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AN INTRODUCTORY STUDY OF THE STRUCTURE
OF THE VOCATIONAL GROUP

by

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Submitted to the Department of Social Sciences
of Carroll College in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Bachelor of Arts

Approved and Accepted by John J. O'Connor

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to a better knowledge of the Christian Social Order, and to Father O'Connor for his generous help in its preparation.
INTRODUCTION

Midway between Individualism—the attitude of mind which tends unduly to emancipate the individual from reasonable control of church, state, and society—and socialism—that theory which maintains that the state should own and operate all, or at least, the principle means of production, exchange, and distribution—lies Christian Solidarism. Christian Solidarism is a theory that maintains that society is an organism bound together by wills, and is made up of groups either natural or secondarily natural. Or as Nell-Breuning defines it. "Solidarism, generally speaking, is the social system which makes valid the Amalgamation of men as such, and as members of natural communities of family and state, and advocates, at the same time the free development of a legally, well arranged, co-operative, representative, and corporate association according to rank and vocation that suits the historical requirements."¹

Solidarism includes principally two things, a reform of social conditions and moral renovation. As the title of this thesis suggests, its aim is to discuss only the reform of these social conditions, or in other words, the structure of the Vocational group. By structure we mean the framework. But in order to indicate what type of framework will be required, it will be necessary at times to mention the purpose, effect, or work of the Vocational Group.

The corporative order presupposes a moral reform because as Nell-Breuning says, "Corporative economics cannot be accomplished with people who believe in class struggle and are filled with class hatred and envy."²

². Ibid., p. 261
"Institutions of public and social life must be imbued with the spirit of justice and it must build up a juridical social order able to provide all economic activity."^3

"We do not say that the proposed social order presupposes that men have changed into angels. This social order leaves unrestricted man's God-given impulse to care for himself and his family and to advance by efficiency. It does not require that excessive measure of disinterested unselfishness of Altruism that is demanded by the socialistic system. In order to bring about a better economic system through a more perfect social order, humankind must give its whole hearted and active support. Every step in the improvement of morals makes possible some reform of conditions. So the corporate order of society and economics presupposes a more perfect moral behavior by all concerned, but at the same time makes it possible and simplifies it."^4

Moral reform may be summarized under the headings of justice and charity.

Justice is of four kinds: Social, Legal, Distributive, and Commutative. Social justice is the virtue which governs the relations of members with society as such, and the relations of society with its members, and directs the social and individual activities to the general good of the whole collective body and to the good of each and all of its members. Such a definition is self-explanatory for this purpose because a discussion of these relations would entail a complete discussion of the reform of morals.

Legal justice is the obligation of the individual to obey the laws of the state and according to his ability and opportunity to do his share

^3. Ibid., p. 249
^4. Ibid., p. 261
to promote the common welfare. It deals with the relation between the individual and the state.

Distributive justice is the virtue of attributing to different members of a group, whatever they have a right to, on the basis of their different contributions to a combined project or their different needs. It deals with the relative differences among various members of a group and aims at proportional or relative equality among them.²

Commutative justice deals with the obligations of one to respect the rights of each of his fellow men, that is, it exists between individual and individual. Examples of this are: when a person asks and accepts an exorbitant price for an object he is selling; when an employer squeezes a maximum amount of work out of a laborer at a minimum wage, although the laborer is worth more. Likewise does the laborer violate this virtue who strikes for a higher wage and is able to get it because of special circumstances, although the wage he had been getting before the strike was an adequate recompense.

Finally, we must observe social charity, which is the soul of economics.
AN INTRODUCTORY STUDY OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE VOCATIONAL GROUP

The Vocational Group will be discussed under these twelve heads:

I. The Vocational Group an Organic Group.

II. Order in the Vocational Group.
   1. Natural Group.

III. The Position of the Employee in the Vocational Group.

IV. The Position of the Employer in the Vocational Group.

V. Relation of the Employer and Employee.
   1. Membership in the Vocational Group.
      A. Compulsory Membership in the Group.

VI. Position of the State in the Vocational Group.

VII. Legal Status of the Vocational Group.

VIII. The Functional Principle in the Vocational Group.

IX. The Bond of the Vocational Group.


XI. The Principle of Hierarchy in the Vocational Group.

XII. A Sample Charter for the Vocational Group.
I. The Vocational Group an Organic Group.

The fact that the vocational is an organic group is shown in the very definition of the Vocational Group because it is included in it. The Vocational Group is an organic group, that is to say, it is composed of an association between employers and employees and includes within itself all the agents required for the accomplishment of its purpose. Or to elaborate on this definition as given by Nell-Breuning: "The Vocational Groups are well ordered members of the social body binding men together, not according to the position they occupy in the labor market, but according to the diverse functions which they exercise in society."

