁶² Economic policy included the abolition of the private sphere and of autonomous social groups and organizations that were not part of the state. This included trade unions, since the Communists did not think that workers could organize apart from the state. Industrialization

¹⁶² Lukowski, Jerzy and Hubert Zawadzki. *A Concise History of Poland*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press., 2006. (287)

was also a key goal, evident for example in the attempt to establish a perfectly atheist Communist industrial city in Nowa Huta. Collectivization of agriculture, though it was never completely accomplished, contributed to perpetual food shortages.

A key part of the Communist regime's plan to dominate Poland consisted in tearing down its rich culture. It therefore strictly controlled the outward manifestations of Polish culture in every way that they could. Aspects of this control functioned as an attempt to starve the Polishness out of the Polish people. The "content of this cultural diet was strictly controlled; anything deemed religious, anti-Russian or 'decadent' was excluded."¹⁶³ Everything from Poland's rich intellectual heritage, for example its literature, to many of its religious practices became subject to the control or at least oversight of the Communist government.

The Polish Resistance Church served as the principal unifying force of Polish culture in the face of the Communist's atomizing tactics. The Catholic Church and the Communists most blatantly conflicted in 1953 when the state wanted all of the Catholic clergy to swear an oath of loyalty to the regime. At this time, then Archbishop Stefan Wyszyński gained great popular support with his statement "We are not permitted to place the things of God on the altar of Caesar. *Non possumus!*"¹⁶⁴ The archbishop was imprisoned for his opposition. Also, one of the most important contributions of the resistance Church to the foundation for Solidarity was Wyszyński's Great Novena, a plan that was broken up into three parts. The first was planning a different theme, such as faith or the family, for each of the nine years prior to the millennial celebration of Polish Christianity in 1966. This formed a basic catechesis program to give the people a firmer grounding in their moral and spiritual lives. The second element was pilgrimage, with the Polish people encouraged to make pilgrimages to traditional sites around the country.

¹⁶³ Ibid. (290)

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. (292)

Wyszyński too made pilgrimages around the country during these years. The Black Madonna, the patroness of Poland, would also travel in pilgrimage from diocese to diocese. All this was in preparation for the millennial year, commemorating the baptism of Mieszko I in the year 966. The massive demonstrations of loyalty for the Church—one million people came for the Mass celebrating the millennium—demonstrated the unity of the people in their faith, despite the attempts of the regime to implement their atheist, atomizing agenda.

Though the government attempted to break the Polish spirit, they never succeeded. Compared to the Communist regimes in neighboring states like Czechoslovakia and Hungary, the totalitarianism in Poland was never as completely stifling or violent. However, a major cause of this was the cultural unity of the Polish people, so that the Communists from the beginning knew that they had to at least feign allegiance to Polish culture and past. Indeed, as Timothy Garton Ash says of the Polish Communist regime in power at the time:

“This regime can accurately be described as ‘totalitarian’ in the sense that it *aspires* to total control over every aspect of its citizens’ lives, to break every social bond outside its aegis, to destroy ‘civil society.’ Wherever two or three are gathered together, there the Party-state desires to be. Ideally, this control will extend even to the subject nation’s collective memory, to history, for ‘he who controls the past controls the future’. Yet every national cause in eastern Europe was different, and nowhere did the reality fall farther short of the totalitarian ideal than in Poland.”¹⁶⁵

Authors who write about the Polish revolution focus on the slogan of Solidarność: “Let Poland be Poland.” There was something about Polish society or Polish community that withstood 123 years of not even being on the map from 1790 through World War I, something that held them together as a people despite the efforts of Communism to stifle Polish Society. Stalin himself said that, “introducing communism to Poland was like putting a saddle on a cow.”¹⁶⁶ The community within Poland—especially the resistance Church—kept the community alive during these times of struggle. Solidarity was able to take hold because of the rich community in which

¹⁶⁵ Ash, Timothy Garton. *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity*. 3rd Ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002. (10)

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. (6)

it was able to take hold. Solidarity was a labor union, but it was also a movement that united an entire country.

Of immense importance was the October 1978 election of Polish Cardinal Karol Woityła as Pope John Paul II. After his election, first secretary Gierek is said to have commented: “By God’s wounds, what are we going to do now?”¹⁶⁷ The pope visited his homeland, and his people chanted, “We want God.”¹⁶⁸ His visit, which mobilized millions of Poles who wanted to meet their new pope, helped Poles to realize that together they could accomplish what they wished, even if that meant being opposed to the wishes of the government. As a result, “by 1979, then, there was already the embryo of that tacit alliance of workers, intelligentsia, and Church, unprecedented in Polish history, unique in the Soviet bloc, unseen in the West, which was to grow into Solidarity.”¹⁶⁹ All of Poland seemed united despite apparent divisions. At the very beginning of his visit, the pope spoke of society and the role of the Church in relation to social man:

