

Georges Duchêne,

# Government

— and other texts from the *Voix du Peuple* (1849-1850)

*La Voix du Peuple*, December 10, 1849.

## Government.

### I.

#### WHAT IT COSTS TO BE GOVERNED.

— You see, Eveillé, you can say all you like: I am as republican-socialist as you, and yet I want a government. Imagine all the benefit we would get from the State, if we had at our disposal the resources it has at its disposal. Only the State is capable of devoting millions to sponsoring worker associations and organizing credit. Instead of tearing the machine apart, it makes much more sense to use it.

— Ah! Baptiste, you tell us some great stories. Where did you see that the government was rich?

— Why, in Cabet, Louis Blanc and a host of other less famous people who know what it's all about. And it only takes a little common sense to understand that. An administration that has at its disposal a billion and a half annually can, without embarrassment, give the workers around fifty million a year to organize labor.

— You don't understand anything, my boy. You are so stuck that I dare not continue the discussion. Here, come and have a bottle of wine. We will be sheltered from the cold and the wind and we will be able to chat longer.

— I accept, although I don't like the cabaret. But wood and candles are so expensive that unless you go to bed soon after dark, or shiver in your attic, you are forced to go to public establishments. So the aristos reproach us for being debauched.

— Don't talk to me about Paris. Everything there is overpriced. Long live my village, long live my town; that's where beans and potatoes are cheap. And the wine, my friend, the wine! Six farthings per liter, and first-rate! Much better than the *petit bleu* at twelve from the corner stall.

— It is understandable; there is no excise there. This excise duty is a revolting inequity! When the Social Revolution comes, we will abolish it. Right, Eveillé?

— And the beverage tax, Baptiste! The indirect tax on wine!

- Yes, yes, all these contributions based on the worker's necessities must disappear.
- First-rate! Baptiste, first-rate! you see, I am dedicated to the emancipation of wine, because it is treated by the government like the proletarians are by the capitalists. Wine is oppressed.
- My God! All you talk about is wine. But meat, then, and salt, sugar, oil, coffee, tobacco, soap, wood, candles... Everything, finally, everything that serves the consumption of the worker must be freed from taxes.
- So, you are in favor of reducing taxes? I bet, if you were a farmer, that you would also ask for a reduction in the land tax.
- I don't need to be a farmer to ask that we lighten the burdens that are crushing our rural brothers. Everyone must have their share of the reforms. Moreover, when the peasant is less burdened with taxes and mortgages, he will sell his wheat cheaper and the entire population will gain.
- You don't understand anything about politics.
- My policy is to have work and life at a good price.
- You egoist, go on!
- How am I an egoist! Eveillé, you are making fun of me.
- Not at all. Don't you know that the tax on drinks brings in more than 100 million per year to the Treasury, not counting the excise duties; the salt tax, 60 million; the duties on sugars, 50 million; the tobacco authority, 120 million; to be in the world and to have furniture, the French pay 60 million; to see clearly at home and breathe, 35 million; to work, 47 million; property in land produces 280 million.
- Enough of that, Eveillé; you know the numbers, and you abuse them. All the taxes that you have just listed must be abolished, razed: there is no bargaining. Otherwise, the Revolution in perpetuity. I will rise up in insurrection until the Social arrives.
- Will *your* Social abolish the contributions I just mentioned?
- Yes, and many more.
- *Yours*, it will never do this stupid thing.
- Eveillé, you are joking. I will not say another word.
- I have never been more serious. I reiterate to you that *your* Social will not eliminate one tax, on the contrary. *Mine*, at the right time.
- So there are two Socials now?
- There are thousands and hundreds of Socials!
- I'm one of the good ones.
- Not true; you're beating yourself up
- The proof?
- You demand the abolition of taxes.
- So I'm the truest of the true.

— Heh, Joker! How will you make up the budget of your ministry of labor and progress? With what will you sponsor the associations? You want to take away from the State, at once, two thirds of its resources.

— Ah, devil!... Bah! It will have plenty left... All the same, it will have to be a big blow to it.

— You scratch your ear, so you are sunk.

— Not at all! I protest against your conclusion. We will clip the nails of the big *winner*s, and we will ignore those we don't care about; we will dismiss the army: that's savings.

— Savings! It needs them devilishly, your State. Do you know what it owes?

— Goodness! No.

— Well! Neither does the State. It only has to pay 395 and a half million per year in interest to its creditors, and 57 million in pensions to its servants.

— A thousand thunderclaps! That's a lot of capital, that rent. But you're exaggerating. Where did you get these numbers?

— In a kind of almanac for *aristos*, written by Malthusians, which is called the *Annuaire de l'économie politique*. It gives the exact figure: 395,451,860 francs in annual pensions; this represents a debt that the most moderate estimate at 8 billion; and I suspect they don't count everything.

— We call these, you say, *political economies*?

— Well done! Baptiste, well done! It is indeed the great politicians who have put things in this state.

— Ah! If this mess was the work of the democs-socs, how the reacs would scream!

— From 1814 to 1848, according to the same almanac, 10 billion 886 million 8 thousand 860 francs in interest was paid to government creditors. (1)

— But then, they find themselves more than reimbursed, since they are only owed 8 billion... and the cents.

— Baptiste, how long has your mother lived in the same house?

— 35 years.

— What is her rent?

— 200 francs.

— How much is the building valued at?

— In your village you could have a shack like that for 100 crowns. But here it could have been worth 2,000 francs.

— Well, my boy, in 35 years, your mother has paid 6,000 francs in rent. Is she the owner?

— My word, no! She is so far from being the owner that before the Revolution, they wanted to increase the rent or give her notice.

— We workers always finance and we never pay off. The state is in the same position. Despite having paid, in 35 years, nearly 11 billion in interest, it still owes the same capital.

I must tell you that these debts did not prevent the honest people of the restoration from spending, in addition, 15 billion 931 million 408 thousand 697 francs in taxes; Louis-Philippe, 24 billion 833 million 617 thousand 814 francs: Together, 40 billion. 765 million 26 thousand 541 francs.

— God! How expensive a government is!

— The fact is that you have to be rich to do without this fantasy.

— But at least it brought in something?

— Oh! Yes, fabulous things. First, we paid, as I already mentioned, 10 billion 886 million in rents. (Let's leave aside the hundreds of thousand francs; they are only cents in the face of such figures.) The kings, princes, princesses, princelings, their whores, their valets, their beasts and their castles absorbed 948 million 700 and so many a thousand francs.

— Two chapters of very little interest to the People.

— The people? Here is their business: they provided soldiers for a sum of 9 billion 243 million 322 thousand 575 francs; sailors for 3 billion 683 million 300 thousand and francs. They were given, in prefects, jailers, snitches, portraits of Louis XVIII, of Charles X, of Louis-Philippe. funeral services, parties, prisons, town sergeants, etc., a value of 3 billion 245 million 684 thousand 670 francs. Magistrates and prosecutors handed down judgments and made indictments for more than 691 million. The tax collectors, collectors, receivers, payers, cellar rats and other financial people, have eaten away 5 billion 290 million. Diplomacy is the cheapest: France only paid 320 million 829 thousand 994 francs for its place in the European concert. The clergy did not cost the State more than 1 billion; but the priests also have their small bonuses, the flow of masses and indulgences. We had non-values, reimbursements to be made of sums unduly received, encouragements and bonuses to various people, for a total of 1 billion 426 million and a half. — Let's count a little on our fingers.

#### FROM 1814 TO 1848

|                            |                |
|----------------------------|----------------|
| Annuities and pensions,    | 10,886,008,860 |
| Endowments of princes,     | 918,797,742    |
| War,                       | 9,243,322,575  |
| Navy,                      | 3,683,324,559  |
| Management and finance,    | 5,290,039,138  |
| Ministry of the Interior,  | 3,245,684,670  |
| Justice,                   | 691,825,706    |
| Foreign Affairs,           | 320,829,994    |
| Reimbursement and bonuses, | 1,426,533,552  |
| Cults (2).                 | 1,000,000,000  |
|                            | -----          |
| Total.                     | 36,736,367,096 |

To which must be added:

|  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| Costs of invasion, in 1814<br>and 1815, and other royal kindnesses | 1,491,231,887<br>----- |
| Total.   | 38,227,598,983         |

There you have it, I hope, 38 billion (not counting the cents), which has made France flourishing.

— But you have not cited any useful works in all this. And yet, here we are already at 38 billion... out of 40.

— Hold on :

|   |   |
|---|---|
| The restoration has spent,<br>Louis-Philippe, | 15,931,408,697<br>24,833,617,844<br>----- |
| In total,                                     | 40,765,026,541                            |
| We already know the use of,                   | 38,227,598,983<br>-----                   |
| There remains,                                | 2,537,127,558                             |

The Power eats up everything that taxes provide it; so that, for public works and education, it is forced to resort to loans. This explains the enormity of the national debt. And it is my opinion that if the French people, instead of giving themselves the luxury of a government, had devoted their 40 billion to works of general utility and the education of children, they would be infinitely better off, and what's more, would not owe anything to anyone. What do you think, Baptiste?

— At least the State has ensured public tranquility and security: it is a real service; only I find it expensive, extraordinarily expensive.

— Order, my friend! Order above all and at all costs! Are you naive! Take a look: I don't want to tell you old stories. You are so infatuated with your line of government that you don't realize that, from 1814 to 1848, an era of tranquility par excellence, an era of strong powers if there ever was on, we had two royal restorations and one imperial, two invasions, two great Revolutions, I don't know how many insurrections, and a host of plots and conspiracies whose number the devil would not know. Security is such — thanks to the government — that in a single year (1846) the assize courts tried 6,685 accused of crimes against people and property; the criminal courts, 207,476 defendants; the simple police courts, 236,255 delinquents; and the justices of the peace made 2,195,575 citations. These numbers grow every year, from which you can conclude that fraternity, morality, security take on a gigantic development under the beneficent, salutary, civilizing influence of authority. Oh, what a good story is that of the king of the frogs.

- (1) The billion emigrants have paid their rents to the State.
- (2) Religious expenses were not counted separately

## II.

### SMALL ACTS OF CUNNING OF BIG FINANCIERS.

The important thing is to make taxpayers swallow the budgetary pill, to extract their money from them, to finally fleece them without making them scream too much.

All the calculations, all the combinations of the political financiers are based on the probity of the People, on their horror of bankruptcy. They say to themselves: "Once the expense has been made, we are sure that the nation will pay. So let's have good food and merrymaking."

But you should not expose yourself to the lash. It would be imprudent to defy morality with too much cynicism: the public conscience, indignant, would demand reparation. But how can honesty and the power be reconciled?

A wonderful invention has come to ward off the dangers; it is called *the art of grouping numbers*.

Entanglement is its method; the more confused the accounts, the better things are. The taxpayer must only be able to read the total from the payment card.

Here are some samples of the know-how of those skilled in this art.

Two categories of expenditure are established; 1. *ordinary services*; 2. *extraordinary services*. Public works, war, the navy, the interior, have two budgets: the first pays for the administration itself, the bureaucracy; the second is assigned to real works, bridges, roads, canals, monuments, fortifications, construction of ships, ports, embankments, etc.

The *extraordinary service* is, as we can guess in advance, the ink bottle, the sanctuary of fiddling and extortion. Many times, during the reign of Louis-Philippe, opposition speakers and writers came to reveal, from the podium and in the press, scandalous embezzlement. The Ministry of the Navy has made itself, above all, a celebrity of this kind. Indiscreet people have often wondered if the number of vessels leaving our shipyards really represented the value of the allocations voted for this purpose. And ministers have quite regularly found themselves attacked and convicted, through these sorts of investigations, of having diverted considerable sums from their legal destination.

Such an action, in a mere mortal, would be punished with forced labor. In the governmental world, one does not conquer dignities and titles in any other way.

The first mystification is therefore the *extraordinary service*. The People willingly bleed a few hundred million to have local streets, roads, monuments, schools. They pay with resignation. Then we give them an apothecary account, and that's that.

However, if ministers made too frequent use of the breach of trust, they would not be able to defy public opinion for long. So they found a way to legalize their shenanigans: and

the *floating debt* became, in their hands, the most energetic means of deception that could be invented.

The State, like the spendthrift sons of a family, trades with its future and eats its wheat in the bud. It subscribes to term notes from its creditors, bills of exchange with various maturities and bearing interest. These are *treasury bonds*. There are usually 2 to 300 million in circulation.

The State receives funds of all kinds on deposit, the interest of which it pays. Thus the money from savings banks, the savings of sailors and soldiers, the *masse*, as it is called in the regiment, the funds voted by municipal councils for municipal expenses, the capital available from philanthropic and mutual relief funds, retirement and others, are accepted by the treasury, which undertakes to reimburse the depositors when they request it.

