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THE CONFESSIONS OF A REVOLUTIONARY

TO SERVE
THE HISTORY OF
THE FEBRUARY REVOLUTION,

BY
PIERRE-JOSEPH PROUDHON.



WORKING TRANSLATIONS BY
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FROM THE REVISED, CORRECTED AND
ENLARGED EDITION OF 1851.



CORVUS EDITIONS, 2024

[These *draft translations* are part of an ongoing effort to establish an edition of Proudhon's works in English. They are very much a *first step*, as there are lots of decisions about how best to render the texts which can only be answered in the course of the translation process. It seems important to share the work as it is completed, even in rough form, but the drafts are not necessarily suitable for scholarly work or publication elsewhere in their present state. — Shawn P. Wilbur, translator]

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PREFACE

FROM THE THIRD EDITION.

WHAT IS GOVERNMENT?

WHAT IS GOD?

(*Excerpt from the Voice of the People*, November 5, 1849.)

What is Government? What is its principle, its object, its right? — This is incontestably the first question that the political man poses to himself.

Now, this question, which appears so simple and the solution of which seems so easy, we find can only be answered by faith. Philosophy is as incapable of demonstrating Government as it is of proving God. Authority, like Divinity, is not a matter of knowing; it is, I repeat, a matter of faith.

That insight, so paradoxical at first glance and yet so true, merits some development. We are going to try, without any scientific apparatus, to make ourselves understood.

The principal attribute, the characteristic trait of our species, after THOUGHT, is *belief*, and above all things, the belief in God. Among the philosophers, some saw in that faith in a superior Being a prerogative of humanity, while others discovered there only its weakness. Whatever merit or demerit there is in the belief in the idea of God, it is certain that the beginning of all metaphysical speculation is an act of worship of the *Creator*: it is that which the human mind, among all the Peoples, certifies in an invariable manner.

But what is God? That is what the philosopher and the believer immediately, and with an irresistible movement, demand. And, as a corollary to that first interrogation, this one arises immediately: What, of all the religions, is the best? Indeed, if there exists a Being superior to Humanity, there must also exist a system of relations between that Being and Humanity. What then is that system? The search for the best religion is the second step that the human mind takes in Reason and Faith.

To this double question, no response is possible. The definition of Divinity escapes the intelligence. Humanity has been by turns fetishist, idolater, Christian and Buddhist, Jew and Mohammedan, deist and pantheist: it has worshiped in turn plants, animals, stars, the heavens, the soul of the world and, finally, itself: it has wandered from superstition to superstition, without managing to determine its God. The problem of the attributes and essence of God and of the worship that is proper to him, like a trap set for its ignorance, torments Humanity from its origin. Peoples are sacrificed for their idols. Society is exhausted by the elaboration of its beliefs, without the solution being advanced a step.

The deist and the pantheist, like the Christian and the idolater, is reduced to pure faith. One could even say, and it is the only progress we have made in this study, that it is repugnant to reason to know and understand God: it is only given to us to believe. And this

is why in all eras, and under all religions, we encounter a small number of men, bolder in appearance than the others, who, not understanding God, have taken the part of denying him: we have given them the name of *free thinkers* or *atheists*.

But it is clear that atheism is still less logical than faith. The basic, conclusive fact of the spontaneous belief in the supreme Being remaining always, and the problem implied by that fact inevitably posing itself, atheism could not be accepted as a solution. Far from testifying to the strength of the mind, it would only prove its desperation. It is with atheism as it is with suicide: it has only been embraced by the smallest number. The People have always had a horror of it!

And so things have remained. Humanity seemed eternally placed between an insoluble question and an impossible negation, when, at the end of the last century, a philosopher, Kant, as remarkable for his profound piety as for the incomparable power of his reflection, realized how to attack the theological problem in an entirely new manner.

