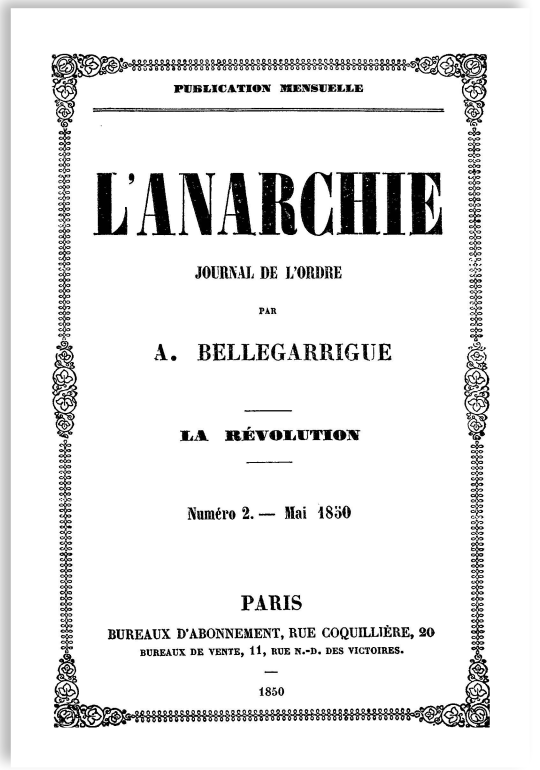

PUBLICATION MENSUELLE

L'ANARCHIE

JOURNAL DE L'ORDRE

PAR

A. BELLEGARRIGUE

LA RÉVOLUTION

Numéro 2. — Mai 1850

PARIS

BUREAUX D'ABONNEMENT, RUE COQUILLIÈRE, 20

BUREAUX DE VENTE, 11, RUE N.-D. DES VICTOIRES.

1850

THE REVOLUTION

THE ELECTORAL LAW

TO THE POINT! TO ACTION!!

BY

ANSELME BELLEGARRIGUE

Anarchy A Journal of Order

Anselme Bellegarrigue

Issue Two

Foreward

The editor of Anarchy, tackling head-on a word which the politicians have used to intimidate the population and hold it for ransom, has proposed two things:

First, to prove that order is a popular and anti-governmental element. The best argument that can be furnished in support of this thesis is that the monarchist papers openly greet the civil war as a Providence.

Second, to establish that the Revolution is purely and simply a matter of business. The indifference and political skepticism to which the people abandon themselves more and more, the disgust that they show for the quibbles and the contempt they profess for the men who want to command them, come to corroborate that opinion and show that the editor of Anarchy is in agreement with public sentiment.

The royalist parties being historically and materially ruined, it is not necessary to combat them. What it is important to destroy is the pretension of the new parties who, under the pretext of burying royalty, wish to inherit its power. Anarchy has then to unmask the revolutionaries, for the benefit of the Revolution.

The old journalism is on its way out, hated by the interests that it has compromised, loaded with curses by the people, about whom it has understood nothing, damned by the civilization that it has fouled.

The old journalism understands nothing of finance, nor of industry, nor of commerce, nor practical philosophy; as the positive sciences are established, its dull ignorance is revealed and, in a few months, it will disappear in its own shame.

When the fictions are overwhelmed by the facts, the controversialists no longer have anything to say.

THE REVOLUTION

I

In theory, the Revolution is the development of well-being.

In practice, it has only been the extension of malaise.

The Revolution is supposed to enrich everyone: that is the idea.

The Revolution has ruined everyone: that is the fact.

Do you know why the revolutionary fact finds itself so strongly in dissonance with the idea?

Nothing is more simple: in theory, the revolution should make itself, and each social interest should furnish to it its part of the action; in practice, the Revolution has been made by a handful of individuals and submitted to the authority of a group of rhetoricians.

The essential genius of the Revolution is the acquisition of wealth; the dominant instinct of the revolutionaries is the hatred of riches, and this is precisely why, by becoming wealthy, the revolutionaries cease to be revolutionary. While each seeks to enrich himself by labor and industry, while everyone loudly demands the calm which multiplies transactions and constantly displaces wealth by mobilizing and developing it; while, in that way, the true Revolution, that of individual needs and interests, struggles with vigor against the nuisances and barriers of the tyrannical regulations of the governments, the revolutionaries arrive, a fateful tribe who, to satisfy their sole, sordid desire—to offer themselves as replacements in power for men already pushed aside by the force of things—halt the general advance, suspend the solemn manifestation of the public interests, paralyze the Revolution, complicate the legislative details which the social facts seek to suppress, and consolidate the governmental mastery that business was in the process of subjugating.

There are, in truth, no worse counter-revolutionaries than the revolutionaries; for there are no worse citizens than the envious.

This is not the place to examine in detail the period of ambition between 1789 and 1848. I have neither enough time nor space to give myself over to that review, from which it would follow, as it results from faits accomplis, that the European Revolution has been halted and the European governments consolidated by the revolutionary doctrinaires, men of the most sinister sort that ever existed. I will recount someday the history of those sixty years, and you will be surprised to see to what dark joke the western world has owed more than a half-century of ruinous troubles and bloody mystifications.

For the moment, limited by contemporary history, I will examine the event of 1848, which I would much less than a Revolution, since, from my point of

view, the Revolution must be the ruin not just of a government, but of government as such, and since the evolution of 1848 has only been the consolidation of what it was a question of destroying, and which would indeed be destroyed today, if the movement of February 24 had not taken place. I would not, however, go so far as to say that that movement, accepted by all the citizens, would not have been able to turn to the profit of the Revolution; far from arguing that, I will strive on the contrary to demonstrate that it would have obliged the leaders of that movement to convert its governmental character into a character that was revolutionary, industrial or anarchic, which is all one.

II

In the last years of the reign of Louis-Philippe, the Revolution, — and by this word I mean the development of interests, — had so undermined the government that it split on all sides, and through its numerous fissures, badly repaired with the aid of the emergency laws, was introduced in continuous jets the free flood that should have carried it away.

Education felt itself restricted by academic regulation.

Worship balked under the yoke of the state.

Justice was ashamed of its contacts with politics.

Commerce and industry, tired of governmental supervision, already sought the means of freeing themselves from the routine of regulations and from the financial monopoly.

The arts and letters protested against a tyrannical protection which granted subsidies to favor and incapacity, while preventing true merit from producing itself.

And, in conjunction with all these other elements of public life, agriculture, their common mother, demanded a relief which could only be obtained by the suppression of various sections of the protectorate, and of the budgets allocated to that protectorate.

The manifestation of public needs has rendered the abuses of the tutelage so prominent; the social eddies caused by the administrative dikes were made so strong; the floating existences that the regulatory restrictions had created formed so formidable a logjam, that M. Guizot, to avoid an overflow, had been forced to buy, not only the parliamentary riverbed, but also and especially the source of that political river which carried the governmental ship. The minister of Louis-Philippe purchased the voter himself: official France was his, from the censitaire to the legislator, from the base to the summit.

Having reached this ultimate point of political appropriation, the government found itself cornered; the Revolution should necessarily have made it spit it all back up; I mean that the flood of interests should have submerged

and overwhelmed it; there was no escape for it in new encroachments: everything was taken, everything except the social nation, the real France, the industrial ascendancy, the appetite for comfort—in a word, the Revolution.

Now that unassailable and unconquerable adversary, which the government finally found itself facing, that natural enemy which pressed it from all sides, the Revolution, has never had,—this must be well understood,—and can never have the name of a man.

It was called Mirabeau, it protested.

It was called Danton, it was indignant.

It was called Marat, it trembled.

It was called Robespierre, it roared.

In our time, it has been given the names of Ledru-Rollin, of Louis Blanc, and of Raspail. You see what it has done about that.

Bad luck to the man who presumes to make Revolution; for the Revolution is the people, and whoever has the audacity to try to personify the people commits the greatest assault that history has ever witnessed!

The Revolution is the flux of interests: no one can represent the interests; they are represented by themselves; the strength and intensity of their persistent and calm expression is the only revolutionary force that is possible, or even thinkable. Nothing is more pathetic, nothing is more ruinous than to see in the assemblies, in journalism, or in the street a few individuals boast of representing the interests of the people, and thus confining the Revolution within a radius of a few square feet. Interest is a notion that springs from the needs, the taste and the aptitudes of each. Thus it is a purely personal act that rejects all delegation. No one is capable of realizing any interest but their own. When a man appears who says to another man, "I am going to do your business," it is clear that from the political or unguaranteed perspective, this businessman will make the affairs of the constituent his own business.

Interest being a purely personal and individually realizable fact, its revolutionary object is to lead to liberty of action. Now, can the liberty necessary to the realization of interest be personified in a public capacity in one or more delegates? No! One is no more the representative of the liberty of others than of their interests. Liberty is not a political principle; it is an individual fact. Man is free in the dependency of what he loves; he sacrifices his liberty to his interests daily, and he is truly free only as long as he has the option not to be so.

In this way, no one can pose as the representative of the liberty or the interests of others without becoming in the same instant an authority, and without being, consequently, caught red-handed in the act of government.

Thus, by confining—in an assembly, or in a club, or in a journal, or on the public square, or behind a barricade—the interest and the liberty that belong

essentially to the public domain, one has confined the Revolution which, as I have already said, is nothing other than the flux of interests and of liberty, and by confining the Revolution, one has gelded it, neutralized it.

Thus, I have reason to say that there are no worse counter-revolutionaries than the revolutionaries.

III

The governmentalists of the monarchy and the Republic make an admirable attempt to persuade the people that their fortune is in the hands of authority; it is exactly the opposite that is true. Power possesses only what it takes from the people, and in order for the citizens to believe that they should pursue well-being by giving up what they possess, their good sense would have to be subjected to a profound upheaval.

It is true that the combination presented inevitably blinds populations by awakening the coarser instincts and agitating the base passions.

Something must be done, say the monarchists, the people are uneasy: we will think for them. Already the monarchists are posing as the Providence for the destitute masses, and naturally provoking in those masses a ferment of envy.

"The wealthy do not take care of you!" cry the republicans, addressing themselves to the subjugated population, "we will force them to give you a part of what they have!" Now the revolutionaries agree with the monarchists, and who proclaim the latter as the Providence of the masses.

Thus, the republicans and monarchists claim with a common accord that wealth must remain immobilized in a certain class of citizens and that all the rest of the population should live on charity: a disgraceful and degrading error which has engendered the right to work and to assistance, the counterpart of which is inevitably the monopoly of capital; for it is impossible that I should have to ask anyone for the right to work, if I have not previously recognized in someone the right to possess, by an immutable title, that with which and on which I would labor. It is not necessary to have much insight in order to understand that fact. Simple good sense will suffice.

It is from this error, which has divided the French nation into privileged and mendicant parties, that we get the idea of localizing the Revolution and making it the prerogative of a sect of doctrinaires. By denying to individual initiative the ability to displace and generalize wealth by multiplication, by turning in the tight circle of existing capital, without thinking about the capital to be created, by making the social question a question of envy instead of making it a question of emulation and courage, we have made ourselves believe in the efficacy of governmental initiative in the allocation of well-being; from that arises the necessity of government. But the more the revolutionaries want

government to distribute, in other words to monopolize, the more also the monarchists want the government to monopolize, that is to distribute. One cannot be the master of the distribution of wealth without first being made master of wealth; distribution is thus first monopoly; from which it follows that the citizen Barbés and Mr. Léon Faucher profess exactly the same doctrine. In this way, the consolidation of the government is due to the double action of the royalists and the revolutionaries. Now, it must be clear that government is, in whatever hands, the negation of the Revolution, for a very simple reason: government is forced monopoly. The greatest enthusiast for redistribution will arrive at government, which I challenge him to divide. See for yourself.

No one can govern without relying on wealth; wealth is to government as columns are to a building, what legs are to the individual. Thus as soon as an individual, under the pretext of doing good for the poor, is driven to government, that individual must, in order to maintain the balance, rely on wealth. Now, how will he be able, from now on, to deprive the rich in order to profit the poor, since his own preservation rests with the full support, if not of personal, at least of financial monopoly?

Thus we see, as soon as the Revolution has been reduced to the slender and measly proportions of a movement of individuals, a transformation of proper names, it has gone astray; it has fallen into an abyss, and the worst of abysses, that of envy, laziness and mendicancy.

If, during the period of the reign of Louis-Philippe, the revolutionaries had set themselves to glorifying the industrial initiative of individuals, instead of developing stupid theses about the munificence of the State; if they had taught individuals to count only on themselves, instead of teaching them expect everything from the lame Providence of governments; if they had sought to produce some money-makers instead of driving the people to sterile controversy and shameful begging, liberty, which, whatever the sophists say, is a question of coins, and happiness which, whatever the idlers say, is a question of morality and labor, would have been universally established in France. And the government, forgotten in its corner, would hardly concern us. A people who conduct their own business is a people who govern themselves, and a people who govern themselves repeal and render obsolete, by this act alone, all the legislative jumble of which the popular agitation, much more than the genius of the men of State, had favored the conception.

After having indicated what, in my conviction, is the truth, that is to say: that the institution of government, shabby, decrepit and corrupt in 1848, was going, pushed by the force of things and the flux of interests, to disappear quietly and forever, if the untimely movement of the population hadn't uplifted and rejuvenated it, it remains for me to demonstrate how that movement, as governmental as it was, could only be revolutionary, industrial or anarchic.

IV

February 24, at two o'clock in the afternoon, the Tuileries, the legislative palace, the ministerial hotels, the Hôtel de Ville, and the Prefecture of police were all deserted; the official hierarchy was eclipsed. Authority had physically disappeared, and the people were free.

And understand well what that word people means, coming from my pen: when I make use of that word, I mean to designate everyone, smocks and coats, patent leather shoes and hobnailed boots.

On February 24, I say, the people were free, that is to say, that no one having more or less authority than others, each had the same authority. Now, it is when the authority of each is equal to that of all that the social balance is inevitably achieved.

This is of a mathematical exactitude and a native simplicity: everyone understands the neutralization of forces by their parity; everyone understands, consequently, how, in a group of men equally vested with the power to enslave, liberty is constituted. If I can counter you and you can counter me, our mutual respect is assured: peace is with us.

Such was the state of Paris and France on February 24, 1848.

The Revolution was accomplished. And yet the revolutionary movement had been an error; an error that the people would have paid for very dearly if that movement had not succeeded; an error that the people have paid very dearly for, since that movement, which only succeeded in a false manner, was found to have consolidated the very thing the interests wanted to destroy: the tutelage

The movement of February 1848 has been an error because, on the one hand, the public needs to pursue the repeal of the tutelage, and because, on the other hand, any movement in the street, being a mutiny, demands and, as a consequence, confirms the tutelage. I challenge anyone to accomplish a feat of arms without discipline. Now, there is no discipline without a leader, and no leader without subordinates. The movement of February, like that of 1830, was a feat of arms, so it had its leaders, its guardians, its necessary and inevitable government. Bit it is precisely against government, not the government of Charles X, not that of Louis-Philippe, but the government of anyone, whoever it might be, it is against the government as a principle that the interests militate and the Revolution struggles. The movement of February, which carried government in its womb, came to no agreement with the interests, nor with the Revolution, from which it follows that it was an error.