The receivers general, the payers, the accountants, — people of finance and agio, — advance to the public fund, — under the benefit of a discount of course, — the sums it needs. We'll pay later.

Many privileged industries can only be carried out after the posting of a bond: notaries, solicitors, bailiffs, stockbrokers, etc., are in this category. Finance receivers and public works contractors are also required to pay a sum as a guarantee of their management. Daily, weekly and monthly newspapers are in the same situation.

The litigants, — despite the gratuity of justice, — must, for bad jurisdiction, deposit, before the judgment, a sum equal to the *maximum* costs.

Treasury bonds, savings banks, municipal resources, advances from receivers and accountants, capital from relief funds, military assets, sureties, deposits, — all debts whose payment can be requested at every moment, — compose what is called the *floating debt*.

The State always spending more than it has in revenues, we can see that the funds are hardly safe in its hands. So it frequently happens that the enormity of the floating debt makes it impossible for the treasury to meet its debt.

Then, the minister presents to the chambers a statement of his distress. He justifies his expenses as best he can. Then if the members of the opposition raise their voices to object, there is an irresistible argument to respond to them: the expenses have been incurred, there are only two ways to finish: EITHER PAY, OR GO BANKRUPT. The next day, the ministerial newspapers did not fail to shout loudly: the radicals want bankruptcy. The integrity of the taxpayer revolts at the idea of a bankruptcy of the State, and the unfaithful administrators are forgiven.

What did I say? All the friends of the press and the platform celebrate the intelligence, the courage, the firmness of the minister who did not despair of the country in the face of a considerable deficit; he is proclaimed a great genius, the savior of civilization and national honor. — Pay, taxpayer; always pays; funny money and big speeches will never fail you.

Political financiers, whose bows are equipped with more than one string, do not always resort to the same expedient to free themselves. We would see the tip of the ear too clearly,



and Martin-Baton would one day escape by playing hard and long, to the applause of all the tax payers.

The simplest, but also the most odious means is to increase contributions. It is only used at the last extreme.

Here is another more clever one:

The government, always ahead of consumption when it comes to its personal expenses, is much more miserly with the budget for useful works. There is always some credit available for ongoing long-term projects (roads, railways, etc.). It is then decided that the funds voted for this type of profitable expenditure will receive another destination, and will be allocated to the payment of the floating debt.

The People found the tax that was to provide the country with major lines of communication very fair. They had paid without murmuring. Now we take the money that was to bring them improvements to pay the debts of their rulers; and they are still forced to say nothing, because if we did not act in this way, it would be necessary to suspend payments, and the People do not want their government to be bankrupt.

There exists, in the administration of finances, an institution that brings together, to the highest degree, the conditions for universal mystification: it is the sinking fund. Financial genius — the workers would say the *spirit of deception* — has never imagined anything superior.

We can judge this from the presentation. The public debt was, in 1816, 146,135,198 francs in annual income. The government proposed at this time the founding of an establishment with the aim of repurchasing and amortizing the capital on which the interest had to be paid, created for this purpose, on April 28, the sinking fund and voted for it, for the first year, 20 millions; in 1817, the sum was doubled; 83 and a half million from the sale of 150,000 hectares of woods were allocated to the same destination. The new institution therefore had to buy back, on behalf of the State, the perpetual annuities with which it was burdened.

What is more moral than paying your debts? The idea of amortization must have been received by honest people with enthusiasm. It was impossible to make a more legitimate use of public funds.

Annuities, as everyone knows, are the subject of considerable trading on the stock exchange. Rentiers who need capital sell their securities to capitalists who need investment. The price of these securities varies greatly depending on political events. We say that the annuity is at par, when it is negotiated at the rate of its issue. Thus, a security of 5 fr. of annuities is worth, at par, 100 francs; if it sells for less, it is below; if it sells for more, it is above.

The sinking fund had to compete with individuals for the acquisition of annuities. Only the law of 1825 decided that it would never make redemptions *above* par.

In addition to its annual endowment of 40 million, increased in 1830 by 4 and a half million, the sinking fund continues to receive annuities from the rents that it has

withdrawn from circulation. For it, it is a progressive supplement of resources. The more it acquires, the more means it has to acquire. The State cannot make too many sacrifices to free itself. We will judge later the depth of this combination.

So far, — apart from the grotesque conception of the State paying to ruin itself, — the mechanism is quite simple. The dangers of its simplicity soon became apparent. Everyone could see clearly in the administration. The law of 1833 put things in order.

There are various categories of published funds: 5 per 100, 4 1/2 per 100, 4 per 100 and 3 per 100. It frequently happens that, while one sort is above par, the other is below. So that depreciation under the law of 1825 could still work.

The law of 1833 decided that each type of fund would have its particular allocation, and allocated per year:

|                   |                        |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| At 5 percent,     | 32,035,779             |
| At 4 1/2 percent, | 246,254                |
| At 4 percent,     | 821,439 fr.            |
| At 3 percent,     | 11,512,991             |
|                   | -----                  |
|                   | In all, 44,616,463 fr. |

Redemption continued to be prohibited above par; and the allocations of one species of fund could not be employed in the amortization of another. However, from 1834 to 1848, the 5 per cent, the best endowed of all, having always been above par, was unable to amortize anything.

The law requires that the sinking funds, unused following the increase in annuities, be put in reserve and paid in treasury bonds bearing interest at 3 percent, and reimbursable in the event that the said annuities fall back to par or below.

When the bonds are accumulated in the sinking fund, the State takes them back and issues, in exchange, perpetual annuities at the rate of so much per 100 of the capital represented by these bonds. Thus, today, the sinking fund — *government fund* — receives per year — from the government — 62,066,885 francs, in annuities. — This operation is called *consolidation of the reserve*.

The results of this fine administrative mess can be guessed: the public debt, which was; in 1816, from 146 million annual income, today amounts to 395 and a half million: it has increased by almost two thirds. And yet the sinking fund received, at the same time, 2 billion 654 million 343 thousand 772 francs.

We have yet only seen the bulk of the thing: we must express its quintessence.

If the government were Robert-Macaire, the sinking fund would be Bertrand.

“Amortization,” said the minister, “is of public utility, of social morality. Power, which owes to citizens the example of all virtues, founded it to leave its debts. — (Bravo! very good!)

“Taxpayers will never complain about paying big budgets when they see them doing such a job. We propose to devote 40 million annually to the repurchasing of government debt securities. — (Assent.)

“40 million is not enough. However, the politician must not push the rigorist to the point of exhausting the present in order to liquidate the past. The endowment will remain fixed at 40 million; but the annuities purchased will continue to be counted as liabilities of the budget. — We will not cancel them. — The proceeds will be used to increase the amortization resources and to hasten the extinction of the public debt. The loads will not be heavier; only they will not be diminished. The current generation, we are convinced, will selflessly accept the sacrifice we ask of it. She will be proud to bequeath to her descendants a calm, flourishing situation; all the elements of public prosperity and citizen happiness.” — (Prolonged applause in the center.)

— A speaker from the center left asks to speak:

“Gentlemen, I completely agree with the honorable speaker on the need to amortize the debt. I applaud his excellent intentions from the bottom of my heart. (Approval.)

“But... but, what have we been told about paying off old debts, when every day new ones emerge? Let’s discharge the current debt first; we will clear the backlog afterwards. (Assent.) I vote against the depreciation allocation.” (Murmurs.)

— A ministerial deputy takes the podium:

“Gentlemen, we all applauded the meaningful observations of our honorable colleague. Only, murmurs greeted his last words. There is only a misunderstanding between him and us that I dare to destroy. (Attention.)

“We all want amortization not to be an illusion; We all want the State to start by liquidating the present. Without this, what would depreciation be? A deception, unworthy of a great nation, unworthy of a great power, discrediting for those who would have conceived it. I say it without hesitation; because I do not fear that anyone will suspect of similar deception the eminent names who find themselves, — for the salvation of France, — at the head of public affairs (Bravos extended.)

“*But* there are two questions here to reconcile. We must not, we cannot, remove the depreciation allowance. It would be a shame for us. (Bravo! bravo!) I almost dare to say: it would be the beginning of bankruptcy. (Prolonged sensation.)

“For the honor of the principle, we keep the amortization. — (Voice on the left: Let’s save the fund!)

“Let us only decide that, for this year, given the seriousness of the circumstances, the sums intended for the extinction of the consolidated debt will be made available to the Minister of Finance to settle the overdrafts of the floating debt.”

The proposal was adopted unanimously.

### *Reflections of Turlupin.*

“You come to ask me, detestable boasters, for my big money to settle your old scores. You make your sinking fund a special situation. You give it 44 million per year, and pay it, in addition, 62 million in rent, and you tell me: this share is sacred; it will have no other job than to pay off the debts of the past.

“Then you waste your own budget, and, when you are dry, you go to your amortization friend, and you say to him: I gave you funds to pay off the old debt; but the current is more urgent; give me back your endowments and your annuities. Louis-Philippe thus found, in the depreciation reserves, 1 billion 16 million 693 thousand 856 fr. which he has indeed spent, without writing off anything, — legally of course, — after a double vote of the Chamber of Peers and that of Deputies. However, the deficit is still more than 500 million today.

“Poor taxpayer, cash cow! You pay for public works; you pay to extinguish the debts of monarchies. But when we hold your crowns, we send you to pasture, making fun of you. We appealed to your interests, to your probity: it was to make you fall into the trap. Now go and hold your statesmen accountable.”

If, at least, with all these administrative frauds, the State could, every year, make ends meet!

But no: like the dissipators, it starts by *pulling carrots*; it then resorts to loans; ultimately, it becomes bankrupt.

We know how the loan is negotiated. Capitalists subscribe for the full payment, even though they do not have the first penny. The Minister, after the auction, gives the entrepreneurs their securities for a sum proportional to the borrowed capital. The bankers then sell these securities to the suckers of the stock market at premiums; and, without paying anything, they realize, in a few hours, millions of profits.

The minister has obtained money that he will never have to return, since it is placed in perpetual annuities. The successful bidders made a good move. The suckers will pay the loan. Everybody is happy. Bankruptcy is postponed; and borrowers and lenders embrace each other, shouting loudly: We have saved the homeland! Only there will be a few million to add to the next budget.

Sometimes again, the statesman says to himself: “Instead of borrowing to pay my debts, I am going to make payments to my creditors.” He then decrees that treasury bonds, savings bank books and other small debts will not be reimbursed: only perpetual annuity securities will be given to the holders. This is the easiest method of borrowing: because it is forced and obligatory. This operation is called *consolidating the floating debt*.

All the capital for which we pay eternally, and which must not be repaid, sleeps in the *consolidated debt*.

Forced borrowing, known as *consolidation*, is a type of bankruptcy. It is therefore clearly understood that it only affects the fry. Receivers, accountants, bond owners and other right-thinking people never lose anything.

When we think of all the skill, know-how, address, sleight of hand, and genius it takes to make a *good* minister of finance, we wonder, in truth, how the government could have been so ungrateful that it reduced the emoluments of the place to 48,000 francs.

### III.

#### THE MASTER STATE AND THE SERVANT STATE.

— All this proves one thing: that the financial administration is organized for the exploitation of the taxpayer, and not for his well-being. But it has not been demonstrated that the principle of the State is bad: it is a question of reforming it; we agree on the bad institution of the past. In the future, the State must be a *servant*, and no longer a *master*.

— In a word, the People appoint clerks, track their work, fire them if they do poorly, and behave towards them like a boss towards his workers.

— Absolutely!

— If it could be like this, do you know that it would be a famous trip to Equality and Fraternity. Here is your reasoning: we currently have the misfortune of being at the mercy of the master government; we will change all that, and from now on we will treat this proud government as a valet. There is more desire for common sense in this way of arguing.

— The People are sovereign and they pay: therefore they have the right to order. I only know that.

— Very good! Then you demolish authority.

— Oh! No. The People exercise authority through their representatives, their delegates issued by universal suffrage.

— You look like you're out in the countryside.

— It's you who's rambling. Read Louis Blanc, you will see, I am only explaining his theory.

— The People, you say, delegate the exercise of authority to their representatives: if they do not work well, they choose others. The exercise of authority is, therefore, eternally alienated in the hands of the agents. Transfers and dismissals do not change anything: whether the State is composed of Peter or Paul, it matters little. There is always a State depositary of power.

— No doubt, but the State only carries out the wishes of the nation.

— And how does the nation let its clerks know what it wants?

— By the votes of the National Assembly.