He no longer asked himself, as everyone had before him: What is God? And what is the true religion? From a question of *fact* he fashioned a question of *form*, and he said to himself: Why does it happen that I believe in God? How, by virtue of what is that idea produced in my mind? What is its point of departure and its development? What are its transformations and, if need be, its decline? How is it, finally, that, in the religious soul, these things come to be?

Such was the course of studies proposed, regarding God and Religion, by the philosopher of Königsberg. Renouncing further pursuit of the content, or the reality of the idea of God, he set himself to writing, if I dare put it in this way, the biography of that idea. Instead of taking, like an anchorite, the idea of God for the object of his meditations, he analyzed the faith in God, as a religious period of six thousand years presented it to him. In short, he considered in religion, not an external and supernatural revelation of the infinite Being, but a phenomenon of our understanding.

From this moment the spell was broken: the mystery of religion was revealed to philosophy. What we seek and what we see in God, as Malebranche said, is not at all that being, or to speak more fairly, that chimerical entity, that our imagination constantly enlarges and that, by the very fact that it must be after all the notion that our mind makes of it, cannot in reality be anything: it is our own ideal; it is Humanity.

What the theologian pursues, without knowing it, in the dogma that he teaches is not the mysteries of the infinite: it is the laws of our collective and individual spontaneity. The human soul does not perceive itself at first by reflective contemplation of itself, as the psychologist believe; it perceives itself outside itself, as if it were a different being placed in front of it: it is that mirror image that it calls God.

Thus, morals, justice, order and laws are no longer things revealed from on high, imposed on our free will by a so-called creator, himself unknown and unintelligible; they are things that are as proper and essential to us as our faculties and organs, as our flesh and blood. In short: Religion and Society are synonymous terms; Man is sacred for

himself as if he was God. Catholicism and Socialism, identical at base, differ only in form: in this way we explain faith, and the primitive face of the belief in God, and the indisputable progress of religions.

Now, what Kant did nearly sixty years ago for Religion; what he had previously done for Certainty; what others before him had attempted for happiness or the sovereign good, the *Voix du Peuple* proposes to undertake for Government.¹

After the belief in God, that which occupies the most prominent place in the general thought is the belief in Authority. Everywhere that there are men grouped in society, we encounter, with the rudiments of a religion, the rudiments of a power, the embryo of a government. That fact is as basic, as universal, as indisputable as that of the religions.

But what is power, and what is the best form of government? For it is clear that if we manage to understand the essence and attributes of power, we will know at the same time the best form to give to it, and which is, of all the constitutions, the most perfect. We will have, in this way, resolved one of the two great problems posed by the February Revolution: we will have resolved the political problem, principle, means and end, — we do not prejudge anything, — of social reform.

Well! Regarding Government, as regarding Religion, the controversy has endured since the origin of societies, and with as little success. It is for governments as for religions, for political theories as for systems of philosophy: that is to say, there is no solution. More than two thousand years before Montesquieu and Machiavelli, Aristotle gathered the various definitions of government, distinguishing them according to their forms: patriarchies, democracies, oligarchies, aristocracies, absolute monarchies, constitutional monarchies, theocracies, federative republics, etc. He declared, in short, that the problem was insoluble. Aristotle, with regard to government, as with regard to religion, was a skeptic. He had faith neither in God nor in the State.

And we who, in sixty years, have gone through seven or eight kinds of governments; who, hardly entered into the Republic, are already weary of our Constitution; we, for whom the exercise of power has only been, from the conquest of the Gauls by Julius Caesar until the ministry of the brothers Barrot, the practice of oppression and tyranny; we, finally, who witness in this moment the saturnalia of the governments of Europe, do we then have more faith than Aristotle? Isn't it time that we get out of this unhappy rut, and instead of exhausting ourselves any more in the search for the best government, the best organization to make of the political idea, we should pose the question, no longer of the reality, but of the legitimacy of that idea?

Why do we believe in Government?