“Given that [the temporal dimension of human life] is realized through people’s membership of various communities, national and state, and is therefore at the same time political, economic, and cultural, the Church continually rediscovers its own mission in relationship to these sectors of human life and activity. By establishing a religious relationship with man, the Church consolidates him in his natural social bonds.”¹⁷⁰

Here, at the beginning of his papacy, John Paul II continues applying his philosophical understanding of the person and its foundational place in interpersonal relationships. In short, he points to man’s moral and religious life in society as the foundation of solidarity. This is in contrast to the “Marxist claim that religion was both the expression and the further cause of

¹⁶⁷ Lukowski. *Ibid.* (308)

¹⁶⁸ Weigel. *Ibid.* *Witness to Hope*. (2)

¹⁶⁹ Ash. *Ibid.* (27)

¹⁷⁰ Weigel, George. *The Final Revolution: The Resistance Church and the Collapse of Communism*. New York: Oxford University Press: 1992. (131)

human alienation.”¹⁷¹ In this and other addresses during his visit, the pope echoes the Vatican Council’s call for religious freedom as a necessary human right which is needed for man to develop to the fullness of his nature in society.

Solidarność placed the year 1956 on their badges because this marked the first time that Poles stood up to the Communist regime, an endeavor which cost lives. This confrontation occurred on June 28, 1956 at the Stalin engineering works in Poznań over economic conditions. After the security forces put down the demonstration, during which the people were shouting for “bread and freedom,” fifty-three people were dead and hundreds more were injured.¹⁷² Though this demonstration is seen as part of the heritage of the Solidarity movement, its tactics were very different from those of Solidarność. The strikers attacked security forces and Party headquarters, while the later Solidarność was a peaceful movement.

Another important date in for Solidarność was December 17, 1970. Security forces again violently put down strikes, this time in the Lenin Shipyard at Gdańsk and also in Gdynia. These strikes were in response to a large increase in already exorbitant food prices shortly before Christmas. The bloodiness of the ordeal became the inspiration for the battle cry of Solidarność ten years later. It was a great motivating force especially for Lech Wałęsa and the workers who followed him on strike because for the workers, “the Poles murdered by Poles, workers murdered by a ‘Workers’ State’, became the symbol for all their accumulated grievances.”¹⁷³ This was also the first time that a concerted call for independent trade unions was voiced, though ineffectively, by the Polish workers. Such a call for trade unions stood “in complete

¹⁷¹ Weigel. *Ibid. Revolution*. (131)

¹⁷² Ash. *Ibid.* (12); Lukowski *Ibid.* (295)

¹⁷³ Lukowski. *Ibid.* (14)

contravention of the Leninist principle that trade unions under communism were merely to serve as ‘transmission belts’ of Party order to the masses.”¹⁷⁴

Another important development that was important for the development of Solidarity was the founding of the KOR, the Workers’ Defense Committee, which created a bridge by which intellectuals could unite with workers, at least beginning to overcome tension in this area. KOR formed in 1976 in response to the price raises and strikes of that year. Important figures in KOR that became influential in the Solidarity movement included Jacek Kuroń, Adam Michnik, and Jan Józef Lipski. The group was composed principally by socialist democrats.

Economic factors were very important for the history of Solidarity, providing the principal impetus for action in many of the formative events leading up to the movement’s birth. The strikes of 1956 and 1970 were motivated by economic deficiency. After the strikes of 1970, Gomulka was forced to resign, and Edward Gierek became first secretary, or leader, of the Party. To gain support, he initiated economic reforms at the beginning of his term that aimed to expand the economy, relying heavily on Western credit and introduction of technology into Poland in an attempt to increase its status in international trade.¹⁷⁵ This led to short-term success, which placated the angry people, whose stores were full and whose situations were finally a little less destitute. By 1974, however, high oil prices from the Arab-Israeli war contributed to an economy that was collapsing from a lack of a firm foundation for its initial growth. Food shortages began again and inflation went through the roof. In June of 1976 the government again had to raise prices, with the result of more strikes by the Polish people. Finally, the raising of meat prices in 1980 contributed to the rise of Solidarity and the famous strikes of that summer.

2. The Birth of Solidarność

¹⁷⁴ Ibid. (303).