How has it happened, however, that this movement has satisfied the Revolution for a moment? It is because before that manifestation, the government, which is not at the Tuileries, nor at the Hôtel de Ville, nor the Elysée, but which is found in the interests from which public opinion takes advice, was already condemned by public opinion: because before having been

accomplished by the movement, the Revolution had been made by the interests, that the doctrinaires call the faith.

But, but between the genius of the interests or of the faith, and that of the movement, there is an essential difference which should soon translate into disappointment: the industrial force aimed at institutions, and the faith separated itself from authority; the movement aimed only at men. We know in what striking manner the interests have protested against the movement and its results. Let us say what would be necessary to assimilate the movement into the Revolution.

V

The revolutionary act was accomplished.

Antagonisms, the misshapen children of governments, were wiped from the heart of the Republic, which was truly the Republic as long as it had no sponsors.

Equity, that supreme justice of the people, hung alone over the City, replacing the law that it had just repealed.

The bank and the Palais des Finances had the rare good fortune to see Liberty stand sentry at their door and they did not complain about it.

Theft, forewarned by some improvised inscriptions of the hasty fate that was reserved for it, was punished immediately with death. Theft, moreover, exists only in the state of privilege; free competition blots it out completely.

The parties, vermin born in the rottenness of the high and low courts, faded with the cause that produced them.

Complete forgetfulness of the past brought all the citizens together.

Fraternity was universal.

The greatest courtesy was exchanged in the streets, and all the public places.

Joy and hope illuminated every face.

Each, no longer being forbidden anything except by themselves, sought a support in everyone and found without difficulty, in the feeling of his isolation, the reason for the respect that he owed to the others.

The most perfect order reigned everywhere, at the same times as the rabble.

No one was afraid, for everyone was king.

No one being afraid, confidence was general.

I hold as perfectly exact this picture of the public situation on February 24, 1848. I suppose that the people of Paris would have placed in the foreground of this picture a simple urban or municipal commission and a magistrate who, face turned towards the border, would have been particularly occupied with notifying foreigners of both the new state of France and its peaceful attitude. In this case, I maintain, and I will show very soon, that the result of the movement would have remained in conformity with the demands of the Revolution, sovereignty would have remained in its place, with liberty gained and domestic peace assured.

Indeed, what more would be needed? A minister of the interior? But that would be to call individual and municipal liberty back into question and recreate a tyranny and budget which the interests have sought to abolish.

A minister of instruction? But that would be to call the liberty of education back into question and recreate a tyranny and budget which the interests have sought to abolish.

A minister of religion? But that would be to call the liberty of conscience back into question and recreate a tyranny and budget which the interests have sought to abolish.

A minister of commerce? But that would be to call the liberty of transactions back into question and recreate a tyranny and budget which the interests have sought to abolish.

A minister of agriculture? But that would be to call the liberty of land-use back into question and recreate a tyranny and budget which the interests have sought to abolish.

A minister of public works? But that would be to call the liberty of private enterprise back into question and recreate a tyranny and budget which the interests have sought to abolish.

A minister of finances? But that would be to call the liberty of credit back into question and recreate a tyranny and budget which the interests have sought to abolish.

A minister of justice? But that would be to call the justice of the jurors back into question and recreate the political jurisdictions and a budget which the interests have sought to abolish.

A prefecture of police? But that would be to call into question the sovereignty of the communes, to substitute for their own police a State police, and recreate a tyranny and budget which the interests have sought to abolish.

A war minister and a minister of the navy? Very well. These offices are natural annexes of the foreign affairs and the men who exercise them are the subordinates of the head of the chancellery named above; the people shouldn't have more to worry them than the accounting that would have to be made to record the small receipts and small expenditures necessary for that small administration.

Thus a town council and a chancellery should have been, and would have been, the official face of the government of the people, if so many ambitious sorts, detesting the democratic condition of mere citizens, had not persisted in wanting to be ministers: prefects, sub-prefects, collectors, inspectors, etc., etc. Democracy does not consist of making all the communes subject to the government of one commune, all individuals subject to one or more individuals; it consists of leaving each commune and each individual to govern themselves under their own responsibility. Now, before a mayor and municipal council, individuals govern themselves; for it does not come to the mind of a communal assembly, not supported by a prefect, to regiment the citizens who have elected them in their individual business and industrial interests. Tyranny comes from communist or monarchic centralization, while individual liberty is in the municipality; the municipal council is essentially democratic. Nothing should be put above it, for fear of reestablishing the monarchy.

Just as before the mayor individuals govern themselves, just so, faced with the chancellery or diplomatic administration, the commune, a complex individual, governs itself; for it would not occur to a body which has no mission but to represent the nation to foreigners to interfere in communal affairs.

Tyranny comes from the monopolization of the domestic elements of society by the State; communal liberty is guaranteed when the central authority has only a purely diplomatic character, and a few duties free from any infringement of the prerogative of individuals. All that is done domestically must be done by the people themselves, by the individuals. That which is materially impossible for the people to carry out by themselves, by each of its members individually, is an international act, a treaty of peace or commerce. There are some cases where the need for delegation makes itself felt. That is why the only magistracy which had the Revolutionary right to spring up from the movement of February 24, 1848, was the foreign ministry.

VI

What! A town council and a chancellery, for the whole government, will appear to the great Revolutionaries, friends of the people, as institutions that are insufficiently complicated and especially too peaceful.

How would the citizen Ledru-Rollin bring back the royalists that he wanted to fight, if not by taking the place of Mr. Duchâtel? Ledru-Rollin is the author of Baroche.

How would the citizen Garnier-Pagès have stifled the newborn confidence, if he had not reopened the finance ministry and declared a new tax? Garnier-Pagès is the author of Fould.

Where would the citizen Carnot take a beating from the Jesuits, if he had not rebuilt the university? Carnot is the author of Falloux.

How would the citizen Crémieux preserve the magistracy of the monarchies, if he was not installed as a justice? Crémieux is the author of Rouher.

Would the inquisition of the State not be dead if the citizen Caussidière had not become police prefect? Caussidière is the author of Carlier.

Some much stranger things would have come to pass, if the citizen Louis Blanc, the Ignatius of socialism, had not daily preached the crusade of labor against capital; Louis Blanc is the author of Montalembert.

All these republicans who, as such, should have a blind confidence in the good sense of the public, will begin by mistrusting the good sense of the people, who showed themselves to be republican that the republicans paled beside them.

In the face of universal republicanism, the National did not know what to do, and the Réforme felt itself threatened with asphyxia. Since the disappearance of authority, each citizen having an interest in dealing carefully

with everyone, there was no more animosity in the country: politics having fled with the government, the question became completely economic, calculation taking the place of controversy.

But the doctrinaires did not find any profit in this; they sensed clearly that, from the moment that each was occupied with their own business, everyone's business would go very well. But, in that case, the least would do as well as them, and they would find themselves obliged to labor like everyone else. In that case, there would no longer be parties, and the agitation that gives a living to the vagabonds and the men of state would cease. In that case, there would be no more politics, and those who live without doing anything would no longer have anything to do. From this they deduced the necessity of rebuilding the Government.

But how were they to go about it? Government has no mission but to bring the people to agreement; now, everyone agreed. Thus no government was possible, and yet a government was called for; it needed one itself. The democracy had its administrative staff, just like the royalty; like the royalty, it had some men whose devotion to the homeland could go even so far as occupying the kitchens and the ministerial palaces; like the royalty, it had great citizens all ready to sacrifice their obscurity to attain a prefecture, at the risk of taking home 40 or 80 francs per day; like the royalty, it had some more modest, but no less deserving heroes, capable renouncing common labor to go sit in some sub-prefecture. There was a need, if not for France, which was then very fortunate, at least for those who wanted to do it the honor of living at its expense, of a government. It was necessary, besides, to save the governmental principle. To fail to rebuild the government, that would have been to allow a precedent which compromised all the governments of Europe. That would have been to take from the last descendents of the dynasties all hope of return. Now, to take from the princes any hope of returning, was to take from the republicans the power to fight the princes, and the republicans cannot stop fighting the princes without ceasing to be republicans.

Thus the republicans of February were going to perish, absorbed by universal agreement, when suddenly the National, near the end of it strength, cast this challenge into the arena: To the republicans of tomorrow, from the republicans of the old order.

From that moment, the categories were created, discord sang victory and the government of the friends of the people was able to establish itself. Thus, in order to govern, the republicans, like the kings, set about dividing the population. Mr. Marrast instituted the old order and Mr. de Lamartine that of the moderates. Twenty-four hours before, there had only been brothers; twenty four hours after, there were only enemies.

VII

If the Revolution had been understood, no one would have concerned themselves with government; for the Revolution, stranger to politics, was simply a question of economy. The people would have had to make politics submit to the fate inflicted on criminals; on the walls of Paris along with the inscription, death to robbers, we should have seen: death to politics! Sadly, the people still did not know, as they know today, that politics is the height of knavery.

Each citizen is called to resolve the economic question it as it pertains to them. When politics has disappeared, it is the interests, it is business which triumphs, and no one needs a minister to watch over their own interests and business. Each is their own government.

Suppress the dictatorship of the Hotel de Ville on February 25, and the people would have had nothing to do in the street. It was only politics that kept them there. Their business would have immediately brought them home, for that is where they live

Now, imagine to yourself the immense economic movement which would have resulted from the suppression of politics in the aftermath of the barricades? Labor, that morality par excellence, would have revealed itself in all its forms to capital, and capital, which is frightened by politics, but strongly attracted to labor, would have thrown itself with confidence into industry. Nothing is more reassuring than a population which applies its activity to production, for nothing is more worthy of interest than people occupied with earning their living. The confidence inspired by those people is general. We willingly contract obligations with them, and we even seek to extend credit to them, for those who give credit want some guarantees, and the first guarantee of a transaction is morality. Now, everyone knows that labor and morality are synonyms. The only honest people that there have been, and that there can be in the world, are the laborers.

But, if I set aside the political men and the vagabonds, there are only laborers in society. The capitalist, rid of the political protectorate which deigns to give him 4 percent, is the natural associate of the industry which can give him 10, 15 or 20 percent. When capital and labor join together without the political intermediary which exploits them both, they will get along marvelously, for they cannot live without each other. They complement one another, and if labor cannot move forward without capital, I don't know what capital means without labor.

At the point liberty had reached on February 24, 1848, there were only, as there could only be, people inclined to help each other. Each willingly made some sacrifices for his neighbor. The creditor extended due dates; the proprietor assisted the tenant; people shared their dinner with others they hardly knew; and if the restoration of the government had not left half of the population begging in the back rooms, if, disillusioned with the space of politics, the citizens

had applied themselves to useful industries, in no time at all each, by permanent or provisional title, would have found their place and their bread, and the government of all would long since have been established.

To summarize my thoughts with regard to the movement of February and the democratic outcome that it has achieved, I would say that the movement has lacked a man who, like Washington, understood the justice of public aspirations. The people have no need of people who love them. Thus far, the people have been loved far too much. What they want is for someone to let them love themselves. Philanthropy is a factory whose products have been more profitable to the entrepreneurs than to the shareholders. For proof I would require only Mr. Thiers, whose love of society has brought in fairly handsome dividends, according to those who in former times were acquainted with the sheen of his clothing and the holes in his boots.

When I see a man who is called a friend of the people, I begin by securing what I have in my pockets, and I consider myself very well warned.

That said, I return to my subject.

VIII

The Revolution is the emancipation of the individual or it is nothing; it is the end of the political and social tutelage, or it means nothing. In this I am, and indeed must be, in agreement with everyone, even with those we are accustomed to call reactionaries and who are, after all, only minors promised to the tutelage of the self-styled democrats, as the democrats are today minors under the tutelage of the so-called reactionaries. From a national point of view, the names of the parties matter little; I meet here only some people who want to take hold one another, precisely in pour order to free themselves from one another. The means are brutal and their ineffectiveness is demonstrated by experience, but it is a certain fact that the desire to be emancipated is everywhere. Thus, the Revolution is universal, and it is for this reason, because it does not want to be localized, that it is the Revolution.

The Revolution being the end of tutelage, what must the Revolutionary logic be?

Will it be political opposition?

Will it be insurrectionary opposition?

It will be neither politics nor insurrection, I would respond, and I demonstrate:

Politics, in the usual meaning of the word, as a social or domestic question, is the art of governing people; it is the recognition of the minority of the public, and the code of the tutelage. It is the tutelage itself. To combat politics with politics, to battle the government with government, is to engage in politics and government. It is to confirm the tutelage, instead of abolishing it. It is to halt the

Revolution, instead of accomplishing it. For, finally, what is the opposition, if it is not the critique, in other words, the government of the government?

Before the Revolution, all politics, like all governments, resemble one another and are equal, for the Revolution is, by principle, nature, character and temperament, the enemy of all politics and all government, whether social, domestic or internal. The Revolution has swallowed up the Estates-General, the Constituent Assembly, the Convention, the Directory, the Empire, the Restoration, Louis-Philippe, the provisional government and M. Cavaignac, and it will devour Louis Bonaparte and all the would-be governors who could come after him, for the Revolution, I repeat, is the negation of all political tutelage.

Thus, politics and government are not, and cannot be, Revolutionary means. Robespierre was as hostile to the Revolution as Guizot; and Ledru-Rollin has halted it no less than Mr. Baroche; for Robespierre and Ledru-Rollin were political men, government men, as much as Guizot et Baroche, from which it follows from the Revolutionary point of view that both belong to the traditional category of public tutors that it is a question of eliminating. The men who, either in Parliament or in the press, make opposition to politics and government, are inevitably anti-Revolutionaries, for they engage in politics and government. They are involved in the heights of political and governmental complicity. They serve the cause of the tutelage and plead against emancipation.

That could appear paradoxical at first, but it is very true. When an orator of the opposition takes the floor against a piece of legislation which harms the common right or liberty, and when the writers of the opposition take up the pen to combat some governmental measure, they give to that measure, which they don't know how to stop, the ultimate sanction of a public hearing. They give it its legal reason to be. To discuss is to combat, and whoever combats subscribes in advance to the law which must result from their defeat. Now, the defeat of the opposition is never in doubt. The government cannot be wrong.

All the legal oppressions, suppressions, and prohibitions which have been accomplished since the unfortunate invention of the parliamentary regime are due much more to the opposition than to the government. I say much more, because there are two senses in which these tyrannical measures are attributable to the opposition: first, because it is the opposition which has provoked them; and second, because the opposition regularly makes itself an accomplice in their adoption by debating them.