— Profound nonsense! The People only speak through the mouths of their representatives, who make them say whatever they want; they only have the arm of their clerks; and yet they are sovereign, they are the master: the master of what? Master enough to dismiss the servants with whom they are dissatisfied, on condition of reappointing others immediately. The State once constituted, the sovereign People only have to obey. And as the State is perpetual in society: composed today of Guillaume, of

Frédéric, of Jacques, tomorrow of Louis, of Eugène, of Célestin: it follows that the State, although a servant, always commands, and that the all-powerful nation is eternally doomed to passive obedience. It's the story of *servant-mistresses* and debauched old men. The maid dominates the house, spends, wastes and makes *the handle of the basket dance*; the bourgeois grumbles, complains, sometimes threatens, but always pays and goes through along with the whims of his despot — in order to have peace. The name changes nothing; and the *servant State* is nothing more than gross ineptitude, or a mask of hypocrisy and ambition.

— Master or servant, I don't care: but you need a government, a power to do good.

— *A dictatorship for the right reason!* Those who say: it is necessary for the People to be governed, have been led to this conclusion by a series of arguments that it is good to re-establish. The People are incapable of knowing what they need; through negligence or stupidity, they understand nothing about their own affairs: therefore they need guardians. Under the monarchy, there is only one, and he is automatically appointed; under the Doctrinaire Republic, the guardian is replaced by a guardianship council, and the minor has the right to choose its members. — If the nation understands nothing about its affairs, it can, like spoiled children, have whims detrimental to its interests; therefore, it is the duty of a tutelary government to resist the enticements of the crowd, to oppose the demands of the multitude, to remain firm in its line of conduct, and, if necessary, to treat like mutinous brats those among the administered who are ungrateful enough, blind enough to suspect its management and free themselves from its enlightenment. This doctrine was established in principle by Louis Blanc in several circumstances, notably in his speech to the People's delegates, on March 17, 1848, at the Hôtel de Ville, and in his December issue of the *Nouveau Monde*.

— Since, after all, power must be exercised in the interest of the People; Louis Blanc's theory seems very rational to me.

— It was that of Charles X suspending, in the interest of order, the freedom of the press; — that of Louis-Philippe refusing reform to save civilization; — that of Cavaignac, ensuring that a massacre of 12,000 transported people was necessary to strengthen the Republic; — that of Bonaparte and Mr. Fould, reestablishing the tax on drinks despite 700,000 petitioners. — It is the same dogma as the infallibility of the pope.

— You always talk to me about old governments: I know as well as you their abuses.

— The vice of an institution comes from its principle and not from its personnel. The provisional government made transfers of prefects, magistrates and generals; it changed nothing in the internal administration, in the judiciary; it kept the army. That's where all our disappointments came from.

— So it is impossible to find honest people?

— Rather than running the risk of laying hands on knaves, I find it wiser not to expose virtue itself to seduction. To place men in a superior position, to leave the life, liberty, and fortune of citizens to their discretion, is to give free rein to all evil passions.

What are the guarantees of the governed against the State? The government, depositary of authority, polices, commands the armed force, delivers justice — on behalf of the People. The public force, the police, the judiciary, must therefore be docile instruments in the hands of power. And if it pleases the government caste to exploit society instead of defending it?...

— Then the power is deposed.

— This is what the Montagnards have been saying since June 13. The current government, completely in communion of ideas with Louis Blanc, responded to the accusations of its enemies, and to the manifestation of the national gauntlet: “There are people who come to suggest that we go back in history until the tyranny of the first comer, to make us free in the manner of savages, to make us sovereign in the manner of the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego or Van Diemen’s Land. — The sovereignty of the People cannot consist in the right recognized to several million men to slit each other’s throats until the strongest reign over corpses or over slaves. — The sovereignty of the People is the power exercised in the name of the People, under their gaze, under their dependence, in their interest, BY THOSE WHOM THEY HAVE CHOSEN TO EXERCISE IT. — We have little fear from the multitude, and as for becoming its instrument, it is not a shame, it is an honor, when one is resolved NOT TO ABDICATE before it either one’s dignity, or one’s conscience, or ONE’S REASON. Now, should we encourage an unfair demand, or just too hasty? Should we sacrifice the duty to serve the People to the desire to please them?”

— That’s the *Constitutionnel* all over.

— No. It’s from the *Nouveau Monde*. When they publish this: Power has the right to resist the masses, if it seems to him that the masses are mistaken; we must put an end to it with cavalry charges and grapeshot.

— I cannot accept such a terrible conclusion. There must be a way to organize the State in such a way as to avoid contriteness. For example: “The term of office should be *as short as possible*; the representatives are revocable, responsible.”

— What do these words mean: *as short as possible*? The provisional government, the executive commission, Cavaignac, had a mandate of very short duration; they were revocable, and they were revoked. Responsibility, what does that mean for those in power? The provisional government is responsible for the 45 centimes and the counter-revolutionary league; the executive commission is responsible for June 1848; Cavaignac, the transportations; the Constituent Assembly, for the presidency of Louis Bonaparte; M. Marie, the national workshops; Mr. Ledru-Rollin, April 16. And after?

— We must indict the unfaithful powers.

— And if they don’t want to let it happen; if they answer: *We prefer the duty to serve the People to the desire to please them*; if their reason tells them to resist, how can we pursue them? *Their reason*, you understand: if their reason goes astray, so be it; It is the People who will pay the price. When the government emerges victorious from the struggle, it has the right to say, and it does not fail to do so: “The People have a wonderful

instinct to know who loves them; even beneath the words that displease them, they are capable of guessing the palpitations of every heart that is their own, and they applaud *when one resists them in order to be useful to them.*" This is again the *Constitutionnel*, perhaps? No, it's Louis Blanc. Despotism uses the same language everywhere.

December 31, 1849.

## IV.

### THE INITIATING STATE.

Six thousand years of government have proven abundantly that power is, by its nature, spendthrift, prodigal, unproductive, invasive, despotic. Experience does not seem decisive for certain intelligences; and we are in the necessity, — if we do not want to attempt a new dictatorship, — of combatting the idea of authority, not by its historical antecedents, but in its very principle.

The program of the supporters of strong, initiating, intelligent power was summarized by Louis Blanc in these words: *Create in the power a great force of initiative; — create and sponsor, at state expense, public workshops.* — We will try to demonstrate that these propositions lead to nothing other than the organization of arbitrariness, of the exploitation of man by man, of dispossession. And as M. Blanc has converted his ideas into clear and precise formulas, under this title: *Socialism as a draft law*, we will quote verbatim, and we will discuss article by article.

Let us note, above all, that the State has neither income nor fortune; — that asking it for sponsorships is simply asking for a tax increase.

— "Art. 1. A ministry of labor and progress would be created, whose mission would be to accomplish the social revolution, and to gradually, peacefully, without shock, bring about the abolition of the proletariat."

— This is the *great force of initiative* by the power clearly established. Let's discuss the ways and means.

"For this, the Ministry of Progress would be responsible for: 1° repurchasing, by means of State rents, the railways and mines; 2° transforming the Banque de France into a state bank; 3° centralizing, to the great advantage of all and for the profit of the State, insurance, 4° establishing, under the direction of responsible civil servants, vast warehouses, where producers and manufacturers would be allowed to deposit their goods and their foodstuffs, which would be represented by receipts having a negotiable value, and which could act as paper money, perfectly guaranteed paper money, since it would have as security a specific and appraised commodity; 5° finally, opening bazaars corresponding to retail trade, just as warehouses would correspond to wholesale trade."



— Expropriation of railways, expropriation of banks, expropriation of insurance companies, as undoubtedly a prelude to universal expropriation; and creation of an exorbitant public debt: these are in substance the first three measures proposed by the Minister of Progress. The public debt already absorbs, per year, 100 million in interest. It would quickly rise to a billion. Before long, the total contributions would not be enough to pay the annual income from the loans contracted by the government, and from the expropriations made for its benefit. It is obvious to us that the day the government is recognized as a debtor of 20 billion or more, it will only have one way to free itself: bankruptcy.

Bazaars and warehouses are the obsession of governmentalists and communists. What is certain is that individuals will only use those created by the State if they find a saving; unless a *good law* comes to prohibit citizens from opening a shop. As for negotiable receipts, issued on goods, they are an imitation of English *warrants*. M. Louis Blanc took an invention of the mercantile genius of his hosts for a democratic inspiration.

Receipts cannot be used as paper money; and you only need to know the elements of commerce to realize this. The value of products is determined, not by expertise, but by the price obtained for them in exchange.

You can estimate the objects placed in your bazaar at a million and only find 500,000 francs for sale. Receipts can be the subject of more or less considerable trading, just like acknowledgments of the pawnshop: — the pawnshop is a big bazaar, and acknowledgments of receipts, — it is impossible that they fulfill the function of coins. Indeed, who would like to receive as payment a paper whose pledge does not yet have a determined value.

It is true that this is not yet an embarrassment for M. Blanc, because he says further:

— “We would determine the cost price; we would fix, taking into account the situation of the industrial world, the figure of the *licit profit above* the cost price. We would establish in all workshops of the same industry a wage, not equal, but proportional, the conditions of material life being not identical in all parts of France.”

— So, I do my work myself: but it is the State that sets the price; it imposes its price on me. I exchange my salary for what I need; it is the State again, yes, it sets its conditions for me: you will pay this much, or you will not buy. And we dare to write LIBERTY on your flag!

— “Art. 3. Profits that railways, mines, insurance, banking, bring today to prime speculation, and which, in the new system, would return to the State, joined to those that would result from rights of warehouses, the ministry would compose its special budget: the workers’ budget.

— “Art. 4. Interest and amortization of sums due as a result of previous operations would be taken from the workers’ budget; the rest would be used: 1° to sponsor workers’ associations; 2° to found agricultural colonies.”

— In truth, when I see the workers call such ideas *the highest expression of Socialism*, I begin to despair of common sense. So, brave Minister of Labor, when everyone has increased the public debt by a dozen billion, you will think about paying it off. You will need money, a lot of money. Where will you get it?

— “The State will operate on its behalf the mines, insurance, railways, etc.”

— Bravo! We will finally be rid of financial feudalism; big companies will no longer extort work; we will see the reign of brotherhood. What will the People gain? Let’s count a little.

It is necessary to find in the company 1° enough to amortize the capital; 2° enough to pay the minister and his bureaucracy; 3° resources to sponsor the associations; 4° capital to found colonies: all this in addition to the real costs of exploitation; something like 20 or 30 percent premium.

On this, any citizen who is even slightly informed will make the following reflection: We are fighting capital because it costs too much; because it charges more for its services than they are worth: the State, like a good philanthropist, takes the place of the capitalist, and sells me its services at the same price. Net benefit to me and the public: ZERO.

— But the government has good intentions. With your money, it will do good.

The proprietor as well. He pressures us to give alms. What the government will return to us in the form of sponsorship and settlement will not be the equivalent of what it will have taken from us, since it will have to cover its collection costs, its distribution costs, its accounting costs, its printing costs of reports, its material and personnel costs, finally.

— On the other hand, it will rain burning speeches of fraternity, proclamations that will make all good souls burst into tears.

— Let’s write it off as profit and loss and leave it alone.

— “Art. 5. To be called upon to benefit from State sponsorship, workers’ associations should be established according to the principle of fraternal solidarity, so as to be able to acquire, by developing, a collective, inalienable and ever-increasing capital, the only way to succeed in killing large and small usury, and to ensure that capital is no longer an element of tyranny, the possession of the instruments of work a privilege, credit a commodity, well-being an exception, idleness a right.”

— Blah, blah, blah! Here are the proclamations.

“Art. 6. Consequently, any workers’ association, wishing to benefit from State sponsorship, *would be required* to accept as the constitutive bases of its existence, the provisions contained in the ministerial program.”

— Of privilege, of exception, of favor, of arbitrariness; I recognize myself by these characteristic signs: it is the government atmosphere. Ah! Party minister of progress, you will shear all the livestock, and you will only distribute the fleece to your faithful, to the good devotees of your little church, who will accept your tirades and your maxims as words of the Gospel. You call this distributive justice, the power *to do good*.

And not content with taking our écus as a token of generosity to your favorites, you threaten to force us into your brotherhood. At least this is what results from these words: “Such is the force of elasticity that we believe in our system, that in a short time it would have spread over the whole of society, attracting rival systems into its bosom by the irresistible attraction of *its power*.”

I respect your illusions and your convictions, on one condition: that you will only try to propagate your system by *its power of elasticity*, and not by the *power* of our écus and the *force of initiative* of the power. I am a heretic, citizen minister; I no longer believe in the infallibility of the Pope, even less in yours. Please don't make me happy in spite of myself!

— Yet see how simple it is: “A board of directors would be placed at the head of all the workshops. In its hands would be united the reins of all industries, just as the direction of each particular industry would be handed over to an engineer appointed by the State” — why not by the universal suffrage? — “The only way to eliminate usury.”