¹ La *Voix du Peuple* having been suppressed, after a few months of existence, by police authority and force of bayonets, the studies that this newspaper had promised to its readers were necessarily postponed. A first publication has just been made under this title: *General idea of the Revolution in the 19th century*. in-18, English, Paris, July 1851, Garnier frères.

From where, in human society, comes that idea of Authority, of Power; that fiction of a superior Person, called the State?

How is that fiction produced? How is it developed? What is its law of evolution, its economy?

Won't it be with Government as with God and the Absolute, which have so long and so fruitlessly occupied the philosophers? Would it not still be one of the first-born conceptions of our understanding, which we wrongly give the name of ideas, which, without reality, without possibility of realization, expresses only something indefinite, which only has tyranny for its essence?

And since, relative to God and Religion, we have already found, by philosophical analysis, that, beneath the allegories of its religious myths, Humanity pursues nothing other than its own ideal, could we still seek what we want beneath the allegory of its political myths? For in the end, the political institutions, so different, so contradictory, exist neither for themselves, nor by themselves. Like the cults, they are not essential to society; they are hypothetical formulas or combinations, by means of which civilization maintains an appearance of order or, to put it better, seeks order. What then, once again, is the secret meaning of these institutions, the real reason why the political concept, the notion of government, comes to naught?

In short, instead of seeing in government, with the absolutists, the organ and expression of society; with the doctrinaires, an instrument of order or rather of policy; with the radicals, a means of revolution: let us try to see simply a phenomenon of the collective life, the external representation of our right, the education of some one of our faculties. Who knows if we could not discover then that all these governmental formulas, for which nations and citizens have slit each others' throats for sixty centuries, are only a phantasmagoria of our mind, that the first duty of a free reason is to return to the museums and libraries?

Such is the question posed and resolved in the *Confessions of a Revolutionary*, and on which the *Voix du Peuple* proposes, with the aid of facts furnished to it by the power and the parties who dispute it, to give daily commentary.

Just as Religion, Government is a manifestation of social spontaneity, a preparation of Humanity for a higher state.

What Humanity seeks in Religion, and calls God, is itself.

What the citizen seeks in Government and names *king*, *emperor* or *president*, is also himself; it is LIBERTY.

Without Humanity, no God; the theological concept makes no sense. — Without Liberty, no Government; the political concept is without value.

The best form of Government, like the most perfect of religions, taken in the literal sense, is a contradictory idea. The problem is not to know how we will be governed best, but how we will be the most free. Liberty adequate and identical to order, that is all that

power and politics really contain. How is that absolute liberty, synonym of order, constituted? That is what the analysis of the different formulas of authority will teach us. For all the rest, we do not accept the government of man by man, any more than the exploitation of man by man...

Thus, the course that we propose to follow, in treating the political question and in preparing the materials for a constitutional revision, will be the same that we have followed up to this point in treating the social question. *La Voix du Peuple*, in completing the work of the two journals that preceded it, will be faithful to their wanderings.

What have we been saying, in these two papers, fallen one after the other under the blows of the reaction and the state of siege?

We have not been asking, as our predecessors and associates have thus far:

What is the best system of community? the best organization of property? Or better still: Which is better, property or community? The theory of Saint-Simon or that of Fourier? The system of Louis Blanc or that of Cabet?

Following the example of Kant, we have posed the question in this way:

How does man possess? How does he acquire property? How is it lost? What is the law of its evolution and transformation? Where is it going? What does it want? What, finally, does it represent? For it appears sufficiently, by the indissoluble mixture of good and evil that accompanies it, by the tyranny that is its essence (*jus utendi et abutendi*) and is the condition *sine quâ non* of its wholeness, that it is still, just like Religion and Government, only a hypothesis, or rather, a *hypotyposis* of Society, that is to say, an allegorical representation of a conception of our intelligence.

How, then, does man labor? How do we establish the comparison of products? How will circulation take place in society? On what conditions? According to what laws?

And the conclusion of all these monographs on property has been this:

Property indicates a function or allocation; community, reciprocity of action; usury, always decreasing, the identity of labor and capital.