IX

The parliamentary opposition was born of an error of logic, which the ambition of men has sadly had a great interest in propagating. The irregular minds and ardent hearts, stimulated by generosity and, too often also, by an envy of which, perhaps, they have not taken account, have believed, and persist

in believing, that the Revolution or Liberty can be represented and localized in a legislative space. That is—I have said it above and I repeat it—a fatal mistake of the modern spirit. Liberty is not a social principle; it is only an individual fact. No one can represent any liberty but his own individual liberty. As soon as a man presents himself as representative of the liberty of others, he is already an authority. Now, the authority of liberty transforms itself and becomes at once the liberty of authority. In this case only the delegate is free. The magistrate absorbs the city.

Let us also note that by placing themselves alongside the parliamentary opposition on the terrain of the discussion of the acts of power, the writers of the opposite press engage in politics, in government, and that by imitating the government in the care that they take to name the country as guarantee for its acts, they truly displace that country which is social and not political, which makes industry and business and not controversy.

I will repeat then, after having sufficiently demonstrated it, that politics is not a Revolutionary means. The facts, moreover, come to the aid of my reasoning. The political history of the last sixty years confirms all that I have said. Thanks to politics, the question is still today what it was on the eve of the storming of the Bastille.

We come to the second question, regarding insurrection.

I said, in speaking of politics, nearly all there is to say about insurrection. Insurrection is the opposition in the street. Here it no longer discusses, but acts; it is always the same combat, only it has taken some material proportions. Victorious or vanquished, its triumph or defeat is summarized in the government, in the negation of the Revolution.

The insurrectional opposition is found to have exactly the same character as the parliamentary opposition, in the sense that it affirms the tutelage instead of denying it, that it denies the Revolution instead of affirming it, except that, in the confines of an assembly, the opposition only confirms the governmental principle, while in the street, it confirms the fact.

Insurrection is no more a Revolutionary means than politics and, here again, the facts come to the aid of my reasoning. Experience shows, indeed, that every insurrection has only served to strengthen and even, I must say, to aggravate the tutelage.

So it has become as urgent as it is rational to renounce, in order to accomplish the Revolution, the means, recognized as ineffective, of politics and insurrection.

These means, the ultimate recourse of the ambitious types improperly called revolutionaries, discarded, what remains? I will make that question the subject of a last examination.

X

I have said that the Revolution was the substitution of the individual for the traditional State; that definition will be within the reach of everyone when I explain what I mean by the traditional State.

The notion of the State, as we have inherited it, incorporates in a supreme magistracy, king, emperor, president, committee, assembly, all the elements of social life. In conformity with that notion, nothing is done, nothing is said, and nothing budges in the country except by virtue of laws emanating from that official personage; the reason of the functionary is the reason of the State and from now on, before thinking, before acting, before moving with an eye to their own good, individuals must think, act and move with an eye to the preservation of the magistrate, keystone of the public edifice. This is communism or monarchy, which amounts to the same thing.

In this strange and barbarous mechanical combination, each individual, held by a bit, directed by reins and driven with a whip, finds themselves tethered, like a beast of burden, to the wagon of the State or supremacy. The State, universal driver, halts or advances, holds back or pushes forward, at its will and according to its caprices, art, science, education, worship, industry, commerce, and credit, without concerning itself with anything but its own security. The logic of the state, as Rousseau explained it, and as it was practiced by Robespierre, Guizot, Ledru-Rollin Thiers, and Louis Blanc, accepts this enormity, namely, that the supreme magistracy being saved, the destruction of all the French people would not compromise the salvation of the State at all. For the State is that same magistracy; whoever attacks it, attacks the State, and, provided that it remains standing, all can perish around it without the State courting any risk.

Such is the traditional State. MM. Thiers, Cabet, Berryer, Pierre Leroux, de Broglie, Louis Blanc, Laroche-Jaquelein, and Considerant know no other. Well! The object of the Revolution is to free the individual from the leads of that harness; the object of the Revolution is to substitute real, individual will for fictive, public will. From a traditional point of view, I am lead in order to profit my guide; from the Revolutionary point of view, I guide myself for my own profit. From a traditional point of view, the magistrate ceases to be an individual by becoming the State. From the Revolutionary point of view, the individual becomes magistrate; the State is the individual.

At this point in our demonstration, we can cast a decisive light on the vices of the political and insurrectional means in use up to this day.

The State being given, when I gather my fellow citizens in a hall or in a public square to ask them for the investiture of their confidence, in order to give combat to the State, whether by words or by arms, I do not propose to overthrow that institution for their profit; I simply intend to substitute my person for the person that I will combat. My only object is to seize the direction

of public affairs from those who now hold it. I may believe that I will direct better than they have, but I will inevitably be mistaken; for, as it is precisely a question of not directing, the direction, whatever it is and wherever it comes from, is necessarily an evil.

The institution of the State can only be overthrown by the opposite institution. Now, the opposite of the State is the individual, as the opposite of fiction is fact. Let the individual constitute itself and the State perishes; let liberty be established and authority disappears.

But how, I am ask, should liberty be established? How will the individual be constituted?

The individual will constitute itself by applying itself to doing itself that which, thus far, has been left to the initiative of the State. Liberty establishes itself in labor, production, wealth, and not otherwise.

XI

I know nothing more obscure than the demonstration from evidence. The analysis of a simple notion demands so much care that I would lose courage if I did not feel myself aided by the attention that the public gives to these questions today.

When I speak of the substitution of the individual for the State, I mean that the regulatory legislation by means of which the State has appropriated the direction of public affairs must be repealed, and that each individual must from now on conduct their own affairs, not in conformity to the laws of the State, but by virtue of their own instinct, and directed by their own interests.

But we cannot ask the assemblies to repeal the laws. The repeal of the laws of the State cannot come from the initiative of the State. The State cannot dispossess itself. That operation comes down, as a matter of fact and right, to the initiative of the individuals who have empowered the State.

A State law is repealed as soon as we put the social facts in opposition to it. All the police laws, for example, will be repealed, and all the agents of the police will disappear on the day when society becomes generally and completely calm.

Now, society will be generally and completely calm when the opposition of party or verbiage disappears to leave the material opposition of real interests and active labor, otherwise known as the popular or individual opposition, free to act. Against the force of social needs, the laws of the State can do nothing.

We make an effective opposition to the police when, without other concerns, we get close to our material interests; for those interests being enemies of every disorderly or state agitation, it follows that to concern ourselves with them is to cease to agitate. Now, to cease to agitate is quite simply to suppress the police,

unless the police has some reason to be apart from agitation, which is incomprehensible.

Once the police are absorbed by labor and the interests, the suppression of the rules of the State, the repeals of the law come fast, for the confidence which supports credit develops rapidly.

Each individual occupies themselves with their own interests, so each labors; each labors, so no one threatens; no one threatens, so no one fears; no one fears, and security is universal.

Security being universal, capital, which fear had driven into the caves of the state bank, puts its nose to the transom and, seeing the passage of industry, which promises him six, ten, fifteen, or twenty percent, naturally asks the question: What am I doing here? The question posed, capital says to itself: The fear of being robbed has imprisoned me in a privilege which gives me four percent; there is no longer agitation outside; I am no longer afraid and I can have, outside, the double benefit of liberty and of a greater profit. Let us go out.

Capital leaves the bank by instinct, and it puts itself in contact with intelligence and industry, in order to know how best to realize the largest profits. The association of money with labor takes place progressively. The financial monopoly is destroyed by the interest of finance itself: free or individual credit is established. Thus, the most beautiful jewel in the crown of the State disappears gradually and without the government having more to complain about from its impoverishment than the police agents have to say against their suppression.

XII

Now when, instead of a single store of money, the country possesses, for the sale of that merchandise, as many shops as there are capitalists, that metallic commodity cannot fail to be cheap. Woolen cloth is not expensive in France thanks to the expansion which free commerce has given to its sale! If it came to be monopolized, as money is at present, the frock coat would become a rare distinction.

Capital being freed, it is labor which is stimulated. Capital and labor are one and the same thing; capital comes from labor and returns there, or rather never leaves it. It moves it. If labor is halted it is because capital is paralyzed. Labor only walks on the legs of capital, but capital only thinks with the head of labor. That duality creates only one body and one aim: production.

Those who have said that there is an essential antagonism between capital and labor have only wanted to preserve the means of governing both. Now, to govern is to exploit. By defying these officious outsiders, capital and labor communicate among themselves without intermediary. As soon as they

communicate, they know each other, and when they know each other, they join; for we only make war here below because we do not know one another.

Look closely at society after the suppression of the official opposition, after the working out of the political inertia and the calm which results from it, after the disappearance of the state police and the conversion of the financial system, and you will see how rapidly the transformation develops.

No more stupid declamations in the press; the abstract hair-splitting which has never proven anything, which can prove nothing, which has never made anything but unrest, and which can never make anything but agitation, returns into the darkness. A positive people no longer pay attention to quibbles. The public sphere is rid of those dumb clods who only known how to speak doctrine, because doctrine is like God, like the unknown, like insolubility: the theme of the stupid and the hobbyhorse of fools.

The press, like the people, turning to positivism and industry, the legislation which disturbs and exploits it no longer has any reason to exist. It finds itself repealed in fact, or unenforceable, which comes down to the same thing.

Individual liberty, no longer guaranteed by a scrap of paper, but by the similarly eloquent fact of general security and private confidence; the liberty of industry guaranteed by the best of constitutions—that of anarchic or unregulated credit; the liberty of the press guaranteed by the most august of princes: interest: from these three fundamental liberties must inevitably, inescapably arise all the specific liberties which will be found today immured in the files of five or six ministers. The absorption of the State by individuals will be the work of a year, more or less. In a few months the government, stripped of the budget for the interior, the budget for religion, the budget for public instruction, the budget for labor, the budget for industry and commerce, the budget for agriculture and the budget of the prefecture of police, will find itself, (driven by the force of events and without thought coming to it crying "Help!") reduced purely and simply to democratic proportions—the minister of foreign affairs and of his two adjuncts, the minister of the navy, which is a permanent position, and the minister of war, which is potential. The government will be, in the end, what it must be, no longer an internal or domestic government but an external or diplomatic government: a chancellery.

As for ourselves, we call that, with or without the permission of the gentlemen revolutionaries, the Revolution: for we are those who want, in fact and not in words, an honest, equitable and good Revolution, a Revolution which will be a great thing as well as a good deal for the noble, the bourgeois and the worker, for before the Revolution as before God, there are neither nobles, nor bourgeois, nor workers. Or rather there are only workers, only bourgeois, and only nobles. There are only individuals and these individuals, from an anarchic

or free point of view, will be impoverished and enriched, raised or brought low, ennobled and degraded as conditions or their genius favors or strikes them.

XIII

Here then, insofar as we can indicate it, is the character of the revolutionary mechanism:

Convinced as we are, and as experience and the passage of time have forced us to be, that politics, the new theology, is a base intrigue, an art of scoundrels, a strategy for smoky rooms, a school for robbery and murder; persuaded that every man who makes a career of politics, by offensive or defensive title, by governing or opposing, as a director or critic, aims only to prevent some good for another by taxation or confiscation and finds himself ready to descend into the road, with his soldiers or his fanatics, in order to assassinate whomever would dispute the booty with him. We are aware, consequently, that every political man is, without knowing it, doubtless, but effectively, a robber and assassin. We are sure, as we are of the sun that shines on us, that every political question is an abstract question, every bit as insoluble and, consequently, no less idle and no less stupid than a question of theology. So we separate ourselves from politics with the same eagerness that we would show in freeing ourselves from complicity in a crime.

Once separated from the politics that teaches him to hate, to bear envy, to make war on his fellow citizens, to dream of their destruction, to annihilate himself to the point of no longer counting on himself, and to await everything from a government which can give nothing to him that it had not previously taken from others, once, we say, separated from politics, the individual recovers his self-esteem and feels himself worthy of the confidence of others. His activity, snatched from the shadows, unfurls itself in the broad daylight. He leaves the ambush and passes on to labor.

He is poor and without credit, and the beginning will be difficult, but if he never begins, where would things drive him? His intention is good, his activity great, and his will firm. He gathers up his courage, and, there he is, seeking an issue in real society, his natural domain.

He will find that issue inevitably proportional to his merit. It is possible that while suited to watch-making, he will at first only find himself at the forge. It is possible that having knowledge of cabinet work, he will be forced for the moment to do carpentry. It is possible that although he is a lawyer, the absence of clients relegates him at first to studying as a notary, solicitor or bailiff. A journalist, it is possible that he will only find refuge for now in a boarding school or bookkeeping establishment. What does it matter! Every road leads to the goal. He creates, in whatever position he finds, some relations that it is up to him to make amicable. If he really has some aptitudes superior to those that he

exercises, he must sooner or later find someone who has an interest in making use of his talent. He possesses himself, and the time, the activity, and discernment necessary to see to his ranking. For the moment, he works, so he speculates; he speculates, so he gains; he gains, so he possesses; he possesses, so he is free. He establishes himself in principled opposition to the State, by possession; for the logic of the State rigorously excludes individual possession; in that, the new apostles of the State doctrine are much more mathematical than the ancients, and Mr. Thiers is only a poor despot beside Louis Blanc. He establishes himself, then, individually by possession. His liberty begins with the first coin, and he will be more free in the future to the extent that he has more coins. That is the naïve and simple truth, the self-evident fact, which demonstrates itself like the light of day.

The rhetoricians will designate as a monarchy or oligarchy, empire or republic the state in which I have coins in my pocket. I don't give a damn about their reasoning. They attract my attention only when by virtue of who knows what phantasmagoric law of balance, they want to take my coins. Then, let them call themselves monarchists, oligarchs, imperialists or republicans, I observe that my vocabulary permits me to give them another name, infinitely more intelligible and above all more conclusive: I call them crooks.

XIV

But what is it that authorizes the crimes of the State? What is it that makes the governments deduct an enormous premium from the time, industry, goods, life and blood of individuals? Fear. If no one in society was afraid, the government wouldn't have to protect anyone, and if the government didn't have to protect anyone, it would no longer have any pretext for demanding from each an account of the use of their time, the character of their industry, or the origin of their goods. It would no longer demand the sacrifice of the blood or life of anyone.

When, to speak only of our profession–and all professions are obstructed like our own–we seek the reason for the numerous hindrances which are placed in our path; when we ask why we have to consult the minister, and then the procurator of the Republic, and then again ten prefects of police in order to publish a journal, we find that the government is afraid, but we also discover that the government is stronger than us. What gives that strength to the government? Everyone's money, the public wealth. But if it is accepted that the public wealth pays the government for being afraid, it remains to be shown that it is the public wealth itself which is afraid.

Why is the public wealth afraid? Precisely because it is the stake of political or insurrectionary struggles; precisely because public wealth, which is by nature revolutionary or circulating, finds itself constantly suppressed by the governmental piston of agitation and idleness.

