



Yves R. Simon and the Problem of Authority in NeoThomism

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For I agree with you that there is a natural aristocracy among men. The grounds of this are virtue and talents . . . The natural aristocracy I consider as the most precious gift of nature for the instruction, the trusts, and government of society. And indeed it would have been inconsistent in creation to have formed man for the social state, and not to have provided virtue and wisdom enough to manage the concerns of the society. May we not even say that that form of government is the best which provides the most effectually for a pure selection of these natural aristoi into the offices of government?¹

The thought of St. Thomas Aquinas, the universal doctor of the Roman Catholic Church, permeates much of contemporary Catholic discourse in the fields of metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and theology. One of the aspects of Aquinas' thought, however, that is conspicuously absent from the contemporary Catholic mind is his political writings. Certainly, there is much written about natural law and Aquinas.² However, his writings on monarchy, authority, and the nature of a community are usually shelved as being reactionary, outdated, and, at worst, dangerous.³ This has not stopped certain

¹ Thomas Jefferson to John Adams, 28 Oct. 1813.

² More recent major work on the Angelic Doctor's legal theory include John Finnis' *Aquinas: Moral, Political, and Legal Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); the collection of essays in Goyette, John, Mark Latkovic, and Richard Meyer's *St. Thomas Aquinas and the Natural Law Tradition: Contemporary Perspectives* (Washington DC: Catholic University Press, 2004); Anthony J. Lisska's *Aquinas's Theory of Natural Law: An Analytic Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); and John Rziha's *Perfecting Human Actions; St. Thomas Aquinas and Human Participation in Eternal Law* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2009).

³ Fergus Kerr in *After Aquinas: Versions of Thomism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002) proudly writes that he has "paid no attention to what Thomas Aquinas says that is now totally unacceptable", 207. The first words that John Finnis writes in his *Aquinas: Moral, Political, and Legal Theory* are "There are some serious flaws in Aquinas's thoughts about human society," 1. Perhaps the most honest work that refutes the liberal reading of Aquinas as a liberal is Shadia B. Drury. *Aquinas and Modernity The Lost Promise of Natural Law* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008). In one of the few works specifically written on the broad scope of Aquinas's thought, *The Political Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Chicago:

philosophers from attempting to redeem Aquinas by getting him to speak the language of liberalism. The first generation of Catholic philosophers genuinely to attempt this updating of St. Thomas was composed of the liberal NeoThomists led by thinkers such as Jacques Maritain, Etienne Gilson, and Yves Simon. Following the lead of these NeoThomists, a generation of Catholic political philosophers has arisen that seeks to found a “Whig Thomism” in which Aquinas is portrayed as one of the early progenitors of Enlightenment thinking.⁴ In the end, these authors, whether intentionally or not, obscure the angelic doctor’s thinking while trying to get St. Thomas to say what they want him to say. One of the key points in the history of twentieth century rupture in the Thomistic tradition is Yves R. Simon’s departure from Aquinas’ thinking on authority.

Thomistic political thought in the United States in the twentieth century has a popular narrative that flows through discourse both in and outside of the Church. This view of Thomism is often presented or implied by a now third generation of thinkers who claim to be disciples of the NeoThomists and the true guardians the Thomistic tradition. These thinkers include “New Natural Lawyers” such as John Finnis; his student, Robert George; and Germain Grisez as well as another group of middle brow scholars who disseminate what has been called by one of their progenitors, “Whig Thomism”. This group of popular writers, often calling themselves “neo-conservatives” or “evangelical Catholics,” includes such thinkers as Fr. Richard John Neuhaus, Michael Novak, George Weigel, and Robert Royal. Both groups are advocates of liberal democracy, some form of laissez faire capitalism, and a theory of rationally defined and rationally apprehensible rights that serve as the foundation for political society. These thinkers imply that they, at least on a certain level, present an authentic and honest vision of Thomistic political thought that they have inherited from the NeoThomists.

University of Chicago Press, 1963) Thomas Gilby O.P. also got caught up in the fervor of presenting Aquinas as a Whig and defending him, writing “His thought bears some points of resemblance to that of Catholic Liberalism during the first three decades of the *Risorgimento*: freedom-loving, yet with no more liking for mob-rule than for despotism,” 297. Avery Cardinal Dulles more mildly suggests that the “contemporary Thomist must not be enslaved to the letter of the Master.” “John Paul II and the Renewal of Thomism *Nova et vetera* 3 no. 3 (2005) 443-458, 456.” 456.

⁴ There are numerous references to this Whig Thomism through much of American Catholic political thought. The source of term is Michael Novak’s 1992 work *This Hemisphere of Liberty: A Philosophy of the Americas* (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute) in which Novak, draws his argument from a supposed passage from Aquinas contained in Lord Acton’s writings as well as F.A. Hayek’s *The Constitution of Liberty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011). For a rebuttal of Novak, see Kenneth Craycraft Jr.’s “Was Aquinas a Whig? St. Thomas on Regime.” *Faith and Reason* (1994) in which Craycraft points out that Novak’s reading of Acton is based on a passage from Aquinas at best paraphrased if not completely fabricated by Lord Acton.

There are three primary NeoThomists whom contemporary Catholic Whigs champion as being the authentic interpreters of St. Thomas Aquinas's political views: first and foremost, Jacques Maritain. Maritain's political writings are prolific, and their impact on the Catholic Church in the twentieth century cannot be underestimated. Influenced by Fr. Garrigou Lagrange, Maritain began as a man of the right, supporting *Action Française* and monarchy and ended up a man of the left. His work, *Integral Humanism*, was translated into Italian by Giavonni Battista Montini and greatly influenced the Second Vatican Council that Montini concluded as Paul VI. Maritain's book, *Man and the State*, was one of the defining works of Catholic liberalism in the twentieth century, which along with the work of Fr. John Courtney Murray, ushered in the new era of neo-conservatism in America after the Second Vatican Council. The second member of the liberal NeoThomist trio, Etienne Gilson, while known for his writings on the history of medieval thought and aesthetics is less known for his political philosophy; Gilson did, however, publish "1940-1950" in *Le Monde*, which condemned monarchists and Charles Maurras, the founder of *Action Française*. Gilson also worked on the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights with Maritain. The third of the liberal NeoThomists is Yves R. Simon.

