



The Idea of DECENTRALISM

Charles Maurras

The Idea of Decentralism by Charles Maurras (1898), First edition

Translator's preface to the first edition

In this brilliant text, Maurras goes over the history and ideas of decentralism in France and beyond, discussing its Liberal, Anarchist and Reactionary applications, he argues that one cannot truly be a patriot without espousing some level of decentralism, today this text has been translated by d'Arma for Project 3rd Position - Library from the original French text.

THE IDEA OF DECENTRALISM

Here is a very beautiful thing under a very nasty word. We call "decentralization" a set of reforms intended to reconstitute the fatherland, to restore it to a free head and a vigorous body.

Such a name has the aspect of a real antiphrase:

in negative form, it is essentially positive;

critical, it signifies a renewal of organic life;

anarchic or at least liberal in appearance, it contains the idea of an order;

finally, by the composition as well as by the number and weight of the syllables, it seems to designate some artificial system, when it announces the doctrine of the return to our natural and historical laws.

Besides, it is very ugly (as a word). Nevertheless, to be understood, we had to use this unfortunate name. It makes you forget the faults that are specific to it as it develops in people's minds the truth and the richness of its meaning.

I. From 1814 to 1870

The constitution of Year VIII, the very year in which the eighteenth century was closed, completed the work of centralization; one will find in twenty special authors, in particular in M. Dupont-White¹, the detailed history of this great work begun by the Monarchy and continued by the Revolution². The first Empire could not decentralize. But it is said that, as early as 1814, a group of Legitimists of the shade of M. de Bonald came to beg the Duke of Angoulême, who was passing through Bordeaux, to insist near the throne in favor of the old communal and provincial franchises. "Are you mad, gentlemen?" replied the duke, with a smile. He was convinced, like a large number of emigrants, that the administrative Caesarism established by

Corsica would make the government of France much easier. Thoughtful minds did not share this error. Chateaubriand, Villèle³, Corbière⁴, Royer-Collard⁵, the Count of Serre⁶, Benjamin Constant, Martignac⁷ repeatedly tried to make the government and the Chambers feel the truth; their speeches of 1815, 1818, 1819, 1821, 1822, 1824, 1829 were eloquent and their ideas were brilliant; all failed, however, through the stubbornness of the right, or that of the left, or even the ill will of the reigning prince. Centralization was maintained. It did not save the regime; it only served to make the whole country more easily accept the results of the Parisian insurrection which overthrew him in three days. It is a feature that must be remembered. This false administrative coherence is not an element of political stability.

The government of July had the honor of making the first breach in the Consulate system. The law of 1831 freed the municipalities to some extent; that of 1833, the general councils. The popular election replaced the choice of the sovereign. In 1837, new progress of municipal franchises; in 1838, the powers of the general councils were extended. It would have been necessary to persevere in this way. These were not the indications which the reformers lacked. With the exception of M. de Cormenin⁸ and M. Thiers, there reigned between the leaders of public opinion a veritable unanimity on this point. Shall we cite M. de Barante⁹, Odilon Barrot, Louis Blanc, Lamennais, from the most diverse parties? M. de Tocqueville, with his beautiful studies of American Democracy, made the idea of decentralization popular among the liberals, who saw in it, not without mistake, a synonym of political freedom. M. Guizot, after his fall, repented of having neglected this capital point during his long ministry; he drew up in his retirement, as M. de Villele had done before him at the same conjunctures, a complete system of decentralization.

Louis-Philippe fallen, the legitimists and the republicans advocated the destruction of the regime of the year VIII. The Comte de Chambord, who was to found the newspaper *La Décentralisation* in Lyons, was not at all reluctant to do so. It has been said of him this intelligent declaration: "The attempt that was made of the representative system, at the time when France wanted to entrust its destinies once again to the families of its former kings, failed for a very simple reason: it is that the country which one sought to make represent was organized only to be administered." The Republic of 1848 conferred on universal suffrage the election of local councils; municipalities directly appointed deputies and mayors.

Then came the coup d'état. This is the place to insert into this historical account a general truth: a permanent authority, a lasting, responsible and strong central power, will only be reestablished in our country by means of very extensive local freedoms. They will provide our modern parliamentary habits with a useful distraction and, as they have done for centuries in other countries, they will form that public spirit which, today, is nil in France. Louis Napoleon seemed to glimpse these truths. The first acts of his government removed certain electoral attributions from the local councils, but these, from 1855, saw their own strong powers extended; the municipalities, the general councils obtained a new importance ten years later.

Moreover, the decrees of 1852, 1861 and 1867 organized the responsibilities and the direct authority of the local civil servants, formerly reduced to the simple role of organs of transmission. The emperor even came to decentralization proper, that is to say, to local autonomy. Hadn't he set up a decentralization commission? The Constitutional Empire would

perhaps have succeeded better if it had gone in this direction, rather than turning to some bizarre combination of liberalism and parliamentarism, which led to its downfall. Had he not set up a decentralization commission?

Napoleon III had to a certain extent yielded to two orders of parallel inspiration; one came from the liberals and the other from the socialists. The liberals, however adversaries of the regime, exercised a considerable influence by their talent, their position and their grouping. In 1865, they had established a common program or "Nancy Project"¹⁰ to which Republicans such as Eugène Pelletan¹¹, Jules Favre¹², Vacherot¹³, even Gambetta and Ferry, Orléanists like M. Guizot and the Duke of Broglie, legitimists like Berryer¹⁴. But the Socialists spoke much more closely to the Emperor's heart and imagination. One cannot doubt the strong influence of Proudhon on all that thought at that time. Proudhon¹⁵ deduced his federalism from the individualist philosophy. But his formulas were precise, corrected by the violent love of this Franc-Comtois for his native province. His book *On the federative principle* retains excellent parts.

Let us not forget that Auguste Comte, who expired in 1857, had recommended in the *System of Positive Policy* the abolition of the department, the constitution of seventeen large provinces, the erection of Paris into a "western metropolis" and the emancipation from the rest of France in its relations with this oppressive capital. Finally, let us note that Frédéric Le Play, interpreter and guide of far-sighted conservatives, when he published his conclusions favorable to communal and provincial power, enjoyed the confidence of Napoleon III, as well as the esteem of contemporary scholars and philosophers; we know the value that two minds as different as possible made of him, Sainte-Beuve and Montalembert.

We cannot leave this period of the Empire without pointing out the beginnings of the southern renaissance. Mireille is from 1859, the first Almanac of Provence from 1855, the first meeting of the Félibres at Fonségugne from 1854. This group will exercise a very natural influence on the minds of many French decentralizers; but it is fair to note that the Saint-Simonian views, the researches of romantic historians, the theory of nationalities, the awakening of Germany and Italy excited by French thought, the liberal philosophy of 1848 had not had no influence either on the mind of the author¹⁶ of *Mireille et de Calendal*, who, moreover, returned a hundredfold what he had received.

II. Under the Third Republic:

1. Legislation

The war and the Commune slowed down the course of the decentralist spirit less than one might imagine. Despite the accusing legends relating to the Ligue du Midi¹⁷, the National Assembly, which barely restored peace, began discussing an almost federalist bill, the Raudot project¹⁸. The intrigues of M. Thiers prevented its complete adoption. M. Thiers "did not care," writes M. Paul Deschanel, "to increase the local franchises which, in his opinion, might have benefited his adversaries." Deceived and divided by him and his cronies, the Assembly followed him. It rejected not only the essence of the Raudot draft, but also the main provisions of Mr.

Waddington's report¹⁹ ; the prefects retained responsibility for municipal control, which was to be handed over to the departmental commission issued from the General Council. Nevertheless, the law of 1871 constituted this Permanent Commission, analogous to the "procurators of the countries" of our former provinces, representatives of the States General and of the Assembly of the communities in the interval between sessions, even more analogous to the permanent deputation of Belgium ; the same law extended to some degree the powers of the General Councils.

(Around this same date, M. Taine set to work. One cannot exaggerate the consequences of his researches on *The Origins of Contemporary France* . The principal effect of M. Taine's work on certain thoughtful minds consists perhaps being to have made them distinguish that true political authority was far from requiring the omnipotence of the State; developing the views of the master, more than one reader of M. Taine has even come to notice a sort of secret opposition and contradiction between centralization and authority.)

The purely political struggles of the first years of the Republic relegated this question of local freedoms to the background. Legitimist restoration projects and even, what is less well known, Bonapartist coups announced the extension of these freedoms. This is what put the Republicans in distrust. Nevertheless around 1876, in the southern departments, Mr. Louis-Xavier de Ricard²⁰ and his friend the great Languedoc poet Auguste Fourès²¹, who were not suspected of legitimism, imperialism or clericalism, published their first almanac of *La Lauseta* (*The Lark*) where federalist theoreticians were quoted and commented on with great consistency. Foreign publicists, but belonging to Latin nations, Mr. Pi y Margall²² , former President of the Spanish Republic, author of a curious book on Nationalities, Mr. Magalhaès Lima²³ , author of *The Iberian Federation* , various party leaders Catalanist, the poets Balaguer²⁴ and Verdaguer²⁵ , for example, participated either in this curious periodical or in other Felibrian publications. The previous year, at Avignon, three well-known provincialists, MM. de Tourtoulon²⁶ , de Berluc-Perussis²⁷ and the Marquis de Villeneuve-Esclapon²⁸ , established, with Mistral, the status of *Félibrige*. Political and religious quarrels nevertheless made it difficult for the decentralizers to get along.

After May 16 and the triumph of the 363²⁹ , "the reds of the south" thought that decentralization would finally be established after the Republican victory. They were asked for reprieves until the complete installation of the regime. But the truth is that Gambetta, like Thiers, now felt poorly supportive of local franchises. He did not believe that it was possible to govern without centralization. It is said (but is it really true?) that he threatened M. Xavier de Ricard with a council of war, on the day when the federalist theory received the slightest beginning of execution. He explained with a patriotic concern his Jacobin and Caesarean preoccupation with "holding" the country under administrative supervision. This was to follow the error of the Duke of Angoulême.

Centralization did not save Gambetta from falling. M. Jules Ferry and the "opportunists", having changed nothing in Gambetta's system on this point, were not much happier. The Radical ministry of 1884 resumed study of the half-aborted reform of 1871; M. Goblet³⁰ increased the

powers of the magistrates and the municipal councils. His plan to establish "cantonal municipalities" did not succeed and we must hope that it will not succeed. Later, around 1889, Mr. Hovelacque³¹ submitted his plan for regional organization, taken up in 1896 by MM. Cornudet³², Lanjuinais³³, Beauquier³⁴. The Boulangist tumult, faithful in this to its radical origins, did not fail to announce, through the mouth of the general's private secretary, Mr. Pierre Denis³⁵, a decentralizing and provincialist program. The moderates, returned to power, took up his program from the opposition. In 1890, the communes acquired the right to unionize. At the request of Mr. Maurice Faure³⁶, who went up to the rostrum several times to plead in favor of the reform, it was deliberated to extend to the departments the privilege of the union: which was almost admitted. This is the last stage of decentralizing legislation. She probably walked very slowly. If we can regret the excesses of precaution, we must not lose sight of the fact that she has never experienced a setback. What the Empire had taken over (for example the appointment of mayors by the councils) was gradually given back by the Republic; besides, the strictly local attributions and the importance of these assemblies in the State have never been arrested in their movement of growth.