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. (305)

Polish Solidarność became something much greater than a labor movement, yet many of the national leaders of the movement, such as Lech Wałęsa, began as humble workers. In the midst of an economic crisis following a decade of irresponsible management by the Gierek regime, on August 14, 1980 the Gdańsk strike began. Wałęsa jumped over the fence of the shipyard to participate. The list of demands of the strikers reflected a much broader set of demands than those traditionally of a labor strike. They demanded acceptance of Free Trades Unions, the guarantee of the right to strike, respect for the freedom of speech, restoration of former rights to political prisoners and those who had been fired or dismissed from a university following earlier strikes, mass media access, full disclosure to the public on economic situations, and allowance of all social groups to participate in discussion on a reform program.¹⁷⁶ The strikers attended daily Mass, celebrated by special permission of the bishop at the entrance to the shipyard. Timothy Ash Garton also relates how the strikers posted the words of Adam Michiewicz's translation of Byron's 'Giaour' at the shipyard:

*"For Freedom's battle once begun,
Bequeath'd by bleeding sire to son,
Though baffled oft is ever won."*¹⁷⁷

When the strikers wrote these words and placed them on the gate, however, the word "bleeding" was left out. Ash comments: "Where else but in communist Poland would a strike be launched with Holy Mass and lines from Byron?"¹⁷⁸ The worker's cause in Gdansk was strengthened by workers in other areas following suit and beginning strikes of their own in places such as the Shipyard at Szczecin, Warsaw, and Nowa Huta. The result of the fourteen days of strikes in August was the signing of the Gdansk Agreements, an unprecedented recognition of the desires of the people under Communist rule.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. (47)

¹⁷⁷ Ash Ibid. (49)

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

One of the first acts of the Solidarity movement was forming an interfactory strike committee. It began as a local strike committee for the Gdańsk strike committee. The Gdańsk strike set the tone for the future of Solidarity because it refused to settle on merely local issues, but it became expanded into the Interfactory Strike Committee (MKS) which comprised the soon to be national leaders of a movement millions strong. The leaders of this first strike realized that what they were doing was bigger than their own local issues, and that the eyes of the whole nation were upon them. The “realization suddenly dawned that the ruling Party’s monopoly was under siege from concerted action across the country” and the “hearts of all dedicated Communists sank when they saw the slogan; WORKERS OF ALL ENTERPRISES—UNITE!”¹⁷⁹ This recalls Marx’s call in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* for all proletarians to unite. Now it was being used against a Communist government.

It is also essential to note the influence of the personality of Lech Wałęsa upon the success of Solidarity. He could relate to the strikers because he was part of their community, and he lived the same hardships as they. Wałęsa “was one of them, the personification of the ‘little man’, a truly representative individual, and he spoke their language, not the Newspeak of the apparatchiks” of those who were trying to stifle the Polish community.¹⁸⁰ He was a Pole, a Catholic, a simple worker, yet he led the largest challenge to Communism in the history of the Soviet bloc.

From the very beginning, Solidarity was more just a worker’s movement. During the Gdańsk strike an intellectual named Konrad Bieliński, who was part of KOR, began publishing a Strike Information Bulletin and called it *Solidarność*. The title was inspired by the strike leaders’ constant calls for solidarity. A radio broadcast by sixty-four intellectuals during the

¹⁷⁹ Davies, Norman. *God’s Playground: A History of Poland*. Vol. II. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005. (483)

¹⁸⁰ Ibid. (52)

strike declared “The place of all the progressive intelligentsia in this fight...is on the side of the workers.”¹⁸¹ Waleśa affirmed that the workers needed the intelligentsia to help negotiate with the government. In the aftermath of the successful Gdansk strike, Solidarity leaders affirmed a “basic philosophy of solidarity between all social groups (‘social self-defense)’ and said of the developing groups of leaders that:

“The...ideal should not be a trades union secretary, but *a tribune of the people*, able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it takes place, no matter what class or stratum of the people it affects.”¹⁸²

In a sense, this placed Solidarity leaders in the position of a *de facto* representative government of the people as a whole whose role was to face down the oppression of state.

In 1980 Solidarity was more than a trade union. One analyst called it “a massive and unique new social movement, a movement which was perhaps best described as a ‘civil crusade for national regeneration.’”¹⁸³ Another view of solidarity, proposed by another analysis, emphasizes a more liberal perspective of the goals of Solidarność. This labels the movement as more than an ordinary trade union as a “mass social movement committed to the democratization of political life, the dismantling of the command economy, and the introduction of autonomous production units.”¹⁸⁴ Regardless of the specific emphasis or interpretation, Solidarność was clearly more inclusive than any mere labor union.

3. Strikes and Spreading

Solidarity grew very quickly in the aftermath of the first wave of strikes and the famous August Accords. By November their membership had grown to eight million members and after another year they had over ten million. Even the majority of Party members were members of

¹⁸¹ Ibid. (55)

¹⁸² Ibid. (83)

¹⁸³ Ibid. (84)

¹⁸⁴ Lukowski. Ibid. (309)

Solidarność. In the aftermath of the August Accords, Edward Gierek was replaced as First Secretary of the Party by Stanisław Kania.