“The Times They Are A Changin’”: Yves Simon and the Problem of Authority

Like his mentor Jacques Maritain, Simon was born into a liberal family—his father was an industrialist who made farming equipment—whose views shaped his life—in fact, the majority of Simon's political writings are an attempt to reconcile the principles of 1789 with Catholicism.⁵ Simon studied under Maritain at the Institut Catholique in Paris and was a frequent visitor to Jacques and Raissa Maritain's 'Cercles d'études thomistes' before coming to the United States where, like Maritain, he taught at Notre Dame and the University of Chicago. Simon wrote a number of works that specifically dealt with the issue of authority, including the posthumous *A General Theory of Authority*⁶ as well as his 1940 Aquinas Lecture, *Nature and Functions of Authority*;⁷ he also covered the issue of authority in his *Philosophy of Democratic Government*.⁸ Even more than Maritain, Yves Simon

⁵ The attempt by the neoconservative Catholics to distance American liberalism from its more violent and slightly more anti-Catholic manifestations in Europe is not made by Simon, one of their principal teachers.

⁶ (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1962).

⁷ (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1940).

⁸ (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1951).

was the product of his era, and the events in Europe surrounding the Second World War as well as the political events that antedated it, helped to solidify Simon's views.⁹ Simon wrote a number of works attacking French conservatism in particular and European conservatism in general for capitulating to fascism and Nazism, including *The Road to Vichy, 1918–1938*;¹⁰ *The March to Liberation*;¹¹ *The Ethiopian Campaign and French Political Thought*,¹² written in response to the *Manifesto of French Intellectuals for the Defense of the West* in which a number of conservative French intellectuals gave their support to Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia; and *The Community of the Free*.¹³ Yves Simon was incensed with the Francoists, Vichy Catholics, and, unlike Maritain, saw the Portuguese ruler Salazar as being in the same boat. Simon makes it clear that he sees these Catholic regimes as being modern incarnations of true and authentic Thomistic thought.¹⁴ As a result, Simon scuttles these aspects of St. Thomas' thought and even appears to undergo a crisis of faith at the beginning of World War II at the sight of so many Catholics who supported leaders like Franco and Pétain.¹⁵ Throughout his works, Simon is very explicit in attempting to place the blame for the rise of Nazism at the feet of conservatives.

Yves Simon and the Historical Attack on Authority

Reading Simon's historical writings, it is apparent that he views the major historical events of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as composing a protracted civil war between the right (consisting of monarchists, aristocrats, Nazis, fascists, Italian Fascists, Francoists and maybe some conservative liberals)¹⁶ and the left

⁹ This is one of the key points of Thomas R. Rourke's *A Conscience as Large as the World: Yves R. Simon Versus The Catholic Neoconservatives* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997).

¹⁰ Translated by James A. Corbett and George J. Mcmorrow (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1942).

¹¹ (Milwaukee: Tower, 1942).

¹² Translated by Robert Royal (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009).

¹³ Translated by Willard H. Trask (New York: Henry Holt, 1947).

¹⁴ A very helpful and honest analysis of the effect of World War II and the Vichy regime on Maritain and especially Simon's view of political Thomism can be found in John Hellman's "World War II and the Anti-Democratic Impulse in Catholicism." *Journal of Church and State*. 33 no. 3 (1991):453–471. Hellman's title is especially revealing: "Anti-Democratic" is a term that supposes that democracy is a value prior to Catholicism to which the Church must conform, not vice versa.

¹⁵ For a discussion of the anger at Thomism and conservative Thomists, especially Fr. Garrigou Lagrange, see John Hellman's "The Road to Vichy: Yves R. Simon's Lonely Fight Against Fascism." *Crisis* May 1988.

¹⁶ In *The Ethiopian Campaign and French Political Thought* Simon notes that supporters of Italian Fascism in France included "the majority of the people on the right,

(consisting of both communists and liberals). Thus, the Italian occupation of Ethiopia, the Spanish Civil War, and World War II are flare ups in this civil war, which for Simon, has its roots in France in the Dreyfus affair, the unjust trial and conviction of a Jewish French military officer who was accused of spying for Germany. This event exacerbated the tensions between conservative and liberal France as well as conservative and liberal Europe—Simon himself admitted that Dreyfus' culpability was “no more than a secondary question.”¹⁷ Thus, as the final flare up in the civil war, the most publicized tragedy of the twentieth century, the holocaust, was committed by a supposedly “conservative” political organization known as German National Socialism, who like Catholic conservatism was authoritarian and anti-Semitic. Therefore, traditional conservatism receives its death blow as the guilt for the horrors of Nazism is smeared all over the political right.

At the center of Simon's ire is the situation in Vichy France, which affected him on a deeply personal level more than any other flare up in the civil war. He wrote two books that specifically dealt with Vichy, *The March to Liberation* and *The Road To Vichy*. Living in the twenty-first century, we primarily view Vichy through the lens of Hollywood movies, which depict the French Resistance as a noble and heroic effort against an unquestionably wicked collaborationist regime, and there is a lot of truth to this depiction. However, as even the strongest critics of Vichy and Marshal Phillippe Pétain, Vichy leader, admit, the situation was much more complex than simply the case of cowardly and cruel French fascists happily welcoming in their Nazi lords.¹⁸ Many Catholics, at least initially, sided with Vichy as a form of government much more sympathetic to the Church than the Third Republic.¹⁹ What is more, “the resistance”, composed of Soviet funded communists and criminals, often used resistance and liberation as pretexts to murder their conservative enemies whether they were collaborationists or not.²⁰

For Simon, the war was not between the forces of Christian civilization and liberalism or neo-paganism; rather, it was a war between

the nationalist and conservative parties, the most important segment of the capitalist bourgeoisie . . .”, 9.

¹⁷ Simon, *The Ethiopian Campaign*, 1.