III. Under the Third Republic:

2. the Ideas

Alongside these decentralist laws, the theory of decentralization constantly developed under the Third Republic. In addition to the already noted influences of Taine and Mistral, that of Le Play became very clear. Le Play's disciples founded their "Unions de la paix sociale", where the doctrine of the master was commented on by correspondence and by conference, their "Société d'économie sociale", their reviews *La Réforme sociale*, by MM. Delaire³⁷ and Cazajoux³⁸, and a little later, under the influence of a small number of dissidents, *La Science sociale*, by M. Demolins³⁹. More radical, in the traditional sense, the Marquis de La Tour du Pin La Charce developed analogous ideas in *L'Association Catholique*, which M. de Mun also propagated in the same circles.

On the extreme left, the socialists came there. Doubtless the influence of Proudhon had diminished in that direction; and the orthodox Marxists, such as M. Jules Guesde, if they dream of political federalism for an indefinitely distant future, posit as an indisputable fact (we will dispute the meaning of this presently when we have analyzed it) the "tendency" of the human race and wealth to unify, to integrate, to centralize; Doubtless still, Mr. Guesde and his friends declared themselves the partisans for the present hour of an economic centralization in the hands of a rigorously centralized power, too. But Mr. Bush⁴⁰, for example, did not absolutely share the sentiments of M. Guesde on this point. There is a decentralizing collectivism; and it was in particular that of Benoît Malon⁴¹. His disciples persist in it. We can see in the *La Revue socialiste* of 1893 a curious article by M. Ghislair on this subject. Mr. Georges Renard⁴² is a federalist. Finally, a large group of Proudhonian anarchists formed, the Recluses⁴³, the Kropotkines, the Jean Graves⁴³ professing a federalism sometimes exclusive of all nationalism.

This did not deter tempered minds. As early as 1891, Mr. Paul Deschanel wrote in *Le Temps* a series of articles in favor of decentralization. He brought them together under this title, four years later⁴⁵, noting in his preface that “we have come a long way since then”. This first and very circumspect campaign left aside “certain very important questions, such as the reworking of the map”. It is on this that the better ordered effort of our decentralizers has been directed for six years.

In the early months of 1892, the southern federalists resumed their agitation which had languished since 1879. They demanded the extension of communal franchises and, instead of departmental decentralization, the formation of large regions, these autonomous, at least on objects which were of interest neither to the defense of the territory nor to the security of the State. Shortly after, but without there being any connection between the two facts, the Senate rejected, at the eloquent invitation of Challemel-Lacour⁴⁶ and despite the entreaties of Bardoux⁴⁷, the university decentralization project presented by M. Bourgeois⁴⁸. Challemel-Lacour claimed to save French unity: it was said over and over again that the President of the Senate was only defending the private interests of his constituents in Aix-en-Provence, whom the project was sacrificing. This explanation became quite plausible if one remembered the old attitudes of Challemel-Lacour when, in Lyons, in the midst of the German invasion, he, commissioner of the provisional government, defended the system of communal autonomy without limits.

Three years later, moreover, the same bill of reform, superficially amended, reappeared before the Senate, was adopted there, and any group of faculties obtained the qualification of university. We must attribute the merit of this success to the strong and persevering initiative of Mr. Lavissee and some of his colleagues. But they were also supported by public opinion. Unlike what had been seen under the Empire, it was no longer only doctrinaires and cabinet politicians who discussed this principle, but all the Parisian and provincial press, the most diverse orators and lecturers. . While the conservatives of the North and the West, in their congress of Angers, on a motion of M. Urbain Guérin⁴⁹, who in the same year had taken a course in decentralizing politics at the headquarters of the Social Economy Society⁵⁰, demanded communal reorganization, the constitution of provinces, and while M. Millerand, in a speech at Troyes, dared to say : "We will go in this direction until we reach federalism", certain newspapers, mainly in the south-west, like *La Dépêche de Toulouse*, by the pen of its collaborator Mr. Louis-Xavier de Ricard, undertook the methodical exposition of the same doctrine.

It is around this moment that the direct and personal intervention of Mr. Maurice Barrès begins. In the first volumes of his *Culte du moi*, he had marked the value of the hereditary local contribution for the formation of the individual and, notably in *Un homme libre*, sketched out the theory of the “Lorraine soul”. But this time, he joined in the political action of the decentralizers. The goal of this action was to strongly unite the two federalist and nationalist programs. Undoubtedly, since we are dealing with France, these programs do one and the same thing that can only be distinguished by sophism, thoughtlessness or bad faith; in fact, however, this dishonest, or vain, or sophistical distinction had often been introduced; certain minds, born cosmopolitans, dared to take advantage of the federalist feeling, certain nationalists confused federalism with separatism, which means quite the opposite. The presentations of M. Maurice

Barrès made it felt that the federalist party was the national party, and that the national party would lose three quarters of its forces if it did not become a federalist party. He insisted on replacing administrative patriotism with geographical patriotism and replacing the image of "ideal France", dear to some rhetoricians, with the idea of a real France, that is to say composed, as in reality, of families, of communes, of provinces; all elements not contrary or divided among themselves, but varied, sympathetic and convergent.

These nuances were expressed in the first articles of M. Barrès: while he was publishing a series of studies on the invasion of foreign wage-earners into France, he was also giving his first sketch of decentralization properly so called. Shortly after, he took the direction of *La Cocarde*. *La Cocarde*, made up of the most diverse elements, was, despite everything, federalist and nationalist. They prosecuted there the Frenchmen of too recent date, these "Métèques", which make the law on our premises. They supported, although the paper hardly passed the fortifications, all the just provincial causes. Gallé and his excellent followers and disciples from Nancy, M. Beauquier⁵¹ and the popular singers of Franche-Comté were cited and defended; they sided with the Gascon and provincial municipalities in the bullfighting question. "But," some newspapers objected, "the law must be uniform and common for all parts of the territory. — Well, that's not true, M. Frederic Amouretti answered them in *La Cocarde*: the law must bend to the physical and moral varieties of the country, or rather flow from these varieties." Theory not very consistent with case law; but *La Cocarde* appealed from the present constitution to a new constitutional right. We know that *La Cocarde* and his friends subsequently got the better whims of the central power⁵².

The editorial staff of *La Cocarde* had the opportunity to apply and defend Taine's methods and teachings. In seeking the concrete form of their nationalism, its writers felt federalist; they felt provincialist and traditionalist when an attempt was made to give their federalism an interpretation at odds with the concrete reality from which it resulted. It was M. Léopold Lacour⁵³, in *Gil Blas*, and in *La Justice*, M. Clemenceau, who proposed this hardly acceptable interpretation. They also declared themselves federalists, but under three conditions:

1. that the divisions of the new federative France were unrelated to the territorial groupings prior to the Revolution;
2. that academic interests, wholly intellectual and moral, provide the data for this future division.
3. that the federation thus constituted had above all the spontaneous and voluntary character⁵⁴ of a Syndicat freely debated and accepted by individuals.

Mr. Maurice Barrès did not intervene in this discussion; but we can infer from his other articles the attitude he would have taken there. He did not reject the last of the three conditions; however, he nuanced it, admitting the importance, omitted or denied by MM. Clemenceau and Lacour, of non-individual factors and interests.

One of his collaborators supported the traditionalist thesis in its purity. He answered word for word:

1. that there is no need to deal with the old historical divisions, but rather with the "natural circumscriptions" of France (let us have these existing circumscriptions recognized by law, some of which are found to coincide with this or that ancient province, when the others deviate notably from the primitive type);

2. that the intellectual and moral interests expressed by university life are dominated by economic interests which, from the national point of view, engender the others (agriculture, industry, commerce will be precisely the humble plastic causes which will give future universities their personal physiognomy: let's not put the cart before the horse by suspending these primary causes from one of their possible effects);

3. that the will of individuals would doubtless be indispensable to the acceptance of the new divisions, but nevertheless that if these divisions were well made, that is to say by people who were exactly informed of the material and moral needs and interests involved, the adherence of those concerned would automatically result from these excellent divisions. A commission of geographers and economists, drawn from the Institute, would therefore be better suited to this than political assemblies.

It was also at La Cocarde that efforts were made to isolate and define federalism, as a political doctrine, to remove it from almost mystical influences. Everyone can adhere, it was said, to federalism: individualists and socialists, traditionalists⁵⁵ and anarchists; you can go to federalism via ⁵⁶ Comte or via Proudhon, via Tocqueville or via Le Play. Essentially, it consists of a certain regime which is found in some degree in the constitution of the United States of America and in that of the Empire of Germany, in the Helvetic pact and in the Austro-Hungarian compromise. Austria-Hungary is a parliamentary dual monarchy; Germany, a feudal empire; Switzerland,⁵⁷ "; the United States, an individualistic but religiously-trained democracy; yet these four states, so diverse, resemble each other in this precise point that they are themselves composed of autonomous territorial elements and enjoy very extensive local freedoms. Federalism is therefore essentially the doctrine of autonomy and local or at least ethnic autonomy. Its principal factor is less the will of men than their interests and their economic and historical characteristics; one can find an autonomy of this kind on the most opposed philosophical and political doctrines.

Inspired by this principle, La Cocarde willingly quoted quite diverse authorities in support of his capital claim, and in particular the great name of Proudhon, moreover unforgettable in a subject he treated like a master. M. Bernard Lazare⁵⁸ and other contributors to La Revue blanche took the opportunity to declare that the new federalists had not understood Proudhon well.

Understanding Proudhon was a privilege reserved for these gentlemen. In truth, they hardly understood that he⁵⁹. I dare say it was little. However penetrating and diverse the genius of Proudhon was, he had encountered someone infinitely more diverse and ingenious than this systematic mind: I mean Nature, playing out through centuries of history. Proudhon has defined a certain order of federation, which has perhaps never occurred until now, not even in the United States, and which perhaps will never occur; but nature has engendered multitudes of federative types, some of which have passed away, others living and prospering. These are the

types who must define federalism. "The famous Proudhon devoted several books to extolling the advantages of federalism, which moreover he understood in a very special way." bet it a Federal State and State Confederation⁶⁰, the principles and the life of these numerous real federations and confederations, Mr. Louis Le Fur⁶¹. A year before the publication of this work one would have found in La Cocarde⁶² views analogous to those of M. Le Fur.