— Ah! Please rid us of the usurers, but do not trouble us with your officials. What do you want the cooks, the tailors, the hairdressers, the trimmers, the shoemakers, the bakers, the lithographers, the printers, the gilders, the painters, the druggists, the grocers and wine merchants — I'll stop, because I could write a dictionary of professions that have no use for your engineer — to do with your engineer *appointed by the State*? Let the workers look for engineers themselves when they need them.

Let's return to our subject, the question of usury. We demand, we egoists, the abolition of usury for the benefit of the worker. You demand, — you fraternal ones, — the replacement of the usurer by the statesman. Ah! Citizen minister, if the workers listen to you, they will soon realize that they have only fought so much, shed so much blood, to succeed in exchanging a one-eyed horse for a blind one. You multiply the civil servants with a truly princely munificence. They eat well, these functionaries!

The current State — this detestable Court State for which you cannot have too much tolerance — has already carried out part of your program. It is a postal contractor, a tobacco merchant, a manufacturer of salt and powder, a printer, a mason. Like you, it makes great use of engineers, inspectors, experts, administrators. Now, do you know what a worker said to me the other day — a bad head, an ungovernable man? He assured me this: that capital gets paid handsomely for its services. Well! it still produces more cheaply than the government. This is so true that the printing work for the National Assembly is awarded to a capitalist. However, the State has a national printing press made up of the finest equipment that could be desired, served by very capable workers. If it does not make its own prints, it is because it would benefit more from giving them to an industrialist. I have verified the fact, citizen minister, and I certify it to you as true.

Many people will conclude: the *initiative by the State* being more onerous than capitalist privilege, there is no urgency, as for now, “to place a board of directors at the top of all the workshops, to bring together in his hands the reins of all industries, nor to put

an engineer at the head of each profession.” As a result, the need for a ministry of labor and progress is not generally felt: it would be an undemocratic and even less social luxury.

December 31, 1849.

## V.

### POLICE AND ORDER BY THE STATE.

Let us let Louis Blanc speak, since in him the principle of *fraternal authority* was embodied. He also summarized, with the greatest conciseness, all the banalities that have been said since the flood, on the need for a power *protective of the weak and the oppressed, guardian of the widow and the orphan*. — Let’s listen:

— “In what does liberty consist? In the complete development of each person’s faculties. Do all men have the same faculties? Are all equal in strength and intelligence? — No. What will happen if we allow the most intelligent or the strongest to obstruct the development of the faculties of those who are less strong or less intelligent? It will happen that freedom will be destroyed.

“How can we prevent this crime? By intervening between the oppressor and the oppressed all the power of the People. If Jacques oppresses Pierre, will the thirty-four million men of which French society is made up, all run at once to safeguard his freedom? To pretend so would be a buffoonery. So how will society intervene? By those *that it will have chosen* for this purpose. — But these representatives of society, these servants of all the People, who are they? The State.

“So, the State here is nothing other than society itself, acting as society, to prevent what? the oppression ; to maintain what? freedom. Therefore, to demand the abolition of the State is to surrender the swallows to the birds of prey; it means ensuring that there are always exploiters and exploited, *and so on*.”

— Let’s put aside phrases and let’s reason. You distrust intelligent and strong men; they are real vampires. Thank you, citizen Louis Blanc. I can regard you as my enemy without insulting you, because I consider you more capable than me. You want to use your influence and your advantages to oppress me. The State is mine, the police are mine! Save me from the gates of Louis Blanc. “Preserve me from oppression; maintain my liberty.”

Alas! Who will I seek protection from? to power, that is to say to a collection of intelligent and strong men, my sworn enemies, my natural oppressors, real Louis Blancs. For let us note this: under hereditary monarchy and caste privileges — nobility and clergy — power can be composed, by right of birth, of infirm people and imbeciles like me; out of sympathy of mood, they will undoubtedly take pity on my fate. But under the democratic regime, where the first places are conferred on the most worthy, the State is the elite of forces and capacities. Each member of the government would individually be my enemy.

Hand to hand, he would have defeated me: what will it be like when all the forces and all the intelligences find themselves united against my ignorance and my weakness?

You posit the innate perversity of man. You come and tell me: You will be made the same again by the evil ones. Build up power to protect yourself; and don't go and bring in fools; they would let themselves be sunk like you.

Slowly, although I am stupid and weak, I have common sense. Establishing a power means giving people more capable than me, smart people — my enemies according to you — special rights that not everyone has, the permission to have a force at their disposal. central and resources taken from the mass of citizens. These government guys, you say, will be my defenders. However, if I draw the consequences of your opinion on their account, I must believe that they will have the same tendencies, statesmen and individuals; — they will use public force and finances to give vent to their evil passions, to exploit the mass of the weak and poor in spirit who have appointed them.

Consult history, citizen minister of progress: you will see that all the powers, after having promised the People, the philistines, wealth, security, protection, have only sheared on the flock and aggravated their suffering. They justified in every way your distrust of strong and intelligent men.

I was exposing these ideas in front of half a dozen listeners, and I was at this point in my reasoning when a vigorous athlete, a Hercules, rushed towards me, and, putting his fist under my nose, cried out:

— Ah! I don't want the protection of authority. Well! I will break your back and strip you of everything you wear: who will stop me?

I suddenly backed up to the wall. The four people who were listening to us threw themselves between us to protect me.

— Certainly, I said to my attacker, if I had only counted on the police to save me from your blows, I could have been knocked out a hundred times before the arrival of the commissioner. Fortunately, the heart of man is so made that each individual spontaneously flies to the aid of his fellow man to defend him.

At that moment, a great noise arose in the street: the shopkeepers rushed away from home; we shouted thief. We stood at the window. A man was fleeing at full speed, carrying a package under his overcoat. A group of passers-by blocked his way and arrested him. The thief took back his belongings, and the thief was taken to the National Guard post.

— If the victim, I said to my hercules, had had to rely only on authority, she would run a great risk of losing everything.

A strange noise, like a door shattering, interrupted us: we went out onto the square. It was a break-in at the neighbor's house. The assailant, upon seeing us, threw himself astride the ramp and slid down like an eel. Fortunately, our cries had attracted the attention of the concierge; we went down hastily, and the bandit grabbed him. Where were

the police, where were the strong and intelligent men charged with defending us? — Hunting the Red Republicans, probably.

We went back up. Arriving at the landing below ours, we felt suffocated by a strong smell of coal. The idea of a disaster suddenly crossed our minds.

We forced the door: a stove was burning in the room; an unfortunate worker was moaning on his bed. Our care quickly brought him back to life. He told us that poverty had driven him to despair.

“The government has not done its duty,” cried our Hercules, stamping his foot violently.

— Alas! said the unfortunate man whom we had just rescued from death, “the government has privileges in society. The statesman commands, and the subject obeys. Privilege can only live by relying on monopoly. Capital and authority are necessarily associated. If the police did not have rights over our wealth and our freedom, they would not hinder our attempts at freedom. Between work and property, the question would quickly be resolved. Likewise, if we succeeded in freeing ourselves from the tribute paid to the capitalist, we would soon do the same for taxes: the service of power is no more useful than that of the owner. Capital and authority are exploitation; work and freedom are emancipation.

The Hercules frowned, but said nothing.

It was late. Those of us who did not live in the house considered leaving. We had barely set foot on the street when we encountered a considerable convoy escorted by town sergeants, informers and soldiers. These were citizens who were being taken to prison. They were accused, one of having shouted *Long live the democratic and social*; — another for having sung the *Chant des ouvriers*; — another for having sold the *Voix du Peuple*; — some for having gathered illegally at a wine merchant; — a few others for having carried leaded canes; — the majority were involved in a coalition affair for the maintenance of wages.

— When will the police be done with their provocations? whispered a passerby.

Two coppers rushed at him to stop him. The commissioner who led the detachment called his new recruit to him: “Sir,” he said to him, “I guessed from your apostrophe that you are a democrat. However, you do not want to make us free like the savages. It takes power to protect the weak against the strong. The sovereignty of the people is the power exercised by those they have chosen, that is to say by Bonaparte, the Assembly and the agents of authority. Government must sacrifice the desire to please the people for the duty to serve them.” We judge socialist meetings and demonstrations to be detrimental to workers, as preventing work and confidence from being reborn. We must stop it. Anyone who does not applaud our actions is being mischievous; “because the people have a wonderful instinct to know who loves them; even beneath the words that displease them, they are capable of divining the palpitations of every heart that is their own, and they applauds when someone resists them in order to be useful to them.” We resist them for

their happiness and you do not applaud. I could treat you like a bad citizen. I will simply say to you: If you are not happy with us, take it out on your prophet Louis Blanc, your future minister of progress. I have just reminded you of his theory; and, as you can see, we put it into practice as well as he could do it himself.

January 14, 1850.

## VI.

### PARLIAMENTARISM.

Today the deputy must, in order to conscientiously fulfill his mandate, know everything, and even something more. The most diverse questions, — public works, finance, education, religion, law, pyrotechnics, navy, sugar confectionery, agriculture, commerce, customs, statistics, banks, credit, etc., — are within his competence. He makes rain and good weather, peace and war, rise and fall, prosperity and misery, liberty and oppression.

The representative of the People pronounces like the oracles, without understanding what he is saying; he votes as lawyers speak, without knowing of what. The most complex problems, which have caused scholars to turn their backs on them, are for him a joke; black or white, heads or tails, and the solution is found.

What a shame that this ingenious parliamentary mechanism is not applied to science and industry! What controversies we would be spared! How much work would become useless!

Is Mr. Leverrier's planet, yes or no, in its place? — Let's vote.

Is chloroform a hoax or a serious discovery? — Let's vote.

Are mechanical hats progress? — Let's vote.

Is Mr. Ruolz's gilding and silvering process more economical than others? — Let's vote.

What should the wage rate be in France? — Let's vote.

How much is a fine pair of clogs worth? — Let's vote.

What is the best wood to use for embankments? — Let's vote.

Were the astronomical calculations announcing a high tide for December 31 accurate? — Let's vote.

What is the best medical method, homeopathy or allopathy? — Let's vote.

How expeditious it is, and above all simple. There is no need to know how to read and write. For a good representative of the People, you need a white ball and a black ball, without knowing how to use them; because he is sovereign, he owes no account to anyone. If the majority wants the snow to be red, the snow is red; those who claim the opposite are

mischievous. The majority has decided that the Republic will be white; all those who want it in another color are anarchists.

THE VOTER. What profession did you exercise before becoming a deputy or citizen?

THE DEPUTY. None, I am neither scholar, nor artist, nor industrialist. I don't know anything about business.

THE VOTER. Tomorrow you will have to vote on an important question. Do you think it is necessary to give forced circulation to bank bills? Can the Bank of France, without compromising the security of trade, increase the issuance of on paper by 75 million?

THE DEPUTY. I don't know a thing about.

THE VOTER. Come on, will you abstain from voting?

THE DEPUTY. At all: I am ministerial; I will vote with the power; it thinks for me, and I agree for it.

THE VOTER. Devil! Our affairs are in good hands. If they walk straight or crooked is in the keeping of God. Providence, however, offers more guarantees; because at least it remains neutral in these questions. But all of our elected officials are probably not like this gentleman. Let's see another one.

What are you, citizen?

THE DEPUTY. I am a lawyer.

THE VOTER. Here is an educated man, he cannot fail to give me good reasons. Are you discussing a very serious issue tomorrow?

THE DEPUTY. Yes, yes... Which one actually? I don't recall.

THE VOTER. The customs tariff. What is your opinion? Will we continue to pay three times more for foreign products than they are worth, to provide half a dozen capitalists with the means to enrich themselves at our expense? Trade is in great turmoil, and tomorrow's session will bring many interests into play.

THE DEPUTY. My dear sir, I have nothing to do with the customs question. This is not my specialty; I devote myself to general politics.

THE VOTER. So you won't vote?

THE DEPUTY. Yes, my dear, I am from the opposition; I will vote with my colleagues against the ministry.

Three representatives of the People cross, at a gymnastic pace, the Concorde Bridge. A voter, one of their friends, approaches them. — You seem to me to be in a big hurry.

FIRST DEPUTY. We run to the poll; it is a question of knowing whether the press will be free or chained; the addition of a few votes can save it; we will vote for freedom.

THE VOTER. But you don't pride yourself on accuracy: the session started a long time ago.

SECOND DEPUTY. What do you want, my dear, we were close to a good fire: it is thawing; the streets are bad; we only left at the last moment. Goodbye, time is running out.



THIRD DEPUTY. Ah! Here are the representatives coming out; the session is over. We arrive too late. Colleague, what result?

A DEPUTY, leaving the Assembly. The ministry carries it; it triumphed with a three-vote majority.

FIRST DEPUTY. Three majority votes! our three votes, if they had arrived in time, would have saved the freedom of the press.