Just as economic conditions played a very important part in the early history of Solidarity, they also contributed greatly to its spread and the attending weakening of the Communist regime's hold on the Polish people. An example of this is the building of community that took place in the daily bread lines in which families stood to obtain basic food. The bread lines essentially turned into "the biggest, social, political, and historical seminar that Poles have ever attended."¹⁸⁵ In every weather people stood in lines waiting for food, and shared their stories of common hardship at the hands of the Communist regime, as well as the great disparity they all recognized between what the state said and the reality that each had experienced. They told jokes and with characteristically cutting Polish humor tore down the government that has been an instrument of oppression for most of their lives. One newspaper article from a few years earlier than Solidarność relates a few of these jokes. For example, a man standing in line at a meat shop might say "'I've had enough of this line. It hasn't moved in three hours. I'm going off to murder the prime minister.' A few hours later he returns to the line, looking dejected, and says: 'No luck. There was a line.'"¹⁸⁶

One of the most prominent groups that followed the lead of the strikers in Gdańsk was a group of Peasants in Rzeszów. They began a strike in the dawn of the year 1981, placing a banner in front of the Provincial Council of Trades Unions (WRZZ), the location of their massive sit in. The banner declared "WE DEMAND THE REGISTRATION OF RURAL SOLIDARITY."¹⁸⁷ Following the model of the previous peaceful strikes, this collection of the Polish peasantry desired the recognition that Solidarność has already gained with the August

¹⁸⁵ Davies. Ibid. (489)

¹⁸⁶ Getler, Michael. "Poles Tell Jokes, Too—and Laugh." *The Washington Post*. 3 July 1978 (Final Edition): A10.

¹⁸⁷ Ash. Ibid. (117)

Accords: recognition by the Communist regime saying that they were an independent trade union. This is also further evidence of the nationwide effects of Solidarity. Solidarity was composed not just of isolated groups of workers from factories or shipyards in Gdansk or Gdynia. Rather, it was a movement in which all Poles could share. These farmers were affected by the attempted collectivization of agriculture on the part of the regime. This collectivization led to crop shortages, and therefore bread shortages. In a very real way, the woes of the farmers were connected to those of the hungry Poles in the breadlines. They demanded the registration of "Rural Solidarity" as an Independent Self-Governing Farmers' Union. This demand was voiced in language which showed their awareness of their own connectedness to the rest of Poland. Wanting a Gdańsk Agreement for themselves, their strike committee issued a statement saying that "Farming...is after all an ancient trade which is inseparably bound up with the history and survival of the Polish nation and state."¹⁸⁸ Like Gdańsk the strike had a distinctly Polish Catholic identity. The location of the strike bore an altar, an image of the Pope, a papal flag, and an image of the Black Madonna of Częstochowa on top of a background of the red and white national flag. Timothy Garton Ash explains his experience at the Rzeszów Commune and describes a peasant farmer's defense of the strike who claimed that he stood for "free and secret elections, the right to buy and sell and inherit land, to speak out about violations of human rights."¹⁸⁹ When asked if such goals, in order to become reality, would necessitate the end of the communist system he replied "*Ale jasne!*" or "But of course!"¹⁹⁰ Thus, the grassroots of the Solidarity movement, whatever Lech Wałęsa said about dialogue with the Communist regime, recognized the incoherence of communism with the Polish culture and society, and indeed with their understanding of man. Unlike the cautious support of the Church hierarchy that Solidarity

¹⁸⁸ Ibid. (121)

¹⁸⁹ Ash (123)

¹⁹⁰ Ash (123)

received in some areas, the bishop of Przemyśl openly supported the Rural Solidarity strike, preaching to the participants on the pope's words about freedom in his recent encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis*. Rural Solidarity, a group of peasant farmers, gained legal recognition in May of 1981.

On March 27, 1981, a nation wide general strike was held, in which the entire nation laid down their work in peaceful protest for four hours. Timothy Ash Garton says that it was the largest strike in the history of the Soviet bloc. By this time there was already some underlying division within the leadership of the group. As Solidarność became bigger, encompassing an ever increasing part of the population, there appeared factions within the leadership. Some, like Lech Wałęsa urged moderation, focusing on dialogue and compromise with the government. Others demanded more radical actions, and a more frequent use of the general strike than the moderates thought prudent. This dissension, however, did not translate into less participation in the strike by the Polish people. The strike was held in response to the beatings of three Solidarność activists in what was known as the Bydgoszcz Crisis.

In September 1981, Solidarity held its first Congress. It then issued decrees that stunned the world. They called for, among other radical goals, free elections in Poland and also declared unity with other unions throughout the communist world. The government in Warsaw denounced Solidarity's actions and accused them of having "unilaterally broken" the terms of their status as a free and self-governing trade union.¹⁹¹ Instead, the government claimed, they began to take upon themselves the activities of a political organization that displayed tendencies of confrontation, and therefore posed a threat to Poland. Although surprised by the international

¹⁹¹ "Warsaw tells Solidarity it is Risking Bloodshed with Free Election Call." *The Globe and Mail (Canada)*. 17 September 1981.

reactions to their Congress, Solidarność grew ever emboldened and continued pursuing plans for greater political power.