Mr. Maurice Barrès had taken over the management of La Cocarde on September 5, 1894. It was around the same time that Mr. Paul Bourget began in Le Figaro the publication of his impressions of America: this book from overseas returned to the nationalist and federalist movement services comparable to those provided by Democracy in America to the decentralizers of the preceding age. Always preoccupied with comparing to the flourishing societies he described to us the degenerate state of his own country, M. Bourget compelled the French public to examine itself on many essential points. By his final thesis (it is important to "methodically undo the work of the Revolution"), M. Paul Bourget placed himself, among the decentralizers.

At These philosophical and political discussions resounded in Parliament. An infinitely curious and remarked speech by M. Boudenoot⁶⁴, deputy of Pas-de-Calais, had the gift of moving the ministry. An extra-parliamentary decentralization commission was set up in February 1895⁶⁵. It is true that far too many functionalists were called there; it was hard to imagine that so many bureaucrats could do great harm to the bureaucracy. In fact, the commission's initiatives were rare and modestly effective. However, it would be unfair to despise them: the report by M. de Kerjégu⁶⁶ on the role of the chambers of commerce was appreciated, for the lofty reason and the practical sense which was revealed therein, by all informed minds. As for the rest, the commission was accused of timidity even in the columns of Le Temps. It is not to the extra-parliamentary commission, but rather to the personal initiative of Mr. Louis Barthou, Minister of the Interior, that we must report the excellent project of reducing the number of prefectural councils to eighteen must be mentioned.

IV. The propaganda of these ideas

On March 6, 1895, M. Barrès and his friends abandoned La Cocarde, and the very next day, in a salon of the Grand-Hôtel, the Republican League of Decentralization was founded. We must not establish between the two facts the connections that we would readily imagine. If several editors of La Cocarde were part of the committee of the new league, some of the most important, and M. Barrès himself, abstained. The moderate element predominated there. M. de Marcère⁶⁷, a former minister and senator, had the presidency. A Newsletter was distributed, memberships solicited and obtained in the provinces; lecturers were sent from various quarters. A little later, in order not to alienate anyone, on an observation of Mr. Paul Bourget elected vice-president, the very title of the league was modified; 'Republican League' was replaced by 'National League'. This is, indeed, a purely patriotic question, and party divisions have nothing to do with it. From a clear and eloquent talk-conference by M. Jules Roche⁶⁸ made in the first

general assembly and from the various circulars sent to the departments, I extract the following wishes: "Reductions compensated by the economy of useless personnel; decentralization of public services on the basis of the region; extension of the powers of local assemblies; referendum for all important issues; freedom of association; development and emancipation of all private initiatives." Although a little vague, except on the point I have underlined, this is a pretty good program.

The various Parisian agitations, joined to the repercussions of the campaigns carried out in the South by the Felibres and their friends, had given birth in the provinces to more than one decentralizing publication: La France d'oc in Montpellier, La France federale in Bordeaux, that -this headed by M. de Peraldi, that by MM. Maffre de Baugé⁶⁹ and Paul Redonnel. In Paris, on March 15, 1895, La Nouvelle Revue published this curious anonymous article, which we soon learned was the work of M. Léon Daudet, "Paris et la Province, le malentendu", in which was summarized the present state of the question of decentralization. The article ended with an unexpected announcement: La Nouvelle Revue became the regular monitor of French provincialism. We knew that Mme Juliette Adam⁷⁰ had never hidden her sympathies for the Gironde, nor her aversion to the consular constitution emanating from Jacobinism; no one expected to see him do so generously to the Federalists. Henceforth, each issue of La Nouvelle Revue included a series of letters sent from all parts of France, dated not from the departments but from the provinces, and full of curious details. A political discussion on some general feature of the decentralizing problem marked the essential phases of the action, specifying which reforms would be most to be desired. This "chronicle of decentralization" strongly insisted on the following points:

› Decentralization is demanded by the interests of the whole of France, as much and more perhaps than by the special needs of each province; it is required for the proper functioning of central power as much and more than for the free exercise of local powers; far from injuring the true interests of Paris, she alone is capable of disengaging them. Decentralization must be distinguished from administrative simplification, which, although a good thing, is no less something else. Decentralization and federalism are perhaps not essentially different; perhaps also that these two ideas differ on this point: the decentralizers want to export certain ready-made institutions from Paris and set them up in the provinces; the federalists would like local authorities to be put in a position to create and

› Whatever label one adopts, whether federalist or decentralist, it is important to abolish the department; the department is an artificial framework, its only effects are negative; it restricts, it hinders local life, it responds to no real interest; it contradicts history, geography, mixes races, blurs the most diverse interests. It is a cog that absolutely needs to be removed. On the other hand, it is necessary to form large economic regions, with the borders that they derive from nature. It is a matter for scholars, not for politicians, to draw constituencies of this order: let them say what is, what must be will follow.

› Within the region, which subdivisions should be adopted? Anything reminiscent of the department should be discarded. Likewise, the canton, which has the same vices. Alone, or

almost alone, the commune is real, and can enjoy a personality. It is still necessary to distinguish between urban municipalities and rural municipalities. These different realities must be dealt with under separate systems. Is there another acceptable subdivision of the region? Perhaps. There are even two. The ideal would be to return to the "districts" of 1790, which correspond to the "countries" of the old regime, even in the south to the pagi of Roman Gaul. It might be quite a difficult job. It would be better to maintain, with some corrections in the drawing of their borders, the arrondissements as we have them. The arrondissements in France have an economic and physical, if not administrative, personality; what the departments and cantons lack.

Such is, very narrowly, the spirit of some of the reforms advocated in the chronicle of *La Nouvelle Revue*. Around this time the first somewhat lively oppositions took shape. Mr Joseph Reinach⁷¹ came to reproach the Federalists for causing a dangerous "awakening of the past"; in truth he opposed them, a few lines below, "the tradition of France." Good luck, we say to ourselves: awakening of the past beyond the opinions and measures of Mr. Reinach, pure traditionism on this side! M. Ferdinand Brunetière went to Nantes to give a conference to distinguish between decentralization, understood as disorganizing, and the provincial awakening. Federalists had already made this distinction. At least they had the pleasure of learning from M. Brunetière that England is an island and that our eastern frontier is well discovered. But, at the same time, the works of the Comte de Luçay⁷² (*La Décentralisation*⁷³), of M. Paul Laffitte⁷⁴ (*The Moderate Party, Letters from a Parliamentarian*) helped dispel the frivolous objections of the public mind. Considerable writers such as M. Jules Lemaître, in his study in the *Revue Bleue* on Louis Veuillot, recognized the beneficence of the local government; some had been preaching by example for a long time, applying themselves to the petty affairs of their municipal country. About Paris itself, in a conference organized by the Historical Society of Auteuil-Passy, M. Anatole France defines in touching terms the feeling of "historical and moral piety" from which emerges this particular patriotism.

Finally, Mr. Maurice Barrès brought to different points of our provinces the ideas of autonomy and freedom. In his Bordeaux lecture, *Federalism and Sanitation*, he defined his political conception as follows:

"Families of individuals, these are the communes; families of communes, that is the region; family of regions, that is the nation; a family of nations, socialist citizens, this is the federal humanity towards which we are tending by maintaining the French fatherland and by the impulse of 1789."

In Marseilles, a few months later, he showed that the emancipated communes, finally able to try out the most diverse economic and political regimes, would be veritable laboratories of sociology; one could judge rival systems there, not on their theoretical statements, but on their results⁷⁵.

Finally, in October of the same year, Mr. Maurice Barrès convened a federalist and internationalist congress in Paris. It is true that this last meeting had a limited result. Some revolutionaries at first did not agree to give its true meaning to the word "internationalism," which means the alliance between nations, not the destruction of historic nationalities. A second

ambiguity, this one quite pleasant, arose between Proudhonians on the meaning of "federalism": some, defenders of an Iberian federation or a Balkan one, thought only of unifying distinct States, instead of others, supporters of a federative France, aspired to give a distinct regime to each natural fraction of French unity... The same word was therefore taken in reverse. The memory of this equivocation will perhaps have served to clarify some thoughts. Purely moral and abstract federalism, suspended, as Novikov⁷⁶ wanted it, to the mobile caprices of minds and wills, that is to say, clinging to the wing of the cuckoo clocks and the fantasy of the clouds, like the imaginary city of Aristophanes⁷⁷, this more metaphysical than political federalism seems to give way to a land-based conception on the one hand, and on the other hand, ethnic. A small newspaper in the South-East chose these words for its motto: "La patrie, c'est le sol." (The homeland is the soil) But the fatherland is still blood. Community and differences of our soil, community and differences of our blood, this is what founds this federal spirit and this national feeling without which any decentralization would be incomprehensible.

For two years the decentralist demonstrations have emphasized these two characteristics, which resolve themselves into a third, the traditional spirit. The founders of the Société d'ethnographie nationale, and in particular Mr. Gustave Boucher⁷⁸, were not unaware of this. It is of literary and artistic tradition that they were occupied in the beautiful festivals given in the West poitevin, under the presidency of Mr. Gaston Paris⁷⁹ and Mr. André Theuriet⁸⁰; and the album which contains the history of these popular and scholarly festivities is also called *La Tradition en Poitou et Charentes*. Tradition sums up the forces of soil and blood. One keeps it even when leaving one's country, like an eternal temptation to return there: the number, the prosperity of the provincial societies in Paris, in Algeria and in Tunisia are not weak indices of the greening of the national tradition; the periodic journeys of the provincials of Paris, such as the Cigaliers, to the regions of their birthplace can also be counted among these testimonies. Even the evil that one must think of them in certain cases accentuates the importance of these manifestations. They too express that secular effort of interests, legislative texts and intellectual speculations of which we have just seen the picture: there is perhaps nothing more positive or more organic in the history of our time.

V. Les Déracinés

Undoubtedly, reason, political right, public interests conspire in favor of such thoughts. But who will make their evolution consummate? Who will make reason touching, law desirable, interest sensitive and alive? Who will be passionate about these questions? We need a Jean-Jacques in the new Social Contract !

Thus spoke one day, of the weather in La Cocarde, Mr. Maurice Barrès. It is not rash to relate to this reflection the first project of *Les Déracinés*, where the reasons favorable to decentralization are shown as living persons. His book is a fable where the moral and the story are rigorously linked. I will only dwell on the meaning it covers, on the success it has obtained. *Les Déracinés* won their author the attention of a new public, not only that public of scholars and

politicians which he had acquired, but the vast and confused crowd, cultivated but generally incurious, which is called the great public and which forms our "intellectual aristocracy". Uprooted, *Déracinés*, Uprooting, the same image, more or less modified, has passed into the language of journalism and conversation. It was in common use even before the volume appeared: in *Le Temps*, under the heading of Miscellaneous Facts, I caught its first job in the middle of last summer to announce the suicide of an unfortunate provincial incapable of adapting to the laws of the Parisian environment. The "seven in front of Paris"⁸¹, as M. Henri Fouquier⁸² calls the young Lorrainers of M. Barrès, will doubtless not all die of it (only one perishes, and by the guillotine, at the end of this first volume of the Roman national energy), but all will be affected in some way by an effect of centralization."