¹⁸ Charles Williams, who is not a rightist, presents an honest overview of Pétain and Vichy in *Pétain: How the Hero of France became a Convicted Traitor and Changed the Course of History*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). Print.

¹⁹ Simon admits as much himself when he writes that “among the early supporters of the Vichy government” there may have been “some mistaken patriots,” *The Road to Vichy*, 5.

²⁰ There is an entire book dedicated to the mass murders by “resistance”, member: Herbert R. Lottman's *The Purge: The Purification of French Collaborators After World War II* (New York: William and Morrow, 1986).

the forces of freedom and totalitarianism. Despite the fact that free France, Great Britain, and United States were secular liberal republics and the Soviet Union was a totalitarian Communist nightmare, Simon placed supreme confidence in the allies as the enlightened defenders of liberty.²¹ Simon repeatedly writes of the Vichy regime as being composed of traitors who were stupid, “second-class luminaries,”²² and represented only a minority of the population of France at the time.²³ Those conservatives who hoped for the return of monarchy or the emergence of a reactionary authoritarian regime were also “traitors.”²⁴ These men were traitors, according to Simon, not because they supported Germany per se.²⁵ Simon admits that many reactionaries, including Charles Maurras, founder of *Action Française*, the leading reactionary magazine, were opposed to Germany and Italian aggression for nationalistic reasons.²⁶ Simon was also well aware that the French right was bitterly anti-German, and even this Teutonophobia fueled their anti-Semitism—for example, members of *Action Française* protested the suggested appointment of Albert Einstein as a chair at the College of France because he was a Jewish agent of Germany.²⁷ What then could make conservatives “traitors”? The answer is that reactionary conservatives are traitors to liberty or freedom (and specifically against Republican France);²⁸ it is this idea of freedom which is at the core of Simon’s political thought and which represents a key to understanding the sea-change in Catholic political thought (and perhaps all of Catholic thought) in the twentieth century.

Simon makes this point clear when he writes that it does not matter what a “utopia” (i.e. a conservative vision for government) calls itself, “[n]or does it matter much whether utopia dress itself up in modern, ultra-modern, or revolutionary clothes, whether it wear the

²¹ Simon, *The March to Liberation*, 1.

²² Simon, *March*, 40.

²³ He further writes, “Whatever the success of the forces of blindness and treason, the French of 1939 and 1940 showed that they were sufficiently aware of the meaning of that war to die bravely whenever their leaders allowed them to fight.” *The March to Liberation*, 2.

²⁴ He writes, “Among the French intellectuals of the last years of the Third Republic there were undoubtedly a certain number of traitors.” *The March*, 4.

²⁵ In *The Road to Vichy*, Simon does dedicate some passages to critiquing Frenchmen who were, in fact, Nazi sympathizers.

²⁶ Simon, *Ethiopian Campaign*, 9. “no journalist denounced more vehemently than Charles Maurras the threat Italy posed on our border in the Alps and our Mediterranean coasts.”

²⁷ Samuel Osgood. *French Royalism Under the Third and Fourth Republics*. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960) 157.

²⁸ “Those old patriots profoundly detested Germany. But did they detest any less profoundly democratic and social France, republican and egalitarian France, the France of revolutionary syndicalism and the France of the Popular Front?” Simon, *March* 44.

trappings of traditionalism, conservatism, or reaction. What does matter is that utopia, by a perfectly intelligible development, gives birth to a monster which devours all liberties, personalities, and autonomies.”²⁹ The right is wrong because it is authoritarian not because it is murderous, anti-Christian, or immoral. What is odd to find in a Catholic Thomist is that the determining factor in a regime’s quality is its ability to preserve liberty.³⁰ Simon, at one point, expresses his disgust and anger with Benito Mussolini, not because he was a neo-pagan who sought to use the Church as a vehicle for his Fascism, but because he “declared that Fascism was ready to trample on the decaying carcass of the goddess of liberty: this stupid and wicked phrase was greeted with applause in all parts of the world.”³¹ Simon then gives a list of crimes of right wing authoritarian regimes including concentration camps, executions, “curfew at nine o’clock,” creating an oppressive feeling of paranoia, “an iron law hanging over suspect groups,” and “fatality attached to the blood strain . . .”³² Here, Simon gives a litany of crimes not against Christianity but against liberty. This point cannot be stressed enough: the reactionaries are wicked because they inhibit freedom.

Like Maritain and the Catholic Whigs, Simon sees society as in a state of the evolution of liberty, and “*the progress of liberty implies the decay of authority insofar as authority takes the form of a dominion of servitude.*”³³ This passage sounds like it could be found in Marx, Hegel, or any number of radical thinkers and underlies the basic sea change within the evolution of the idea of authority in St. Thomas. Simon makes a similar statement that “*the progress of liberty*” entails a substitution of “*persuasion for coercion wherever these substitutions can be reasonably realized.*”³⁴ For Simon nineteenth century liberalism was not the “golden age” because of its anarchism and because of the tremendous economic injustice of the period.³⁵ Simon, again, uses evolutionary language about the march of liberty, suggesting that this new republic will have “the design of pushing the victory of real liberty incomparably farther than liberalism ever did.”³⁶

Simon’s liberalism and evidence of the greater affinity he has with Hegel than St. Thomas Aquinas becomes crystalized in his repeated invocation of the pantheon of liberal revolutions, “certain great

²⁹ Ibid., 10.

³⁰ In *The Road to Vichy*, Simon says that the liberty is one of God’s names, 14.

³¹ Simon, *March* 33.

³² Ibid. 33-34.

³³ Simon, *Nature and Functions*, 45.

³⁴ Ibid., 45.

³⁵ Simon, *General Theory*, 94.