4. State of War: the Communist Crackdown

In February of 1981, General Wojciech Jaruzelski was appointed prime minister of Poland. On December 12-13, 1981, a “state of war” or martial law was instituted in the country and six thousand active members of Solidarity were arrested, including Lech Wałęsa. Fortunately, although the Polish army did deal harshly with Solidarity, bloodshed was not as catastrophic as it could have been. The horrible exception was the death of nine miners in Katowice. Some Western analysts proclaimed the inevitability of such action by the Polish government, and denounced the leaders of Solidarność for not realizing the gains that they had made. They said that the downfall of Solidarność was unsurprising because the movement had always been “liberally laced with Polish idealism” and therefore “unable to draw reasonable limits in a real world.”¹⁹²

During the time of martial law, Poland was ruled by the Military Council of National Salvation. The initials for this organization were “WRON,” and among the people is gained the title of ‘The Crow’—in Polish *wrona*. The Crow, led by General Jaruzelski, arrested tens of thousands of innocent people, putting them in internment camps where there were beatings and deaths. Social organizations were more under the control of the government than ever before, with everything from forced pledges of loyalty, to nightly curfews, to banning all social gatherings.¹⁹³ A proclamation “banned union activities and all assemblies except church services, prohibited the use of duplicating equipment, closed Poland's borders and warned Poles

¹⁹² Stanglin, Douglas. *Newsweek*. “Did Solidarity Go Too Far?” *Newsweek*. 28 December 1981 United States Edition.

¹⁹³ Davies. *Ibid.* (494)

to carry identification cards.”¹⁹⁴ The days when the Polish government remained paralyzed in confusion and fear because of Solidarity were over. Norman Davies says that “By the implicit admissions of the WRON’s own pronouncements, it had declared war on Polish society,” so that “All pretence of legality was cast aside.”¹⁹⁵ Totalitarianism could no longer hide its ugly face behind rhetoric and lies. Oppression bore down upon the people like never before, with the government implementing its programs of atomization of society in a more blatant manner than ever before in Communist Poland.

Ultimately, one of the most important elements in the decline of the Communist regime under martial law, which culminated in the fall of the Party, was the flawed communist economic policy that sunk Poland deeper and deeper in debt. The central control of the economy under the government simply could not improve productivity. Also, foreign debt rose increasingly higher, compounded by international sanctions.

However, just as important if not more so than the economic crisis was the complete lack of faith in the regime. The people had tasted the freedom of the Solidarity years of 1980-1981, and it could not go back. The underground flourished, printing numerous illegal newsletters, journals and books. The literature became a “massive onslaught against every aspect of Communist ideology—in philosophy, religion, history, political theory, economics, and general literature” and included many authors, but especially exiled Poles and Catholics, and others who opposed totalitarianism such as Orwell and Solzhenitsyn.¹⁹⁶ Radio Free Europe based in Munich served as a source of unbiased information.

¹⁹⁴ Strasser, Steven and Douglas Stanglin, Theodore Stanger, and Zofia Smardz. “Crackdown in Poland.” *Newsweek*. December 21, 1981.

¹⁹⁵ Davies. *Ibid.* (492)

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.* (498)

A pivotal moment for the oncoming death of the regime was the murder of Father Jerzy Popiełuszko. Indeed, the principal targets of Communist ire during the time between the glory days of Solidarność and the Roundtable Discussions were Catholic priests. Father Popiełuszko's death caused such a public outrage that General Jaruzelski held a trial for the three police officers who were responsible for the crime, sentencing them to long prison sentences. This was momentous because "for the first time in the history of the People's Republic since 1956, he ordered that agents of the Communist regime should answer in public for their misdeeds."¹⁹⁷

5. Roundtable Discussions and the Fall of Communism

In 1988 there arose a new wave of strikes that forced Communist leaders to once again dialogue with Solidarność. Economic crises had reached a point of desperation, and the government raised prices past the point of endurance. Workers declared a strike in the spring of that year, and then an even bigger one in August. They chanted "*Nie ma wolności bez Solidarności!*" or "There's no liberty without Solidarity!"¹⁹⁸ Lech Wałęsa emerged to lead the strikers. The government reached out to Solidarność and offered to engage in Roundtable discussions with them. This began a torturous process of negotiation and compromise, in which the Communist government, which had power yet absolutely no political capital, tried to gain the support of Solidarność without relinquishing too much of their own power. On February 6, 1989 the Roundtable Talks took place. Finally on August 16, 1989 the Soviet's issued a statement saying "We do not interfere...in the internal affairs of Poland."¹⁹⁹ On April 17th the Independent Self-Governing Trade Union called "Solidarity" was legal re-registered.