M. Paul Bourget has strongly summarized in *Le Figaro* this centralist antithesis, against which M. Barrès has posed the thesis of *Les Déracinés* :

"... They are intelligent, sensitive, ambitious, and they left their native land because Paris is the only field open to all initiatives and everywhere else the Frenchman is only a citizen : political citizen, because the whole - powerful governmental machine, mounted by the Jacobins and Napoleon, has its unique center here; administered from the idea, because here again is the point of intensity for all the art, all the science, all the literature of the country; administered by feeling, I would almost say, for plays, novels, collections of verse, all the works of the imagination which fashionably propagate the most recent ways of enjoying and suffering, are still being elaborated here. outside Paris, because there are no longer any provinces for a hundred years, but departmental ones . " Paris !", says their historian, "the rendezvous of men, the roundabout of humanity! It is the homeland of their wishes, the place marked out for them to fulfill their destinies..." And he adds: "Their education has suppressed their national consciousness, that is to say the feeling that there is a past of their native canton and the desire to relate to this closest past..."

They were bent early, either by circumstances, or even by their masters, to this conception. In high school, a "superior uprooted", their philosophy teacher, who looks a bit like Burdeau⁸³, only taught them an abstract homeland, an abstract morality, an abstract patriotism, and all this therefore without any connection with the natural and first environment of these young people, Lorraine. Mr. Paul Bouteiller is a Kantist. He professes both the emptiness of all beliefs and the duty to believe in duty. The sign of duty is to be universal and to be able to serve as a model for the conduct of every man, whoever he is and in whatever conditions he finds himself. These are lessons of a very heroic appearance. They teach contempt for hereditary prejudices, local customs. They free, they say. Wait. By the example of Bouteiller, the author will show us that it is not systems that are heroic, but souls. A generous morality, reduced to its own power, only allows rhetoricians to fail in the delicacies of honesty, then in its essential laws, without feeling too much remorse or discontinuing sublime grimaces. It is good preparation for hypocrisy.

The students of Bouteiller are from a time of free examination and from Lorraine, that is to say doubly examiners, critics and distrustful. Mr. Pelletan⁸⁴ somewhere complained that these young people believed in nothing: M. Barrès showed us how Bouteiller emancipated them from any firm idea. They only completed his work by emancipating themselves from duty. Kant's morality does not carry with it such evidence that it is not possible to know it without admitting it. The

seven studied, to the extent of their strength, this academic stoicism, and immediately discarded it. Their province, their race would have furnished points of support. But they were uprooted and dreamed of the universal. Paris, where they did not live isolated from each other, nevertheless gives them some anguish, a common anguish that unites them.

The most philosophical of the seven, Romerspacher, owing to particular circumstances, receives a visit from M. Taine, who takes him out for a walk. We know the pilgrimage of the master and the disciple to this plane tree which is "at the height of the eighth rung of the gate, counted from the Esplanade des Invalides". M. Bourget, who was the real Roerspacher, in the sense that it was to him that M. Taine showed his tree, told the historical anecdote in *Le Figaro*. I quote it, everyone having seen the legendary account of Mr. Maurice Barrès: In the very last years of his life, the famous writer, who knew his days were numbered, used to direct his walks towards the small square of the Invalides, to stop there for long minutes, in contemplation in front of a tree then a teenager, today very large and very tall, whose rare vigor enchanted him. It was the time when he composed his admirable *History of the origins of contemporary France*. The conclusions to which this work led him on the future of the country frightened him with a patriotism that was all the deeper the less he spoke of it. He often said, with a shake of the head which I still see: "I measure the caverns of a consummate," and when he had too continuously, too bitterly studied French error, it was a rest for his too tense thought. than the spectacle of the young and beautiful tree. "Let's go see this being in good health...", he said to me, when he met me on those days, and he dragged me towards this tiny garden where I have returned on pilgrimage how many times!...

This walk sheds light on natural philosophy in Roerspacher's mind. As there is in the human soul an entirely mechanical portion, condition and support of the other parts, and without which nothing would hold together, a portion to which all the laws of the mineral world apply, there is also in us a province vegetative which supports and therefore conditions the sensitive and the rational. It is necessary to put oneself in order with these laws of the vegetative soul if one wants to be a good animal, as one must, if one wants to be a good rationalizing animal, or human, to feel well, that is to say to feel like a healthy and complete animal. Taine's conversation reveals to Romerspacher this presence of the universe in the little world of our persons. Great subject of pride at the same time as of submission! While Romerspacher reflects on the subordination of the best individuals to rather humble conditions, his friend Sturel, whom he has taken as his confidant, is exalted like a poet and dreams of infinite action. It is he who leads the other six to the tomb of the Invalides to suck virtue from Napoleon's ashes. In the author's mind, if I interpret it accurately, François Sturel's method is not quite good here. Certainly the cult of heroes has nothing but commendable. There must be "teachers of energy". But they don't create the energy, they call it up, they make it arise within ourselves. Nothing more. We must already possess this force in a latent state. When a man clings to his soil and his natural environment, his personal resources know no bounds; what he spends, he regains and renews by a continual borrowing from the inexhaustible nature, with which he communicates incessantly. In Sturel and his friends, this renewal which is specific to the vegetative function hardly exists anymore, the channels that unite their seven human plants to

the nourishing soil are cut or bound; strangers in Paris, these young people are left to the resources of which they have made provision once and for all.

The case of Sturel is more particular, even more significant. He is not only uprooted from his native orchard; the highly symbolic influence of Ms. Astiné Aravian, a strange Oriental whom he met at the table of his pension, simultaneously Persian, Armenian, Slavic and Hellene, transplanted Sturel into the chimerical garden of cosmopolitanism. He is not only far from his country; he has become in a way its adversary. A ferment of anxiety enters his thoughts. By certain inclinations of his mind, he might one day deserve the compliment that Bouteiller would soon pay Suret-Lefort, another young uprooted friend of theirs, for having been able to free himself "from all Lorraine intonation, and, more generally, from any particularity of Lorraine". In this oblivion of Lorraine, he became the fellow citizen of all Asian rottenness. Bad way to develop his secret strengths. Curious, intelligent, Sturel, at the Invalides, An individual does not develop on his own. He needs a thousand favorable circumstances: a family, a well-defined country, an intellectual and moral atmosphere, which is finally lacking in "dissociated" and "decerebrated" France. It is not through the fault of society, as the romantic and humanitarian theoreticians of pauperism say, but, on the contrary, through the fault of a society, that the Racadots and the Mouchefrins end in crime the poor agitation of their Parisian life. .

Did those who had directed this emigration feel that they were in charge of souls? Had they seen the perilous gravity of their act? To these uprooted people they did not know how to offer a good ground for "replanting". Not knowing whether they wanted to make citizens of humanity or citizens of France, they dragged them from their well-conditioned age-old homes and paid no further attention to them, having thus labored to make denless young beasts . From their natural order, perhaps humble, but finally social, they passed to anarchy, to a deadly disorder. In these lines, and by the very whole of his thesis, Mr. Maurice Barrès satisfies the concerns that I myself had expressed about the spirit which seemed to animate his *Ennemi des lois*⁸⁵; by this book, M. Barrès had caused himself to be classed among the number of anarchists. It was an inaccurate classification. Without contradicting himself, but correcting himself, the Cult of Self theorist writes today:

"In principle, the personality must be considered as a pure accident."

In other words, there are very few people; the human soul realizes itself in the human race at very long intervals. Whether it is good or bad that this is so is not the place to discuss it. But if this is so, it is not bad for crowds to adopt a common law, an order superior to individual passions; without this condition, their effort cannot be successful and will result in too many deficits.

M. Barrès makes Rœmerspacher say, in agreement on this precise point with François Sturel, that Racadot suffered and was "degraded by the individualist and liberal milieu into which he was thrown, still confident in the social declarations of the school" . That is calling things by their name. Formerly an individualist and a Caesarean, at least for appearances, Mr. Maurice Barrès reveals his true background to us. He is, according to the definition of M. Paul Bourget, "at the

antipode of the ideas of the Revolution, without being a reactionary": in this the direct pupil of Taine and also of Renan⁸⁶ who is too often forgotten, like the t is Mr. Paul Bourget himself.

VI. Character and value of some objections

We could calculate like mathematicians, by simple analysis, which categories of people must displease the provincialist and nationalist theses exposed in *Les Déracinés* or elsewhere. It suffices to ask who benefits from the fragmentation of the nation into individuals and the omnipotence of the centralizing state.

In a disorganized nation like ours, any minority that particular circumstances or habits hold together easily becomes preponderant; for it encounters as adversaries not political units like itself, but isolated persons whom it vanquishes one by one. The anti-Semites thus explain the influence of Jewish society among us. It is remarkable that so many Israelites speak out forcefully against the spirit of *Les Déracinés*.

In the same disorganized nation, the State alone has a privilege analogous to the corporations of the past. If our political institution were stable, the privilege of state officials would be exorbitant; it is not so, because of the threats that weigh on them, the need for advancement which makes them docile not only towards their leaders, but also towards whoever can serve or serve them, that is to say to almost the entire nation. If we except the officers, who do not live from the common life, it is easy to see that all the functionaries, even the judges and the priests, have been reduced to this degree of administrative agents, that is to say of universal servants. They therefore suffer like the others from the common individualist right. A single group of functionaries must be excepted from the rule, because it has been systematically freed and forms in the state a solid and powerful state, more and more removed from all arbitrariness, having its courts, its discipline and its autonomy: it is the teaching body. The members of this body, closely linked, draw from there their influence on all the disunited French people. Influence without counterweight, since there is no other legal corporation. In a country where everyone is "uprooted", it grows roots in them, and already perennials. I find it significant that these gentlemen (except of course two or three free spirits its discipline and its autonomy: it is the teaching body. The members of this body, closely linked, draw from there their influence on all the disunited French people. Influence without counterweight, since there is no other legal corporation. In a country where everyone is "uprooted", it grows roots in them, and already perennials. I find it significant that these gentlemen (except of course two or three free spirits its discipline and its autonomy: it is the teaching body. The members of this body, closely linked, draw from there their influence on all the disunited French people. Influence without counterweight, since there is no other legal corporation. In a country where everyone is "uprooted", it grows roots in them, and already perennials. I find it significant that these gentlemen (except of course two or three free spirits⁸⁷) received *Les Déracinés* as enemies, and did not even concede the interest of the thesis or the beauty of the work.