THE VOTER. What do the destinies of empires depend on? Without the thaw, you were at your post; the ministry, soundly beaten, resigned; the press retained its independence.... Damn thaw! Finally, God is great and the thaw is his prophet.

— Is this how the interests of France are treated? — Yes. — Are we in the nineteenth century? — Yes. — The Republic? — Yes. — In a civilized country? — Yes, yes, yes. — Three statements are not too many to convince me.

Do you know why, according to governmental communists and socialists, we are devoured by usury, unemployment and poverty?

It is because labor is not governed, consumption is not governed, commerce is not governed; the parliamentary machinery is not generally applied enough. The representative of the People must in the future add to the encyclopedia, already so extensive in its scope, the determination of wages, the fixing of value, the discipline of workshops, the choice of the best methods of cultivation, the quantity of labor to furnish per worker, the most hygienic form of clothing, the limit of each person's needs and their classification into reasonable needs that must be satisfied, and unreasonable needs that must be repressed; — and a thousand similar joyful things that have had the brilliant privilege of being taken seriously.

However, citizens, are we in a civilized country, in France, in a Republic, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century?

— Unquestionably; primitive and savage men would never have enough wit to invent these things.

January 21, 1850.

## VII.

### HIERARCHY.

Ask the soldier what makes him act. He will answer you: My orders. Talk to the sergeant, he will repeat; My orders. My orders, says the lieutenant; my orders, says the captain; my orders, says the battalion commander; my orders, says the colonel; my orders, says the general.

Soldiers, sergeants, lieutenants, captains, colonels, generals, good people at bottom, shoot you i— without hatred, indeed, and without grievances, with many curses and complaining with all their hearts — because those are their orders.

Go to civil court now. Ask the first pen-pusher you come across, a court clerk copying the minutes of political convictions. Ask him what cause of complaint he may have against those whose sentences he writes. None, he will answer; I only carry out orders. Go back to the clerk, he will repeat, like his clerk: I am carrying out my orders. I carry out my orders, said the office manager; I carry out my orders, said the general secretary; I carry out my orders, said the prefect; I carry out my orders, said the under-secretary of state.

Clerks, clerks, chiefs of staff, secretaries, prefects, senior employees, good devils full of compassion, pursue you, seize you, imprison you, ruin you, as naturally as possible, by showering you with politeness and condolences, in wishing all kinds of prosperity. — They carry out their orders.

The military man is a rifle or a saber; the civilian employee, a pen, a summing-up or a lock. Both are perfect automatons, although not very entertaining.

The impetus of the machine is strong, and the mechanism is so perfect that the first person to come along, a child, an idiot, a madman, provided he manages to perch atop it, can make it move as he pleases.

When we think that this machine, driven by an unskillful or malicious hand, can crush thousands of existences, wipe out wealth, decimate populations, turn the world upside down, plunge humanity into war and chaos; when we review the damages, the plagues, the massacres with which it has frightened the earth; — we wonder how the People could have been so imprudent as to allow it to exist until today; how they did not break it up in the aftermath of the Revolutions, of which it had been the first cause.

The government machine is perpetually besieged by ambitious people from all parties. A swarm of multicolored tumblers perform the most magnificent springboard jumps around it in the hope of one day reaching the top. It exerts an inconceivable fascination on everyone, even its victims. Such politicians, constantly bruised and mistreated by it for years, would rather succumb to its blows than see it collapse. It brings a lot of money, glory and dignity to those who have access to its machinery. The last of the cretins, at the top of the State, becomes a great man.

A considerable crowd usually flocks to political representations. The acrobats heat up, heat up the enthusiasm; it's who gets the votes of the crowd. Each of them, in order to interest the People in their cause, lavishes the most extravagant promises, to make the machine produce money for those who do not have any, orders for those who have no customers, income for the infirm, husbands for spinsters, crosses for intriguers.

The People, seduced, amazed, full of confidence and hope, give a leg up to the one who has most dazzled them. But once installed, the juggler bows out and laughs at the onlookers who took his words at face value, at all his rivals start their antics again.

Ah! proletarians, if you have always been robbed, you can say your *mea culpa*. Instead of associating yourself with the haranguers and the ambitious, have you not studied yourselves? You would have convinced yourself that this machine of the State, from which you are promised mountains and wonders, is nothing other than a suction pump, absorbing your clearest benefits, an instrument of high compression whose entire weight weighs on you; you would have understood that, fueled by the funds of the People, it can only be a burden for them, and that it will always function for the benefit of the ambitious.

Aspirants shout to you: Respect to the State; let us preserve this precious organization. Only, place at the head a capable man and one of your friends; put us in business.

I want to believe all the aspirations in good faith, only you can answer them: We know that the government, after having decimated the socialists and the republicans, can one day be used to proscribe the Jesuits and the reactionaries. What would the nation gain from a change in victims?

For party men, there is no other alternative than to be proscribed or prescribers. For the People, the position never changes; all they know about the State is the budget, some obstacles and some stains.

What can we expect from an organization whose officials have all abdicated their conscience, their dignity; recognizing blind obedience as their only guide, the only law; committing the most terrible enormities without remorse, and finding themselves absolved of all responsibility by sheltering behind their stupid refrain: My orders, my orders!

On the other hand, how can we govern if each soldier claims to be something more than a firearm: if employees want to consult their colleagues before acting and reason regarding the orders of their superiors?

It is impossible to govern without hierarchy; It is impossible to administer well if each official is not responsible.

Between government and administration, you have to choose.

February 4, 1850.

## VIII.

### OF THE NECESSITY OF APPLYING THE PRINCIPLE OF THE DIVISION OF LABOR AND THAT OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY TO THE FUNCTIONS OF THE STATE.

It follows from our last two chapters, *Parliamentarianism* and *Hierarchy*, that governmental waste, in other words despotism and oppression, is based on the violation of two fundamental laws of the economy: THE DIVISION OF LABOR and INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY.

The legislative power embraces everything in its attributions. While the simple schoolmaster is obliged to produce a certificate of capacity, while the lowest of the

gendarmes must know how to issue a ticket, the representative of the People has no proof to provide of his enlightenment.

The National Assembly, even were it composed of the elite of intelligence, would still achieve nothing; because it is impossible for a citizen to manage, in fifty years of study, to know all the subjects on which the representative is called to vote.

Asking that each member of the Assembly speak out on all questions of customs, trade, agriculture, education, finance, right, economics, etc., is as absurd as the idea would be to force each individual to produce by himself everything he consumes: his bread, his wine, his meat, his vegetables, his clothing, his habitation, etc.

Just as work, to be productive, needs to be divided; as it would be ruinous to occupy cooks making clogs, or to employ turners to tan leather; in the same way it is ridiculous and prejudicial to have public works voted on by lawyers, and bank regulations by engineers.

The principle of the division of labor has not been applied to the parliamentary system, — and, although Mr. Louis Blanc calls for the *separation of functions* of federalism, it will be necessary to achieve this, otherwise we will walk eternally blind and fall into pitfall after pitfall.

All ideas are about centralization. So if farmers have collective interests to resolve, improvements to make in the field of their industry, who should they contact? Who should they elect? Their colleagues, farmers. It goes without saying. Now will the agricultural meetings deal with instruction and education? No, they will focus on their specialty. Alongside them will be the chambers of commerce, of public education, etc.

Parliamentarianism, not specialized, offending, with each vote, the laws of social economy and the interests of labor, would see its decrees ignored every day, its errors corrected by the common sense of the commoners, if the executive power were not there with its public force and its magistracy to *suppress, repress* and *prevent* resistance.

AUTHORITY is the essential attribute of executive power.

It is particularly responsible for maintaining order. But the executive power, as ignorant as its colleague, the legislative, of the laws of labor and society, instead of seeking the conditions of order in the progressive and spontaneous development of institutions, in the free development left to the human activity, imagines that peace is the silence of tombs; that tranquility is the uniformity of obedience and servitude.

Also every government is by its nature hostile to movement and reactionary. We have seen the constitutionalists proscribed by the absolutists, the republicans by the constitutionalists, the socialists by the republicans. The power has always had fines for inventors, courts and prison for scientists and philosophers, embargoes for trade, monopolies against labor, in a word, irons for freedom. Man is forced to compete for well-being and progress, not only with nature, but also with authority.

Compression is a danger for power and for society. Each government regards the cause of order as subservient to its preservation. So all civil servants are purely passive

instruments in the hands of the bosses. As soon as they carry out their orders, they are blameless; and if they make a mistake, they are irresponsible. Impunity is acquired by all excesses.

If things happened in government as in industry; if, for example, the prefect's coppers were responsible for their arrests, and liable to a fine each time they made a mistake; If prosecutors were obliged to pay out of their own pockets damages to citizens whom they incarcerate illegally and hold for months and years in custody, what would happen? That gentlemen in authority would probably be less brutal and more circumspect.

This will undoubtedly seem monstrous to the governmentalsists.

However, unless we resign ourselves to eternal arbitrariness and a despotism without end, we will have to, one day or another, punish as criminals the officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers who shoot by mistake, the magistrates and city sergeants who seize or hold without reason.

The division of labor, that is to say the separation of functions, will naturally result in creating this responsibility. Today, prefects, magistrates, generals, division heads, tax collectors, agree, like Normans at a fair, to protect each other against the citizens and ensure the peaceful exploitation of society. Subordinate agents always refer responsibility for their actions to superiors, and superiors cannot be prosecuted without authorization from the Council of State. Impunity is their right.

When, on the contrary, the State has become *administration*, and no longer *authority*; when those elected by universal suffrage will have *specific responsibilities*, and no longer a vague, indefinite mandate; when the delegates will be none other than responsible managers; when public functions, education, public works, finance, will be specialties of labor, in the same way as mines, railways, canals, agriculture, commerce; when between all varieties of social activity, there will be equivalence, instead of hierarchy and government, — then the laws of economics will be the same everywhere, and as the laborer, the foreman, the accountant, are responsible for each of their works in the industry, they will also be responsible in the administrations currently devolved to power. It will never occur to a trade union to protect the depredations of a Bank administrator, or the damage of a national forest ranger.

With universal suffrage and the division of functions, hierarchy is impossible: all mandates are equivalent. Offenders no longer fall under the jurisdiction of a higher governing order, which can, at its pleasure, punish them, leave them alone or reward them for their evil actions; they become subject to popular justice.

Power belongs to the People, not to their delegates.

## IX.

### DISMEMBERMENT OF THE STATE.

We call *anarchy, liberty, abolition of government*, “the restitution to society of the attributions of power.”

Our readers have already understood the need to abolish oppression and parasitism. However, we are so accustomed to tyranny that we cannot conceive of order without snitches, gendarmes, prosecutors and judges. We will reserve the police and justice for the end of our analysis, and we will begin our criticism with the most graspable monstrosities of the governmental system.

The government has awarded itself various monopolies, such as the transport of correspondence, the manufacture of gunpowder, salt, tobacco, and coins. It undertakes, concurrently with individuals, all kinds of labor: earthworks, masonry, messaging, plantations, printing, etc. It has porcelain, carpet and glass factories. It owns museums, palaces, gardens, forests, parks, stud farms, libraries.

Now, I ask you, what relationship is there between the exercise of any profession and authority? Why is this industry in the hands of the State rather than other hands? It is impossible to give an acceptable reason for this.

Espionage, despotism and dispossession especially characterize state enterprises. Thus, while the distribution of letters, printed matter, newspapers, is done in Paris, by industry, at the price of 1 centime, the post office charges it there.

The power stops correspondence, breaks seals, searches letters, sequesters papers that do not suit it, seizes, in police interest, secrets and private property, receives money from forwarding agents and does not ship; all this with impunity and without it being possible to request or use another means of communication — under penalty of a fine.

Consumers know what the government’s powders, salts and tobacco cost them. So, down with state monopolies!

The works that the State carries out, without privilege, costs it more than it brings in. It is entirely beneficial to give them out to tender to entrepreneurs.

The conservation of public monuments, the administration of estates, the management of forts are an inexhaustible source of abuse and depredation. The agents of power, who only move from one public function to another, who are never sure of being in place the next day, first think about doing their business; so the libraries are pillaged, the museums stripped, the forests devastated. When the damage is considerable and too scandalous, those in power decide to pursue the case. But most often impunity is by right.

Let’s take away the State’s monopolies; let us prohibit all agricultural, commercial and manufacturing businesses. Let us entrust to special men the supervision of municipalities

and departmental councils, the administration of national properties. Let us leave the execution of public works to the free associations of excavators, masons, washers, carpenters, etc. What is the need to receive the minister's inauguration to distribute letters, dig a trench, fill a valley, make gunpowder, print books, etc.?