In order to see that the Vocational Group is an organic group, we must know the purpose of the Vocational Group which is to control economic life for the benefit of both individual and the community as a whole, in other words, provide for the common good. These Groups would have the agents necessary for the control of economic life because they would be composed not only of those who owned industry but those who operated it as well. How these groups will contribute to the welfare of both employer and employee will be shown in a special section devoted to the discussion of their position in the Vocational Group. The welfare of the community as a whole will be safeguarded by the state and the consumer. By the consumer because he will be represented in the Group and by the state because that it is its function in stimulating and restraining. This will be discussed more fully, under the head of the position of the state in the Group.

1. Nell-Breuning, Reorganization of the Social Economy, 1937, p. 218
II. Order in the Vocational Group.

We come now to the second point in our outline, namely, order in the Vocational Group. Fr. Nell-Breuning defines order as "The unity arising from an apt arrangement of a multiplicity of parts." In the Vocational Group we find multiplicity, each member contributing to the welfare of the whole in a varied manner but yet with an orderly arrangement which will secure accomplishment. In this well-arranged multiplicity, in which there is unity, we have a will for function which directs all forces toward a common goal; a common goal and activities designed to achieve it, constitute the unity, that unity would be secured by internal will rather than external force. But the will does not create this unity nor is it based on the will of the individual member. It is the goal itself which has power to attract the human will. The human will cannot be forced but a goal is able to allure and attract it. Now the force to act as a uniting bond is inherent in the goods and services whose production and offering is the task of the members of the same Professional Guild.

Natural Group

A discussion of the order in the Vocational Group may raise the question of whether the Vocational Group is a natural group.

To discover whether or not the Vocational Group is a natural group would require a general evaluating of the whole group, so we leave that to the individuals investigating. But the following may act as a sort of guiding discussion. Fr. Nell-Breuning clarifies this point when he says, "Both the union of people based upon neighborly homogeneity and that based upon vocational homogeneity appear natural to the Pope." And

2. Ibid., p. 225
quoting the Pope, he says: "These groups in a true sense autonomous and considered to be, if not essential to civil society at least its natural and spontaneous development. (33)"\(^3\)

Now men, who by their nature are dependent upon one another, have to produce by mutual common co-operation those goods that are indispensable to all but which cannot be produced by individuals alone. In this way objective necessity, and subjective ability call into being member units within the group engaged in the production of a particular good. The organizing of these units into one organization constitutes a vocational guild in that industry.

These groups are not arbitrary or artificial groups representing certain private or collective interests but rather, as has already been shown, they are necessary organizations, growing out of the needs of society and they fulfill an indispensable function in the social body. The bond of the Vocational Group which will be discussed in a later section coupled with the foregoing discussion and with the fact that the individual is not self-sufficient nor yet isolated like an atom but he is essentially a social being, seem to indicate that if the Vocational Group is not a natural group it at least flows from man's nature.

III. The Position of the Employee in the Vocational Group

The discussion of the individual in this section will include both employer and employee.

We begin this discussion of the position of the employee in the Vocational Group with a quotation from Leo XIII. "All social life and therefore all economy emanates from the individual, and for this reason are here for the sake of the individual. The individual, here referred to, is

\(^3\) Ibid., p. 222
conceived of as he actually is, a being essentially social. Man therefore has a double nature, as an individual and as a social being. Thus the Vocational Group makes man central in economic life and so adjusts the process of production directly to human needs.

The Vocational Group will attain to relative self-sufficiency and be able adequately to care for the various needs of its members. Because it will make provision for unemployment, sickness, old age disability and so on. For as Dr. Bruehl says, "The worker belongs to his group for better or for worse. It cannot simply discard him and absolve itself from all responsibility towards him." This means social security for the worker which may, but not necessarily, be taken care of by his own Vocational Group. Dr. Bruehl shows the effects of such an organization when he says: "At ever so many points the life of the individual touches the life of the group; there exists between the group and the individual a real identity of interests; the group is an extention of the self and aids in its fuller realization. Loyalty and devotion to such an organization would spontaneously grow up, and all the members would work for the benefit and advancement of the group in the prosperity of which they shared. There is in the Vocational Group a real social element which holds the group together, and is actually experienced in the consciousness of the members: This inner consciousness leads to social activities. We feel that we are a part of a whole. The Vocational organization emphasizes the human side: It is an association of men and the basis of the organi-

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4. Ibid., p. 207
zation is human interest. More may be added to this however, such as security of employment, a just wage, and of course, the possibility to rise in the social scale. So we see that it will make possible for the individual a community of life that extends for beyond the mere tasks of production.