In the same disorganized nation, which individuals are happy? Neither the mass nor the elite. The first suffers from growing weakness. The second feels, as a result of this suffering, the

feeling of the diminution of the fatherland. But there is formed between these two classes, especially in the big cities, an intermediate, floating class which finds, thanks to the breaking of all the frameworks, the freedom and the mores of the primitive forest. "Young wild beasts", calls him Mr. Barrès. It includes a fairly large number of old beasts. Original and vulgar natures at the same time, no name suits them better than that of "personal mediocre." Such was the species of wandering clerics at the end of the Middle Ages, denounced as a grave danger. Like the abbots of the 18th century, which made the Revolution. They have become ministry employees! They have discovered a soul, which they cultivate assiduously, without much profit either for themselves or for the public. Life in Paris is conducive to this culture.

One is hardly inconvenienced there, nor limited, nor weakened except by oneself. The administration is not bothersome. With few material resources, isolation is not tragic. At twenty you can allow yourself to waste away pleasantly. It is in this group of anarchic and anarchist souls that many of our aesthetes have revealed themselves. Uprooting was one of the conditions of their being. Their hostility to the Uprooted is as remarkable as that of the Jews and the academics.

Consult, in *La Revue blanche*, M. Leon Blum: he belongs to two, perhaps to three, of the classes of minds that I have just noted.

Above all, to M. Barrès, who was the theoretician of *Le Culte du moi* and who remained an individualist, I ask what becomes of the ego and the individual in his theory. The family, the commune, nothing distorts and diminishes the energy like such groupings. These are the most dangerous communities, because we love them and because they hold us back. Against the free development of the individual, it is not constraint or misery that I fear most, but the bonds of shared affection and mediocre happiness. We do not repress a desire in the face of coercion, we restrict it or cancel it in ourselves for fear of the pain it may develop around us.

M. Barrès had said: "An energetic family life, a powerful communal milieu are indispensable, even to form superior individuals." But, replies M. Blum, ordinary souls lose their characteristic differences under the influence of these absorbing media. world, including for the person concerned.

Consult M. Doumic⁸⁸ in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. He admits the thesis of *Les Déracinés*, but subject to the following reservation:

The essence of education is to tear man away from his formative environment. She must uproot him. This is the etymological meaning of the word "elevate"...

Why is this professor laughing at us. M. Barrès would only have to ask him at what moment a poplar, however high it rises, can be forced to uproot. To dream of universal monarchy and to rise to the metaphysical sphere of the city of God, Dante is none the less the exact citizen of Florence; Sophocles the Athenian and Sophocles the universal are not two opposing figures that exclude each other, but the same character. And so with Goethe in Weimar, insofar as he attained classical genius.

Napoleon himself needed strong roots to uproot us. As Taine has shown, he cut us off from our traditions; but this powerful work of uprooting would never have succeeded if his own person,

his own energies had not plunged into the depths of a very vivid past, country, family, clan. This is what Mr. Barrès has clearly indicated in his turn.

— On their island, at the end of the last century, the Bonapartes, my friends, were a family of lesser nobility, without means of action, but tenacious and ardent to maintain themselves and to increase... For Napoleon, when he had nine years old, they obtained a scholarship to the school at Brienne, and the whole family, a host of sympathetic friends accompanied him on the mole with pride, because he was going to become an officer. He knew the feeling of honor.

- Oh! said the young people of Lorraine listening to Sturel, when we were taken to school, our father, our mother were alone, on a sad evening, and we did not feel delegated to any clan, but subject to distant, ill-defined and which escaped us.

Someone said that this Napoleon of M. Barrès, so different from the "little Corporal", from the soldier of fortune, from the egalitarian and plebeian Caesar conceived by the liberals of the first third of the century, is legitimist in appearance. M. René Doumic, a royalist, I believe, but a professor, took no notice.

Let us consult, in the third place, the most interesting, the most lively, the most reasonable of our university critics, M. Émile Faguet. He did not misunderstand the meaning of the Uprooted thesis. It even adopts certain conclusions. Paris dries up and impoverishes the French sap. "We must resuscitate provincial life". We must heal the "dissociation" of France. Mr. Faguet indicates that he is a big supporter of a revival of the spirit of association. "The State," he said with admirable clarity, "the State does not supervise the individual closely enough to support him and to bring into play all his strength." But the association he desires is moral, professional association; it is, he said, apologizing for this formula,

As for the local association, or "decentralization", he has many reservations. He distinguishes three orders of decentralization: political, administrative, intellectual. He doesn't want the first. "Europe is a battlefield. Every nation is a camp. — "Political, military and financial centralization is an absolute necessity." We have created unity, centralization in Germany and Italy. Let's not be so foolish as to slack off in front of two powerful neighbors of a discipline that still makes us valuable. In which Mr. Faguet is partly right. He is right to want our military forces and national finances to remain in central power. But no federalist, however extreme, dreamed of decentralizing the administration of war, Navy or Foreign Affairs. All federalists leave these national actions to the organs of the nation. They also recognize that the central state has the power to control everything else. What they refuse him is direct and personal action in the management of interests which are not common to the whole body of the nation, but rather particular to the municipalities, to the regions.

Mr. Émile Faguet could agree to admit a certain decentralization, of this kind which he insists on describing, I don't know why, as administrative, subject to two conditions. The first was not explained in the article on Les Déracinés, but for a completely different purpose. According to Mr. Faguet, few services can be decentralized without danger. And on this point, he refers us to the speeches of M. Thiers during the Raudot project, around 1871, where this statesman knew how to make it understood that the most insignificant details of administrative centralization (and even the need to approval by the ministers and the prefects of the installation of fountain-limits in the smallest villages, yes, perfectly, until then!) affect the most lively interests of national defence. I had the curiosity to re-read these dazzling, too dazzling demonstrations by an orator who was doubtless skilful, but in bad faith. These speeches gave me a long hallucination. They

made me doubt the reality of the war of 1870 and the German victory. Because finally, if the advantages of the most finicky centralization are numerous, striking and decisive to this degree, how has our centralized empire been beaten by a mere confederation of sovereign states whose customs bond and military bond alone made the unit? If M. Thiers and M. Faguet are right, if the connection they admit is so rigorous between the military order and the civil order, it is absolutely necessary that we have been victorious. For my part, I hardly doubted it, after having read both⁸⁹ .

Here is M. Faguet's other condition: "Many things are done in Paris which could be done in the provinces better and more quickly. A certain measure of autonomy granted in this respect, I will never say to the municipality, but to the canton, to the arrondissement, to the department, to the region is among the desirable things. " Never in the commune! Remember, I urge you, this significant word, and admire it. Neither the department nor the canton have a well-marked physical and historical personality in France. The arrondissement and the region (or province) exist, but the first is often badly drawn, and our laws organize it all wrong; the second has no legal existence, and it will be very difficult to mark its borders, which are moreover very real. A single group is both natural, historical and legal; it is the commune: it is the commune that M. Faguet rejects, or that he condemns to an indefinite guardianship.

Nothing is more characteristic. Note that I clearly see the reasons which M. Faguet would allege; but I also perceive causes which move him perhaps without his knowing it. Doubtless the communes, being complete persons, true political units, are capable of as much harm as good; and to immediately and suddenly give them back full powers over themselves would be a great madness. Nevertheless, they are our first political or, if you prefer, social realities, which we must develop if we believe in the beneficence of local action.. But precisely, it does not seem that Mr. Faguet admits this beneficence. Is it not his qualities as a teacher and an academic that keep him away from it? Perhaps he still distrusts the diversity of France. Perhaps an administrative autonomy conferred on the municipalities being, that one, a real autonomy, appears to him a dangerous routing with all kinds of national divisions.

This, in my opinion, is to lack confidence in our centuries of common history; it is, moreover, to neglect the consideration of economic interests, more pressing, more powerful than anything. Imagine the left bank of the Rhône separated from the rest of France by a customs line! What would become of the coast? Where could the peasants of the coast export their oil? Where would the riverside gardeners ship their early vegetables? The fearful may say so; our country is very well made and, very diverse, it is more "one" than you might think.

But, since he feels such patriotic solicitude, M. Émile Faguet would be wise to remark how much this local spirit, which he disdains, is necessary for the prosperity of the whole nation. Without this spirit, the nation languishes itself. M. Barrès has given great examples of this in the various passages of his book which points out Germanic infiltrations in the East. On this side "resistance is weakening, he tells us, the Germanic race is replacing the autochthonous in all of eastern France". "At all times, France was a road, a path for the North emigrating to the South; she picked up these strangers to fortify herself. Today these vagabonds transform us into their likeness. Strong Lorraine communes would be excellent instruments of Gallicization. But Mr. Faguet does not

All it concedes to us is intellectual decentralization. There, no reservations. "The provincial intellectual life must be revived by all possible means. " Hey ! what means? There is only one type: to oblige all the citizens to take care of finances and the rest of the local politics, to cease unloading them on a civil servant. From these humble works they will pass, if they are capable of it or when they will have felt the desire for it, to intellectual cares. To proceed otherwise is to found branches of Paris in the provinces; it is putting up mirrors, not lighting hearths. Your intellectual decentralization, even academic, is only a word if it does not emanate from the moral and political life of the milieu in which you produce it. Would one object to the Provençal movement, born precisely in full centralization? But we would forget in this case that, until the Revolution, Provence had been a very autonomous state country: Mistral and Roumanille were born less than fifty years after the disappearance of Provençal autonomy and their own fathers had practiced and tasted this diet. Their reaction therefore came from a vivid memory and from the still fresh vestiges of freedoms known to the previous generation. They had their particularist passion in their blood. Their reaction therefore came from a vivid memory and from the still fresh vestiges of freedoms known to the previous generation. They had their particularist passion in their blood. Their reaction therefore came from a vivid memory and from the still fresh vestiges of freedoms known to the previous generation. They had their particularist passion in their blood.

Intellectual decentralization, it cannot be said too strongly, is not a beginning, but an end; it is an end, not a cause, a flower, not a root. It is born, it is not decreed in a ministry office. But we can, in truth, obtain some semblance of it. We can call phenomena of "intellectual decentralization" simple facts of moral and professional association established in the provinces, but by no means provincial. I believe them to be good and excellent, for example in the university form which has already given first-rate results. However, I do not have Mr. Émile Faguet's unreserved confidence in facts of this kind, and I would like to share my budding apprehensions with him. He is a patriot. He fears that the commune will attack the fatherland. He fears that political decentralization will sow indiscipline in our French state, which must be, like the neighboring states, a kind of camp. Well ! let him feel some fear; because all alone, without the corrective of the local association, its dear professional and moral association pierces, discovers, dismantles our border.