Public wealth sustains government, not for the good that it does–that good is always and everywhere elusive–but for the evil that it is supposed to prevent. The evil that public wealth dreads, and that government is supposed to avert, can only come from government itself, or from the initiative of men who want to bring to the government one system or another; it sustains the politics of Peter because it fears the politics of Paul. Let the Paul-opposition withdraw from politics and the Peter-government is ruined. Since the public wealth sustains Peter only because of the evil that he prevents Paul from accomplishing, as soon as Paul no longer inspires fear and can no longer do evil, as soon as he labors, wealth circulates to him by right, Peter is no longer sustained, his action becomes null, his influence is dead, and his authority evaporates.

Confidence reborn in all minds, free credit is established, the interests develop on the largest scale, well-being is generalized, prosperity becomes universal, civilization is extended to all classes, and the Revolution is accomplished.

Abandon politics completely, and get seriously back to business–this then is the true revolutionary tactic; it is simple, like all that is true, easy like all that is simple, and it is simple, true and easy like all that is just.

The government of the people is neither a doctrine nor an idea, but a fact. That government does not sum itself up in a motto or a color; it has for a symbol a gold coin.

THE ELECTORAL LAW

In the first issue of this journal, we have clearly, even audaciously expressed our opinion regarding the present character of electoral rights. The attitude of the people in the face of the partial suppression of this right proposed by Parliament has proven to us that our doctrine was in conformity with the general sentiment. The electorate is not a principle.

The popular instinct is more sure than the reasoning of the sophists, for that instinct bears on the facts. The so-called democratic parties have cried loudly that universal suffrage is the sole guarantee of progress, the sole principle from which well-being should result. The facts respond that universal suffrage, the exercise of which has up to this day softened the position of a few elected officials, has considerably compromised the individual interests and, as a consequence, public prosperity.

Does that mean that suffrage, as it has pleased the majority to formulate it, would resolve the question? It would be foolish to suppose it. The truth is not in the election; nothing can come from the election, the election is the guarantee of the government and the government is the cause of the unrest, it is thus in abstention and not in the election we will find the solution of the difficulty.

The people will come to abstention, as they will come to the refusal of taxation; it is necessary and inevitable. They have started down the road which must lead then there by falling into political skepticism, into doctrinal indifference. It is when the people no longer believe in anything that they will believe in themselves. That last belief determines the estimation of the act, and, positivism come to this point, the people leave the domain of interpretations to take fixed quantities; they no longer let themselves be led, they speculate; they no longer agitate, they amass; they no longer shout, they seek to enjoy.

Do you know, from the popular point of view, what is signified by the debates which have taken place in the Assembly between the majority and minority on the subject of the electoral law? They debates signify that the members of the majority believe that they can only be reelected by neutering universal suffrage, and that the members of the minority are convinced that universal suffrage is essential to them to remain where they are. That is the true sense of the discussion; but, in fact, what can the people expect from the majority or from the minority? Nothing. Both have well proven it, and, even when they have not proven it in practice, we believe we have, in this publication, furnished some very clear arguments on this point.

Have we so much to gladden us from the electoral regime that there would be cause for us to act to defend it? What has it produced? Some volumes of laws that, for my part, I would gladly pass on,—and you?

Certainly, it is universal suffrage which has produced the assemblies to which we owe all the prohibitions which crush us; would limited suffrage have

produced worse results? We do not assume so. From now on what is the meaning of that enthusiasm that one wants to give us for universal suffrage, when it is proven that the assemblies have only led to disturbing and ruining us?

The right is wary of one part of the population.

The left mistrusts the other part.

What do you take us for? Whose creatures are we? We mistrust the right ad the left, and we reserve our votes; that is what it is best for us to do to put in agreement the whites and reds who only want our money.

That is the reason for the calm that has greeted the electoral law. The most naïve of the journals of Paris, as well as the most smug, L'Evénement and la Presse, have recommended calm to the population, and, the calm having taken place, they are pleased at having been obeyed. To hear them tell it, the wisdom of the people is their work; without them, the agitation would have torn up the paving stones and disturbed the city, which is pitiful.

The calm is in the force of things. The people have become deeply skeptical. They do not believe the troubadours or sellers of specifics. However much one professes a deep and tender love for them, however much one wants to assure them, they do not get more tenderness, nor more assurance, and they ask who are these bold or crazy sorts who dare put themselves high enough to love them, and who is the sovereign or schemer who has separated from them enough to promise them security.

The times of exploitation by big words have already passed. The labels no longer fool anyone. The devotion has delivered its bill. It is too costly. We no longer believe in chivalrous selflessness, so that from the very moment when a man separates himself from others in order to command them, some legitimate suspicions arise about him. In that state, the people no longer have leaders, and equality begins. When the people no longer have leaders, no movement is possible any more, and calm inevitably descends. Now, that calm is the Revolution, no longer the Revolution of the schemers, everyone's Revolution, that of the interest and wealth.

The politicians do not want to abandon questions of form, but it is the question of content which is debated in the heart of society. The government, the men of the government, the manner of constituting the government, the antecedents and doctrines of various individuals, the preeminence this system or that one: all that is of little importance to the people. What matters to them is well-being, and it is clear that no one can realize well-being except for themselves; it is proven that it cannot be obtained by delegation, and it is established in fact that it is independent of the form. It is thus with full and complete reason that people become indifferent with regard to the form, with the government, and they pay attention to the content, which is nothing but the people themselves, and their own business.

So let come, after the electoral law, the decennial presidency, the presidency for life, the empire—the devil come, provided that the good-for-nothings are condemned to silence by the prudence of the workers. The governmental form, however lofty it may be, will be overcome by the content; the people will devour the government.

The government is not a fact; it is only a fiction. The immutable and eternal fact is the people. We are, for our part, with the fact, and a time is coming which seems bad for those who do not want to separate from the fiction.

ANARCHY will appear regularly on the first of each month. In the next issue (June 1) we will apply ourselves to the presentation of the picture of liberty in its industrial and economic exercise. Returning to February 24, 1848, epoch when the parties and governments had disappeared, to make place for fraternity and universal security, we will explain what would have been done materially, industrially, and financially by LIBERTY, if the speech-makers had not revived that school for theft and murder that we call POLITICS. These explanations, we are confident, will do more for the revolution and for the public peace than all that has been said and done in the last sixty years.

In the later numbers, the editor of ANARCHY will examine the origin of wealth and credit, and will prove that the antagonism which exists between capital and labor is purely governmental fact which would not exist in an anarchic state. He will begin from this principle to demonstrate the supreme absurdity of the right to work, of free credit, of the tax on capital and other errors sustained in recent times by socialist childishness.

TO THE POINT!
TO ACTION!!

AN INTERPRETATION OF THE DEMOCRATIC IDEA

I am told that that I am governed for my own good. Now, since I pay my money to be governed, it follows that it is for my own good that I pay that money. This is possible, but it nevertheless deserves verification.

Moreover, it is a fact that no one could be more familiar than me with the means of making myself happy. I still find it strange, incomprehensible, anti-natural, and extra-human, to devote oneself to the happiness of people that one does not know, and I declare that I have not the honor of being known by the men who govern me.

It is therefore fair to say that, from my point of view, they are really too kind, and, in the end, a little indiscreet to concern themselves so much with my happiness, but, more importantly, there is no evidence that I am unable to pursue that happiness myself.

I would add that devotion involves disinterestedness, and that one does not have a right to impose caring attentions unless they cost the recipient nothing. I know better than to discuss a question of money here, and God preserve me from questioning the devotion, or, on the contrary, the disinterestedness of our men of state. But I ask permission to wait to express my gratitude until the delicate attentions with which they deign to surround me become cheaper.

Anselme Bellegarrigue, Toulouse, 1848.

To the Point! To Action!!

AN INTERPRETATION OF THE DEMOCRATIC IDEA[1]

I

HAD I a friend, just one friend—a good cook or a pleasant woman—I would not have written what follows; it would have been the subject of an intimate confession. Then, relieved of the weight of my concerns, I would have been consoled for my representative labors in the fraternal arms of the one who shared my burden.

I have, however, no cook and no pleasant woman; therefore, no friend, and, by extension, no confidante; so, for lack of anyone to talk to, I address myself to everyone. This manner of keeping to myself will, I trust, be appreciated by the Republic.

And while we're on the subject of the Republic, I humbly request forgiveness from the high and mighty scribblers of the Rue Lepelletier, but I must declare that this word—I said this WORD—is beginning to weary France not a little, from the Ocean to the Alps and from the Pyrenees to the English Channel.

The word "Republic" poses rather prettily on its three rhythmic syllables; but a word is, after all, nothing but a word, as a sound is only a sound; while a thing is a fact; and the people—this, at least, is what I believe—live much more on facts than on words.

Thus, if we leave the idea and pass on to the fact, I imagine that development would be sufficiently to the taste of everyone; though when I say everyone, I very seriously intend to exclude from my formula that polished class of citizens that reads Le Moniteur, that plodding congregation which condescends to spend its time dragging the budget by the tail and without which one would never really know what to make of public liberties, nor of the coins of the Treasury.

I would like to know—may it please God, I would not be found guilty of too much indiscretion!—I would like to know what is really meant by the word "Republic."

II

---

[1] Translation by Collective Reason, with contributions by Robert Tucker, Jesse Cohn and Shawn P. Wilbur. Final edits by Shawn P. Wilbur. Revised March 2,2102.

Some months ago, when it was a question of electing agents in order to carry out the liquidation of the late government, those who had seen nations not under tutelage, major nations; those who, too proud to be ambitious, had made their democratic egoism consist of not belonging to anyone; those whose faces had never been seen in the back rooms of any regime; the true democrats, the gentlemen of humanity have been able to speak of the Republic, and its name is not soiled in passing their lips.

These said, or might have said, in speaking of the members of the provisional government:

Let us not count on verbose theorists to establish democracy in France, to introduce liberty into the practice of the social facts.

There are great intelligences in the improvised council, but these great intelligences have preserved intact both the governmental apparatus of the monarchies and the administrative body of the condemned constitutions; these great intelligences have not repealed any of the organic legislation, which had the condemned constitutions for its basis; these great intelligences have assumed all the powers whose usurpation had been the crime of the condemned royalties.

Further, they said, or might have said:

M. de Lamartine has written a Robespierréide wherein we find consecrated the autocratic principle of the personification of democracy, and that doctrine can cease to be a dream of the poet only by becoming an attack in the Russian or Chinese manner:—Case closed!

M. Ledru-Rollin was as much an exponent of exclusivism as M. Guizot:—Case closed!

M. Louis Blanc aristocratizes the workshop:—Case closed!

All the men who say that France has reconquered its liberties really hold in their hands, and do not wish to release, the liberties of France.

All the men who say that the people must govern themselves actually govern the people.

There are dreamers among them, and ambitious men, but no democrats.

And those who argued in this way expressed a very respectable opinion, for it was the opinion of France, of that France which wanted only two very simple and legitimate things: to be free and to pay little.

In the time of which I have been speaking—an epoch I will call "republican" since the authority was public, since all the citizens, instead of connecting to a government which existed only in name, connected to the country, as the only immutable fact, and felt the need to shake hands fraternally—at that time, I say, which preceded the Meeting of the National Assembly, one could speak of the Republic: there were no other parties then; there was only the party of good

sense, the party of public morality, established, in fact, on the democratic law of confidence in each, and sanctioned by the security of all.

So when one spoke of the Republic, everyone knew what was meant.

Today, as soon as I utter this word, around me one wonders what color of republic I refer to, and the mayor of my commune, who is no one except when he is being something, asks the Prefect for permission to have me arrested.

III

We speak of a red republic, of a tricolor republic, of a moderate republic; we speak of a violent republic; we also speak of an Orleanist, an imperialist and a legitimist republic.

Is it possible to explain clearly what all that means? In my opinion, it is very simple:

It means that the citizens one calls red are opposed to France being exploited by the tricolors; that the tricolors are opposed to her being exploited by the reds; that the Orleanists, imperialists and legitimists are opposed to her being exploited by the reds and tricolors. But it signifies as well, to be fair, that both sides would willingly accept the patriotic task of exploiting her, whether for their own ends and in their own name or, in extremis, under an assumed name.

But unless we are calling wolves sheepfolds, I do not see why we must call all these gentlemen republicans.

The Republic does not accept this coarse ridicule of its official denominations. It is just a republic of which I am, of which we are citizens—we, honest folk, who do not engage in intrigue but pay for the irreverent domesticity of the nation. The Republic is us. That is the real France, that which is exploitable and exploited; the quarry of all these frantic republics, of all these parties who have the wealth of others for dream and the laziness for idol.

The Republic is to parties what a tree is to parasites; parties are the vermin of nations, and it is important not to forget that it is because of the various claims of these political religionaries that we have to jolt along through revolutions resulting from insurrections, and of insurrections resulting from states of siege, to arrive periodically at the burial of the dead and at the payment of the bills of revolution, which are the premiums resulting from the imbecility of everyone, responding to the audacity of a few.

Our forefathers witnessed the France of the great vassals and that of the absolute monarchs. Our fathers saw that of Marat, of Danton, of Robespierre, of Barras, of Bonaparte and of Napoleon. We have seen the France of Louis XVIII, the France of Charles X, the France of Louis-Philippe, the France of the provisional government, the France of the National Assembly; but France in person, that is to say, the France of everyone, the France of France, has yet to

be seen. No one, therefore, has seen the Republic, because the Republic is nothing other than the liberation of France from the tutelage of governments.

IV

Do not ask a democrat if they are a socialist and of which faction, if they are conservative and of which faction; if they are an Orleanist, imperialist, legitimist and of which faction. At the bottom of all these doctrines and social policies we could look for all we're worth for free men and respect for private money. One will only find paid masters and paying servants. The Democrat is not of those who rule because he is the one who does not obey at all. There are shy or timid people who take shelter in Fourier, who lodge with M. Cabet or M. Proudhon, who take refuge in Louis-Philippe, in Bonaparte, in Henri de Bourbon, but I declare for my part that I do not know how to live except within myself, and I am not about to renounce my own identity.

Hear how others call with all their voice for the rise of a sovereign authority before which to bend! I proclaim my own accession to the sovereignty of action.

I am not at all opposed to the fact that, for recognition, for devotion or for charity, some men sacrifice some of their time, their work, their intelligence, their lives to provide comfort for some needy princes or for philosophers in poor accommodation; each can do as he feels fit, provide alms from what he has to whom he likes; and when, renouncing being themselves and acting for themselves, some people decide to live, think and produce for the benefit of dreamers, soldiers and princes. So be it! The princes are poor and the dreamers even poorer than the princes; the dreamers are idle, and the princes are more idle than the dreamers; the soldiers are vainglorious, and the dreamers and princes are more vainglorious than the soldiers. But that those who give themselves to the dreamers, to the soldiers or to the princes claim the right to give up, along with their own, my time, my work, my intelligence, my life, my liberty; that there is an obligation for me to accept and pay the master who becomes my neighbor; that, just in order for a dreamer, a soldier or a prince to be installed in the Hôtel de Ville, I, myself, am required to become the devoted servant of this dreamer, soldier or prince, that is beyond the limits of my comprehension!