³⁶ Ibid., 96.

enthusiasms,”³⁷ of the past two hundred years as being the blueprint for the French resistance, the “war of liberation”;³⁸ and Free French forces, “the forces of liberty”;³⁹ and the new age of liberty that will be born after the defeat of fascism: “The consideration of the future was a source of fervor to the men who made the American and the French Revolutions, to the German patriots who chased Napoleon from their land, to the Italian revolutionaries who realized—under a form unexpected by the greater part of them—the vision of an Italy united and independent.”⁴⁰ He repeatedly invokes “history” as a personified active force that is unveiling this new age of liberty, stating that those groups “that make history are those which are animated by heroic faiths.”⁴¹ General De Gaulle, for Simon, is one of these heroic men of action whose faith in liberty will be rewarded by history.⁴² De Gaulle “has taken the side of justice” not because he is promoting a Catholic moral order or is defending the rights of the Church, but because he is promoting liberty.⁴³

If De Gaulle, the Free French united with Great Britain and later the United States and, yes, the Soviet Union, win the Second World war, a new age will arise. Discussing these matters using apocalyptic language, Simon states that in order to achieve “Liberation of the World” “we” must have “a hope as great as the world” and the “most exalting of creative visions.”⁴⁴ Again, it is not that Simon is merely and rightfully hoping for the eradication of Nazi Germany or the removal of Nazi influence over France; it is that, viewing World War II as the final show down between the right and left in their long civil war, Simon hopes for the death of authoritarian conservatism as such and the creation of a new order of liberty, which will stretch across the globe. Anticipating the emergence of the United Nations, Simon writes that this liberation of the world “should open the path to an unprecedented effort towards universal cooperation.”⁴⁵ Also, anticipating Francis Fukuyama by fifty years, Simon writes that the

³⁷ Simon, *March* 35.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁴² “In the midst of all these good arguments, perfectly irrefutable in the atmosphere of polite discussion, a handful of Frenchmen, soon rallied by general De Gaulle, declared that they would not ratify the enslavement of France and that why would settle the ‘realist’ capitulators after the victory. *This is the kind of virtue which history recompenses.*” Simon, *March*, 18-19. Simon gives further evidence that he views General De Gaulle as being at being the heir of the torch of liberty when he repeatedly notes that General De Gaulle’s army was called the *Valmy* named after village on the main road between Paris and Verdun on which the French revolutionary army stopped the invaders of the *ancient regime*.

⁴³ Simon, *General Theory*, 102.

⁴⁴ Simon, *March*, 54.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

new future will represent in both France and the world a new era of peace or end of history: "Once victory has been gained, civil war will belong to the past."⁴⁶

Monarchy: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

Despite his tarring of royalists throughout his work, there is one point at which Simon discusses royalism as a possible political form for a liberated France. Perhaps Simon's political views (and his theological views) are best incorporated by his boast of his "adherence to the French Republic, one and indivisible."⁴⁷ Simon states that he cannot be accused of natal prejudice toward monarchists because he was educated by royalists and many of his friends were royalists.⁴⁸ He nonetheless makes the emphatic statement, "I am one of those who have rejected the hypothesis of a restoration of monarchy."⁴⁹ For Simon, a liberal republic is the only possible option for France after the Second World War. This probably has more to do with the reactionary nature of much of French monarchists, their anti-Semitism, and support of Vichy during the war than with an aversion to monarchy in principle, for Simon states that he supports the idea of a constitutional monarchy in other countries: "I am a royalist in England, in Belgium, in Holland, and in the Scandinavian countries. I am a royalist wherever monarchical institutions remain a living instrument of conservation and of progress. I cannot be a royalist in France."⁵⁰ On the other hand, it is interesting that most of the monarchies listed were not Catholic, but Protestant, and all of them, at least officially, resisted Nazi Germany. It is also perhaps more important to note that all of these monarchies were, at least for their time, very liberal and have only gotten increasingly liberal over the past one hundred years, becoming de facto "Disney Land" monarchies.

For much of Catholic monarchs, especially those who have been tainted by collaboration during World War II, Simon has nothing but scorn. Simon blames the Italian king for the clergy and conservatives embrace of Fascism. He blames the German monarchists who "play the Nazi game,"⁵¹ He blames King Alfonso XIII for spending the Spanish civil war traveling "casino to casino."⁵² He concludes from this corruption, cruelty, and decadence that "the monarchical idea has

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 59.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁵² *Ibid.*

played no more than a decorative role in the great organic crisis of contemporary societies.”⁵³ Monarchy has shown itself to be corrupt, for it failed to produce a truly free and prosperous society: the only hope for the future of freedom is the appropriately named liberal democracy. In his writings, Simon is very little concerned with the rights of the Catholic Church, the promotion of the moral or divine law, or the salvation of souls. This preoccupation with temporality will define much of the Second Vatican Council’s writings on politics as well as the focus of the Church’s mission for the rest of the twentieth century and beginning of the twenty-first.

Despite his adulation for liberty, Simon wishes to maintain some authority in the post-World War II liberal world. Simon seeks to solidify the idea that men fighting for a Free France are not fighting for an anarchic utopia; rather they “want the France of tomorrow to have a strong government, a government capable of assuring the effective repression of crimes against the public weal, capable of assuring that unity of action without which there is no true social life, capable of impressing on all an effective direction towards the public good.”⁵⁴ In fact, Simon turns the tables on conservatives, arguing that it was the fault of reactionaries who preached authority but incited chaos: “Never will we forget that society in which authority breaks down is a society in which liberty is on its deathbed.”⁵⁵ During the Third Republic, “the exhaustion of authority” allowed for chaos to run amuck, and after this chaos came tyranny.⁵⁶ But why was this such a tragedy? Because this new power has been able “to destroy the liberties of the nation with the collaboration of the enemy.”⁵⁷ Simon oddly lays the blame for chaos and disorder on the authoritarian parties in France: “The adherents of these parties constantly had authority on their lips and lived in a state of perpetual rebellion. They more than anyone else contributed to the spread of the spirit of indiscipline among the French youth, that very spirit of indiscipline which they noisily blamed their adversaries for engendering.”⁵⁸ Simon is not entirely incorrect here; the *Camelots du Roi*, the youth wing of *Action Française* would often disrupt movies and the lectures of professors whom they deemed too liberal; in fact, the *Camelots du Roi* drag Leon Blum, prime minister of France, out of his car and beat him.⁵⁹

⁵³ Ibid., 62.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 91.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Simon, *General Theory*, 91.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Simon, *March*, 12.