In order to bring about the clarification and realization of all these terms, until now shrouded beneath the old proprietary symbols, what must we do? Let the workers guarantee work and outlets to one another; to that end, let them accept, as currency, their reciprocal obligations.

Well! Today we say:

Political liberty will result for us, like industrial liberty, from our mutual guarantee. It is by guaranteeing liberty to one another that we will pass from this government, whose purpose is to symbolize the republican motto: *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*, leaving to our intelligence the care of finding its realization. Now, what is the formula of that political and liberal guarantee? Presently, universal suffrage; later, free contract...

Economic and social reform, through the organization of credit;

Political reform, through the organization of universal suffrage:

Such is the program of the *Voix du Peuple*.

The Revolution advances, cried an absolutist paper yesterday, with regard to the message of Louis Bonaparte. Those people see the Revolution only in catastrophes and *coups d'état*. We say in our turn: Yes, the Revolution advance, for it has found interpreters. Our strength may fall short of the task; our devotion, never!

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Levabo ad coelum manum meam, and dicam:

Vivo ego in æternum.

I will raise my hand to the sky, and I will say:

My Idea is immortal.

Deuteronomy, XXXII, 40.

I.

CONFITEOR.

Let the kings unite from one end of Europe to the other against the nations;

May the Vicar of Jesus Christ launch an anathema at liberty;

Let the republicans fall crushed under the walls of their cities:

The Republic remains the ideal of societies, and outraged liberty soon reappears, like the sun after the eclipse.

Yes, we are defeated and humiliated; yes, thanks to our lack of discipline, our revolutionary incapacity, we are all dispersed, imprisoned, disarmed, mute. The fate of European democracy has fallen from our civic hands into those of the praetorians.

But is the war of Rome more just and more constitutional?

But are Italy, Hungary, and Poland, because they protest in silence, erased from the catalog of nations?

But, socialist democrats, have we ceased to be the party of the future, a party that today accounts for half of France?

But you, desolate bourgeois, who are constantly irritated against us, and whose ruin is consummated by our disaster, are you more dynastic, more Jesuit, more Cossack?...

For four months I have been watching them in their triumph, these charlatans of family and property; I follow them with my eyes in the staggering of their drunkenness; and with each gesture, each word that escapes them, I say to myself: They are lost!

Do not doubt it, friends: if the Revolution has been constantly postponed since February, it is because the education of our young democracy required it. We were not ripe for freedom; we were looking for it where it is not, where it can never be. Let us know how to understand it now, and, by the fact of our intellection, it will exist.

Republicans, do you want to shorten your ordeal, take up the helm again, soon become the arbiters of the world again? I only ask you to no longer touch, until further notice, the Revolution. You do not know it: study it. Leave it to Providence alone: never, by the council of mortals, was it on a better path. Stay still, whatever happens; collect yourselves in your faith, and look, with the smile of the soldier assured of victory, on your haughty victors.

The fools! They mourn what they have done for thirty years for liberty! They ask forgiveness from God and men for having fought corruption for eighteen years! We have seen the Head of State exclaim, beating his chest: *Peccavi!* Let him abdicate, then, if he has so much regret for the five and a half million votes that the Republic won him! Does he not know that *satisfaction*, as well as *firm intention*, is an essential part of PENITENCE?

Since everyone confesses, and since the breaking of our presses did not put the seal on our writing desks, I too want to speak to my fellow citizens in the bitterness of my soul. Hear the revelation of a man who was sometimes wrong, but was always faithful. Let my voice rise to you, like the confession of the condemned, like the conscience of the prison.

France was given as an example to the nations. In her abasement, as in her glories, she is still the queen of the world. If she rises, the peoples rise with her; if she goes down, they sink. No liberty can be conquered without her; no conspiracy of despotism will prevail against her. Let us therefore study the causes of our greatness and our decline, so that we may be firm in our resolutions in the future, and let the peoples, sure of our support, form with us, without fear, the holy alliance of Liberty and Equality.