Since the workers have a voice in the management of the industry, they will share in whatever greater productivity is secured by new inventions or other devices. "The security of the social position (of the laborer) does not necessarily forbid that those who are permanently inefficient perhaps due to laziness or lack of conscientiousness will be socially degraded while those who excel in performance, will progress. This would be a perfect social order, an order which protects people against misery and offers them security against undeserved degradation, an order which facilitates peaceful and steady progress for the efficient and ambitious." This is emphasized still further by Dr. Bruehl when he says: "The corporate society by the very fact that it fits all economic and social factors into an organic structure aiming at the welfare of all provides for the legitimate interests of the separate elements and safeguards the common good."

Dr. Bruehl goes on to say: "We must assign to the worker his rightful place in the social organism. This place will only then satisfy the laboring classes if it involves a recognition of the inherent worth and dignity of labor, assures the worker of social esteem, and makes it

6. Ibid., p. 231.
possible for him to enjoy a measure of self-respect. Also it must involve a concept of labor which expresses the dignity and social value of work. Labor must be seen to be a real good and the essential condition for social existence and human progress.9

Thus we see that work would be raised to the dignity of a profession and would be surrounded by the same distinction and prestige which is now attached to professional activity. Professional Idealism includes the conception of a group of men pursuing a common calling as a learned art and as a public service even though it may, incidently, be a means of livelihood. Therefore, the Vocational Group raises the dignity of the laboring man because: first, he is made to feel the value of his work to society; second, he belongs to a profession who’s ideal is social service to society; and third, he would be assured of a living wage. All these, in addition, spell a raised social status for the laboring man.

IV. The Position of the Employer or Capitalist in the Vocational Group.

Having seen something of the position of the employee in the Vocational Group we now pass to the position of the Employer or Capitalist in that Group.

The Capitalist in the Vocational Group would obtain certain advantages as well as incur certain obligations. For example, the use of his property would be limited to a certain extent. In other words, the capitalist or employer must use his property and also dispose of it in accordance with the moral law. That is included in the very definition of ownership as given by Virgil Michel. "The right of ownership is the right to have or hold things as one’s own and to use them or dispose of them in accordance

9. Ibid., p. 271.
with the moral law." He goes on to indicate the social aspect of property. "The social aspect derives directly from the general purpose of the goods of earth to serve the whole society of mankind, which purpose no degree of private ownership may prevent from being fulfilled. The use of the portion of his income which he does not need in order to live comfortably and becomingly is not left entirely to his own choice, the rich are bound by the gravest precept to practice almsgiving, beneficence, and liberality."10

The wealthy employer may fulfill this obligation in various ways such as seeking out opportunities of extending employment, improving opportunities for workers, by encouraging sharing of profits and management, and such modern methods as rendering the worker more secure. On the other hand, he must not assume that profits are more important than people. He is, however, allowed reasonable profits in keeping with his station in life.

The employer would reap the benefits of a better relationship with his employees, as well as the benefits that would accrue to him as a result of the employee's consciousness of being a part of the plant and industry as a whole.

V. Relationship of Employer and Employee.

1. Membership in the Vocational Group.

A. Compulsory Membership.

The relation of employer to employee is aptly expressed by Pope Pius XI in the following quotation.

"The wage contract in itself is not essentially unjust. In the

present state of human society, however, we deem it advisable that the wage contract should, when possible, be modified somewhat by a contract of partnership, as is already being tried in various ways to the no small gain both of the wage earners and the employers. Should this partnership, as it appropriately might, become a part of the Vocational Group we would have a condition to which Nell-Breuning refers in the following words. "In this way the workers are made sharers in some sort, in the ownership or management or the profits. Precisely, because the modern industrial concern requires the co-operation of many workers of different type, this ownership would have to be a form of collective ownership in order to permit all to participate in it. Yet it would not be communistic, since the plant could be owned in varying degrees by individual partners in the Group."

Membership in the Vocational Group

Membership in the Vocational Group would be determined by choice and aptitude. To paraphrase Dr. Bruehl, there would be a professional list in which would be registered all who legally exercise that given profession. Such lists would be compiled for all industries. The members registered in these lists would constitute the body of that group.