If it is a profession to govern, then I demand to see the products of that profession, and if those products are not to my liking, then I proclaim that to force me to consume them is the oddest abuse of authority that one man can exercise on another. The truth is that that abuse exercises itself by force and that it is I who maintain, with my own funds, this force of which I complain. Considering this, I withdraw within myself and recognize that while I am a victim, I am also stupid.

But my stupidity depends on my isolation, and that is why I say to my fellow citizens: Hold your heads up! We have confidence in no one but ourselves. We say: liberty now and hereafter!

V

In this France of lords, princes, philosophers and generals; in this France, whipped and castigated, like a rebelling child by who-knows-whom for who-knows-what; in this France at the heart of which the governments have inoculated an administrative cancer with so many millions of francs, every last one of them a link in the chain that binds us; in this France, finally, where everything is denied us, from the freedom to educate ourselves to the right to freely season our food, everyone, in what concerns them, must shake off his torpor and proclaim himself minister of himself, governor of his own France.

The France of each and every one is the undeniable, egoistic achievement of one's individuality with all that belongs to it: thought, production, commerce, property.

For me, as a writer, my France is my thought, over which I wish to have supreme control, the production of my thought that I wish to administer; the marketing of that product over which I have charge; the property of the acquired result that I wish to keep and to use when I like, within the limits of the respect I owe to the thought, to the products, to the market, to the property of that France comprised by others, whatever their profession or way of life.

In the infinite number of diverse thoughts that find their social expression in various products, each producer carries, infallibly, an instinct for the public taste, for the producer seeking the consumer cannot ignore the fact that the latter will only surrender his money for a product that he likes and needs. Production could not be controlled by someone who cannot find an immediate interest in it, i.e., the producer, without it becoming bothersome and being discontinued, but if everyone governs their own thought, as a producer, production will necessarily tend towards a single goal: the satisfaction of the consumer who is everyone. In the same way if everyone governs their thoughts, as a consumer, a sure market is prepared as a result of their labor, and production will tend, in its turn, towards a single end, the satisfaction of the producer, which is also everyone.

In this way, each individual is the beneficiary administrator of all, and all are the beneficiary administrators of each individual; that is to say, the producer does well for himself in doing well by the consumer, and the consumer fortifies his existence while creating the wealth of the producer. And this without effort, without anyone having to concern himself with anything other than his own individual interest, which is necessarily in the interest of all. This

is social harmony in its democratic simplicity, in what the Americans call, as they practice it, self-government, the government of oneself.

Either I govern myself, and my instinct cannot fail me in searching for my well-being; or else someone governs me, and I am sacrificed, because the instincts of my governor which, subjected to the same law as me, also seek his well-being, not only are not and cannot be mine, but rather are and must be opposed to mine.

Either my thought is free, that I can produce, that my product can find a market, that the market will provide me with resources the exchange of which I can bring home and allow me the consumption of the products of others. Or else, on the contrary, my thought is held in check by an authority; that I am not allowed to express myself according to the infallible law of my own instinct, and I do not produce anything or produce badly; not having a product of any value, I cannot effect any exchange, from which it follows that I consume nothing; I am dependent on others and on myself; I am paralyzed at the center of a circle.

Let us make a general application of that isolated fact, and we will find that swirling flurry of a social residue unknown in the United States, but which governmental barriers have rendered familiar in France; that collection of stationary existences, which pass and pass again before the administration like bodies that pursue a restricted course, returning to the obstacle, and we have nothing more than a society where we all bump and run into each other, or else a society immobile, interdicted, annihilated, cadaverized.

VI

The organization of society is the enslavement of the individual, and its dismantling leads to the liberty

affixed by the revolution on the governmental succession of the royals. We were the inheritors of that succession; they thought it was they:—Madness! What was their dream? That they bore well-liked names? That they were more honest than those conquered? As if, in free nations, the government was a matter of proper names! As if, in a democracy, usurpation could argue for the probity of the usurper!

That they were more capable? As if it were possible to have the intelligence of everyone, when everyone withholds his intelligence.

They should have understood something completely simple, completely elementary, which is, that since the divine right has been consigned to the depths of the priesthood, no one has which deploys in the social body those providential rules of harmony, whose observance, being in the interest of everyone, finds itself being the inclination of all.

But one says that unlimited liberty is a menace.

Whom does it menace?

Who must fear the proud horse, if not he who would tame it?

Who is afraid of an avalanche, if not the one who wants to stop it?

Who, therefore, trembles before freedom, if it is not tyranny?

Liberty! Menacing? One should say the opposite. What is frightening about it is the noise of its chains. Once it has broken them, it is no longer tumultuous, it is calm and wise.

Let us not forget the order that followed the revolt of 24 February and let us recall above all the disorder that arose from the revolt in June.

The gentlemen of the Hôtel de Ville ruled; that was their mistake. They were nothing but simple keepers of the seals affixed by the revolution on the governmental succession of the royals. We were the inheritors of that succession; they thought it was themselves:—Madness! What was their dream? That they bore well-liked names? That they were more honest than those conquered? As if, in free nations, the government was a matter of proper names! As if, in a democracy, usurpation could argue for the probity of the usurper!

That they were more capable? As if it were possible to have the knowledge of everyone, when everyone withholds his knowledge.

They should have understood something completely simple, completely elementary, which is, that since the divine right has been consigned to the depths of the priesthood, no one has received a mandate to act in the name of all and in the place of all.

But what the provisional government has not done at all, the Assembly could do; one might hope that it would democratize France; whatever might be the attitude of the vast majority of representatives, a single, truly democratic man, that is to say a man who has lived in association with the practice of democracy and liberty, would suffice to clarify the situation and free the country. Well, this man, if he exists, has not shown himself; no one has addressed parliament in the noble, disinterested, grandiose language of democracy. There are, no doubt, some generous intentions at the Palais National; but unintelligent intentions are the miscarriages of human grandeur, the stillbirths of God, and the Assembly, like the provisional government that sanctioned its taking of control, failed to recognize its mandate.

We have only seen emerge from within it party men, theoreticians, political casuists who have only practiced monarchy, administrative exclusivism, ruling governments; men who have only seen liberty through the jealous veil of royalism.

We can therefore say of the majority of the Assembly what we said of the members of the provisional government: do not count on these theorists to establish democracy in France, to introduce freedom in the practice of social facts.

The representatives to the National Assembly were elected, let us not forget, to create a democratic constitution, to simplify the administration to allow a reduction in tax and respect for the individual; they were elected to set up the country.

What have they done, however?

Instead of setting up the country, they have been busy setting themselves up in government; they have deduced the consequence before establishing the principles; then, and without being able to escape the disastrous precedent they have just established, they have only been concerned, as they could only be concerned, with the health and conservation of that government.

They acted in this way—and they were consistent! Didn't the country, in effect, cease to exist the day the representatives met in the legislative palace? Wasn't the Assembly declared sovereign—absolute sovereign, let us make note thereof! and so absolute that it could do more than us, because it was against us.

It could stay in place indefinitely.

It could, by decree, have us imprisoned or proscribe us individually or all together!

It could sell France, bit by bit or as a whole, to foreign powers!

You might object that it will not. Certainly that is where we rest our hopes, because I repeat that it could, and I add that I do not understand how a free people can be regularly at the discretion of a single national representation which enjoys a modest instrument of action, made up of five hundred and fifty thousand bayonets.

The National Assembly has the mind of a king. The spirit of democracy is foreign to it.

The Assembly is a government. It should be a notary.

We elected representatives to draft a contract that would determine, by specific stipulations, the line where the people end and the administration begins. It decided, without composing anything, that the people end everywhere and that government begins everywhere.

If the Assembly was the faithful expression of national sovereignty, the laws and decrees that it makes would immediately safeguard the rights of citizens, rather than applying to nothing but its own security. The essence of the law is to express the will, and protect the interests, of everyone, and everyone is supposed to obey it. Well! Let us examine all the decrees issued by the Assembly. We do not find one that is not designed to preserve administrative inviolability by paralyzing civil liberties; we do not find a single one that does not sanction the restriction of society for the benefit of officialdom.

VIII

I do not believe at all in the efficacy of armed revolution and I will soon state why I do not. But, once a revolution of that sort is accomplished, once it is accepted, without contest, by the whole entire country, I can imagine the possibility of turning it to the benefit of the nation.

What are the conditions for this?

Revolutionary action must intervene; it must apply itself to institutions!

The February revolution, like that of 1830, only became of benefit to a few men, because that revolution only abolished some proper names. The machinery of government preserved, as it now preserves, the same mechanism, and I see no change other than the hand that turns the crank.

What did they mean to say when on February 24 they posted in the streets and printed in the newspapers that France had overthrown the government and regained its freedom?

Did this mean simply that the National Assembly had taken the place of the "Journal des débats"?

Did anyone think that the consequences of this event that shook the world should have the triumph of Monsieur Marrast and his friends as its bounds?

That would have been, indeed, much ado about a rather poor job! When the revolutionaries told us that the French people had regained their freedom, we took the revolutionaries at their word and we proclaimed in our hearts the abolition not only of royalty, but of royal government, government that held the liberty of France tightly shackled in its administrative clutches.

Thus, in regaining freedom of thought, freedom of the press and freedom of voting, we have abolished, together with its budget, the government of the interior that was established to spread insecurity for the benefit of the government of the king.

Thus, by regaining the freedom of education, we have abolished, with its budget, the government of public instruction, which had been set up to hone our intelligence and to direct our education for the benefit of the government of the king.

Thus, in regaining the freedom of conscience, we have abolished, with its budget, the government of religion, which was established to introduce into the church only men whose influence was gained in the interests of the government of the king.

Thus, in regaining the freedom of trade, we have abolished, with its budget, the government of commerce, which was established to hold public credit continually under the control of the government of the king.

Thus, in regaining liberty of work and industry, we have abolished, with its budget, the government of public works which was set up to provide great benefit to friends of the government.

Thus, in regaining the liberty of transactions and the liberty of the territory, we have abolished, with its budget, the government of agriculture

which was set up to keep the owner of the land, that is to say the one on whom rests the overseeing of the alimentation of the people, under the immediate dependence of the government of the king.

Thus, in regaining the right to free existence, we have abolished, with its budget, the government of the barracks, which, in times of peace, has only been used to hold us in a state of political nonexistence for the benefit of the government of the king.

Thus, finally, in reclaiming all our freedoms, we have abolished, with their multiple budgets, that complex administration of the illegitimate monarchies, that exorbitant tutelage that arose in the shady days of imperial tyranny, which has lain dead, crushed by discussion, for over thirty years, and whose corrupt cadaver stifles our freedom, because we have not known how or where to bury it.

If it is true that a revolution abolishes anything, that is what we abolished on February 24th.

If it is true that the people who make a revolution do so in order to win their liberties, those are the liberties that we won on February 24th.

IX

The last revolution's call to democracy was not heard by our representatives.

Had that call been truly interpreted, France could have passed the barrier and gone home, that is to say to the commune. The nation thus returned to its natural domicile, there would remain in Paris only an inoffensive symbol, carrying on diplomacy with the nations of the world, directing the navy, taking on or declaring war, as events and conditions stipulated, signing peace treaties and trade pacts, keeping watch on the interior, on the implementation of the laws,—always simple and few in number among free people,—appointing, under its own responsibility, a minister for foreign affairs, a justice minister, a minister for the navy and the colonies, a minister of war and a finance minister, and managing its business with a budget which would reach, from one year to another, save for the case of hostilities and debt interest, the amount of four or five hundred million.

I am not talking about the debt that remains under this scheme. That debt, which France can reckon with so much better when she has returned to the commune and is again in possession of her own wealth, will incur less interest, since administrative charges absorb the most distinct quantity of its revenues. Here I liquidate the royal government. I oblige it, by canceling seven budgets, to return annually to the nation twelve hundred million, at least, with which the debt can easily be extinguished in a few years.

But the most immediate benefit that France must gain from the canceling of these budgets is her freedom of action, which must by nature result in confidence among the citizens, the end of the crisis and the establishment of national credit on the ruins of this feverish government credit, a credit which rises or falls as the government stabilizes or totters.

Apart from the ministerial departments of the navy and war, which are annexes to that of foreign affairs, and apart from the chief judge, on whom judicial unity depends, all other ministries are incompatible with civil liberties, because they are only a parceling out of the royal despotism that held all social elements in its grasp.

If commerce, industry, education, religion, and agriculture are free—if, in a word, the French are free—can someone tell me what need we have of the great masters of industry, of commerce, of education, of religion, of agriculture, of home affairs? Since when has great mastery ceased to be the sanction of servitude?

X

If the government of France is established on the bases that I have just indicated, the parties will disappear, ambitions will become extinguished and the words Liberty, Equality, Fraternity will finally leave the domain of interpretation and controversy to go into effect.

I will explain myself and my explanation will be simple:

What is opposed to the establishment of liberty, equality, fraternity among us? Ambition, which is to say the desire to dominate, to govern the people.

Where does ambition reside? In the parties, in those who desire to dominate and govern the people.

From whence does a party derive its reason for existing? From the certainty that it will have the power, if victorious, to take for itself the freedoms and taxes of the nation. From the possibility of demonstrating mastery and authority over all things and of thus imposing itself on the people and the opposition parties.

How can a party impose itself? By taking control of the administration.

So, what is the administration?

The administration is something abstract, indefinite, illogical, contradictory, obscure, incomprehensible, arbitrary, absurd, and monstrous.

It is something which comes neither from the heart, since it is arid and without sentiment, nor from science, since its partisans understand nothing.

It is an instrument without form, contour and proportions. A wicked and cowardly myth, whose ruinous culture gives occupations to a million priests, all as insolent as they are fanatic.

It is blind, but still sees everything; deaf, but it hears everything; impotent, but it is capable of everything; without weight, and yet it crushes everything; invisible, but filling everything; impalpable, but touching everywhere; impossible to grasp hold of, but capable of grasping everything; inviolable, but violating everything it touches.

It is an incandescent nebulosity of lightning, thunder and asphyxia.

It is a magical, demoniacal, infernal invention that strikes out, always strikes out at everything and in all directions, so that there is always a bulwark of whirlwinds between its officers and the people.

That is the administration!–the means by which one governs, the primary reason we need parties, ambition, tyranny, privileges, and hatred! This is the monster in dispute! There is the Minotaur that drinks blood and devours millions upon millions! Here is the fortress by turns besieged, conquered, resieged, reconquered, and besieged again to be reconquered anew by the parties!