⁵⁹ Evger Weber *Action Française: Royalism and Reaction in Twentieth Century France*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), 54.

Simon is very concerned in his historical works with diagnosing the psychological and sociological causes of Fascism, Nazism, and racism. For example, he writes, “Indeed, you have only to examine at close range the psychology of the paternalists in order to recognize that justice finds no place in the foreground of their preoccupations.⁶⁰ Rather than taking a Christian, theological approach to the evil underlying these social phenomena, Simon seeks to diagnosis authoritarian conservatism as a mental illness. Even so the critical passages from Simon help to form a torrent of abuse directed at conservatives that enable neo-conservatism to triumph over traditional conservatism in Church in the twentieth century. If it can be proven that the “old order” is responsible for one of the worst tragedies in human history, liberals can force a change and then seize power, and that is exactly what they did.

Yves Simon’s Philosophical Attack on Aristocratic Rule

In addition to his historical writings, Simon makes several statements in his philosophical works that tar conservatives with the blame for World War II and the holocaust and which, thus, nullify authoritarian conservatism as a viable political option. The idea of the aristocracy as the cultivated force of superior gentlemen draws a great deal of ire from Simon throughout his work. He refers to Vichy collaborationists as being “those ‘perfectly correct’ gentleman to whom the defeat of the French armies had entrusted, for a time, the control of French soil.”⁶¹ Throughout his works, Simon attempts to thus discredit such an aristocracy and has a particular animus against the “myths needed to represent the men designed by birth as excellently qualified for leadership.”⁶² Suggesting that such views are properly common to “primitive” societies, Simon dismisses hereditary monarchy or aristocracy.⁶³ It is clear in Simon’s political writings why: it is this aristocratic culture that led to fascism and Nazism. In *A General Theory of Authority*, Simon lays the blame “the murder of a few million innocent persons” at the feet of conservatives, implying that “well mannered gentlemen who ran the Western world at the time of Queen Victoria” created the culture that led to the holocaust.⁶⁴ Simon makes an even bolder criticism of conservatives in *The Philosophy of Democratic Government*, noting that while the “propertied

⁶⁰ Simon, *March*, 86-87.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁶² Simon, *General Theory*, 137.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 137.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 124.

class” likes to think of itself as an elite dedicated to “the disinterested service of society”⁶⁵ the “catastrophes of the twentieth century have proved instructive.”⁶⁶ Simon is implying, again, that conservatives were responsible for the holocaust. Simon continues in the same work, mentioning the Catholic conservative who briefly served as vice-chancellor under Adolf Hitler, Franz von Papen, accusing him of having “delivered” Germany to Hitler, and noting that “this will not be effaced from the pages of history.”⁶⁷ Simon continues, noting that while it is true that many conservatives, “men describable as virtuous,” were not entirely cognizant of what was going on, having been caught “in a cloud of confusion”, they still share the blame.⁶⁸ Simon then goes for the jugular: “Together with a few progressive myths, this essentially conservative myth of the upper class has been disposed of by horrid experience.”⁶⁹ Simon blames conservatives for the second world war and sees the war and the holocaust as game changers, as points at which philosophy, social order, and even theology must change.

Simon does not seek to lay only the blame for the holocaust at the feet of conservatives; this same conservatism is responsible for race based slavery. Simon further attacks the conservative aristocracy, tagging them as not just proto-Nazis or Nazi sympathizers, but as being colonialists and racists, writing that aristocrats, “identify themselves with the nation, just as the whites of Georgia, in the theory of white supremacy, are the State of Georgia.”⁷⁰ This tarring of traditional conservatives as being Nazis or White supremacists will only gain further traction as the Catholic Whigs supplant the NeoThomists. Simon qualifies himself by saying that sometimes “the feeling of paternal responsibility toward the common man, in conservative circles, is not always insincere . . .”⁷¹ and even goes so far as to say that “in certain times and places a quasi-colonial government of the many by the few may be the best arrangement or even the only conceivable one.”⁷² Nonetheless, Simon views any sort of traditional aristocratic conservatism as being essentially totalitarian and racist.

⁶⁵ Simon, *Philosophy of Democratic Government*, 93.

⁶⁶ Simon, *Philosophy*, 93.

⁶⁷ Simon, *General Theory*, 93.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁶⁹ Simon, *Philosophy*, 93.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 16.

A New Anthropology for a New World Order

Like Maritain and the Catholic Whigs, Simon is a personalist; he thus places a tremendous emphasis on human freedom and the natural goodness of humans in his works as well as the view that the center of the human person is desire or energy and not reason. Simon's primary method is to present an argument for a new kind of authority that is not tainted with Nazism and racism. It is as if he is very reluctant to make his case, but sees that despite the natural goodness of humans and their inherent right to freedom, there is a need for an authority.

Autonomy and freedom, for Simon, seem to be one of the primary ends of man: "Above all, the autonomy of the individual man, as fact of nature and as moral requirement, is comparably better expressed by the notion of a person than by that of individual."⁷³ Simon states that he sympathizes with the anger many people feel toward the notion of authority as an obstacle to truth, and this anger "is a metaphysical sentiment of great significance."⁷⁴ Simon's sympathy for *L'homme révolté* springs from his view of human nature as being impelled by some sort of vital spontaneity, and thus authority seems to conflict with "the spontaneousness which characterizes the operations of nature and life."⁷⁵ Simon further explains that it is better to act according to free choice is better than merely obeying orders, which is in harmony with St. Thomas and traditional Catholic teaching; however, he still has a strange perhaps Bergsonian attachment to "spontaneity" or "life", some sort of mysterious power or force that impels human behavior.⁷⁶ Ever the liberal, Simon even goes so far as to suggest that the conservative argument made by St. Thomas Aquinas himself for the ability of authority to guarantee peace ultimately suffocates the spontaneous life force: "Authority boasts of unique ability to assure peace: but the peace it procures is that of death."⁷⁷ Clearly, Simon is not rejecting all forms of authority; rather, he is again attacking the conservative (and Thomistic) understanding of the need for strong authority in order to bring peace. Simon's view of the importance of liberty is Romantic and Satanic in the Miltonic sense; the Franco-American philosopher even goes so far as to state that the "aversion to authority" as deriving "energy from sublime sources."⁷⁸ This sounds like a passage out of Rousseau, Victor Hugo, or William Blake. For Simon, the only natural authority is that of a parent over a child or in the case of the insane or "feeble-minded