During the first free election since before World War II, on June 4th, 1989 Solidarity won all but one of the seats in the *Sejm*, or Polish Parliament, allowed by the Round Table talks. The

¹⁹⁷ Ibid. (488)

¹⁹⁸ Ash Ibid. (370)

¹⁹⁹ Davies. Ibid. (504)

candidate who lost this seat failed to have a picture taken with Lech Wałęsa. General Jaruzelski became the State President of Poland by a very narrow margin. Tadeusz Mazowiecki, an advisor of Solidarity, became the Prime Minister of Poland on August 24, 1989. On December 29, 1989 the Polish Constitution was changed, removing the Marxist preamble and changing the name of the state back to the Polish Republic. In an effort to remedy the catastrophic effects of the economic situation under communism, the Balcerowicz Plan, which planned a rapid conversion of the Polish economy into a capitalist system, was implemented on January 1, 1990. This economic plan effectively spelled the death of the already gasping Polish communists. Davies says:

“Every Communist textbook that had ever existed preached the doctrine that politics was driven by economics, that political organizations reflected the relationships of their members to the means of production. Hence Communist parties only made sense if they exercised monopoly control over all branched of economic life. And that monopoly had now been lost.”²⁰⁰

Almost all leaders of the Solidarność held prominent government positions, and Lech Wałęsa himself was elected president of the Polish Republic on December 9, 1989.

6. Solidarność Since 1989

As a political party and even as a trade union, Solidarność did not long survive the breakup of Polish Communism. Divisions among the leaders, as well as power grasping methods by Wałęsa, had broken down unity within a year. By the early nineties, Solidarność was in a state of crisis. In 1995, divisions were so deep that votes were split to the advantage of the post-communist party, who gained power over both the presidency and the position of Prime Minister. However, there was remarkably consistent policy despite this power switch, and there was no attempt to return to pre-1989 policies. In spite of political party chaos, Poland was a democratic country.

²⁰⁰ Ibid. (506)

It is beyond the scope of this paper to analyze in depth the failure of Solidarność in the nineties. More important for this analysis is the action of the movement itself, particularly between 1980-81. This is not because 1989 was not a great victory for Poland, but because in the early years especially the movement was more than the political party it later became.

7. Analysis

In many ways, whether in its influences or in the problems it faced, Solidarność represented a search for solidarity. At first, the Communist government found many ways to spin the movement, trying to make it seem a natural embodiment of communist principles. For example, at the signing of the August Accords, the government controlled media panned the crowds. They showed the communist leaders extolling the ability of communism to accommodate the needs of workers and respond to demands for reform. Then the camera showed the leaders along with Lech Wałęsa signing the Accords, the camera getting nice and close to properly document the historic moment demonstrating the greatness of communism. Wałęsa was using a pen on which was a picture of John Paul II.

So to what extent was Solidarność influenced by communism or socialist ideology? Is there any semblance between the reality of Solidarność and the ideas contained in the concept of solidarity in socialism and socialist leaning sociology? Solidarność began as a trade union organized by a class of workers against their government. A communist government was supposed to preclude the existence of independent organizations of trade unions, certainly removing with scientific sureness any need for a revolution of the people. Such organizations had a place in a communist society only as tools or mechanisms for the government bureaucracy. This was because communism was supposed to free the working class from the oppression of bourgeois capitalist institutions. After the revolution the workers would be protected by the

central governmental authority, and would therefore have no need for intermediary societal structures. According to Marxist ideology, such a revolution as this could only be one of the proletariat revolting against the bourgeoisie. However, Solidarność was not one class opposed to another, but a people opposed to an oppressive regime that was trying to destroy their very way of life. The communist revolution is supposed to be one of a rejection of all bourgeois institutions: family, nation, Church etc. Rather, Solidarność embraced all of these societal institutions which communism had attempted to eliminate.

This is not to say that there was no influence of communist ideology upon Solidarność. Communism was imposed upon nearly every aspect of society, including education. Certainly there were some members of the movement who espoused Communist ideology in various forms, and many more who had been influenced by it in certain ways. There was in particular the influence of the socialist democratic tradition on Solidarność. This is seen primarily in the influence of KOR and the intellectuals who performed key roles in the movement by negotiating with the government and issuing publications. The theory of the social democrats indeed bears resemblance to Solidarność in its belief in the importance of trade unions and even of common values that hold society together. Ultimately, though, the social democratic position must function against a capitalist country in order to remain logically consistent. Also, Solidarność seemed to be united by more than interest, but by a deep sense of community.