Remove the administration, smother the monster, crush the Minotaur, demolish the fortress, and what is left? Doctrines, and nothing more! Individual doctrines having no way to impose themselves! Isolated doctrines, timorous and abashed, that you would see running, utterly out of breath, throwing themselves, for protection and security, onto the bosom of that great human doctrine: EQUITY.

Let us slay this dragon bristling with talons, which the nationalists want to tame for the benefit of Monsieur Cavaignac, in order to make it bite us.

Which the socialists want to tame for the benefit of Monsieur Proudhon, in order to make it bite us.

Which the Orleanists want to tame for the benefit of Monsieur de Paris, in order to make it bite us.

Which the imperialists want to tame for the benefit of Monsieur Bonaparte, in order to make it bite us.

Which the legitamists want to tame for the benefit of Monsieur de Bourbon, in order to make it bite us.

Disperse the nails of the animal in the municipalities; keep them with care so that no one can reunite them with the body, and discord will flee with its sole cause; there will be in France only free people, respecting the right of others, as their own rights should be respecting, and embracing one another in the fraternal ambition of contributing to their common welfare. Mistrust loses the guarantee of its heinous impulses, capital is attracted to production, production is supported by capital, and national and individual credit is established.

XI

Having achieved this level of liberation, we will each be masters of ourselves. No one will be above the rest. No one will be above the common law. From then on, national sovereignty will be a fact, and universal suffrage will have a democratic meaning.

Instead of the silly and puerile right to choose our masters, which has just been granted us, we will select delegates who, instead of being guided by administrative law, as is the practice at the time I write, will be guided by national law, which will be specified in accordance with the facts.

From this will emerge a simple administration, and, consequently, a comprehensible one; a true administration, and, consequently, a just one. The program of the accession of the French to all the jobs will cease to be a crude lie, an iniquitous delusion whose turpitude is demonstrated by the inability of special study to educate men to understand the mechanism of a single section of the formidable administration that rules us.

And, our liberties once safe, the administration once simplified, the government once stripped of its means of aggression, put a Frenchman at its head. It is of no matter to me whether he is called Cavaignac, Proudhon, d'Orléans, Bonaparte, or Bourbon. As long as they cannot usurp my mastery, as long as they cannot fail in their duties towards me, those in office do seem to me to require serious attention. The names of those who serve me are of little importance to me. If they act badly, I will punish them; if they act well, they have done nothing but their duty, and I owe them nothing but the salary we have agreed upon.

What I have said about their name, I also say about their title. It is of little importance to me if the head of a democratic administration is called president, king, emperor, satrap, sultan, if he is mister, citizen or majesty! When the nation is truly sovereign, I am sure of one thing, and that is that the head of state, whatever his name may be, must be nothing other than the first servant of the nation, and that satisfies me. Once he is established, de facto, as a public functionary, salaried by the people, he is nothing but a servant of the people. I know that the people will remain protected on the passing of the functionary, who will find himself before the people who pay him, from whom he earns his living, to whom he owes his services, and who, therefore, are his master. This known, there is no more indecision in the city: public law is defined, the nation is queen and the civil servant is no more than a member of some hierarchy, remunerated by a political position, who owes everything to everyone, and to whom no one personally owes anything.

If democracy is the overthrow of a regime unworthy of office;

If democracy is the consecration of the dignity of the citizen;

If democracy is the nonexistence of ambition and crime, and at the same time a source of altruism and its virtues;

If democracy is the government of the people, the government by oneself for oneself;

If democracy is nothing but pure and simple rule and not a tyranny of administration;

It seems to me that I am speaking to the point.

XII

There are only two points among the people on which no divergence of opinion can exist, two points on which the good sense of all parties converge, regardless of the details.

Those two points are:

The repression of crime against the person and against property, and the defense of the territory.

Consult on this question all the sectarians of the social sects. Ask the socialists, the conservatives of this regime without name in the National Assembly, the Orleanists, the imperialists, or the legitimists—ask them, I tell you, if it is necessary to punish the assassin and the thief, and if it is necessary to defend the country's borders. All will respond unanimously in the affirmative. For all, regardless, the person and his belongings are sacred, and the national territory is inviolable. These are the common, universal doctrines; before them the parties step aside and fade away. At these ultimate points of public rendezvous, every Frenchman is in agreement and fraternally offers his hand.

So why should we seek the guardian spirit of a government outside this reservoir of common aspirations? Why should we permit the introduction of a dose of individual attachment to this potion prepared for the health of all?

Do you want a strong government with the consent of the public? A government whose existence is in no way threatened by the irritation and sudden attacks of minorities? Establish a serious governmental administration, a stranger to the petty squabbling and to the wretched ambitions of individuals; a national administration which includes the parties by their rational and sensible foundations, an administration whose power, though limited, extends to provide assistance in the execution of judgments decreed with a view to repress crimes and offenses against the person and against property, and to regulate the agreements and differences between our country and foreign nations.

A government whose powers are thus defined cannot excite the discontent of anyone without at the same time being condemned by everyone. Since it only concerns itself with issues on which everyone is in agreement, whether it acts well or it acts badly, it has no opposition. The sanction of its acts is in the conscience of all. To protect a government from revolutions, it must not be permitted to interfere in the real lives of its citizens, it must not be allowed to touch the instincts, the tastes, and the private interests of its citizens; because

these instincts, tastes, and interests are varied and changing, while the rules of an administration are uniform and fixed. A democratic government must remain forever a social abstraction.

If I am enjoined, by a higher authority, to think in one way rather than another, to trade on such a condition rather than some other, to instruct myself in one school or with such a book rather than in another school or with another book; to exercise one profession rather than another; to like this instead of liking that—that is to tyrannize me as much as if I were ordered to eat vegetables rather than meat, and a government that has powers over such details will not fail to annoy an intelligent people that possesses a sense of human dignity.

If we let our attention rest for a moment on the spirit of the institution that concerns me, it will be impossible for us to find a ministerial act that does not carry within its flanks the violation of a liberty. A minister (I speak of those whose administration applies to the instincts, to the tastes or to the interests), could only respect the public right—I speak not of the written law—on the condition that he did not act. Since, acting, he acts for everyone and in the place of everyone, it would be necessary for him to act well and without hurting anyone, that he has an instinct for current trends, a mind for current tastes and an awareness of the current interests of everyone. That being the case, one thing astonishes me: that there are still men sufficiently wicked or so profoundly unfit to not be able to shrink back from accepting a portfolio.

Who then would have suffered from the reduction of the apparatus of monarchy?

Some civil servants!

Who would have benefited from it? All France!

Who suffers from the preservation of the full apparatus of monarchy? All France!

Who benefits from it? Some civil servants!

I have said enough to make it understood, how, by taking the revolution of February at its word, it is possible to attain both sides of the democratic equation: individual freedom and cheap government.

XIII

But there are people who are still far from accepting this reasoning. The theoreticians, our masters, find ideas preferable to fact. And this doctrine that they maintain provides them with a dividend which strongly encourages them to continue maintaining it.

In their view, provided that tax payments continue and provided that the rain respects the words Republic and Liberty on the front of the public buildings, we are republicans and free.

These people are very bright!

As bright as that well-advised character in the Arab proverbs who, without touching the contents of a vase in any way, believed that by changing the label, he changed the liqueur.

As bright as those burlesque geniuses in the farces at the fair, who believe their clothes safe from catching alight because they wear the badge of a fire insurance company on their breast.

These people, I repeat, are extraordinarily bright!

Listening attentively to the intricacies of their arguments, we hear much spoken—and loudly—of the sovereignty of the people. Do you believe it has ever been permissible to insult the sovereign? You reply: No? Ah, well! That is because you were told that the people are sovereign and that you do not have the right to insult the people! I would like better, for my part, to deny the sovereignty of the people and believe in the sovereignty of the government that I am required to respect.

I say that I would rather believe in the sovereignty of government; but I am forced to believe in it, and everyone is forced to believe in it like me. I do not exist for myself. No one exists for themselves. Our existence is not at all our own. We do not live, whether civilly, commercially, industrially, religiously, or intellectually, except for the government.

Can we travel without a safe-conduct pass signed by it? Can we buy a property or make a transaction without it intervening? Can we profess a religion which it has not validated? Can we teach ourselves, except in the schools and with the books approved by its university? Can we publish anything other than what it permits us to publish? And to push these considerations of this regulating tyranny to the extremes of triviality: can we smoke a cigar which it has not itself sold to us? Are we lawyers, medics, teachers, merchants, artists, agents, town criers, without it giving us a license? No! We do not exist, I tell you; we are inert objects, parts belonging to a conscious and complicated machine whose crank handle is in Paris!

Well, I say that this is an irregular situation, a situation as embarrassing for the government as it is fatal for the nation.

I can understand that it was possible to for Richelieu to govern like this; the France of past centuries was completely and voluntarily under the crown of the king. But woe to those who do not take note of the difference in the times! Today, every citizen feels and deliberates for himself, and official acts are constrained from all directions!

XIV

There are, however, in the healthy part of the nation, in the core of good public sense, people who fear to look clearly at the situation; people who cannot

bring themselves to understand why, by desperately bleeding themselves to maintain five hundred thousand employees and as many soldiers, they hold back a million men from production and create, for the benefit of some Minotaur or another, an official parasitism whose formidable manner dries up in the confidence in the heart of the country, along with the credit that precisely the source on which this same parasitism comes to quench itself.

They perpetuate the crisis, and they perpetuate it because they are afraid!

They are afraid of the socialists, and they fear for their property; they are afraid for their religion, and they are afraid for their family!

They are afraid of socialists? ... Of which socialists are they afraid?

There are the socialists of the school of Fourier.

There are the socialists of the school of Pierre Leroux.

There are the socialists of the school of Proudhon.

There are the socialists of the school of Considerant.

There are the socialists of the school of Louis Blanc.

There are the socialists of the school of Cabet.

There are, in fact, socialists that I know, and then those that I do not know and that I shall never know, because socialism fragments, subdivides, diversifies itself and separates into factions, just like everything that is not defined. And socialism is not defined.

Socialism is, in short, a very obscure philosophical system, highly complicated, and extraordinarily confusing, which erudite men are obliged to study in minute detail, though most often they end up understanding nothing at all.

Socialism, according to what we can grasp from all its proposals, wants to make society a huge hive, into each pigeon-hole of which will be placed a citizen, who will be enjoined to remain silent and wait patiently, while alms are made of their own money. The major dispensers of these alms, supreme tax-collectors of universal revenues, will create a general staff, reasonably well endowed, which on getting up in the morning may deign to satisfy the public appetite, and which, if it sleeps in longer than usual, will leave thirty-six million without food.

Socialism is an attempt at geometric equilibrium whose demonstration—based on a principle of immobility—does not know to base itself on human societies, which are essentially active and progressive.

Socialism is an abstract speculation, just as the current administration is an abstract speculation; the people who do not understand the latter do not understand the former either. And the people never freely adopt what they do not understand.

Socialism, in short, wants to carry on the affairs of the people, and for that it has come too late, or I am much mistaken.

But the socialists are philosophers who have the same right to teach their doctrines as their adversaries have to teach theirs. Just as the people have the right to judge the latter, they have the right to appraise the former.

No one can put himself in the place of the people to pronounce condemnation or recognition of the excellence of a doctrine; since in that diversity of tastes and inclinations that dapple society, there is no doctrine that is bad for all, nor is there one that is good for all.

Tolerance, in theological order, has not resolved the problem of civic harmony; the problem also depends on tolerance in the social and political orders.

State religions have caused, down through the centuries, discords and massacres which we now find pathetic.

State doctrines caused so much blood to flow in our own time that our children will assemble to erect a monument to our shame.

We have eliminated state religions. Why do we wait to crush state doctrines?

If we do not see any problem with those who wish to have churches, temples or synagogues constructed, at their expense, on land that is their own. I do not see any problem at all with those who wish to construct convents, phalansteries or palaces, at their own expense, on land that is their own.

And if it is simple enough to let the Catholics, the protestants and the Jews have the right to maintain, at their own expense, in those churches, temples and synagogues, some priests, ministers and rabbis. It is just as simple for the monks, socialists and men of court to maintain, at their own expense, in the convents, phalansteries, and palaces, some superiors, patriarchs and princes.

All these things fall under the accommodations of taste, faith, and conscience for each one of us, and it is perhaps possible that one can be a monk, a socialist, a man of court and an excellent citizen at the same time, since the religions, which must remain outside the laws of the State, do not exempt anyone from obedience to the laws of the State.

But what is buffoonish and strange is the decision made by so many systems to attempt political campaigns, and their pretensions to make the whole country contribute to the costs of their establishment and the inauguration of their authority all in the name of the public and the nation!

We only need to provide a circus acrobat with five hundred thousand bayonets for the act to become a social doctrine and for the wishes and caprices of Pulcinella to be made into the laws of State. We are, certainly, very close to this, and it surprises me that we are not there already.

But I have digressed enough on this subject. Let us return.

XV

People fear for their property, their religion, and their family?

They are the ultimate intolerant sectarians, those who babble among us in the language—still intelligible, alas!—of the tyrants of humanity, and constantly repeat their disheveled chapters on the subject of religion, property, and the family.

These ridiculous defenders of God and of society lack the intelligence to understand that the ability to save what they claim necessarily implies the ability to lose it. They do not perceive, as seriously as they take their puerile Quixotism, that the guard they mount at the temple door and at home puts, in their eyes, God and society at their discretion. It just does not enter the heads of these big children, that by saying to God and to society "we have saved you from destruction," it is as if they were saying "it is because of us that you continue to exist; you owe us your life."

Do you see a mere organic apparatus, claiming responsibility the existence of God and society?

Do you see the moral and material universe under the control of a degenerate beast which could be finished off by a catarrh, or the flick of a finger?

Shame and pity!

Enough of this wretched and discordant bragging!

Enough of this grandeur founded on the abasement of the public!

Enough of this audacity built on fear!

Religion, property, and the family have survived Geneva rationalism, the philosophy of Voltaire, forfeiture agreements, and the dissolution of social ties from antiquity; religion, property, and the family are, in fact, unassailable by individuals. To defend them is to exploit them! To protect them is to plunder them!

How well the intriguers of every hue—those who believe themselves powerful enough to threaten these institutions as well as those who claim the ability to defend them, all those, in a word, who, living by intimidation and terrorism, have an interest in perpetuating universal panic—how well do all these intriguers know that religion, property, and the family have never had a more efficacious protector than time. There has, consequently, never been a possibility of their being attacked other than by time.

Time, without anyone taking any notice, without anyone formulating a complaint—time modifies them all: religion, property, and the family. The current state of the Church with its degenerate discipline and its neutrality in secular politics would make the audacious Hildebrand die of a fit of rage.

The current state of property, with its infinite divisions and the melancholy surrender of the chateaus, would bring despair to the great landlords of the last century.

The current state of the family, with its incessant displacement of individuals, its submission to the domestic yoke, and its separations resulting from cosmopolitanism, would profoundly wound the patriarchal traditions of our ancestors.