⁷³ Simon, *General Theory*, 71.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 13.

person.”⁷⁹ For him autonomy is “the glory, the splendor of being.”⁸⁰ Liberty is “the principle of social life and its chief glory . . .”⁸¹

Authority and Freedom of Thought

Departing strongly from St. Thomas, Simon further argues that one should not privilege one group of beliefs over another: “To give any of these species a privilege is to do violence to all the others. For lack of a common assent, the only possible policy is one of abstention.”⁸² Peeling away at traditional authoritarian rule, Simon allows for a wide breadth of freedom of thought and inquiry (with the exclusion, of course, of reactionary thinking). Simon also denies the idea that the state could in any way deal with religious matters since this would “involve a lack of respect for what is most precious in truth.”⁸³ Not allowing for freedom of inquiry would, for Simon, lead to a sorry state of affairs:

We imagine a system of censorship run by men that power intoxicates. Brains are hammered by dead truths and by deadly errors, propaganda pervades scholarly work, rewritten syllabi leave out the really embarrassing questions, social pressure substitutes for certainty and probability, the call of the hero is silenced by decree, academic life, at all levels, is defiled by informing and related practices. Where the loftier kind of truth is supposed to be served, fraud and deceit prevail.⁸⁴

This passage is extremely radical and certainly not Thomistic. For Aquinas, as we will see, a strong authority is needed to ensure order, virtue, and to direct souls to heaven. How then, for Simon, can there be order in society? Simon proposes a odd solution. Drawing from Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, and, strangely, Aristotle’s notion of *automaton*, Simon suggests that in a diverse “market place of ideas” the truth will win and things will automatically order themselves without any sort of top down aristocratic rule: “In spontaneity so understood, *things take care of themselves*, and a desirable result is attained just by allowing a plurality of causes to act independently of any plan. An example would be the way truth takes care of itself in the competition of the market . . .”⁸⁵ This radical idea that truth will win in the end and society will naturally order itself is entirely contrary to St. Thomas’ thinking. Simon is deeply sympathetic with the

⁷⁹ Simon, *Nature and Functions*, 13.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁸¹ Simon, *General Theory* 92.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 111.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 127.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 127.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 116.

radical tradition, but he does not dismiss any authority whatsoever; there still must be some rule in society. It is important to note, however, that, in one of the few times in his entire corpus, Simon calls for suppression of freedom of inquiry if it is reactionary thought that is being perused: “Indeed, if society wants to protect innocent life effectively, it must be concerned not only with external behavior, but also with the thoughts of men on various levels, the deepest ones not being excluded.”⁸⁶ While he strongly supports freedom of religion, Simon wishes to censor any sort of reactionary thought.

A New Aristocracy of the Free

Despite his attack on conservative aristocracy, Simon does present his own version of a liberal aristocracy in his work. Simon maintains that direct government “by majority vote, insofar as it evidences indifference to rule by the better ones, suffices to show that he communication of excellence is not an essential function of authority.”⁸⁷ The people thus do not need to be made better by any authority; Simon further rules out any natural hierarchy: “No matter how important it may be, the paternal function of authority is never essential, for what makes it necessary is not any feature of an essence, but always the absence of some perfection.”⁸⁸ However, Simon writes that “when power is in the hands of the best, the expressions of higher knowledge, greater experience, and loftier dedication come to exist in the daily actions of all of us.”⁸⁹ Simon thus has no problem with a certain type of aristocracy; his liberalization of Aquinas’ thought is at once subtle and profound. There is no rule of blood or paternalism or natural rule. However, some people in society may make themselves proper rulers through education and moral quality. Simon seems to be running on a Lockean notion that all men and women are born with a “blank slate.” The liberal ruler, for Simon, must also have a “good will” and should be someone who “wants to do the thing the common good demands, actually knows what that thing is and does it.”⁹⁰ This leader is Simon’s “witness” and “over and above whatever is done by example, love, and friendship, the communication of excellence follows a way to proper authority, for the greater excellence of the able leader consists in his adequate relations to the common good, and it precisely this relation which is communicated in the act

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 124.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 136.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 133.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 147.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 147.

of taking his orders.”⁹¹ So there is some form of ruler who obtains his or her status through some sort of excellence, and there is a need for others who do not have this excellence to obey the ruler to a limited degree.

Simon and the End of the State

In the end, the primary function of authority for Simon is to manage, in a limited fashion, activity in the state. Authority is needed “because it is desirable that particular goods should be taken care of by particular agencies. Some of these agencies are defined by their functions, other are constituted by subjects of various kinds.”⁹² There must be project managers and the like to direct certain human activities. Very important to understanding the change in Catholic political thought is Simon’s emphasis on the fact that this authority must make “rules expressing the requirements of the common good considered materially.”⁹³ For Simon, there is “essential function” of authority in “an ideal community” “except with regard to the unity of the common action when there exists a plurality of genuine means.”⁹⁴ He repeats this point in *Nature and Functions of Authority*: “the essential function of authority . . . [is] . . . to assure the unity of action of a united multitude.”⁹⁵ Simon explains that, since a democratic community usually cannot come to a conclusion on its own, authority is needed, “and the unity of action which is supposed to be required by the pursuit of the common good will be ceaselessly jeopardized unless all members of the community agree to follow one prudential decision and only one—which is to submit themselves to some authority.”⁹⁶ Despite Simon’s strong emphasis on the need for radical freedom, even “An ideally enlightened and virtuous community needs authority to unify its action.”⁹⁷ He repeats this point in *Nature and Functions*, arguing that even if “the development of social sciences ever reaches a state of perfect achievement,” there will still need to authority “to maintain the unity of society in its common action.”⁹⁸

Another branch in Simon’s argument is the idea that authority primarily serves the purpose of protecting the freedom of individuals: “It is the excellence of autonomy which vindicates the particularity

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 145.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 72.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 51-52.