However, the key question is not whether socialists influenced various members of the movement or even if it influenced the movement itself. Rather, the question is whether the movement itself embodies communist solidarity or socialist solidarity. Solidarity as a concept has a varied past, grounded largely in socialism and positivism, but it is best understood as a quest for an adequate understanding of the relationship between the individual person and

society. If socialism does not provide a proper understanding of solidarity then perhaps Solidarność offers insight into what a proper understanding of solidarity is.

The ideals of Christian solidarity, in its call for a peaceful communion of persons, indeed appear the most like the solidarity of the Polish people in Solidarność. Now, Solidarność was a movement *against* something, against the force of the Communist regime. However, according to the forms of social action of John Paul II, opposition—while not contrary to a proper understanding of true community—cannot be the foundation for true solidarity. The source of solidarity in Marxism is conflict, and the opposite is true of Christian solidarity. In Marxism, alienation forces individuals to come together. For the Christian, it is the harmony and the bonds of community that bring people together. That unity can respond to conflict, but it is not dependent upon it. Indeed, only the Marxists and later socialists see opposition to an outside force to be a basis for solidarity. The call of Solidarność was to “Let Poland be Poland.” Rather than rejecting tradition, the movement indeed embraced it as the foundation for their unity. Their common culture, faith, and experience under Communism formed the basis for union against the oppressive regime. Perhaps the best way to look at Solidarność it is to say that the government was resisting Poland, rather than the other way around.

One of the best places to discover the meaning of Polish Solidarność is in the thought of Pope John Paul II. In *Centesimus Annus* (1991) the pope said that under the half of the continent that was dominated by Communist rule “Many peoples lost the ability to control their own destiny and were enclosed within the suffocating boundaries of an empire in which efforts were made to destroy their historical memory and the centuries-old roots of their culture.”²⁰¹ Thus, the problem of Communist Poland was largely that it tried to stifle the heritage of the Polish community, cutting off its roots. However, the problem of totalitarianism is not simply that it

²⁰¹ Pope John Paul II. *Centesimus Annus*. Ibid. (18)

undermines existing communities. Its gravity may only be seen in the context of the toll that such oppression takes upon the human person, for whose sake the community exists. The pope claims that the Church “In situations strongly influenced by ideology, in which polarization obscured the awareness of a human dignity common to all” has been able to affirm “clearly and forcefully that every individual — whatever his or her personal convictions — bears the image of God and therefore deserves respect.”²⁰² This is why Solidarność was successful—it upheld the dignity of the person by defending a community and culture which held man as its highest value.

The means by which Solidarność defeated Communism serve as further evidence of its proper anthropological foundation. In 1989, the “fall of this kind of ‘bloc’ or empire was accomplished almost everywhere by means of peaceful protest, using only the weapons of truth and justice” and:

“While Marxism held that only by exacerbating social conflicts was it possible to resolve them through violent confrontation, the protests which led to the collapse of Marxism tenaciously insisted on trying every avenue of negotiation, dialogue, and witness to the truth, appealing to the conscience of the adversary and seeking to reawaken in him a sense of shared human dignity.”²⁰³

Pope John Paul II wrote in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* that while the motto of the pontificate of Pope Pius XII was *Opus iustitiae pax*, one could say also say *Opus solidaritatis pax*, or peace as the fruit of solidarity. Ultimately the roots of Solidarność in Christian solidarity are most evident in its fruit: a peaceful working together of persons in community, overcoming fear because they knew that they defended the truth.

What, however, was the fundamental error in Communism’s understanding of the person which inherently opposed the ideals of Polish community and culture? Pope John Paul II said:

²⁰² Ibid. (22)

²⁰³ Ibid. (23)

“Man is understood in a more complete way when he is situated within the sphere of culture through his language, history, and the position he takes towards the fundamental events of life, such as birth, love, work and death. At the heart of every culture lies the attitude man takes to the greatest mystery: the mystery of God. Different cultures are basically different ways of facing the question of the meaning of personal existence. When this question is eliminated, the culture and moral life of nations are corrupted.”²⁰⁴

Communism immanentizes man's nature, denying the transcendent aspects of his essential being. Such a fundamental error removes the possibility for true community, even on a secular level, because it removes the ontological reason for man's dignity and place in community. The result is a spiritual void, for “Marxism had promised to uproot the need for God from the human heart, but the results have shown that it is not possible to succeed in this without throwing the heart into turmoil.”²⁰⁵ The answer is solidarity. In the beginning of his *Confessions*, St. Augustine prays: “You have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.”²⁰⁶ The fruits of solidarity, in which man is in community with others, are peace and the fulfillment of man's nature. Communism denies many essential aspects of man's nature, and is therefore destined to fail. Polish culture implicitly understood this error because of its grounding in the Christian tradition.