I will seek the causes that have brought among us the misfortunes of democracy, which prevent us from realizing the promises that we had made for it. And, since the citizen is always the more or less complete expression of the thought of the parties, since circumstances have made me, puny and unknown, one of the originals of the democratic and social Revolution, I will say, without concealing anything, what ideas have guided my conduct, what hopes have sustained my courage. By making my confession, I will make that of all democracy. Schemers, enemies of any society that does not pay for their vices, of any morality that condemns their licentiousness, have accused us of anarchy and atheism; others, with their hands full of plunder, said we preached theft. I will compare our faith, the democratic and social faith, with that of these men of God; and we will see on which side is the true spirit of order and religion, on which side hypocrisy and revolt. I will recall what we tried to do for the emancipation of the workers; and we will see on which side are the parasites and the looters. I will say, as far as I am concerned, the reasons for the policy that I would have preferred, if it had been given to me to make one prevail; I will lay out the reasons for all my acts; I will confess my faults; and if any lively word, if any outlandish thought escapes my burning pen, forgive me, O my brothers, as a humiliated sinner. Here, I neither urge nor advise, I make before you my examination of conscience. May it give to you, as to myself, the secret of your miseries and the hope of a better future!

II

PROFESSION OF FAITH.

NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE PARTIES.

The believer says: The judgments of God are inscrutable. A sacrilegious philosophy, applying its wavering logic to events, can alone undertake, in its indomitable pride, to make them intelligible. Why, you say, these revolutions, with their deviations and their returns, their catastrophes and their crimes? Why these terrible crises, which seem to announce to societies their last hour; these tremors among the peoples, these great desolations of history? Listen to Bossuet, listen to all those whom faith bends under its salutary yoke; they will answer you that the views of Providence are inaccessible to the prudence of man, and that everything happens for the greater glory of God, *ad majorem Dei gloriam!*

Less modest than faith, philosophy tries to give some sense to the things of this world; it assigns them motives and causes; and when theology, its sovereign, is silent, the audacious follower speaks. Where supernatural revelation ends, rational revelation begins.

First of all, what is religion? Religion is the eternal love that delights souls beyond the sensible, and which maintains in societies an unalterable youth. It is not for her to give us science: dogma in religion only serves to extinguish charity. Why would so-called theologians want to turn the purest part of our consciousness into a phantasm of mysteries?...

God is the universal force, imbued with intelligence, that produces, by an endless information of itself, beings of all kingdoms, from the imponderable fluid to man, and which, in man alone, manages to know itself and to say *Me!* Far from being our master, God is the object of our study: the more we study him, the more, depending on the side from which we consider him, the nature of the attributes we attribute to him, he seems to approach or move away from us, to such an extent that the essence of God can be considered either as the essence of man or as his antagonist.

How did the thaumaturges make of him a fixed and personal being, sometimes absolute king, like the god of the Jews and Christians, sometimes constitutional sovereign like that of the deists, whose incomprehensible Providence is only occupied, by its precepts as by its acts, with baffling our reason?

What is this order of *salvation*, which has nothing in common with the order of the *century*; this *spirituality* that annuls all other interest, this contemplation that debases all ideals, this so-called inspired science against all science? What do they want from us, with their dogmas without intelligible basis, with their symbols without a positive object, with their rites devoid of human significance? Either Catholicism is the allegory of society, or it is nothing. Now, the time has come when allegory must give way to reality, when theology

is impiety and faith sacrilege. A God who governs and who cannot be explained, is a God whom I deny, whom I hate above all else...

Do you believe, when I ask him this question:

"How does it come about, O my God, that society is divided into hostile, intolerant fractions, each obstinate in its error, implacable in its revenge? Where is the necessity for the march of the world and the progress of civilization, that men hate each other and tear each other apart? What Destiny, what Satan has willed, for the order of cities and the improvement of individuals, that they could not think and act freely side by side, love each other when necessary, and, in any case, let each other in peace?"