⁹⁵ 17.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁹⁷ Simon, *General Theory*, 50.

⁹⁸ Simon, *Nature and Function*, 33.

of the subject and whatever forms of authority are needed for the preservation of his particularity. Here familiar contrasts are transcended, authority and autonomy no longer conflict with each other and no longer restrict each other. They cause and guaranty one another.”⁹⁹ This passage marks a significant departure from Thomism and a traditional Catholic understanding of authority. There must be some authority in a community, but the goal of this authority is not to make men and women better or lead them to heaven; rather, it is to direct and unify their practical activity toward material ends.

Simon’s idea of authority as being an essential aspect of organizing action runs tangentially to Maritain’s notion that the end of society is cooperation; Simon states, “The more effectively a society be united in its common action, the more perfect, happy, and free, this society will be.”¹⁰⁰ In a complete and total rejection of the Thomistic notion of the common good, Simon writes that a society unified in common action will be happy and free. Simon restates this view in his concluding remarks to *Nature and Functions of Authority*, laying out two principles for politics: the Principle of Authority and the Principle of Autonomy. In what, upon first glance, appears to be the traditional Catholic argument for subsidiary, Simon basically argues that whenever a task can be done by an individual or a more localized group, then it should be done by that group (Principle of Autonomy); however, “*Wherever the welfare of a community requires a common action, the unity of that common action must be assured by the higher organs of that community*” (Principle of Authority).¹⁰¹ Let us remember that, for Simon, as for Maritain, the community is united in the action of material and temporal interest as well as vague, liberal idea of virtue or fellow feeling, not the salvation of souls as St. Thomas taught and Pope Leo XIII ordered, and the ultimate goal for Simon as it was for Marx, Hegel, and the radical Romantics is liberty.

Aquinas After All: the Thomism Leo Intended

In 1879, His Holiness, Pope Leo XIII called for return to Thomism in his encyclical, *Aeterni Patris*. Many scholars present the encyclical as the *Magna Carta* for Thomism in the twentieth century, and they are right to do so. The only problem is that the same scholars almost always depict Jacques Maritain, Yves R. Simon, and Etienne

⁹⁹ Simon, *General Theory*, 79.

¹⁰⁰ Simon, *Nature and Functions*, 46.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 47.

Gilson fulfilling Leo's request of presenting a true Thomism.¹⁰² Unfortunately, at least in regard to the notions of authority and liberty, they did the exact opposite. When Pope Leo orders that the revival of St. Thomas be faithful to his thought, he specifically mentions Aquinas' theory of liberty and authority among the other basic tenants of Thomistic political thought:

For the teachings of Thomas on the true meaning of liberty, which at this time is running into license on the divine origin of all authority, on laws and their force, on the paternal and just rule of princes, on obedience to the higher powers, on mutual charity one towards another—on all of these and kindred subjects have very great and invincible force to overturn those principles of the new order which are well known to be dangerous to the peaceful order of things and to public safety.¹⁰³

A true Thomism will thus be faithful to Aquinas' vision of authority and liberty. However, Yves Simon radically departs from Aquinas' vision of authority; in fact, upon an examination of the Angelic Doctor's thought, it is apparent that what Simon rejects, when he rejects traditional conservatism, is Thomism.

Despite the ebb and flow of various aspects of Aquinas' thought, he presents a consistent vision, throughout his works, of how human society should be structured and what the role of liberty and authority should be in a human society. The basis of Aquinas' vision is the traditional conservative vision, present worldwide in all "pre-modern" societies; human society is divided into two classes: the rulers and the ruled. Those who are innately superior to others have an obligation to guide firmly those in their charge toward their end in heaven. The Church is the ultimate authority, for Aquinas, and the ruling class must confirm to the spiritual directives of the ecclesial monarchy and aristocracy. Aquinas permits and interior freedom, but because he recognizes the danger to souls of political and religious ideas, he does not allow for a great deal of freedom in the public square.

For Aquinas, human society is divided into two or perhaps three classes. There are those who are meant to rule, and those who are to be ruled. Aquinas makes this point in the *Summa Contra Gentiles* when he writes that among men there is a natural order of rule and "[t]hose of superior intellect are the natural rulers while those who are less intelligent but have stronger bodies seem to have been made by nature to serve."¹⁰⁴ Aquinas then quotes Aristotle, but he

¹⁰² John Hittinger writes, "Simon, like Maritain, sought to work out the implications of the renewal of Leo XIII, especially in recognizing the importance of liberty and justice as animating ideals of political order." "The Achievement of Yves R. Simon," *Crisis* January 1996.

¹⁰³ (29).

¹⁰⁴ *SCG* 3, ch. 81.

is not merely quoting him; he seems to be making this statement as a matter of fact. The Angelic Doctor says something very similar in *De Regno* when he describes aristocracy as being “noble governance, or governance by noble men, who for this reason are called the *Optimates*.”¹⁰⁵ Here Aquinas quotes Cicero, who was no monarchist, but nonetheless, like the American Founding Fathers, understood that everyone is by no means equal in quality and ability. For Aquinas, the entire universe is graded according to a hierarchy; it is interesting to read the passages in which he discusses hierarchy among humans; he presents the sense that he is merely stating a commonsensical fact that everyone knows but is using quotes from classical authors to make an authoritative statement. The only point at which he seems to differ in his view of hierarchy is when he suggests that there may be three classes of men in his discussion of the hierarchies and orders of angels in the *Summa Theologica*: “And so in every city three orders of men are found—some who are the highest, the nobles, others who are the lowest, the common people, and others in the middle, the respectable people.”¹⁰⁶ This vision of a mountainous landscape of human society is radically different from Simon’s own vision of leaders elected from the masses who have individual virtues and talents. For Aquinas the grades of order are firmer and more definite.