The State appoints bishops and subsidizes the clergy: Lie about universal suffrage. Let us leave to the communes the task of choosing their priests and providing for their maintenance. Let the priests give themselves leaders, if they think they need them. Cavaignac, the African general, made appointments of archbishops: if an archbishop became president of the Republic, we would see him appoint generals. We could not watch such a comedy for long without bursting into laughter. And every institution falls flat in the face of ridicule.

The State has taken control of education. No one can open a school unless they are authorized, examined and qualified by those in power. Teaching methods, historical and philosophical, scientific and literary programs are written under the dictation of the minister; the teachers just have to take the watchword, like the soldiers, and follow it from point to point.

In order to force all young people in France to join its program, the State has decided that the baccalaureate title would be required for certain liberal professions. To anyone who wants to practice medicine or pharmacy, enter engineering or the bar, the government begins by asking:

— Do you know Latin and Greek? If you don't know Greek or Latin, I forbid you from treating the sick, selling pills, pleading before the courts, or running a mine. Return to college, and, after nine years spent on Latin and Greek, which you will never use, if I find you capable, I will give you a diploma that will allow you to begin your serious studies, on law, medicine, chemistry, physics, mathematics. Oh, the intelligence of the power!

It is up to the minister to change the examination programs. Under Louis-Philippe, anyone who did not philosophize like Mr. Cousin was declared unworthy. Come Montalembert and M. Parisis, no one will be accepted unless they know the catechism thoroughly, the history of Loriquet and the philosophy of Joseph de Maistre. Then under Louis Blanc, candidates will be required to answer all the questions in the socialist catechism. If they decide against dogma: *To each according to their forces, to each according to their needs*; if they blaspheme against communism, they will be considered inadmissible.

But, it may be objected, who will assess the capacity of the teachers? — The same as the students. Faced with competition, the ignorant will soon be forced to close shop.

What will indicate the best methods? — Experience and liberty.

Who will supervise the morality of teachers and the good direction of studies? — Parents, local residents, you and me, municipal councils.

And if the teacher is guilty of some misdeed... — Like all delinquents and all guilty people, he will be liable to the ordinary courts.

But is there not a need for some sort of organization of teaching? — If teachers and students feel the need to come together, to agree, to consult, to associate, — which is probable, — they will do it on their own. And, without doubt, free and voluntary associations will not make us regret the Academy and the Institute.

So, down with the Jesuits! Down with the University! Down with the teaching state!

The Ministry of Commune and Agriculture is the most democratic of all, because it exerts no pressure, no influence on agriculture and trade. The day a minister of this department wants to exercise authority, we will realize that it is too much, and we will have to conspire to abolish it. As it is today, let us eliminate it, and we will gain a few million savings in the budget; traders and farmers, completely independent of the State, will lose nothing.

In summary, we demand the release of all civil servants. We want priests, rabbis, pastors, schoolmasters, professors, engineers and workers employed in public works to be in the same conditions of independence as all other workers; that they do not form a separate caste, subservient to the head of government and maneuvering at his discretion. Worship, teaching and the execution of works of general utility are specialties of social work, in the same way as cabinetmaking, medicine, architecture and mechanics.

Thus, of the nine ministries that make up the government machine, three seem to us to be able to be abolished immediately without hindrance: the ministry of commerce, the ministry of public works, the ministry of education and religion.

All industries fall under the remit of the ministries of the interior, war, navy and finance, — such as the national printing press, the factories of Beauvais, Sèvres, Gobelins, military handling, arms factories, shipbuilding, arsenals, posts, tobacco, salts, all these professional specialties, more expensive when they are exercised by the State than when they are free, — must come under common right and be exercised under the same conditions as agriculture and commerce. You no more need to be a public servant to make soldiers' clothes than to make those of private individuals.

Of the six remaining ministries, three aim to insure the nation against foreign enterprises: these are war, navy and foreign affairs. Two, interior and justice, are established to guarantee order and security at home. In a future article we will deal with ways to transform them, so that oppression is impossible.



## IX.

### DISMEMBERMENT OF THE STATE. (Continued.)

Without the criminals, the police and the judiciary would have no reason to exist. The professions of town sergeant, commissioner, judge, and gendarme are closely linked to those of crook, thief, fence and assassin. It is a new face of social antagonism. The former's mission is to rid us of the latter. They are therefore generally accepted in this capacity, as public servants.

However, as all accounting must be summarized as a balance of assets and liabilities, profits and losses, it would not be without interest, for statistics and for taxpayers, to calculate whether justice and the police do not cost no more than they bring in.

Let's explain. Magistrates and snitches, as well as thieves, live at the expense of society: some through freely paid taxes, others through forced contributions. Which are the most expensive?

Without doubt, the figure for annual thefts never reaches a third of the interior and justice budget. So that we would have more benefit from compensating the spoliated purely and simply than from pursuing the spoliators, using the means currently in use.

— But, you will say, if there were not severe repression, the number of attacks would grow infinitely.

— This is not rigorously proven. In our society, the profession of thief is almost a normal choice. The army of convicts is recruited, with very few exceptions, in a uniform manner. The child, obliged to earn his living, who has neither parents, nor resources, nor work, steals. Once the first step is taken, it is impossible to get back on the right path. You must eat first; and as soon as we put our hand in our neighbor's pocket, we no longer have the heroism to let ourselves perish from starvation.

The society of rascals is organized along the same lines as our own. — We can speak about it with some knowledge: the leisure that political justice gives us among them has put us in a position to study the matter. — It has its capitalists, its merchants, its snitches: the big ones eat the small ones, and the small ones hate the big ones; at retail, its proletarians and its starving people, like with us.

It also has its public officials, the object of all the solicitude of the authority; they are the *sheep*, the informers. They are the masters in all the prisons. Thus, a famous thief, who remains in Sainte-Pélagie, although sentenced to ten years of detention for theft, enjoying, thanks to his denunciations, a position that brings him 80 to 100 francs per month, struck, some time ago, one did his fellow prisoners with gentle stab wounds. Eight days in prison have been his only punishment so far. — Proudhon, for a newspaper article,

had eight days of solitary confinement, and, moreover, will appear in court. All the morality of the police and justice lies in this rapprochement.

Will we now be accused of exaggerating by arguing that, without the police, there would be no attacks against society? However, this is a serious proposition, in which we firmly believe, and we do not despair of conveying part of our conviction to the minds of our readers. There poverty, we say, is the learning of crime.

Poverty comes from unemployment, unemployment arises from the impossibility for the worker to buy back his product with his salary.

Why can't the worker buy back his product? Because there are two kinds of levies on his labor: one for the benefit of the capitalist, the other for the benefit of the government. Lower taxes equal wealth. Reducing the budget, that is to say eliminating a host of useless functions, would be, while waiting for free credit, to restrict poverty and reduce crime.

— But police functions are essential, people will object.

— Never, we will answer, have we enjoyed more security than the day after a popular victory, when all the authorities were on the road to exile or in the depths of their cellars. Remember 1830 and 1848. Also, the thieves don't like revolutionaries: they are no less conservative than the bankers. "We can't do anything in times of revolution," they say. "We don't just dare to show off." — They can only *labor* when *confidence* is well established. And for them, as for the financier, the emblem of trust is the municipal tricorne.

— Who will ensure public peace when we no longer have spies chasing us?

— You and me, the National Guard. 409,000 armed citizens are, I suppose, for Paris, a more serious guarantee than 4,000 coppers from the Rue de Jerusalem. And when all the peasants are organized in each commune, what will they need from the police to guard against criminals? We turn the civil guard into a ridiculous parade service. May it have a role for good in the future. These days, moreover, ordinary citizens make as many arrests of criminals as city sergeants.

It is true that without the police, we would not have had any political attacks: the *makers of order* at the prefecture would be in exile. But the People would easily console themselves.

— However, if crime is not to absolutely disappear from the earth, there will need to be many courts to judge the criminals. Who will be the judges?

— You and me: the jury.

Justice is divided into two parts: civil justice and criminal justice. The first aims to resolve disputes between individuals. The judge has, in this sense, the function of arbiter. However, the best arbitration is the one chosen by the litigants themselves. Also the best organized and most popular courts are the industrial tribunals. Commercial courts emanate from the same principle.

Criminal justice, established for the repression of crimes and delays, is already exercised, to a large extent, by citizens, by the jury.

There is this difference between civil disputes and criminal judges, that the former, having to rule on special questions, of salary, of property, of commerce, must offer litigants guarantees of capacity and, consequently, be elected by their peers for a given time; while the latter, having to decide only on a question of general morality, must be taken indiscriminately and in turn from all the citizens whose probity has not suffered any attack.

The jury at all levels, the industrial tribunals for all disputes between citizens, for agriculture as well as for industry, would be, with the commercial courts, the radical suppression of the judiciary, that is to say the disorganization of power and tyranny, the organization of order and freedom. Is this a utopia?

It seems to us to be sufficiently demonstrated that police officers and magistrates can, with great benefits for general security and the budget, be replaced by citizens.

Now, when the government no longer disposes of education through the University, conscience through the clergy; when it will no longer have any action on the workers currently employed in public works; when it will have neither judges, nor prosecutors, nor gendarmes, nor snitches devoted to it; when it will find himself facing citizens armed and organized to maintain their rights, I ask, where will the State be? Everywhere and nowhere. Who will exercise authority? Everyone and no one. This is what we call anarchy. What is so frightening and so unreasonable about this?

There remains the question of external security. "As long as there are Cossacks, we will need standing armies." This is the most generally accepted opinion, and we do not come to contradict it. However, it is not 403,000 men who must be ready to march in defense of the homeland, but 10 million. No more conscription; any able-bodied man, in the event of an invasion, is likely to be called up under the flag.

But is it really necessary, to train a good soldier, to send the Gascon to Lorraine, and the Breton to Provence? Could we not avoid putting conscripts in barracks, subjecting them to the stupefying regime of a discipline whose aim is to reduce man to the state of a machine?

The soldier, as the imperial and royal regime has made him, is only a janissary of despotism: he knows neither brothers, nor allies, nor enemies, nor homeland; he only knows his instructions. When we tell him: Shoot, he kills. Is this the soldier of liberty, the enthusiastic defender of his native soil, the warrior who works wonders? Woe to us, if the day the foreigner sets foot on France, he has, to resist him, only the troops trained in the school of Bugeaud and Changarnier!

No more garrisons in peacetime, no more standing armies, no more war budget, no more ministry of the navy; but sedentary national guards and mobilized guards; citizens and not soldiers. So what are taxes and government? This is what we will look for in a future article — if MM. the prosecutors are willing to let us live for a while longer.

X.

WHAT IS GOVERNMENT? — WHAT IS TAXATION? — ORGANIZATION OF  
UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE.

The government is an administration of mutual insurance between citizens;  
Taxation is the premium paid by the insured.

We are all exposed to a series of disasters from which we have no power to protect ourselves, such as fire, flood, hail, bankruptcies, shipwrecks, mortality of livestock, obsolescence.

We all need security, liberty, education — public establishments whose use is necessarily common, such as town halls, schools, roads, canals, bridges, railways, libraries, museums, etc.

The general insurance of society must therefore be established with a dual purpose: 1° Against the risks of force majeure; 2° for the creation of institutions essential to the prosperity of a country.

The ideas of solidarity have deeply penetrated the masses, so we will not insist for long on the necessity and fairness of insurance.

The man who enters active life knows nothing of what the future holds for him. Perhaps he will reach the end of his existence safely. But if an unforeseen accident takes away his means of laboring, if an illness paralyzes his limbs, who will help him? — Society, that is to say the able-bodied workers. But to have rights to compensation in the event of a loss, you must make a commitment to pay your share to the common fund when you are gainfully employed.

This is not only a duty of fraternity; it is a law of self-interest. When a fire sweeps away an entire district, or a flood ravages three or four hundred leagues of coastline, the source of immense production suddenly finds itself dried up. The victims of the scourge, no longer producing, stop buying. A considerable flow is taken from commerce. Now, wealth is circulation and exchange; stagnation is death. Repairing the loss is in the public interest. Everyone must agree to bear their share of the damage. Otherwise, they will in turn be paralyzed.

For the same reason, a country without lines of communication can neither export its foodstuffs nor import products from other countries. Departments of the South are troubled regarding their wines; those in the North can only get them at exorbitant prices. So roads, canals and railways are of general utility.

We do not need to give further developments to this thesis; it is universally acclaimed.

The insurance premium or tax is necessarily proportional: he who has more, owes more; he who has nothing, or makes nothing, is insolvent.

Taxation can only draw from the source of wealth; However, all wealth comes exclusively from labor. The multifaceted tax only draws from the same barrel twice. The single tax is the only rational one.

With the centralization of banks and organized credit, the best method of tax collection, the one that costs nothing, is the discount. All securities coming to the Bank to collect their sign of exchange, their circulation voucher, are taxed at 2 or 3 percent. The same official serves under the law as a banker's clerk and that of a receiver of contributions.