Such a potent example of Christian solidarity as Polish Solidarność necessitates a further critical look at the other traditions of solidarity. It may appear easy to say that Solidarność serves merely as a means of refuting communism, and not necessarily other conceptions of solidarity. Fourier had no understanding of an inevitable class conflict. Durkheim was opposed to the collectivism he saw in communities characterized by mechanical solidarity. The strength of Christian solidarity, however, derives from very specific sources. Its foundation in the classical and Christian tradition, with the attending understanding of man's nature, provide a

²⁰⁴ Ibid. (24)

²⁰⁵ Ibid. (24)

²⁰⁶ Augustine. *Confessions*. Trans. Henry Chadwick. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991. (1)

uniquely adequate way of reconciling the place of the individual person with that of the community. Rival traditions of solidarity almost universally reject these foundations. Fourier and Leroux reject Christian morality and philosophy in the hopes of finding new foundations for community. Comte and Durkheim embrace the progressivist positivism that rejects metaphysics and subjects social science to the methods of the natural sciences. Durkheim's account of man's place in society dangerously reduces him to his function in society. Even Scheler grounds his understanding of what makes a person on shaky ground, avoiding any claims about essence and instead reducing the person to an experience of responsibility in community. Ultimately, only the organic harmony of the person in community found in Christian solidarity provides a consistent and adequate philosophical solution to the search for solidarity.

VI. Conclusion

The history of solidarity is essentially the history of men's grappling with one question: what is the relationship between individual man and the society of which he is a part? Now, men surely asked this question before the birth of solidarity. One may look to Plato's *Republic* or Aristotle's *Politics* to see their quest for the political regime best suited to man's nature. Cicero wrote in *The Laws* and *The Republic* of natural law and what is best for man in the state. St. Augustine's *City of God* tries to understand the relationship between the man's place in the temporal and passing City of Man and in the eternal City of God. In his work on natural law and justice, St. Thomas Aquinas tries to understand the place of man as a part of a whole within his community or society. With the Enlightenment, John Locke, Thomas Hobbes, and Jean Jacques Rousseau were only a few of the men who formulated a wholly new understanding of society, with the hegemony of the individual as the key to their ideas. All this occurred before solidarity

even entered the realm of philosophy and political theory, so what sets solidarity apart from earlier searches by these great men?

The history of solidarity is the history of a question, but it is also the history of certain men in certain specific historical circumstances who tried to answer that question. In general, the search for the meaning of the word “solidarity” spans the spectrum of those confounded by the unprecedented changes within modern society beginning with the French Revolution. These men all sought to discover the meaning of these changes for an understanding of man’s role in society. Solidarity’s heritage also belongs largely to those who reacted against liberal individualism by embracing utopianism or collectivism in an attempt to restore a sense of unity to communities of men.

Of these responses to the question of the relationship between the individual person and society, the answer of Christian solidarity stands alone as a bulwark of man’s dignity and nature. Perhaps one of Christianity’s greatest strengths is that it does not reject the tradition of men who historically asked the great questions, but rather embrace their wisdom as part of a heritage upon which to build. Aristotle and Aquinas did not live in the seventeenth, eighteenth, or nineteenth centuries, but they were men who lived among men. They believed that they could discover things about man’s nature and come to a greater understanding of truth because of this. In the end, Christian solidarity stands as a witness to the greatness of the Christian tradition. It can reconcile the person with the community rather than choosing one over the other, because it understands that separating the two is contrary to the nature of each.

A possible topic of future research in the area of the search for solidarity might profitably be focused upon the connection between solidarity and culture. In the area of Christian solidarity specifically, culture plays an integral role in the life of solidarity in the community. The

importance of culture is seen clearly in Solidarność, where the richness of the Polish culture provided a solid foundation for the movement's development. Modernity in general takes a relativistic stance towards culture, valuing all types and thus avoiding any value judgments. This conveniently avoids the question of whether solidarity and other foundations for community are stronger in some cultures than in others. Certainly various cultures hold differing understandings of the nature of man and his place in community. These variations affect the manifestations of solidarity within the communities of such cultures. Is there a right to culture? What does the uniqueness of human cultures and communities say about solidarity as a universal good for social man? These are topics for further study, and they go beyond the scope of this current paper.

Polish Solidarity, or Solidarność, was originally the primary focus of this paper. This movement of society against totalitarianism, pursued peacefully and under the guidance of Christian principles, provides an amazing example. Despite its shortcomings, it truly is a witness to a hope for an answer to the question: "what is solidarity?" The possibilities available to men who stand up for human rights and dignity cannot be overstated. This movement aspired to embody true solidarity. Its success says something profound about both solidarity itself, and about men who seek to live it. Solidarność was successful not only because it overthrew communism, but also because of what it was: a true community of men striving to uphold the Christian and cultural values of their people, values of freedom and dignity for every man. They asked the question, and found communism wanting.

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