And let this God, through the mouth of his ministers, cause me to hear this impious word:

"Man! Do you not see that your race is fallen, and your soul delivered from creation to infernal powers? Justice and peace are not of the place where you live. The Sovereign Arbiter, in expiation of the original defilement, delivered the humans to their own quarrels. Does the vase have the right to say to the potter: why did you make me like this?"

Do you believe, I say, that my heart is resigned and that my reason considers itself satisfied?

Let us respect, if you will, the secret of God; let us bow our will before his indisputable decrees. But since he has delivered the world and ourselves to our enterprising curiosity, he no doubt allows us to dispute even the origin and the cause of our disputes, should this controversy make us one day as learned as he. So let's argue; and may it please the bottomless and endless Being that we had never done anything else! Man would long have been masters of the earth, and we, socialist democrats, would not have, from February 24, 1848 to June 13, 1849, ceaselessly abandoned the prey for the shadow.

As for me, I do not shrink from any investigation. And if the Supreme Revealer refuses to instruct me, I will instruct myself; I will descend into the depths of my soul; I will eat, like my father, the sacred fruit of science; and when in misfortune I should be mistaken, I would at least have the merit of my audacity, while *He* would not have the excuse of his silence.

Abandoned to my own lights, I seek to recognize myself on this terrain bristling with politics and history; and here is what at first glance I think I first understand.

Society, like Time, comes to mind in two dimensions, the *past* and the *future*. — The *present* is the imaginary line which separates them from each other, as the equator divides the globe into two hemispheres.

The past and the future, here are the two poles of the humanitarian current: the first, generator of the second; the second, a logical and necessary complement to the first.

Let us embrace in thought, in the same contemplation, the two dimensions of history; the whole together will form the *Social System*, complete, without solution of continuity,

identical to itself in all its parts, and in which anomalies and accidents will serve to better bring out the historical thought, the order.

Thus the social system, in its truth and its entirety, cannot exist on such a day and in such a part of the globe. It can only be revealed to us at the end of time; it will only be known to the last mortal. For us, who hold the middle of the generations, we can represent it only on more and more approximate conjectures; the only thing that has devolved to us, in this philosophy of progressive humanity, is, according to the sound understanding of our past, to constantly prepare our future. Our fathers transmitted to us from Society a particular form; we will transmit another to our nephews. There our science ends, if it is one; there the exercise of our liberty is reduced. It is therefore on ourselves that we must act, if we wish to influence the destiny of the world;

Now, since humanity is progressive, and acts only on memories and forecasts, it is naturally divided into two great classes: one that, more affected by the experience of the ancients, is reluctant to walk forward into the uncertainties of the unknown; the other that, impatient with the present evil, inclines more to reform. To take equal account, either of traditions or of hypotheses, and to advance with a certain step in the road of progress, is something impossible to the reason of the first ages, which is naturally exclusive. We would not be men if from the outset we judged things with that simultaneity of apperception that is characteristic of science. The first condition of our education, therefore, is discord. Now, since we already see the cause of our discussions, we can legitimately hope, without exorcism and without magic, to banish discord from our midst. Does Faith, when it mixed with reason, offer us a principle as simple as this?

Let us get down to business.

The party of the past, depending on whether we consider it in the order of religious, political, or economic facts, is called *Catholicism*, *Legitimacy*, *Property*. The generalization of these three terms is *Absolutism*.

All that we can do, all that we want, all that we are, from whatever point of view we place ourselves, derives, either as filiation or as opposition, from this past, that is, from feudal or patrimonial property, from royalty, from Catholicism.

We are no longer today what we were yesterday, precisely because we have been it; we will one day cease to be what we are, precisely because we are it.

But how is this evolution accomplished?