The goings-on of future generations, if we were to see them, would shock our prejudices, our customs, and our way of life.

Thus, everything changes without destroying itself, and the human spirit only accepts that for which it is prepared. Every day, it opens itself to new interests, to which it can accommodate itself without shock. After a period of time, the convergence of interests gives rise to a new institution, which, having arrived en bloc beforehand, would have surprised and injured everyone, but having arrived in a providential way will not hurt anyone and will satisfy all.

Let us speak and have no fear.

Fear is nothing but the condemnation of oneself, and once one is condemned there is no shortage of executioners.

XVI

The hypothesis of plunder has been put forward.

No one can believe in the corruptibility of the majorities, without denying at the same time human reason and the principle of its demonstration. If the majorities are incorruptible, they are equitable, since the basic law of equity is respect for acquired right.

Acquired right has been respected even among people where the means of acquisition have been denied to the majority. How can this right be violated among us, where the acquisition, although it is still impeded, can nonetheless be considered public.

Let no one speak to me of brigandage, when it is proven that it can only be carried out by minorities and that its exercise requires its organization.

Let no one speak to me of brigandage, when in the place of a plan by some impossible organization one brings me some shouts in the street or some argument at a club.

The people are not responsible for the insanity of a few spirits. The mad are the lost children of humanity.

Brigandage is not organizable. Or, rather, I am wrong—one can organize it, and here is how: put in each commune an authority more jealous of individual law than public law; establish in each arrondissement, in each department hateful magistrates, intolerant and fanatical; put at the top of this hierarchy a supreme head, blinded by the pride of domination and nourished by impious dogmas; give to this man four or five thousand armed men for support, and plunder as a rallying call and the violation of acquired rights is accomplished. But you say to me that this picture is of nothing but administrative

organization, founded on the constitution. I admit it, and it follows from it that a malefactor who does not embrace the administration of the State would be nothing to fear. But this also amounts to saying that this administration squashes us in some way, that we are at the complete mercy of anyone bold enough that chance can allow to happen.

Give the people plunder as a rallying call and this rallying call will wrap itself in the probity of numbers.

Let this rallying call go out from the administration, whose systematic webs embrace all individuals and all territory, and the supreme thought propagates like electricity to be lost in blood!

That is the only possible organization of brigandage, and that is, finally, a usage perhaps applied by the government of representative monarchies.

Do those that have fear that they might be individually plundered by those who have not? I sympathize with them, while still being able to condemn them, since by that fear they tell me what they would be disposed to do if they had nothing.

And, yet, they err. They are more honest than they think. They reason from the point of view of the needs that their fortunes has given them. I understand that if they were suddenly deprived of the satisfaction of those needs, which have become for them, in some way, natural, they would suffer, and that it is under this impression that they reason. But there is one thing that they forget, which is that if they had never had their fortunes, they would not have had their needs.

Is it not, moreover the case, by virtue of the same principle, that he who would come to dispossess me today, could himself be dispossessed tomorrow? And if things go on like that with each dispossessing the other, what is going to become of production?

Can such an absurd state of things be feared by sensible people, the day after a revolution where everything is at the discretion of the masses, and where perversity, in the state of emergency, finds itself drowned in integrity of the public?

If the majority, who do not own anything, had an instinct for plunder, the minority of proprietors would have long since lost all they have.

If there are criminals in our communities, let us count them. It is an easy job; and whether we find a few or do not find any, let us not believe that we exercise a monopoly on fairness: people are the same everywhere.

The domineering and insolent rage of a few men tear popular magnanimity to shreds and bring human character into disrepute. That is understandable. But the dogma of popular dishonesty is the rationale of tyrannies, and the security of tyrants is based on the hatred and mistrust of citizens among themselves.

As for myself, separating from the parties in order to remain human, I defend humanity with esprit de corps.

XVII

But I hear someone say:

If socialism comes to power, it could impose itself. That have expected that objection.

It is quite true that as philosophers, as apostles of a doctrine, as teachers, the socialists are not at all frightening. All of their opinions might be expressed without danger, seeing that these opinions do not aspire to government.

Well! Do we think that the good sense of the public would make justice laughable? Do we fear being governed by absurdity? Do we think that we could be governed in opposition to our good sense? Do we feel someone could violate or surprise our religion as soon as they come to govern us? If we admit that, then we are constantly in danger of being betrayed! I say that, as soon as we are in danger, we have already been betrayed. In matters of public security, probabilities are as good as certainties.

At the moment when we recognize that someone could do violence to us, then violence is done; this is an inevitable law, inescapable and inherent in all states of dependence.

It is therefore not the socialists that we need to fear, or that we need to exorcise. We must fear, we must exorcise the institution of government, because it can strike us. This institution alone is bad and dangerous, and whoever is put at the head of it will immediately be as dangerous as the socialists: first, because he can become the institution, and second, because he could be surprised and conquered by the socialists, and, finally, because his system could be as bad as, or worse than, theirs.

As long as there is no untrammeled freedom of opinion in France, in order for a doctrine to emerge, it will be forced to attempt the overthrow of the government, for its sole means of action will be to become official State doctrine, to govern; and as long as an official State doctrine governs, it will necessarily consider other doctrines as dangerous rivals and proscribe them.

This is why we continue to see these vicious struggles to which society lends its children and its money, these battles of scheming and ambition that I would call ridiculous if they weren't so atrocious, the outcomes of which makes criminality or heroism a mere question of the date. Those outcast today will be lauded tomorrow.

XVIII

It is therefore shown that socialism is no more to be feared in itself than any other philosophical doctrine. It can become dangerous only if it governs. That amounts to saying that nothing is dangerous which does not govern; from this it follows that whoever governs is already or can become dangerous—and the strict consequence is still that the nation can have no public enemy but the government.

That having been said, it is beyond doubt that the only important thing in modern times, as well as the only one against which our representatives have not prepared themselves, consists of simplifying the administrative organism to the degree demanded by individual liberty, which has been without guarantee until this day, and by the reduction of taxation, which will be impossible as long as we persist on the path already beaten by the governments with their fat budgets.

The present governmental institution is the same as that of last year, and that of last year encapsulates all the powers of Louis XIV, with the sole exception that the unity of action of the royal trust finds itself re-divided among six or seven ministerial departments set up by a parliamentary majority. Can we be a free people, as long as our entire existence, from the civil order to the hygienic order, is regulated in this way?

If we posit the guarantee of our individual liberty, if we resolve to move ourselves by our own power, the nation will acquire again that power of which it was relieved—which has been usurped from it—the power necessary, indispensable, for the balancing of popular prerogatives with governmental initiative.

If the nation recovered its strength, the assembly, which comes from its own ranks, would not soon forget its real master, where true sovereignty lies, and in the contract that would be set forth between France and its stewards, there would remain no means for those stewards to make themselves masters.

XIX

With governmental control, such as was held by fallen administrations and as we have preserved until the present time, we can boldly address a challenge to anyone who would seriously accept public functions, and thus diminish the personnel of two formidable armies that weigh on the liberties and the fortunes of France: the army of the offices and that of the barracks. We can challenge them, consequently, not to proclaim liberty—if they do that, I will laugh—but to put that liberty into action, and lead them to be something other than a nonentity.

Even more, we could challenge them to reduce taxes. Better still! We will forbid them to maintain tax revenue at sixteen hundred million francs, which is

a monstrous figure, but one which any finance minister could show to be insufficient.

Here, in its true colors, is what governmental control accomplishes: slavery and ruin.

That control, attributing to itself the right to rule according to its fancy both the movement and the thought of each citizen, has produced, in the moral order, a result not less deplorable. Truly! It has legalized everything.

Oh well! We would be strangely mistaken if we believed that legality carries within its litigious bowels the seeds of human integrity.

The legislation of France is not founded on the respect for individuals. It is founded on the principle of violation of public right, since lese-majesty—respect for the king, for the emperor, and for the government—is consecrated at its root.

The law has never had a social sanction among us. There has only been royal sanction and sanction by governmental supremacy, whose character has always been to protect the minorities.

Our legislation is therefore immoral, because it does not come from the people.

This legislation, moreover, necessarily coming after the vices that it seeks to suppress, is in reality nothing but the consecration of these vices. A code teaches me what I must avoid and what I must do; and in its spirit I practice right conveniently enough, when I abstain from wrong. However, this could introduce a fundamental illusion into public belief, since a clever man finds that, in the eyes of the law, he appears the same as a man who is truly virtuous.

A legally honest man is one against whom no grounds for complaint have been proven; but a sly one has a right to claim the benefits of the same definition! He who has carried out shadowy misdeeds, without witness and without coming to grief, skillfully avoiding the prohibitive letter of the law, and who enjoys the protection of the judge, is still a man against whom no grounds for complaint have been proven. This one, too, is an honest man! And he would be in great error to follow the law of social equity, the rule of morality, while the legal gospel is there before his eyes, while he has a clear field in unforeseen circumstances, while he is, with his ability, up to all foreseen circumstances, and for whom, ultimately, there is the friendship of the judge.

According to legality, therefore, equity goes according to the judgment of the court and the public conscience is taken over by the conscience of statute book.

Legality! But in pushing the social body of the people into pure and simple legality, governments have created and brought into the world a fraud, the poetry of pugilism.

The man, challenged to show genius, to avoid the traps set by the legislator, does not even bother to become a hypocrite. Having cleverly escaped the forethought of the law, he boasts of it as something to recommend to his

contemporaries; he has sailed close to the wind with the law and the victory is his: what a superior being!

It goes without saying that our legislation, made up of scholarly compendiums, whose scrutiny and interpretation is only for the erudite, has fallen short of the morality of the simple people who have always been and do not cease to be the quarry of the jurists.

Here, then, is what the much vaunted work of the legislative assemblies have provided us: a celebrated statute book, a gravestone raised by public grief on the tomb of virtue! Each moral failing has, on passing, come to write its formula in this glossy book, and, the more numerous the formulas, the more beautiful the statute book. But, also, the more beautiful the statute book, the more perverted the society.

XX

Something we should never tire of repeating, is that morality can only exist among free people, and free people are those whose government, speaking very little of the national language, speaks foreign languages primarily; the government of democracies is above all diplomatic.

Among us, those who speak of government speak of the Republic, the State, society. In fact these words—the red Republic, the tricolor Republic, etc.—which try our patience, signify nothing but the red government, the tricolor government, etc. As far as the administration is concerned, the government is the Republic.

Who do you think is wrong?

The men of today, quite different indeed from those of times gone by, sense, though they understand it, that their being and their property are entirely independent of the acts of the administration. They feel it so much that on letting, as a result of custom, a government establish itself on a model of past times, they effectively withdraw from it, granting it neither their confidence, nor their material aid, except grudgingly, when faced with force and fear. They feel it so strongly that they take it upon themselves to control the acts of the administration in the public sphere. But a power whose acts are controlled has forfeited its rights, since its authority is undermined.

But this error, which consists of hiding the whole of society behind the symbol of government, is strongly embedded in public beliefs.

The influence of tradition has made of it an article of national faith, which everyday finds itself in more direct opposition with the public will and public sentiment.

Thus, everyone knows that a popular movement puts nothing in danger but the official fortune of a few men. Despite public bills and proclamations saying

that the movement puts society in danger, the nation allows it without further consideration.

If I wanted to adopt the reasoning of skilled people, who use the powers that society confers upon them for their own interests, it would lead me to a curious conclusion, a disappointing commentary on the tumultuous spectacle of revolutions!

XXI

I have seen, in the few years that my memory spans, a very respectable number of popular movements.

When these movements fail at the first step, their leaders are arrested, thrown into jail, tried and convicted as criminals of the State. The proclamations posted on every wall in Paris and sent to the very smallest township tell society that it has just been saved.

Certainly, at this news, I would logically have to think that if, by some sort of misunderstanding, authority had been overwhelmed, if the army had weakened, if the movement had gone beyond the law, that would have been the end of society. France would have been pillaged, sacked, set ablaze, lost!

When, however, these movements, mastering all obstacles, overturning authority, passing the armed forces have followed their course and arrived at their goal, then their leaders are carried in triumph, hailed as heroes and raised to the highest heights of the judiciary. The proclamations posted on every wall in Paris and sent to the very smallest township tell society that it has just been saved. Thus society, incessantly in danger, is always saved!

Who saves it? Those that put it in danger.

Who puts it in danger? Those that save it.

This means that society is never more completely lost than when it is saved.

And that it is never better saved than when it is lost.

As I said, if I adopt the reasoning of those skilled people who make use of the power with which society endows them for their own personal ends, it leads me to a curious conclusion!

Curious, indeed, but logically explicable by the facts.

Thus, taking us back to 23 February, according to the Journal des débat, Le Constitutionnel, Le Siècle and all the other newspapers that defend social order, it is understood that the agitators in Paris at that time were nothing but unsanctioned troublemakers who wanted nothing less than the subversion, the overturn and the ruin of society.

These unsanctioned troublemakers triumphed the next day and, immediately, every citizen said what they liked, wrote, printed what they liked, did what they liked, went where they liked, went out and came in when they liked; enjoyed, in a word, their natural liberty in every way possible in society, amid the most complete security, favored by the most fraternal urbanity. Society was, in short, saved by and for each of its members.

Well, this happened the day when, according to the friends of order, society was lost.

Thus, again, to the voice of the defenders of social order became added, for reasons known to itself, that of Le National: the June agitators were nothing but

unsanctioned troublemakers who wanted nothing less than the subversion, the overturn and the ruin of society. These troublemakers failed and, immediately, every citizen was barracked in their own home, scrupulously examined on their own premises, disarmed, thrown in jail by a simple ill-willed denunciation, reduced to the most complete and absolute silence, placed under the unruly surveillance of the state-of-siege police and governed by the sharp, pointed and undiscerning law of the sword. Society was, therefore, lost by and for each of its members.

Well, this happened the day when, according to the friends of order, including Le National this time, society was saved.

From this I am forced to conclude, just as I have already said and proven, that society is never more completely lost than when it is saved and that it is never better saved than when it is lost.

This is, oh France, the spectacle, as delicate as it is subtle, that plays out in front of other nations and before posterity, in the most intelligent country in the world.

What an indecorous comedy!

XXII

I do nothing more here than to state the facts; I note them and report them as they appear to me. Regarding the commentary, I simply repeat what I have said elsewhere: I do not believe at all in the efficacy of armed rebellion, and for the simple reason that I do not believe in the efficacy of any armed government.

An armed government is a brutal entity, since its only principle is force. An armed revolution is a brutal thing, because it has no other principle than force.

But when we are ruled by the arbitrariness of barbarism, we must balk and resist like barbarians; and, as for the arms we cross over our chests, the parties would do well to oppose weapons.

To the degree that government, instead of improving conditions generally, only improves the condition of a few people, a revolution, the inevitable aim of such a government, will only be a substitution of persons instead of a change of conditions.

Armed governments are factional powers, party administrations.