While waiting for the tax on circulation, the simplest and easiest to establish and collect is the tax on capital.

Any *single and strictly proportional* tax is equitable. It matters little whether it is put into the treasury by Peter or by James. The value of a product is the sum of its time and expense. The sale price includes the tax levy. Thus the Parisian worker who drinks 200 liters of wine in his year pays 40 francs in contributions for this consumption alone, although he is not registered on the roll. The tax is found naturally and equally distributed among the buyers; and to avoid it, one would have to abstain from consuming.

Now that we know the resources of mutual insurance, let us find out how it should be administered. To do this, we will resume our analysis.

EXECUTIVE POWER. — The basis of any organization is accounting. The bookkeeper and the cashier are the pivot on which the whole machine rolls. Their functions are very simple: keep an exact record of revenues and expenses; settle the bills and pay compensation to those entitled to them. That is the whole *executive power*.

DAMAGES. — The estimate of the losses suffered by the insured, and the assessment of damages, are determined either amicably or by arbitrators chosen both by the claimants and by the insurance administration. The retirement pension is entitled at the age set by the National Assembly, or in the event of proven incapacity.

SECURITY. — 1. *Public force*. — Every able-bodied citizen must serve in the National Guard. Anyone who refuses to take care of the peace and quiet of the general public has no claim to social protection. He is stripped of his civil and political rights, excluded from the benefits of association. For the institution to be serious, young people, instead of leaving for the city garrisons, will have to practice, in the commune, in the handling of weapons, in the canton, in general maneuvers. In the event of war, all single people are likely to be called to the border, by a decree of the National Assembly. Leaders are appointed by election.

2. *Criminal justice*. — All crimes and misdemeanors are amenable to the jury. The person responsible for directing the debates, the public prosecutor and the investigating judges, are appointed by the vote of the citizens included in the judicial district. Each voter is sworn and called to sit in turn.

3. *Civil justice*. — Justices of the peace and civil courts are replaced by industrial tribunals, commercial courts and family councils. Within the same jurisdiction, all

merchants elect their judges; the workers of each industrial category appoint their industrial tribunal; the inhabitants of the same commune or the same district choose their family council. The family council acts as justice of the peace; one of the members replaces the police commissioner in localities where this function is deemed necessary. Justice is free. The litigant in bad faith may be fined. The execution of judgments is entrusted to the diligence of a bailiff appointed by the court.

So everywhere there is personal action by citizens, or universal suffrage.

**INSTRUCTION.** — Any individual who has not suffered an infamous conviction has the right to open a course or a school. Parents can choose the teacher that suits them. The morality of the teaching is placed under the supervision of the inhabitants of the municipality and the municipal council in particular. Moral outrages must be denounced to the public prosecutor; they are subject to the jury.

In addition to private schools, which everyone has the right to run, there will be one or several pure institutes and teachers per municipality, paid from the budget, and chosen by the municipality. Secondary and higher education will also be given at the expense of taxpayers in establishments whose general councils will determine the number per department. Professional durability can only be done in the workshop. The place of special schools (mining, bridges and roads, polytechnics, marine, etc.) is in the very places where the work for which they are intended is carried out. Teacher places are given through competition; the competition is submitted to a commission elected by members of the teaching staff.

All courses are optional; none is required. However, in five years, no one will be able to be registered on the electoral list or hold public office if they do not know how to read and write, and if they cannot prove their means of existence through labor. The press is free for information.

**CULTS.** — Everyone freely professes their religion. The Catholic clergy and the ministers of the different religions will be required to choose between the castle and the treatment of the State. If they renounce their salaries, they will remain the responsibility of those who resort to their ministry. If they abandon the *casuel*, they will continue to receive a salary from the public treasury; but when the abolition of a cure is demanded by two thirds of the voters of a parish, the salary will cease to be paid to the priest.

The ministers of each religion will elect their bishops and their dignitaries, and will regulate their hierarchy as they see fit; they will not be granted any privileges or exemption from service. — (We claim to give this organizational plan as the most complete realization of the republican principle. However, on the question of free worship, we are only expressing a very personal and very controversial opinion.)

**PUBLIC WORKS.** — Workers employed in works of general utility, as we have already pointed out, are producers in the same way as others. They must only have relations with the State for the granting of tenders and the balance of their memorials. The unpleasant labor will be carried out, in the absence of free workers, by the

condemned. The designation of the constructions to be carried out belongs to the municipalities, the members of the general councils and the representatives of the National Assembly.

ELECTIVE ASSEMBLIES. — The public functions that we have just reviewed seem to us to be so clearly determined that they leave no room for arbitrariness and usurpation. It remains to delimit the attributions of the deliberative assemblies.

1. *Municipalities.* — Municipal councils are responsible for the police and special interests of their locality, chosen by all the voters of the municipality. They appoint the mayor and a secretary responsible for keeping civil status registers. They vote on construction and repairs of local roads and monuments within the jurisdiction of their territorial district. The mayor is responsible for organizing the national guard service and promulgating decrees and laws in his municipality.

2. *Departmental councils.* — Every year the general council, elected by universal suffrage, meets in the capital. It designates to the National Assembly the useful works required by the needs of the department, and appoints an administration responsible for communicating with the municipalities and the central authority.

3. *National Assembly.* — The legislature is appointed for one year, by universal and direct suffrage. It verifies the accounts and controls expenditures, sets the budget, votes on emergency work, ensures external security, decrees peace or war, hears complaints from learned bodies, chambers of industry, agriculture and commerce, revises civil and criminal legislation. It appoints a commission responsible for sending its decrees to the departments and receiving communications from local administrations.

Workers' corporations, scientists, members of educational establishments, artists, farmers, etc., are completely free to form associations, unions, academies and whatever they deem useful.

No society receives aid from the State.

FOREIGN RELATIONS. — The issues of peace or war, as we have said, are a matter for the Assembly of Representatives. International trade issues and customs are the responsibility of the chambers of commerce, which appoint a commission responsible for implementing their decisions and safeguarding their interests.

\*  
\*\*

We have just briefly outlined the bases of a democratic constitution, the broadest and most truthful application of universal suffrage and the sovereignty of the People. We have undoubtedly left out a lot of details. But if our readers have understood us well, they will easily make up for the gaps in our labor.

We have not been lacking for insults and accusations since we established the principle of the abolition of authority. Our audience, we must admit, has not always been able to grasp the difference between what we call *administration* and what they call *government*.

The series of articles that we are ending today will, we hope, put an end to any ambiguity in the future.

G. DUCHÊNE.



## Liberty! Liberty!

Anyone who appeals to capital and power to achieve order in work and in society has lied.

Because the realization of order in labor and in society is the submission of capital and the forfeiture of power.

*(Economic Contradictions, 1846.)*

Three ideas have taken root, at more or less diverse depths, in the consciousness of the People. They are:

Universal suffrage;

The abolition of usury;

The abolition of taxation.

These three ideas flow in some way from one another: the abolition of capitalist privilege is the forced consequence of universal suffrage, just as the abolition of taxes or of the State is the forced consequence of the abolition of usury.

Furthermore, these three ideas are the expression of an idea as old as the world, eternal as the human race: freedom.

Whoever says universal suffrage, says liberty without limits;

Whoever says abolition of usury, says liberty without limits:

Whoever says abolition of tax, says liberty without limits.

Outside of these three things, and consequently outside of liberty, there is no Republic.

What we said in 1846, we repeat in 1850. Those who say that in the face of universal suffrage we must establish an authority are lying;

Those who say that to abolish usury, we must make workers into usurers are lying;

Those who say that the tax collected so far, in the name of the master-state, must be collected in the name of the servant-state are lying.

Those who say that there will forever need to be straps on the shoulders of citizens are lying.

Because any law which does not have as its object:

The abdication of power in favor of citizens;

The return to labor of the usurious profits of capital;

The remission of taxes and the destruction of government parasitism;

The pure and simple declaration, in a word, that citizens are free in their conscience, in their work and in their entire existence;

That law, even in the most sublime language, is a betrayal, an attack on the Republic and on liberty.

[unsigned]

# SOCIALIST CATECHISM

BY

C. F. CHEVÉ

Editor of *The Voice of the People*, and former editor of *The People*.

## I.

### SOCIALISM.

QUESTION. What is Socialism?

ANSWER. It is the doctrine of universal conciliation.

Q. What does it come to reconcile?

A. All that rights and interests that are today in incessant war.

Q. By what means will it reconcile all rights?

A. By giving them the fullness of their exercise and of their complete satisfaction.

Q. What is the first of these rights and the one that encloses all the others?

A. It is the right to live.

Q. What is that right?

A. The life of man being at once moral, intellectual and physical, the right to live is the right to sustain and develop all the faculties of his soul, of his mind and of his personality, as that of nourishing and preserving his body.

Q. How is the right to live to be realized?

A. By the right to labor.

Q. Of what does that consist?

A. It consists of the right to the triple labor—moral, intellectual and physical—destined to satisfy all the needs of these three aspects of human life.

Q. In what manner is the right to labor to be applied?

A. By the right to the instruments of labor, that is, to free credit or the use of all the things necessary to the exercise and development of the moral, intellectual and physical life of each man.

Q. How is that free use possible?

A. By *equal exchange*, that is by the abolition of rent, of profit or of interest on capital in all its forms.

Q. By what means does Socialism come to reconcile all interests?

A. By association.

Q. Is that association compelled and forced?

A. No, it remains, and must remain always fully free and voluntary.

Q. What are the principles on which it rests?

A. They are three in number: absolute Liberty, complete Equality of duties and of rights, universal Fraternity.

Q. Does association imply the abandonment of individual property?

A. Quite the contrary, it excludes it; for that abandonment would be the abandonment of the very liberty which must always remain unlimited.

Q. What should the mode of division be in association?

A. It has this principle for a rule: To each according to his works; and each associate must be remunerating in proportion to his labor.

Q. What, then, sums up Socialism?

A. In these two things: equal exchange, the abolition of all interest on capital, and association, which means solidarity, reciprocity, and mutualism between all men for production, consumption and exchange.

Q. What is the principle with the aid of which Socialism means to realize this double reform?

A. It is the principle of the sovereignty of the People.

## II.

### SOVEREIGNTY.

Q. What is the sovereignty of the People?

A. It is the simultaneous sovereignty of each of the citizens who make up that People. It has for principle, for means and for end, the sovereignty of man.

Q. What is the sovereignty of man?

A. It is the sovereign, free exercise of all the moral, intellectual and physical faculties that God has given to each of us.

Q. What are the results that result from it?

A. That sovereignty constitutes all the rights and all the Liberties which can be summed up in these:

Right to moral, intellectual and physical life by the right to labor; Liberty of conscience; religious Liberty;

Liberty of the press, of speech, of art, science and thought;

The right of assembly and association in all its forms;

Liberty of education;

Liberty of labor, of equal exchange, of commerce and of industry;

Individual Liberty, of home and of property.

Q. What is the nature of these rights?

A. All these rights, all these Liberties are in their essence inalienable, imprescriptible, intolerable, sovereign; its exercise is unlimited; no preventive law can restrain it, by suspending, by hindering its manifestation; and the sovereignty of the People has for aim only to guarantee it and to achieve its free exercise and the complete development.

Q. Isn't the right of the majorities over the minorities a consequence of the sovereignty of the People?

A. Quite the contrary; it is its formal negation, for it implies the action of sovereignty against itself, the oppression of one party of the citizens by another party, and the flagrant violation of the sovereignty of man, principle, means and end of all sovereignty.

Q. What then is the sovereignty of all?

A. It is nothing other than mutual consent, the reciprocal and simultaneous agreement of the free sovereignty of each.

Q. How is that agreement possible?

A. By a national representation which groups and harmonically connects all those whose interests are the same.

Q. What is the basis of that representation?

A. Election according to specialties of labor-functions or of interest. Farmers, industrial workers, traders, mariners, savants, artists, all are convened in each of the branches of their specialty in order to choose, among those who make them up, those most proper to represent their common interests.

Q. What will be the consequences of this mode of election?

A. Then only will the election be serious and real, because it will work by men known to those who appoint them, and will have one distinct, precise and determined aim: the representation of a common interest. Then the representation will be national and complete, because there will not be a single interest that will not be directly represented. Then the Assembly will be truly competent, because it will be composed of the most competent men of all the specialties without exception. Then will begin the free organization of labor by that of its common representation.

Q. What is the fundamental condition of all elective representation?

A. It is the imperative mandate.

Q. What is the sanction of every imperative mandate?

A. The permanent right of revocation of the elected by the electors.

Q. Can sovereignty exist without imperative mandate and without permanent right of revocation?

A. Never; for then it is the sovereign who obeys his delegates, the principles his agents, the electors those who elected him, the master his clerks; and sovereignty is no more than the puerile and derisory faculty of writing, every three or four years, some names on a bit of paper, and cast it in a box.