Membership in these groups is to be compulsory for everyone practicing the profession for as Nell-Breuning says; "These groups are considered as public legal corporations, of which by virtue of the law everyone practicing the profession will be a member. They are compulsory in the same sense as are communities, he is a member of a community so

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long as he resides there and participates in all the advantages of com-
munity life and public institutions, he can at any time change residence
and can withdraw from this compulsory membership which in no way binds
him to the community. The same is true of membership in corporate bodies.
As long as he is in a certain profession he must obey the rules of that
profession, but he may at any time change to another profession, the
rules of which he must obey."

VI. The Position of the State in the Vocational Group.

We conclude the discussion of the role of various organizations
and individuals in the Group with the State.

This is summed up very well in a quotation from Michael English,
under three heads.

First, "The authority of government is the only real bond of unity
in nations today. Hence it must assume the lead in encouraging and
stimulating any move toward the organization of Vocational Groups. But
it should not force the establishment of organizations in such a way as
to control them and make them organs of a political system."

Second, "The government, not equipped to handle economic life di-
rectly, should give positive aid and encouragement, sanction the rulings
of Vocational Councils, and settle disputes that cannot be ironed out
otherwise."

Third, "The State remains the highest temporal authority in the
land; it keeps its rights and powers. By the introduction of this in-
dustrialself-government it frees itself for its proper and most important
work." (Which is to direct, watch, stimulate or restrain these groups.)

The State would allow these groups to maintain their independence, and as separate groups, form the building stones of the State structure. This would make it possible for the State to remain on the higher plane of judge and umpire. But it must surround the Vocational Groups with effective safeguards in order to give them security but also hedge them about with restrictive measures, so that they may not exceed their rights and endanger the common good.

"The Groups will either receive from the State or give to themselves with the approval of the State, a constitution which defines their rights and fixes their obligations."14

VII. The Legal Status of the Vocational Group

As to the legal status of the Group we can do no better than adopt the views of Dr. C.P. Bruehl who says: "In legal language the Vocational Group would be designed as a corporation or a syndicate. It would, in some manner, be regarded as a moral person capable of assuming responsibilities for its corporate actions and of representing the interests of its members. The State would have to see that the corporation fulfills the social function wherefore it exists and in return enjoy the social advantages, material and cultural, which the general condition of society warrants. These groups must be permanent vocational bodies not merely in a statistical sense but also in a legal sense."15

VIII. The Functional Principle of the Vocational Group.

1. Capital and labor working together.

2. The abolition of class conflict.

The Rev. Bernard S. Dempsey expresses the functional principle of

15. Ibid., p. 247 ff.
the Vocational Group in these words; "Instead of dividing society horizontally between those who have and those who have not, we divide it vertically into social functions; each within the group performing his function for the common good." 16

Capital and Labor were made to work together. They are not natural opponents. They have the same interest, that is, the finished product from which they both earn their livelihood. The greater the profit from this finished product, the greater will be their common gain. But since labor and capital are performing a social service for the common good, they must take into consideration the rights of the consumer in the determination of profits.

So we see that stress in the Vocational Group is to be laid not on the workers or on the employers singly, but on their common performance in a determined line of economic requirements. They unite to perform a social service, as well as procure a livelihood in the process. These corporations are not only corporate interest organizations but also, and even more, public welfare organizations. The Vocational Group would do away with the odious distinction between employer and employee in a sense that the latter is merely a wage earner and not also a real partner of the employer in the discharge of an important social function. The labor's service is indispensible to the capitalist. The Vocational Group removes the stigma and asserts the fact that he is an essential element in the process of production.

We must have in each plant, and in the industry as a whole, one

single organization comprising both employers and employees, working together for the common good.

Now from the above point we can see that the Vocational Group would abolish class conflict because the employer and employee would have a consciousness of the same interest. For as the Rev. Bernard W. Dempsey says: "Class conflict is the simple denial of the social order. They are opposite concepts. If we succeed in establishing the social order in developing the Vocational Groups which are bound together by the common function of serving the community and which receive their maintenance as members of the community for the performance of that function, class conflict would automatically disappear. Instead of opposing interests we have a coordination of interests in the Vocational Group, in the sense that the more efficient the workers and owners together make their industry, the greater income both deserve from the rest of the community."17

IX. The Bond of the Vocational Group

We have already said that the common goal is the bond of the Vocational Group; that is, the immediate bond, the ultimate and highest bond is Social Justice, the definition of which is found in the introduction to this theses. But to elaborate on this still further we may accept the words of the Rev. Bernard W. Dempsey. "Each industry is responsible for supplying the community with some particular goods—that is the bond that holds them together, and also the bond of service for the common good. Everybody associates with persons who have a common interest, that's natural, the laborers do it and the employers do it. Now, if we could bring into the foreground a new common interest, namely the function they