All our border. How could this thoughtful critic fail to observe that, by its very nature, the moral and professional bond is cosmopolitan? The religious community is cosmopolitan; see Catholicism, so often accused of ruining patriotism; see the French and English Protestants in our colonies. The financial community is cosmopolitan; I don't need to say how. The scientific community is cosmopolitan, despite the diversity of languages, which it also seeks to overcome. The strictly professional community is cosmopolitan: should we point the finger at the Workers' International! factory Girl ! The ingenuity of federalism, with M. de la Tour du Pin or with M. Barrès, consists in uniting the two orders of grouping, the territorial and the moral, in a strong and complex municipal, provincial and national organization. But I doubt that M. Faguet, scholar and professor, conceived it very distinctly. He would call himself both a patriot and a cosmopolitan, a citizen of France to the point of ruining it by centralization, and a supporter of a European city to the point of removing borders for the freest play of the spirit of association. , that I would not be surprised. Now these two conceptions happen to be absolutely contradictory; one or the other must be rejected. Whatever the sacrifice, the objections of the most

distinguished of the adversaries of decentralization are stricken with lapse. If he guards the French fatherland, we have shown how dangerous moral association was for it. If he rejects her, The objections of Messrs. Blum, Faguet and Doumic are interested in literature or politics. They are therefore less strong than that social or, to put it better, economic objection, which is drawn from the conditions of modern life; I will let Mr. Joseph Caraguel establish the formula. He did so, two years ago, in a column in the Journal , inserted in his book *La Raison passionnée*⁹⁰ , not about the *Déracinés* , but indeed about a manifestation of *félibres*:

... Civilization will not interrupt its ascent towards unity and harmony to please a few helpless vain people who fear losing their wits in the dizziness of the summits. Regional or communal, literary or political, no form of invertebration is viable, no attempt at autonomy is to be feared. Unity, already achieved in wills, is strengthened by modern conditions of social existence. After the provinces that had been dissolved by the French Revolution, it is the province that has disappeared since the railways and the telegraph. No strictly local life is, in fact, possible when no life is necessarily localized; so much so that the vitality of all of humanity resounds today in the smallest villages.

I cannot help enjoying this tone of philosophical eloquence. It is inspired by a very concrete feeling, the hatred of the *Felibres*, a hatred that is always strong and tenacious when it settles in a southern heart. For my part, I like the *félibres*, and my readers are warned. This feeling can lead me into error; but at least I warn them. This point settled, let us analyze M. Caraguel's ideas feature by feature.

There are many views on which I lack precise information, and which I would very willingly call mystical, metaphysical, ontological, although they are given to us as very positive. First of all, is Mr. Caraguel sure, positively, that civilization makes a "continuous ascent towards unity and harmony"? It may be, but the opposite may just as well be. The civilizing movement can tend, in short, to differences as probably as to resemblances. For me, I hesitate on this and not only on the point of fact, but on the point of law: should we wish that the universe be unified? I don't know exactly, any more than I know if he aspires to this unity.

Let us admit, however, or pretend to admit as a conjecture, both the aforementioned injection of Mr. Caraguel (the world is unifying) and the principle (undemonstrated) that this unification will be good. Does it follow from this that this unity or this harmony must destroy all natural varieties? A unit can be simple or synthetic. It cannot be simple unity that has a chance of being realized here, but a synthetic unity, an agreement of diverse elements. If, as we seem to want to say, this agreement constitutes real progress, the diversities must be preserved in their primitive richness, otherwise what would be gained in order and discipline would be lost on the other hand, in terms of character. ordered. The desired harmony of the world can therefore only consist of in a better order of the existing varieties, in no way in their suppression. But, if these varieties and these differences persist, how can a peaceful and spontaneous harmony of the whole harm the autonomy of the parts? It assumes it, on the contrary. That these parts can one day take advantage of all the resources at all is permissible; but that at the same time they can enjoy and dispose of their own more freely, that is hardly debatable, and the federalist or decentralizing program poses nothing more. set of resources at all, this is allowable; but that at the same time they can enjoy and dispose of their own more freely, that is hardly debatable, and the federalist or decentralizing program poses nothing more. set of resources at all, this is

allowable; but that at the same time they can enjoy and dispose of their own more freely, that is hardly debatable, and the federalist or decentralizing program poses nothing more. A very vigorous particular life has nothing, in fact, which excludes pure and numerous echoes of all the surrounding life. Long before M. Caraguel, the Leibnizian monads⁹¹ received the reverberations of the whole universe and yet lacked windows to see outside. What federalist, what particularist, what Félibre has dreamed of a closed Commune, or of a Province blocked from outside noise? M. Joseph Caraguel seems to have wanted to disfigure this thesis in order to easily disfigure it. So he made it easier to reply to him. To translate "decentralization" or "federalism" by "invertebration", isn't that an abuse of words when federalists and decentralizers have always indicated that it is.

He should have stuck to the core of his objection, the thesis of 'modern conditions of social existence', 'railways', 'telegraph' and the rest. But, there again, what easy answers! It is certain that distance and time, treated by new engines of locomotion, have changed human conditions to a considerable extent. It would however be necessary to examine if these machines are all of the same order, to produce the same effect; it would be necessary to see if the same engines produced or uniformly produce the same effects. Do you admit it? Then it is by a religious act of your faith, because, in a subject so complex and so varied, there is nothing less assured. Example: the railway and the telegraph, with their tracks and their fixed counters, have determined uniform habits; we leave and we arrive at the same times, we follow the same routes, in similar conditions. But here is cycling, which considerably alters this first state of affairs: what will it soon be like for motoring, or later for aviation?⁹² ? From these various vehicles, all of which save time and bring places closer together, spring two series of contrary uses.

Of the same order of vehicles, in different times, can also produce different results⁹³. Certain classes of the population can be rendered more homelike by the mere fact of the increasing facility of the means of communication. It suffices, for example, for a new brotherhood of brokers and intermediaries to organize themselves to take advantage of these means: the peasant who bothers to make a purchase receives such samples at home, chooses them, receives the goods themselves. and pay without stepping out of his well. M. Caraguel's formula "no strictly local life is indeed possible when no life is necessarily localized" is therefore false if we take it in a real and practical sense, that is to say by subtracting the adverb strictly, and if we keep this adverb, it has only an imaginary value, because never in the history of the world has it been applied to anything, no strictly local life having ever existed, except perhaps in Robinson's Island.

— But, it will be said, nowadays the most homely thought travels and it is incessantly visited. - Without a doubt. — It is even more visited, more traveled than before. - I agree. — It is therefore less local! — This is not a strict consequence. The discovery of navigation did not abolish the fatherland, but it made it dearer. The commerce of peoples, the bringing together of countries, under normal conditions, can only make each particular country more agreeable to its inhabitant, being increased, aided, embellished by foreign contributions. It can, in truth, also be covered with it and submerged. But it is an accident, and it can be repaired and precisely by the remedy of local politics, which subordinates these external contributions and adapts them to the conveniences of the place. It is the very condition of personal well-being and public prosperity.

And here is M. Caraguel's objection! I believe it deserves the name of prejudice. Nor did she steal the qualification of mystic. "The universe tends to unify"... " Everything works in unity": these are the secret majors of many very vicious syllogisms despite their inductive physiognomy; I advise good minds to protect themselves from it. Tendencies, movements, steps of the human race, these are abbreviated expressions to represent past facts; they do not outline the future. Who will deliver us from these itinerant principles, anthropoid causalities, bad little gods more annoying than the scholastic entities, because they result from a logical work inferior to that of the 13th century?century, providences inferior to that which discredited Bossuet!... If common usage continues to use it, you will see that there will soon be no more means of thinking.

VII. Current state of the matter

The success of the Uprooted in Paris and in the provinces could not fail to specify this feeling of a new Right, which one can call particularist, to strengthen this new party which should be called National-federal. Wherever the interests of the soil or the interests of the race are felt, one feels that there are important reforms to be carried out to give these natural forces free play. We felt this at Tarbes, the last summer during the farm credit union convention held in that city. We feel it in the regional and general assemblies of the agricultural unions and in the Society of Farmers of France. The soil, the blood, the tradition demand everywhere to exercise their necessary portion of moral influence and preponderance. In Paris itself, in the middle of the Academy, this national wish is emerging:⁹⁴ and Mistral, Mr. Gaston Boissier⁹⁵ recently spoke of a "revenge of the province". And the very precautions that the orator took testify to the idea he had of the seriousness of the subject:

We come from a country that has always had a taste for centralization in its blood. As far back as we go in our history, when we were Roman land, we are told that the inhabitants of our big cities had their eyes on the seven hills to reproduce what was done there. It was the fashion among them to build a Capitol; their booksellers displayed the last works of Pliny on their fronts as soon as they appeared, and the young people prided themselves on knowing by heart and repeating the little verses of Martial. In the 17th century, Chappelle⁹⁶ was not a little surprised, on his trip, to meet in Montpellier precious women who affected to imitate the little sweets and the bold talk of those in Paris, who discussed Alaric⁹⁷ and Moses⁹⁸ , or Clélie⁹⁹ or Cyrus¹⁰⁰, and who asked him for news "of these Gentlemen of the Academy".

This pleasant preamble is perhaps not of undeniable accuracy. Before the Roman peace, there existed a more or less federated Gaul; Gallo-Roman customs were perhaps not as strictly centralized as we are shown here; before the regime inaugurated by Louis XIV, whom his last direct descendant, the Count of Chambord, called and not without finesse the first of the Napoleons, there was a flourishing federative France whose customs and institutions extended to Burgundy, Brittany , in Provence, in Languedoc and in Béarn, until the Revolution. It is wrong to judge Montpellier, which was a small political, literary and scientific capital, by the conversation of a few caillettes. If there were times in the history of France when centralization became necessary,

What is true is that the institutions of the Empire, of the Convention, of dying Royalty, had formed among us centralizing mores and tastes. These mores and these tastes are weakening, if they are not yet undone. Mr. Boissier notes this clearly:

"It is no longer the same today; the authors realized that outside of Paris there were countries worth looking at and characters that deserve to be portrayed. But among those who set out to describe the landscapes and customs of the provinces, there are different categories. Next to the second-hand provincial, who has remained in Paris, who goes off to observe the countries he wants to talk about for a while and hastens to leave them once his harvest is done, there is the practicing provincial, who lives there, who loves them not only for the profit his works will derive from them and the new paintings he can bring back from them, but because he finds nothing better elsewhere."

Such is the slow action of mores. Ideas are quicker. In a memorable speech also delivered at the Academy a few days after that of Mr. Boissier, Mr. Paul Bourget called for the immediate reconstitution of local governments in modern France.

Thus, even in Richelieu and in front of M. Hanotaux, we note the obsolete parts of the work of the great cardinal. This is also agreed in official political circles. Opponents once criticized centralization as the unobtrusive instrument of governmental power. Today it is criticized in itself. Those who hold power realize that this excessive centralization compromises the serious interests of which they have the deposit and overwhelms them with superfluous responsibilities. It was from the Ministry of the Interior that, as we have seen, came the project relating to the abolition of sixty-eight councils of the prefecture. A government publicist, whose authority equals talent and patriotism, M. Ernest Judet¹⁰¹, declared the other day that centralization, established to increase the forces of the State, had gone against its object and had enervated these national forces; he pointed out how, in the Dreyfus affair, the State, so powerful against all private initiatives, had found itself without arms to defend its military and judicial prerogative:

An unfortunate tendency of our time consists in maintaining to annoyance the prerogatives of the State in the small details of administration which make it odious, while it is weakened at the top in what it has most. essential, moreover necessary; it is the opposite movement that will rally us, if we are wise and clear-sighted. Strip the State of its small but disagreeable privileges which are but an instrument of local tyranny in the hands of overzealous and omnipotent officials ; but let us preciousy tighten the invincible beam of forces which correspond to the higher mission of the State, which enable it to represent our collective security, our national pride, our external greatness.