Armed revolutions are factional wars, party campaigns.

The nation is as much a stranger to armed government as it is to armed revolution; but if it is the case that a revolutionary party is more immediately worried by the governing party than the nation, it is also the case that one day the nation, worried in its turn, will murmur about the government, and it will be in that precise moment when it wins the moral support of the people, that the revolutionary party will wage battle.

From there, this kind of public recognition leads to bloody rabble-rousing, which, under the pompous title of revolution, hides the impertinence of a few valets rushing to become masters.

When the people have understood the position that has been reserved for them in these Saturnalias that they pay for, when they have realized the ignoble and stupid role that they have been made to play, they will know that armed revolution is a heresy from the point of view of principles; they will know that violence is antipodal to right; and once the people are focused on the morality and inclinations of the violent parties, whether the governmentalists or the revolutionaries, there will be a revolution among them brought about by the force of right alone: the force of inertia, the denial of assistance. In the denial of assistance will be found the repeal of the laws on legal assassination and the proclamation of equity.

I see this supreme act of national sovereignty happening, not as a calculated result, but as an expression of the law of necessity, as an inevitable product of an administrative greed, of the extinction of credit and the doleful arrival of destitution. This revolution, which will be French and not solely Parisian, will tear France from Paris to lead it back to the municipalities; then, and only then, will national sovereignty become fact, since it will be founded on the sovereignty of the commune.

At these words—sovereignty of the commune—all the great minds, who have dragged patriotism to the bar of vocabulary to make the Republic a question of words, exclaim in admiration the thrice holy name of Unity.

Unity! The time is ripe speak about it. In the midst of the divisions tearing the country apart, I ask what has been made of national unity by the lame posers who speak in its name!

Unity! I know of only one way to destroy it, to desire to constitute it by force. If someone had the power to act on the planets, and if, under the pretext of constituting the unity of the solar system, he tried to make them adhere by force to the center, he would destroy the equilibrium and reestablish chaos.

There is someone who values unity more than the partisans of unity; that someone is the French people; and if France does not understand that she must promptly leave the belly of the administration, or else be dissolved there, that will not be my fault, nor that of the coarse peritoneum which processes their digestion.

XXIII

Let us say, moreover, that the result of an armed revolution, supposing that the revolution is generously interpreted by a kindhearted man, all-powerful over opinion, honest, disinterested and democratic like Washington, the result of an armed revolution, I have said, can turn to the profit of public law.

The tyrants overturned, before others come to take their place, there always appears, on top of the ruins of the tyranny, a man greater than the others, a man whom everyone sees, whom everyone hears, and he is the master of the debris; it is up to him to scatter them or reconstruct them.

If Monsieur de Lamartine had had the genius of action, as he had genius of matters of intelligence, 24 February would have been the date of the French Republic, instead of being nothing but an occasion for invective.

France, on that day, expected everything from that man, to whom national sympathies had spontaneously handed over the powerful steering of the destiny of the people.

He only had to say to us in the harmonious rhythm of his beautiful voice: "The government of the king is abolished: France is no longer at the Hôtel de Ville!"

"Your masters have gone and they will not be replaced!"

"Their law was in force; it is in force no longer. It will not return!"

"You are returned to yourselves; the foreigner will learn from me that you are free."

"Keep a watch over yourselves; I'll keep a watch on the borders!"

Certainly, after declarations so substantial, our representatives, whoever they had been, would not have lost sight of the fact that they had to define national law, and not the frenzied law of governments.

Perhaps Monsieur de Lamartine would have perished, a victim of ambitious men left without prey. The despair of the apprentice tyrants might perhaps have been unleashed on him; but his death, like that of all great citizens, would have been fecund! And since, as he said, ideas grow in human blood, his would have remained at the beginning of the free era, as an eternal protestation against the tyranny of the delivered.

Unfortunately, instead of scattering the elements of despotism, he set about collecting them together again in order to reassemble them; today the building is complete except for the keystone. It is not he that lives in it, but it is inhabited; not too much worse, perhaps, but not much better either.

Ah, well! The time has come to be done with words and act!

The time has come to know what democracy wants to say!

The time has arrived for all Frenchmen, in whose arteries still beats a little Gallic blood, who, from Diocletian to Charlemagne, protested against the tyranny of the empire, to assume their position as free citizens, and to call to account the cowardice and the inability of the "men of the people," the Republican individualities, for our collapsed credit, our vanished capital, our paralyzed industries, our lay-offs, our extinguished trade, and our products without market; for our France, finally, so unproductive, so alienated, so venal, so prostituted, so debased, so inhospitable, so foreign to ourselves, so polluted by the tax authorities, and so close to contempt for its children, that they will soon

not have enough love in their hearts to set their courage against attempts by their ravishers!

The time has come, for we are facing a decisive spectacle:

On one side there is the government which defies the nation;

On the other, there is the nation which defies the government.

It is absolutely inevitable that either the government will devour the country or the country will absorb the government.

ANSELME BELLEGARRIGUE

—

A Gascon Minister plenipotentiary of the Republic of San-Salvador at Paris

—

Joseph Noulens.

We are going to present a sketch of a bizarre and independent type who, through the adventures of his cosmopolitan life and especially the singularity of his ideas, might have obtained and maintained a great vogue in British society. Among us, his way of life passed unnoticed. That difference in taste between the two nations arises, as we have said elsewhere, from the breakdown of individual originality by the weight of a leveling unity. So we have different sorts. In England, they favor bizarre natures with a gracious and even admiring welcome; in France, public indifference disdainfully turns its back. That is why Bellegarrigue, the present representative of the little republic of San-Salvador at Paris, has not been the object of a single biographical sketch by his fellow citizens. Across the Channel, every writer would have craved the patriotic honor of composing a review of his exceptional organization. Perhaps these encouragements would have made our character like the curious and interesting figure of the Earl of Chesterfield. We could find more than one analogy between the ambassador of Georges II to The Hague and the current consul of San-Salvador. What allows us to compare them, in certain respects, is a great appetite in both for sensation and applause, a perfect courtesy compensating for a great egoism, their common skill sharpening ironic sallies, the reduction of the most extravagant sophisms into philosophical formulas, artificial thought substituted by habit for the natural spirit, the need to legitimate by a specious logic all irrational things, and finally their enmity for tradition and their intolerance towards opponents. What distinguishes these two men is that the role of the British diplomat was lofty and brilliant, while that of our Gascon has so far been humble and obscure. The first was privileged with a colossal fortune, while the second was only endowed with destitution. The first was a Don Juan in the aristocratic world, while the other was only a tamer of coarse virtues. In their respective spheres of gallantry, both manifested an excessive boldness. Chesterfield was always considered the highest expression of outward elegance. Bellegarrigue showed great audacity in his costumes. During his stay in Paris, he came from the Rue Royale, St.-Honoré, to the Latin Quarter to visit me in footed trousers and a dressing gown. I will not try today to justify the parallel of which I have just given a rough sketch. I will content myself with writing, as my memory dictates, what it wants to furnish me about the humorist of the Gers.

The little village of Monfort,[2] already known for having been the birthplace of the father of the two Chéniers, also saw the birth of Bellegarrigue. His birth can be traced back to about 1810. I measure his age without the help of the civil state, according to a simple physiognomic deduction. When he had completed his classical studies, he opted for the thankless career of letters and began his apprenticeship by some sessions of [poetic] improvisation. Eclipsed by [Eugene] Pradel, he gave up poetry and opened a prose workshop which took the name of Mosaïque du Midi. That review was compromised by its lack of historical scruples, by its irreverence with regard to authenticity. The speculation collapsing, Bellegarrigue sold his publication to Paya, Toulousain editor, for a sum of around three thousand francs. The new proprietor did not show great diligence paying off the old; he always gave him a thousand reasons and never the thousand crowns. The seller, to avenge himself for the tergiversations of his debtor, published in l'Epingle, a little satirical journal that he had also created, an article under the title: PAYA NE PAYA PAS ("Paya Did Not Pay").

His little charivaric paper having been hounded and suppressed, our subject emigrated voluntarily to North America, where he held several jobs in turn, among them, journalist and merchant of mules. But weary of wandering from market to market and from hope to hope, he resolved to try the ecclesiastical profession, which gave him some guarantee of stability. He entered the Jesuit monastery founded in the vicinity of New York by P. Boulanger, the old antagonist of Mr. Thiers. In this confined existence, as much as in liberty, he found the dregs at the bottom of the cup and the ashes mixed with the bread. He heard the voice of the passions speak even more terribly to him in the silence of his cell.

One morning, having listened to that wicked internal advisor, he escaped out the door and went to meet a lovely Irish woman, whom he brought with him to pick wild flowers in the thickets of the isle of Manhattan. Returning to France, a little while before the February Revolution, he sought the votes of the citizens of the Gers, who were indifferent to his appeal. Some time later, he founded, in Toulouse, in partnership with Barrousse, former commission of the provisional government in our department, the journal La Civilisation, where he developed the ideas of self government and negation of authority. A rupture with his partner made him return to Paris. A literary and political corporation, formed to publish inexpensive popular works, received him among its members. The only brochure signed with his name that saw the light of day was Jean Mouton et le Percepteur. This group of writers was not long in being dissolved by the postal laws. Bellegarrigue published the program of a collection which died of starvation at the end of two issues. The first number began with this scarcely

---

[2] Near Fleurance (Gers).

spiritualist phrase and sentiment: I have trained my enthusiasm to only leap in the space of a number or in the exergue of an écu. Our compatriot juggled with paradox in matchless fashion. It was he who defined the mind: The electricity that comes from a good digestion. We have reached 1850.

At that time, Etex called and commissioned him to write his biography, promising him a suitable compensation. A manuscript volume of the notice was conveyed to the one who was its object and subject. The sculptor was satisfied; but the writer was not satisfied as to the wage. I was charged by Bellegarrigue to carry his ultimatum to the member of the Institute. There was nothing heroic, to content of the note was roughly this: To Monsieur Etex, of the Academy. I am astonished but not surprised by your practice, the vulgar artists can never present themselves nobly; so you need not fear that I will demand of you the impossible.

I was unaware of the contents of the message; and attributing to it a chivalrous character, I did not hesitate to deliver it. I have always regretted having known too late the terms of the note, for certainly I would not have consented to be its bearer. I entered the workshop of the author of the bas-relief of the Arc de Triomphe with the reverent fear of a novice who sets foot for the first time in the sanctuary. My imagination, idealizing in advance the famous sculptor, had lent him a distinctive physiognomy, radiant with glints of genius. My optimism was profoundly sobered in seeing a fellow with a face marked by small pox and a brow covered by a grecque bourgeoise from which swung a tassel. He told me some of the obstacles which had halted his good will towards his biographer. His failure to keep his word was motivated by some genuine reasons:—accommodations at the Palais Mazarin taken from him; the government was not very anxious to give work to a man accused of having more enthusiasm for revolutionary ugliness than plastic beauty.—That confidence wounded me: I left with feelings very different those preceding my entry, for my admiration had been succeeded by compassion.

Mr. Amédée Jacques, fallen from his professorial chair and silenced, had just founded a bi-monthly review: La Liberté de penser. That independent organ welcomed Bellegarrigue's Femmes d'Amérique. Our writer, in that study, bringing to light feminine education and the domestic role of the wife and mother in the United States. That article was sanctioned by public favor, and later converted into a volume. The idea was powerful and full of potential, but the form, harsh and angular, like a cluster of crystals, especially inspired indigestion in the readers rendered dull by the sweets of the literary confectioners. That category of minds, more straight-laced than epicurean[3], did not prevent the success of the

[3] The wordplay involved in the French phrase, "plus gourmés que gourmets," is, alas, lost in translation.

book. The author, emboldened by the kindness of serious critics, submitted another work to the Révue des Deux-Mondes. In the first part, the Mississipi River, allegorized in the ancient manner, was nonchalantly leaning on his elbow and half-extended on a mat of aquatic plants. The great humanized river proudly displayed its virile nudity and titanic musculature beneath the rays of the sun and the watchful eyes of the riverain nymphs. Mr. Buloz restored the manuscript to the descriptor, charging him with immorality. Having no success in that genre, the Gascon man of letters attempted the exploitation of another; he became a collaborator in the Palais de Cristal, a collection similar to the l'Illustration, and especially intended to showcase the industrial and artistic products which abounded at the British exposition. Although prior examination was necessary to undertake such an analysis, the critic was never allowed to make the Channel crossing. When someone ironically praised his intuitive qualities and his telescopic powers, he replied that he was too wrapped up in Paris with the account of the English exhibition to have the time to go all the way to London.

His realism was unbridled; he declared that all the noble faculties should be the vassals of the stomach, that the development of well-being was the only concern allowed to humanity. He also completely denied politics, which he considered as unhealthy from the social point of view. According to him, activity alone, spurred by interest, could redeem men. He refused, on the grounds of dignity, every governmental protectorate; let each, he said, work their individual redemption, and the redemption of all will be accomplished. As a consequence of these principles, he anathematized the struggle of parties, and accused them of sucking the strength and vitality from the nation, of being detrimental to both collective and private fortunes. Once, while he preached this doctrine, he was questioned by a clubist who declared his maxims strange and incomprehensible. I will be more comprehensible and more demonstrative, Bellegarrigue went on solemnly, I reject politics because it has no influence on the growth of artichokes, or on the flowering of lentils.

In the manner of Plato, he expelled the poets from the republic, without even giving them, like the Greek philosopher, a crown of flowers. He had, besides, a sort of rabid reaction to books he considered parasites invading his individual ideas. He claimed that a man must pull everything from himself, like a spider that spins its webs in its head. According to him, reading dulls and bastardizes the potential. One never saw even a booklet on his work-table After the publication of my Tropicales, I sent him a copy. He responded: My dear Noulens, your volume must be perfect. However, I have not assured myself of it. You know I can not bring myself to arm myself with a wooden knife to cut the leaves of any work, I am always afraid of violating other people's property. A mind so utilitarian must one day necessarily find its place in the materialist societies of North America.

That robust and fertile intelligence, capable of large conceptions, as a result of some unknown fatality, produced, in all, only some stillborn productions in the literary order. Then, passing from the theory of positivism to the practice, he put down his pen without and took up the caduceus. He bought some parcels of land around Paris, which he parceled out and then sold; he combined this industry with a monopoly on billposting in the Salle Musard. He had divided the walls into little squares which as frames for advertisements glorifying certain trades in the capital. When he had supplied himself with a little pile, he made a second transatlantic voyage, and went to offer the assistance of his experience to the little republic of San Salvador, which, appreciating his merits, has quite recently sent him to Paris with the title of minister plenipotentiary. Our compatriot is today the representative of that state, and also the agent of a house on the shores of the Pacific which conducts with Europe a great commerce in pineapples.

Source: Revue d'Aquitaine et du Languedoc, 6 (1862) 40-47.

A CORVUS EDITION
libertarian-labyrinth.org