Q. What sums up the sovereignty of the People?

A. In the common, reciprocal and simultaneous exercise of the sovereignty of each of the citizens; the abolition of the right of the majorities over minorities; the reconciliation of social interests by means of the election by labor specialties; the imperative mandate and the permanent right of revocation.

Q. On what does this principle of sovereignty rest?

A. On the right of property inherent in every man.

### III. PROPERTY.

Q. What is property?

A. It is the exercise of the life *proper* to each individual.

Q. What do you mean by that?

A. The origin and basis of all property is the personality itself. Man has property in his being, his sentiments, his thoughts, his will, and thus in all the moral, intellectual and physical works, products of his free activity or his labor.

Q. The right of property is thus inviolable and sacred?

A. Like the personality itself, since it is only its dilatation, its external manifestation.

Q. It would be a crime to attack it?

A. A crime like assassination, since it is an attentat against the human personality, a real homicide of the moral, intellectual or physique life of one of our fellows.

Q. What then do the socialists attack in contemporary property?

A. It is precisely this crime, this homicide, this assassination.

Q. How?

A. The right of property is today outrageously misunderstood and violated in two manner: by *taxation*, the plundering for the profit of the State, and by *usury*, interest on capital or rent, plundering for the profit of individuals. It is this double attack, this double theft that Socialism comes to abolish.

### IV. TAXATION

Q. What is taxation?

A. It is the negation and spoliation of property, the source of pauperism, the glorification of immorality and the sanction of slavery.

Q. How is it the negation of property?

A. As soon as someone can dispose, without you and despite you, of a part of your goods, it is no longer you, but the one who can so dispose, who is the only true proprietor. Now, that is precisely what taxation does.

Q. But it is the representatives appointed by all the citizens who vote for that taxation?

A. What does it matter! If property is really inviolable and sacred, 36 millions men do not have more right than one to despoil you of what belongs to you.

Q. How is taxation the spoliation of property?

A. Landed property is around 50 billions. Now, that property pays taxes, either directly or indirectly, close to 750 million per year, which, with its mortgages and unsecured debt, absorbs the sum total of its value, and consequently devours it entirely, in less than 15 or 20 years.

Q. In what manner is taxation the source of pauperism?

A. All the indirect contributions, justly the object of public execration, are in reality only a means of starving the People, by making them buy meat at a quarter above its value, by doubling the price of sugar, tripling that of beverages, quintupling that of tobacco, multiplying by twenty that of salt. The consumer, forced to buy all the things necessary to life at prices three, five or twenty times more expensive than their real values, fall into indigence and consume three, five or twenty times less; from this comes unemployment, which reduces consumption anew and thus produces an always increasing pauperism.

Q. How is taxation the glorification of immorality?

A. The profit from the manufacture of money is at base only an official falsification of the currency; rent on the State the legalization of usury; patents only a means of selling the right to labor; the monopoly on tobacco, powder, etc., only a monstrous application of communism; finally, every fiscal measure, only a fraudulent auction block where the citizens are made to pay, at the highest possible price, for the yoke imposed on them, so that those citizens accomplish at great cost, thanks to a myriad of autocratic rents, what they could do themselves, freely and more cheaply.

Q. How is taxation the sanction of slavery?

A. In that it obliges you to give what you would not give voluntarily, if you were not constrained to do so. In that it serves to pay armies of soldiers, employees, customs officers, grant-sellers, administrators, controllers, in specters, police agents, gendarmes and functionaries of all sorts who impose on you, at each instant, things which do not come from your own will and your own Liberty.

Q. What must be concluded from this?

A. That unless we deny the right de property and desire pauperism, immorality, and slavery, we must abolish taxation.

Q. What would you substitute for it?

A. Mutual and free insurance.

Q. How?

A. Just as we insure against hail, flood, fire, diseases of the flock, shipwreck, so will we insure against the social risks which necessitate the action of the law, of justice and public force for the security of all, each paying according to the value of what he possesses and the nature of the risks to be courted, this mutual insurance being specialized, localized or universalized in complete Liberty, in all the possible forms.

Q. What will be the result of that transformation?

R. A third of the current expenditures for which we levy tax have no other aim than to sanction usury and privilege, like the payment of public rents, the monopoly on tobacco, duties, etc.: those would disappear completely with the abolition of all monopolies and the repayment of the creditors of the State. — Another third of these expenditures only concern one special class of individuals or only result from the monstrous confiscation of local or private Liberties, like the budgets for the religious sects and for public instruction, the subsidies to the fine arts, agriculture, and industry, the majority of the departmental allocations of the minister of the interior, etc.: those should be made freely by the categories of citizens concerned with them.—There remains hardly a third of the budget that, alone truly common or national, could still be considerably reduced, like the legal system, communications, provisions for public security: these are the objects of mutual insurance between the citizens who adopt and administer them as they wish, but who can enjoy their profits only by voluntarily bearing the charges.

Q. What will property and liberty gain from this?

A. Property and labor bring in each year the two billions of which they are plundered by taxation, and the citizens in the fullness of the sovereignty and the Liberty of which they are today despoiled by the State.

## V.

### THE STATE.

Q. What is the State?

A. It is the negation of the sovereignty of the People, of Liberty and of democracy.

Q. Why?

A. Because it places the sovereign People under the authority of its delegates, because it imposes on all the will of a few and renders the delegates of the nation masters of those who delegate to them.

Q. Must not society be governed?

A. No; but it must, on the contrary, govern itself.

Q. Do you reject then all authority, and every power?

A. Yes; for every authority, every power, which is not the action of Liberty itself, is only despotism and tyranny.

Q. What if the power should it favorable to the cause of progress?

A. Progress consisting of the realization of unlimited Liberty, the only power favorable to the cause of progress would be that which abdicated and committed suicide, ceasing to exist.

Q. What would you put in the place of the State?

A. Society itself.

Q. And in the place of authority or power?

A. Association, which is to say the mutual and voluntary convergence of all Liberties, the real and spontaneous centralization of all wills in one common will by consent and

reciprocal accord, effective, integral, universal solidarity of rights and interests, organizing themselves by the simultaneous initiative of all citizens.

Q. What then would become of what we today call government?

A. It would transform itself into a simple bookkeeping operation, double-entry accounting for a mutual insurance company of which the National Statistics are the balance sheet, the Assembly the responsible and revocable manager, the whole of society the underwriter, and each of the citizens the insured.

Q. What would be the consequence of that reform?

A. The coming of popular Sovereignty and Democracy, which has thus far existed in name only. Indeed, to overthrow the state is to overthrow the monarchy, not only in its form, but in that which forms its source and essence, in the presidential, ministerial, bureaucratic and functionary power that is only a royalty in disguise; to overthrow the state is to render to each of the citizens all the attributions of sovereignty, it is to found the Republic and the Democracy, not just nominally, but in practical reality, in fact and in mores.

Q. What is the indispensable condition of that transformation?

A. It is that, in each major function or specialty of labor, voluntary association comes to spontaneously replace, organize and regulate, by the free concourse and initiative of each of its members, all the public services that have fallen from the domain of the State into that of the citizens.

Q. Doesn't this reform demand another more urgent still?

A. Without doubt. The monopoly of power is itself based of the capitalist monopole, and we can effect the first only by destroying the second. In order to abolish, by the suppression of the State and of Taxation, the plundering of property for the profit of power, we must first abolish, by the suppression of rent and interest on capital, the plunder of property for the profit of individual, in a word, usury.

## VI.

### USURY.

Q. What is usury?

R. It is the negation of property by itself.

D. How is that?

A. Property is the right to possess the fruit of one's own labor; usury or rent is the right to appropriate the product of the labor of the other. To attribute to property the right of usury, is then to condemn it to deny itself and to slit its throat with its own hands.

Q. What is, for the wealthy, the result of interest or usury?

A. It is to live eternally, without any labor, living on the poor. It is to constantly regain, at the end of the year, without producing anything, the quantity of all the expenditures that he has made, and to always possess the same wealth by always spending



it anew, and without ever working. More than that, it is to constantly and indefinitely increase his fortune, without doing a thing.

Q. What is the result of interest or usury for the poor?

A. It is to live eternally in misery, by laboring constantly. It is to find oneself at the end of the year short all the sums deducted from him for the rent, and, as a result of this growing deficit, to always possess less by always laboring more. It is to descend constantly and indefinitely to a deeper degree of penury and indigence because of the impossibility, caused by the rent, of ever being about to repurchase his products with the wages of his labor.

Q. Isn't that the only source of inequality?

A. Certainly; and of an inequality so monstrous that the laborer, who alone produces all, in the indigent dies of hunger on his pallet in the faubourgs, and this idler, who has never done the least bit of productive work, is the Rothschild, a millionaire five times over, who swims in an incalculable opulence. To the first, the hospital and a common grave; to the second, palaces of gold and armies of lackeys: There is the manner in which usury divides wealth according to labor.

Q. How can interest or rent produce such results?

A. Nothing is easier to understand. By farm rent, rent, lease or loan, each possessor of capital receives, in less than fifteen year, the value of the thing rented, leased or loaned, and always remains its master; so that one pays him its price a hundred, a thousand, a million, a billion times and so on indefinitely, without him ceasing to be its proprietor. More, each of these sums multiplying constantly by themselves in a growing geometric progression, it is only a simple matter of time before on man absorbs the entire product of all laborers, past, present and future, and without the perturbations and catastrophes that follow from that regime itself, this would have long since been accomplished.

Q. What is the origin of this monstrous iniquity?

A. It is nothing other than the last for of slavery and servitude. In the past the slave, then the serf, worked for his master and lord, who appropriated the greater part of the fruit of his labor; today, now that man is recognized as free by right, his is, nominally, no longer held to produce for the capitalist, this modern lord, but, by a fiction which leads to the same result, it is the capital that is alleged to labor for its idle proprietor. Now, this capital being an inert thing, it is always the one to whom it is lent, the laborer, who in reality labors as before for his master. Only his lot has become still more cruel, because the master no longer has any interest in feeding and preserving this slave, grown old, infirm, or unable to work. The rent is then, even in its very form, only the continuation feudal fee or tithe.

Q. Doesn't this iniquitous regime weigh on the laborers?

A. No, it weighs on everyone. It crushes and ruins the proprietors themselves who, for interest on mortgages, unsecured loans and the other forms of rent, have to pay each year close to 2 billions, nearly the total amount of their revenue. It devours the fortunes of the

shopkeepers from which it annually takes half of their profits. Each year it plunders from all the citizens some 400 millions, as taxpayers; close to 3 billions, as farmers and tenants; 5 billions, as laborers. It arrests production which, without it, would soon double wealth or increase it tenfold. Finally, it skins all the consumers who, without the rent, would get everything that they buy two-third cheaper.

Q. What is the only remedy for all these evils?

A. It is to abolish rent, profit or interest on capital in all its forms, to establish equal exchange or free credit.

Q. How will that be achieved?

A. In two ways. — Socially, by a law prohibiting all interest on capital, order that all debts, public or private, will be acquitted by the repayment of the funds alone, without interest or revenue; that every rent, farm rent, loan and lease, can never be anything but a simple exchange, a sale, without any interest or rent; and, finally, give to every laborer the rights of an associated partner, for an equal part of the products of his labor, in every work in which he takes part.—Transitorily and freely, we can still arrive there by an institution of free credit that furnished to the workers, without any interest, property or the use of all the things for which they pay rent today. Declaring, for example, the Bank of France a Social Bank, belonging, not to a Company or to the State, but to all of society, and lending at zero percent interest, or the simple recovery of its administrative costs. Universalizing this credit for all the workers who, constantly exchanging their money for its notes and their notes for its money, would in reality give credit mutually to themselves.

Q. Has the first of these means already been employed?

A. It has been at all times, and almost without interruption for four thousand years. Usury and the loan at interest, always prohibited among the Hebrews by the law of Moses, and among the Christians by the constant tradition of the Church and the innumerable decrees of the councils and popes, was equally forbidden by the primitive legislation of Rome and by that of France for ten consecutive centuries, from Charlemagne to 1777. Thus usury, still proscribed today by religious law, has been recognized by civil law, and with limiting measures, for only around seventy years. It is then quite simply a matter of reestablishing, by generalizing, a law whose principle is as old as the world.

Q. Isn't the second the one by which we must begin?

A. This is obvious, since, unlike the first, we can apply it today, and all that is required is the initiative, the cooperation and voluntary membership of the citizens, while a law demands first that the majority of France be converted to the principle. Already, a mortgage-bank, to which one hundred fifty associations have joined themselves, functions with this aim, and nothing more is required than the spontaneous effort of the citizens in order than in a short time usury be abolished completely and in all its forms.

C.-F. CHEVÉ.