In short, the very principle of the institutions of Year VIII must be changed. By giving the State a thousand importunate distractions, they have weakened it in its own work. They have made it still lose its strength by the feelings of laziness, impatience, disgust and enmity which its continuous intervention excites among the citizens. Neglecting big business and overly concerned with small ones, this centralizing state pushed France towards anarchism and detached it from any idea of a country.

To save patriotism, the country must be reformed, just as the state must be reformed to save the notion of government. The French State will be conceived not less "one," no doubt, but united according to more flexible principles, more conformable to the riches of its nature, more suitable

to our customs, and which will establish a better division of political labor. To the communes proper communal affairs, the provincials to the provinces; and that the superior organs of the nation, freed from all parasitic office, preside with more consistency and vigor over the national destiny.

Thus brought back to its normal attributions, the central power would see them immediately strengthened and developed. A France where the particular freedoms of the Cities and Provinces would be fixed and guaranteed could, following the example of several other federative nations, ensure more stability and independence to the capital organ of supreme power, guardian of Unity, depository of political traditions, trustee of the fortune of the country, preparer, director and executor of those long and vast designs by which a people is preserved and renewed, remains free and becomes powerful.

The nationalists and also those moderate, enlightened, governmental minds, so numerous today in France in the most diverse parties, are seriously considering strengthening the Executive, curbing the turbulent parliamentary agitation, bringing more order, continuity, of effective power in the higher spheres of the State. I beg them to remember that this stability they dream of, this consolidation, this development of the forces of France are only possible after a very complete and very broad decentralization. Only the solution of this first problem makes the others possible, accessible and soluble. They depend on it; they are literally subordinate to it.

Whoever wants to reorganize our nation will have to recreate its first communal and provincial elements. Who wants to realize the nationalist program must begin with an outline of federation.

Charles Maurras.

NOTES

1. Charles Brook Dupont-White, French lawyer and economist (1807-1878). A member of the Luxembourg Commission, he was John Stuart Mill's friend and translator. His daughter married the future president Sadi Carnot.

2. For the summary, see the Grand Dictionnaire Larousse, in the article CENTRALIZATION.

3. Joseph, Comte de Villèle, 1773-1854, leader of the Ultras group under the Restoration, President of the Council of Ministers from September 1822 to January 1828.

4. Jacques, Count of Corbière, 1767-1853, figure of the ultra party, Minister of the Interior of Villèle.

5. Pierre-Paul Royer-Collard, lawyer, philosopher and politician, 1763-1845. Former Girondin, former member of the Council of Five Hundred, he was appointed Minister of Education in 1815. Liberal and opponent of the ultras, he was elected to the French Academy in 1827.

6. Hercule, Count of Serre, magistrate, President of the National Assembly then Minister of Justice in the Decazes cabinet, 1776-1824. Opponent of the ultras, first a friend of Royer-Collard, he separated from them in 1822.

7. Jean-Baptiste Sylvère Gay, Viscount of Martignac, publicist, Minister of the Interior and de facto President of the Council after the departure of Villèle 1778-1832. First ultra, he then rallied to the theses of Royer Collard. Replaced by the Prince de Polignac, he voted in March 1830 against the ordinances which would bring about the fall of the Bourbons.

8. Louis-Marie de Lahaye, viscount of Cormenin, deputy from 1828 to 1846, opponent of Louis-Philippe, 1788-1868. He was one of the drafters of the first constitution of 1848.

9. Prosper Brugière, Baron de Barante, first prefect, then politician, finally historian, 1782-1866. He collected the memories of the Marquise de La Rochejaquelein which he published in 1814. Close to Royer-Collard, of whom he published a biography in 1861, figurehead of the liberal opposition under the Restoration, he supported Martignac and rallied with enthusiasm to Louis-Philippe.

10. Brochure of about sixty pages devoted to decentralization, signed by nineteen intellectuals and notables from Lorraine, which was widely distributed and commented on throughout France. But Napoleon III declared about him that he "did not want to let his policy be dictated".

11. Republican journalist who became a politician 1813-1884, member of the provisional government of September 1870, father of Camille Pelletan.

12. Best known for having ceded everything to Bismarck during the negotiations that led to the Treaty of Frankfurt, Jules Favre, 1809-1880, had risen to fame as a defense lawyer for the Italian revolutionary Orsini, the instigator of the attack on the "infernal machine from which Napoleon III escaped miraculously.

13. Étienne Vacherot, positivist philosopher, 1809-1897. Opposing the Second Empire, he became a deputy after Sedan.

14. Pierre-Antoine Berryer, lawyer and politician, 1790-1868, great figure of Catholic legitimism in the 19th century .

15. The original text incorrectly spells Proud'hon — in this paragraph, but not beyond.

16. Frederic Mistral, 1830-1914.

17. They are indeed legends, whatever one has claimed. Too many ethnic, political, economic and moral reasons require the intimate cohesion of the Pays d'Oc et d'Oil in French unity; at no time was the South separatist, at the time of the war less than ever. All the proclamations of the Ligue du Midi, as much in Marseilles as in Toulouse or Montpellier, develop this formula: "Let's go to the aid of Paris." This historical point was fixed in La Nouvelle Revue by the anonymous author of the "Chronique de la decentralization", in the number of May 15, 1895, and, in the following number, by M. Elbert, editor-in-chief of the Petit Marseilles .

18. Claude-Marie Raudot, known as Raudot-Réglois, legitimist deputy of Yonne, 1801-1879. As early as 1851, he had proposed a decentralization program to the Assembly of the Second Republic. He gave his enthusiastic support to the "Nancy Project" so much so that, in 1907, the Viscount of Vogüé who quoted him in his response to Maurice Barrès' reception speech at the French Academy, mistakenly presented him as a Lorrain from Nancy. — when he was from Avallon.

19. William Henry Waddington, archaeologist, numismatist and parliamentarian under the Third Republic, 1826-1894. Minister several times, he became President of the Council in 1879.

20. Parnassian poet, anticlerical federalist, disciple of Proudhon and "red of the South", 1843-1911.

21. Friend of the preceding, 1848-1891.

22. Francisco Pi y Margall, Catalan writer and politician, 1824-1901. Exiled to Paris in 1864, he met Proudhon there shortly before his death and became a fervent disciple. Returning to Spain, he was one of the leaders of the short-lived First Republic (1873). His work on Nationalities was translated into French in 1879 by Louis-Xavier de Ricard.

23. Portuguese journalist, born in Rio de Janeiro, 1851-1928. His work on the Iberian Federation dates from 1892.

24. Victor Balaguer, 1824-1901, is the Catalan nationalist poet from whom Mistral and the Félibrige received in Avignon, on July 30, 1867, the famous Coupo Santo .

25. Jacint Verdaguer, 1845-1902, ordained a priest in 1870, nicknamed the Prince of Catalan poets .

26. Baron Charles de Tourtoulon, 1836-1913, founded the Revue du monde latin in 1883.

27. Léon de Berluc-Pérussis, 1835-1902, pupil of Frédéric Le Play, initiator of the "Latin idea" during the 5th centenary of Petrarch, in 1874.

28. The Marquis Christian de Villeneuve-Esclapon, 1852-1931, husband of Princess Jeanne Bonaparte, chaired on February 21, 1892, in the absence of Sextius Michel, the famous meeting of the Félibrige de Paris during which Frédéric Amouretti read the Declaration of young federalist Félibres that he had written with Maurras.
29. On May 16, 1877, Mac-Mahon dismissed the government of Jules Simon and recalled the Duc de Broglie. Two days later, 363 deputies signed a petition denouncing this "coup d'etat". The Chamber will be dissolved on June 25.
30. René Goblet, 1828-1905, publicist, several times Minister, notably of Public Instruction.
31. Abel Hovelacque, 1843-1896, anthropologist, linguist, elected radical-socialist deputy of Paris in 1889.
32. Louis-Joseph Émile Cornudet des Chaumettes, 1855-1921, radical deputy of Creuse.
33. Paul-Henri de Lanjuinais, 1834-1916, monarchist deputy for Morbihan.
34. Charles Beauquier, 1833-1916, Radical MP for Besançon. In 1906, he passed the first law on the conservation of sites and monuments.
35. Former communard, anarchist and disciple of Proudhon, mentioned several times by Maurras who knew him in 1895 in La Cocarde by Maurice Barrès. Victor Nguyen devotes a long development (At the origins of French Action , Paris, Fayard, "For a history of the twentieth century", 1991, p. 678-679) to the "pre-Sorelian" influence that he was able to exert on young Maurras.
36. Maurice-Louis Faure, 1850-1919, Radical-Socialist MP for Drôme.
37. Alexis Delaire, 1836-1915, Secretary General of the Unions for Social Peace and the Social Economy Society.
38. J. Cazajoux, for many years editorial secretary of La Réforme sociale , author among other things every fortnight of chronicles provided on foreign social news.
39. Edmond Demolins, 1852-1907, pedagogue, founder of the École des Roches. He was the first editor of La Réforme sociale , before being expelled from it in 1885.
40. Paul Brousse, 1844-1912, doctor who gave his name to various hospitals. Anarchist in his youth, he then evolved towards a reformist socialism, broussisme ou possibilisme.

41. Benoît Malon, 1841-1893, Communard, labor activist, founder of the Socialist Review . He chaired the congress of Saint-Étienne in 1882 which saw the separation between Paul Brousse and Jules Guesde.

42. Successor to Benoît Malon, after the latter's death, as editor of the Socialist Review . Historian, in 1904 he founded the Society for the Study of the Revolution of 1848.

43. In this list, the article les must be understood in the singular since there is only one Kropotkin, only one Jean Grave. But the Reclus formed a large family, and it is difficult to distinguish the most famous, the geographer Élisée Reclus, 1830-1905, who was also an anarchist, vegetarian, naturist and Esperantist, from his brother the ethnologist Élie Reclus, 1827-1904 , which had a similar profile.

44. Anarchist activist, 1854-1939, comrade in arms of Élisée Reclus and of Kropotkine propagandis .

45. At Berger-Levrault.

46. Paul-Armand Challemel-Lacour, 1827-1896, professor of literature, Republican parliamentarian from 1872.

47. Agénor Bardoux, 1829-1897, Republican parliamentarian from Puy-de-Dôme, great-grandfather of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing.