The guidance offered by the ruling class would be just that: rule. It would not be “witnessing” or gently guiding while, at the same time, giving the maximum amount of freedom. In Question 96 of the *Summa*, Aquinas writes that in the state of innocence prior to the fall of Adam and Eve, there still would be rule or leadership in a community. This rule would be a “kind of dominion” in which a greater man would “direct” another man “to his own good or to the good of the community.”¹⁰⁷ The language here is one of rule not simply of being a guide. This idea of authoritarian rule is echoed in St. Thomas’ understanding of law. When discussing eternal law, Aquinas presents a sketch of the hierarchical chain of command: “Wherefore we observe the same in all those who govern, so that the plan of government is derived by secondary governors from the governor in chief; thus the plan of what is to be done in a state flows from the king’s command to his inferior administrators.”¹⁰⁸ This idea of the obligation of aristocrats and monarchs to guide is reflected in the purpose of law, for Aquinas, which is to *make men good*.¹⁰⁹ Expressing similar sentiments in *De Regno*, Aquinas

¹⁰⁵ *DR* 1 ch. 1.

¹⁰⁶ *ST* I-I, q. 108, a. 2.

¹⁰⁷ *ST* I-I, q. 96, a. 4.

¹⁰⁸ *ST* I-II, q. 93, a. 4.

¹⁰⁹ *ST* I-II, q. 92 a. 1.

writes that the idea of the king *ruling* as opposed to suggesting on Simon's witnessing is contained in the very title of king: "The therefore government belongs to all kings (the very name *rex* is derived from the fact they direct the government)..."¹¹⁰ Because the majority of people are defective in character, there is a need for them to be ruled by those who excel in virtue, that is, the ruling aristocracy. However, Aquinas does not long, like Nietzsche, for a return to a cruel pagan world. The Christian aristocrat is guided by the Church whose concern is the salvation of all.

Above this hierarchical human society is the Church, which is ruled in an aristocratic and monarchic manner. Aquinas makes it abundantly clear, throughout all of his works, that pertaining to moral and spiritual issues, the Church has supreme authority and should have a direct influence upon the state. In his *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, Aquinas writes that both secular and spiritual power derive their power from God, and "as a result, secular power is subject to spiritual power insofar as God so disposes, i.e., in those things pertaining to the salvation of souls. In such matters, one should obey the secular rather than the spiritual powers."¹¹¹ Aquinas does not hold that Church has direct control over "those things which pertain to civic welfare," and one should follow the secular rather than spiritual authority.¹¹² The pope, however, for Aquinas, has supreme authority of "both powers" and thus should be obeyed in all matters.¹¹³ Upon first glance, this passage may seem confusing: it would seem that perhaps Aquinas is calling for a separation of Church and state. However, a closer examination reveals otherwise. When things pertain both to the salvation of souls and civic welfare, then obviously the Church would be the prime authority. Aquinas makes a similar point about the pope in *De Regno*: "Thus, in order that spiritual things might be distinguished from earthly things, the ministry of this kingdom has been entrusted not to earthly kings but to priest, and most to the chief priest, the successor of St. Peter, the Vicar of Christ, the Roman Pontiff. To all the kings of the Christian People are to be subjected as to our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. For those to whom pertains the care intermediate ends should be subject to him to whom pertains the care of the ultimate end, be directed by him."¹¹⁴ The Church is the supreme guide over the welfare of Christendom, and any threat to souls should be, if possible, eliminated from society according to Aquinas.

¹¹⁰ *DR* 2, ch. 2.

¹¹¹ *CS*, 2.44. a. 4.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *DR* 2, ch. 3.

Aquinas allowed for a limited amount of freedom, but, unlike Simon, the freedom openly to profess ideas in an intellectual “market place” is an idea, that for Aquinas, is dangerous in the worst way. The punishment for heresy, according to Aquinas is, of course, warning and then torture.¹¹⁵ What is more, if possible, the “rites of . . . unbelievers that have no truth in them are not to be tolerated unless to avoid some evil such as the avoidance of scandal or discord which might arise or interference with the salvation of those who if they are tolerated will gradually be converted to the faith.”¹¹⁶ The reason why Aquinas placed so great a limit on freedom is because he believed the stakes were so high. Since the goal of human life is not just temporal prosperity and happiness for Aquinas but rather eternal salvation, allowing freedom for its own sake or wagering souls on the crap shoot of the “market place of ideas” could jeopardize the salvation of souls. Since on issues of authority and liberty, Simon departs from Aquinas, it would be inaccurate to label Yves R. Simon a true NeoThomist in his political views.

Conclusion: There and Back Again

In the end, from a historical perspective, Yves R. Simon’s hope for a free democratic society after the Second World War, oddly, for a while, bore fruit. Despite recent gains by the far right in European elections, traditional authoritarian conservatism has been completely eradicated by the narrative of WW2 developed by the New Left and neo-conservatism in the 1960s and 70s. Simon’s beloved liberty, however, has won victory after victory in every aspect of human life in the West. No one would doubt that until the emergence of the new security state in the United States and Europe after 9/11, there was a tremendous amount of political freedom in the West. Additionally, as the sexual revolution consolidates its gains and pushes forward into new territory, and the license is granted to distribute any sort of media and every sort of perverse behavior is normalized and promoted it is now clear that, in many ways, people are free to do whatever they want. On the other hand, it would be difficult to say that this society, although apathetic and domesticated, is truly more ordered and that truth has won out in the “market place of ideas.” From a Catholic perspective, Simon’s hope for virtuous society ruled by moderate liberal authority has been an unquestionable disaster, and there is no need to narrate the history of the collapse of Christian culture or the slow retreat of the Church from Western political

¹¹⁵ *ST* II-II, q. 11, a. 3.

¹¹⁶ *ST* II-II, q. 10, a. 11.

life since the end of World War II. Finally, from a philosophical and, more specifically, a Thomistic perspective, Simon's ideas on authority and liberty are so radically opposed to those of St. Thomas that it would be difficult to say that Simon is a Thomist in his political thinking.

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