17. Ibid., p. 439 ff.
perform in the community, instead of the former common interest, the lack or possession of goods, there is no reason why the tendency to associate should not be just as strong as it was previously on the divergent class bases.\textsuperscript{18}

There are also other bonds that hold the Vocational Group together, for as Dr. Bruehl says; "The Vocational Group would possess common property of a nature to be enjoyed by all members. We do not mean the productive machinery but property which serves social, educational, cultural, and charitable purposes. Such common property constitutes a bond which unites the members more intimately and brings them into closer social and personal relations."\textsuperscript{19}

X. The Principle of Autonomy in the Vocational Group

The principle of autonomy as given by Michael English and which ultimately comes from Pius XI is, "Just as it is wrong to withdraw from the individual and commit to the community at large what private enterprise and industry can accomplish, so too it is an injustice, a grave evil and a disturbance of right order for a larger and higher organization to aggregate to itself functions which can be performed efficiently by smaller and lower bodies."\textsuperscript{20}

Now this principle provides for a self-determination, in regard to all matters of life, which would be greatest in the smaller units, and the larger units would have power only in so far as regulation is necessary such as safeguarding the conditions for the desired collaboration between the smaller groups.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., p. 439 ff.
\textsuperscript{19} Bruehl, Charles P., \textit{The Pope's Plan For Social Reconstruction}, 1939, p. 231.
\textsuperscript{20} English, Michael, \textit{Rebuilding the Social Order}, 1939, p. 92.
When the state would be forced to intervene in behalf of the common welfare—and only then— it would intervene through the national organization, and this organization would intervene with the lower organization only in matters of national policy and to secure the desired collaboration between the lower organizations.

XI. The Principle of Hierarchy in the Vocational Group.

Briefly the principle of Hierarchy includes a local, state, regional, National, and possibly an international economic organizations.

Dr. Bruehl describes it in this way, "Each corporation embraces horizontally a given profession throughout the nation, but it is vertically subdivided into local and regional sections with local, regional and national corporative boards elected, by the members, in accordance with statutes, and laws sponsored by the state."

In each plant there would be a union of employees and also a union of employers. The employers and employees need not have separate organizations but they may have as long as together they would constitute a group for the management of that plant in accordance with the Pope's principles.

This group of employers and employees would elect members to represent them in a regional body which would take care of business of a wider nature dealing with the individual plants, such as disputes between plants or even intervene to settle a dispute in an individual plant which cannot be settled by the members of the plant organization.

This regional group in turn would elect members to represent that region in a national group for that industry. This Group would tend

only to business of national industrial concern. For that industry it would determine:

A. "The quantity of production and methods of distribution."

B. "In general it would determine dividends, prices, wage scales, and salaries."

C. "Methods of doing away with unemployment and taking care of the unemployed in that industry."

Now as Dr. Bruehl says, "This national organization would be under the ultimate control of a public chartered council representing consuming interests as well as the managerial and operative grades."

These national organizations, in each industry would elect members to a national business congress similar, in form, to that of our political Congress.

But, and quoting Fr. Nell-Breuning, "We could go beyond national boundaries and the domain of national economics and establish a proper world economic order. But this world economy would not comprise the whole population of the world. Neither would there be a world State or superstate in which the individual states would figure as member states, because the State is the supreme economic unit, but it would be an orderly relationship among nations."

XII. A Sample Charter for the Vocational Group.

Nell-Breuning offers the following charter as a sample. "

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22. English, Michael, Rebuilding the Social Order, 1939, p. 94.
25. Ibid., pages 233-234.
Articles of the Charter.

I. All members of a profession in one district, which will be determined, will be registered, in a special list collected by the administration of the district.

II. The members of each profession registered in this list will constitute the professional corporation.

III. Each professional corporation will have special regulations to which all the members of the profession will be subject.

IV. With each professional corporation will be formed free unions or syndicates—employer's, worker's, mixed or agrarian.

V. At the head of the professional corporation there will be a council composed of delegates of the syndicates with equal representation.

VI. The councils of the professional corporations will make the general laws (the rules and regulations for the application of) relative to the labor organization and will determine the practices of the profession.

VII. The rules and regulations enacted by the councils of the professional corporations should be sanctioned by way of referendum when a certain number of members of the profession ask it.

VIII. The councils of the professional corporations will be invested with certain powers over the members of the profession within the limits fixed by the laws.

IX. The councils will name the representatives of the profession to the governing bodies of longer regional technical groups.
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