48. Léon Bourgeois, many times minister since 1888, was also since 1894 president of the Ligue de l'enseignement.

49. Urbain Guérin was one of the main administrators of the Social Economy Society. He was the initiator of the Angers congress, whose invitation had been co-signed, among others, by Mistral and Amouretti, and published the report under the title "A program of decentralization" in the issue of 16 September 1892 of The Social Reform .

50. This ten-lesson course began on Saturday, November 26, 1892, with one session each week.

51. Cf. supra note 34. It should be noted that Charles Beauquier, like Émile Gallé, was a free thinker and an ardent Dreyfusard.

52. A lively campaign by M. Jean Carrère has since supported and prolonged the resistance of the South; it still lasts; the action committee set up to defend local freedoms, particularly bullfighting, became in 1896 the "Fédération des cités du Midi". This federation is divided into three leagues: the Oceanian, the Mediterranean and the Pyrenean, one encompassing the cities of western Provence and maritime Languedoc, the other Bordeaux, Dax, Mont-de-Marsan and Bayonne, the last Toulouse and Haut Languedoc.

53. Journalist and playwright, 1854-1939, best known for his commitment to feminism.

54. We encounter here for the first time this theory of the "federation of wills" which we will find under the pen of M. Émile Faguet. I would like someone to tell me how many minds per century and how many per nation have a will and, in this small number of volunteers, how many know how to will with constancy and fixity! However, it is not possible to lay the first foundations of public order on whims, on desires, on uncertain whims.

55. The original edition bears the traditionalist spelling .

56. The original edition bears the spelling *viâ* four times in italics.

57. Definition by Mr. Charles Benoît.

58. Dreyfusard journalist, anarchist and Zionist, 1865-1903, best known for his studies on anti-Semitism.

59. Here, by way of curiosity, is Proudhon's definition: "What constitutes the essence and the character of the federative contract is that in this system the contracting parties, heads of families, communes, cantons, provinces or States, bind synallagmatically and commutatively to each other; they reserve individually by forming the pact, more rights, freedom and authority than they give up. » (On the federative principle)

60. Paris, Marchal and Billard, 1896.

61. Louis-Érasme Le Fur, 1870-1943, was an eminent international law theorist. This is an early work, in this case his thesis.

62. See also, in *La Quinzaine* of September 1 and October 1 , 1896, by Charles Maurras, discussion of Proudhonian federalism and federalism stemming from the principle of nationalities.

63. Here is the conclusion of Paul Bourget's article, as quoted by J. Cazajoux in *La Réforme sociale* of March 16, 1895:

"All countries built in this way in the logic of their origins have this same deep unity, and consequently this plasticity, whatever the nature of their government. Aristocratic England is proof of this. This is a lesson we can learn from American democracy; but, to practice it, we would have to work in a direction opposite to that in which the democratic party has been marching for a hundred years. We should look for what remains of old France and attach ourselves to it with all our fibers, rediscover the province of natural and hereditary unity under the artificial and fragmented department, municipal autonomy under administrative centralization, local and fertile universities under our official and dead University, to reconstitute

the landed family by the freedom to testate, to protect work by the reestablishment of corporations, to restore to religious life its vigor and its dignity by the abolition of the budget of worship and the right to possess freely assured to religious associations, in a word , on this point as on the other, systematically undo the murderous work of the French Revolution. This is the advice which, for the impartial observer, emerges from all the remarks made about the United States. If their democracy is so lively and so strong, it is because the individual is free and powerful there in the face of a State reduced to its minimum of action. If it unites all wills in immense harmony, it is because it is truly national. It's for establishing a regime where the State centralizes in itself all the living forces of the country, and for having violently severed all historical ties between our past and our present that our Revolution has so profoundly dried up the sources of French vitality. Criticism is not new. The three most lucid analysts of contemporary France, Balzac, Le Play and Taine, starting from such different doctrines and with still more different methods, have arrived at this same conclusion. It is not without interest to note that it is also the conclusion of a trip to the country most often cited by the partisans of this Revolution. is not new. The three most lucid analysts of contemporary France, Balzac, Le Play and Taine, starting from such different doctrines and with still more different methods, have arrived at this same conclusion. It is not without interest to note that it is also the conclusion of a trip to the country most often cited by the partisans of this Revolution. is not new. The three most lucid analysts of contemporary France, Balzac, Le Play and Taine, starting from such different doctrines and with still more different methods, have arrived at this same conclusion. It is not without interest to note that it is also the conclusion of a trip to the country most often cited by the partisans of this Revolution."

64. Louis-Charles François Boudenoot, 1855-1922, was a mining engineer and a railway specialist.

65. This commission, established by a decree of February 17, 1895, was composed of sixty members appointed by the President of the Council Alexandre Ribot. It included twenty-five parliamentarians, representatives of various administrations, prefects and a few rare qualified personalities. Among these, Georges Picot, 1838-1909, author of a vast History of the States-General , wrote the commission's program of work, which appeared in the Official Journal on 28 February.

66. James de Kerjégu, 1846-1908, deputy and president of the General Council of Finistère. He had a sumptuous castle built on his Trévarez estate, work on which had begun when the commission was assembled.

67. Émile Deshayes de Marcère, 1828-1918, magistrate and republican. He will be the last of the "irremovable senators".

68. Jules Roche, 1841-1923, Minister of Commerce and Industry from 1890 to 1892.

69. Achille Maffre de Baugé, 1855-1928, poet from Marseillan, virulent federalist pamphleteer.

70. Juliette Adam, 1836-1936, feminist and republican personality, whose salon brought together many of the future leaders of the Third Republic during the Second Empire. She founded *La Nouvelle Revue* in 1879. Léon Daudet made his debut there.

71. Joseph Reinach, 1856-1921, friend of Gambatta, deputy for Basses-Alpes and emblematic figure of the Dreyfusard party.

72. Charles Héliou Marie Legendre, Count of Lucay, 1831-1905, historian and publicist.

73. Paris, Guillaumin bookstore, 1895. This is more of a useful historical and statistical compilation than a work in favor of decentralization; besides, there are many errors.

74. Publicist, author in 1897 of an essay *The Paradox of Equality*.

75. See, on the same subject, Léon Donnat, *The Experimental Policy* .

76. Probably Nicolas Ivanovitch Novikov, 1744-1818, Russian writer and polemicist. A high dignitary of Freemasonry, his sympathies for the French Revolution led Empress Catherine II to imprison him without trial. Released on the accession of Tsar Paul I , he renounced all political activity.

77. In the play of the Birds , the city of Nephelococcygia, built in the sky to taunt the Gods. Prometheus comes there to negotiate the final forfeiture of Jupiter by offering Pistheterius, the Athenian who directs the work of the bird masons, the hand of Basileia which symbolizes divine sovereignty.

78. A friend of Huysmans, Gustave Boucher responded to the *Enquête sur la Monarchie* and rallied to the royalism of Maurras.

79. Bruno Paulin Gaston Paris, 1838-1903, academician and famous medieval historian.

80. Charles-Adhémar André Theuriet, 1833-1907, man of letters, academician, known as a local writer.

81. Allusion to the Theban cycle and Aeschylus' tragedy *The Seven Against Thebes* .

82. Henry Fouquier, 1838-1901, columnist for *Le Figaro* , *Le Temps* , *Le Gaulois* ... He married a widow, Léocadie Zelewska, who happened to be the mother of Georges Feydeau, of whom he thus became the stepfather.

83. This is Auguste Burdeau, 1851-1894, a gifted orphan who started from nothing to become a professor of philosophy, then Minister of Finance, finally President of the Chamber. Dead prematurely, on the rise, Burdeau had everything to make a posthumous hero, and he had become, although rather classified on the right, the icon of the anticlerical party. A disciple of Kant, Burdeau indeed defended the idea of civic morality owing nothing to religion. It turns out that the young Burdeau had had in his philosophy class in Nancy, a certain Maurice Barrès... This one, at first very complimentary towards his former professor, gradually made him his sworn enemy in his work. "We would have preferred Canut", he wrote in *La Cocarde* in December 1894 (Burdeau was Lyonnais, and had begun his life as an apprentice). It is agreed today that the Paul Bouteiller of *Uprooted* is directly inspired by Burdeau. Was the idea first put forward by Maurras, or was it already in the air?

84. This time it is Camille Pelletan, 1846-1915, deputy of Bouches-du-Rhône, radical socialist with very pronounced anticlerical convictions.

85. See "Maurice Barrès", by Charles Maurras, *Revue encyclopédique*, 1894, page 105.

86. *Intellectual and Moral Reform of France*, Preface to *Contemporary Questions*, *Academic Discourses*, etc.

87. Shall I quote Mr. Georges Pélissier, Mr. Fonsegrive, Mr. Le Goffic?

88. René Doumic, 1860-1937, normalien and literary critic. He would be at the height of literary fame in the twentieth century, but in 1896 he was still relatively unknown.

89. Germany's strongest state, Prussia, was the best decentralized.

90. Paris, Stock, 1897.

91. Theory of matter developed by Leibniz, where mathematics and mysticism are mixed. The monads would be unalterable elementary particles. The *Monadology* was written in French, in 1714, and was not published until 1840. The sentence that inspired Maurras comes from article 7: "The Monads have no windows through which something can enter or exit. Accidents cannot detach themselves or wander outside of substances as the sensitive species of the scholastics once did. Thus, neither substance nor accident can enter a Monad from without."

92. Let's not forget that this text was published in 1898! Aviation and even the automobile were still only uncertain virtualities. Maurras will return several times to his fascination with aviation, an invention allowing man to "follow the course of the Sun".

93. These remarks were in order, they had appeared in the *Revue Encyclopédique* of December 25, 1897 when M. Jean Bourdeau instituted in the *Journal des Débats* (February 5, 1898) an analogous discussion between some theoreticians of socialism, oversimplifications. I read these pages, of such rare clarity and firmness, too late to share them with my readers.

94. Émile Pouillon, 1840-1906, Quercy novelist. Despite his Dreyfusard commitment, he would have had a certain influence on Maurras through his "local Catholicism".

95. Marie-Louis Antoine Gaston Boissier, 1823-1908, historian and epigrapher. At the time of publication of *The Idea of Decentralization*, he was permanent secretary of the French Academy.

96. Claude-Emmanuel Lhuillier, known as Chapelle, 1626-1686, libertine poet of the Grand Siècle.

97. *Alaric or Rome vanquished*, work of Georges de Scudéry, 1601-1667, brother of Madeleine.

98. Work of the bacchanalian poet Marc-Antoine Girard de Saint Amant, 1594-1661.

99. *Clélie, Roman History*, novel in ten volumes by Madeleine de Scudéry, 1607-1701.

100. *Artamène ou le Grand Cyrus*, another novel in ten volumes by Madeleine de Scudéry, published before *Clélie*.

101. Ernest Judet, 1851-1943, relentless anti-Dreyfusard, known for his violent attacks on Zola.