Catholicism, in order to emerge from the chaotic state and rise to unity, tends to rationalize itself more and more. By this rationalism it corrupts itself, it loses its mystical character, and becomes a philosophy of nature and of humanity. — The privileges of the Gallican Church in the Middle Ages, the influence of the Reformation in the sixteenth century; the apologetic works of Fénelon, Bossuet, Fleury, etc., etc., in the seventeenth century; the encyclopedist movement of the eighteenth century; the tolerance, or to put it better, the legal and constitutional indifference of the nineteenth century, express so many different phases of Catholicism.

On the other hand, royalty, absolute at its origin like the paternal power of which it is the increment, needs, as it extends its domain, to organize it, and this organization, which is nothing other than the application to politics of the principle of the division of labor, inevitably leads royalty to democracy. — The emancipation of the communes; the successive encroachments of royalty under Louis XI, Richelieu and Louis XIV; the constitutions of 1790, of the year ii, of the year iii, of the year viii, of 1814 and of 1830; the new constitution of 1848, are the manifestations, in the political order, of the revolutionary work.

Finally, property, by heredity, by equality of division, by mutations, by mortgages, by the division of labor, by circulation and by a host of other causes, also tends to change in nature and of form: economists all know this. — The abolition of masterships, mortmain, feudal rights, etc.; the sale, in the name of the State, of the property of the clergy; equality before the tax, have made property undergo, for sixty years, modifications that, for being less sensible, are no less profound and real.

Moreover, these three parallel movements, the Catholic movement, the monarchical movement, and the economic movement, express, as has been said, only one and the same thing, the conversion of the *absolutist* idea into its contrary, namely, the *democratic* and *social* idea. — Considered philosophically, royalty by divine right is an emanation of Catholicism, formed by the distinction between the spiritual and the temporal; property is an emanation of royalty, by the feudal institution. Socialism, or social democracy, the last term of Catholicism, is therefore also the last form of royalty and property. Socialism is the product of Catholicism and at the same time its adversary, both a child of Christ and an Anti-Christ. Faith will not agree, no doubt: it is enough for us that philosophy, that history, give evidence of it.

Catholicism, royalty, property, in a word, absolutism, therefore express for us the historical and social *past*; the socialist-democracy expresses the *future*.

As absolutism was, at another time, the legal and normal state of society, socialism aspires to become also the legal and normal state of this society.

As long as the two opposite terms of the movement, or the parties that represent them, do not understand each other, they will make war on each other; they will say to themselves, like Ajax to Ulysses: *Move me or I'll move you!* The day when their mutual recognition will take place, they will soon identify and merge.

Catholicism posed the problem: socialism claims to solve it. The first provided the symbolism of humanity; the second to give its exegesis. This evolution is inevitable, fatal.

But, as we have said, the revolutions of humanity are not accomplished with this philosophical placidity; the people receive science only reluctantly; and then, isn't humanity free? There arises therefore, with each attempt at progress, a storm of contradictions, oppositions and struggles that, under the impulse of a divine fury, instead of being resolved amicably by compromises, end in catastrophes.

It results from these agitations and tuggings that society does not traverse the series of its destinies on a regular plan and by a straight path; it deviates sometimes to the right, sometimes to the left, as if attracted and repelled by contrary forces; and it is these oscillations, combined with the attacks of socialism and the resistances of absolutism, that produce the ups and downs of the social drama.

Thus, while the direct movement of society gives rise to two contrary parties, absolutism and socialism, the oscillatory movement produces in its turn two other parties, hostile to each other and to the two others, which I will call, from their historical names, the first, *juste-milieu* or *doctrinairism*, the second, *demagogy*, *Jacobinism* or *radicalism*.

The *juste-milieu*, happy medium, known to philosophers as eclecticism, comes from this selfish and lazy disposition of spirit, which prefers impossible accommodations to straightforward solutions; which accepts religion, but made for its convenience; which wants philosophy, but with reservations; which supports monarchy, but complacent, democracy, but submissive; which proclaims freedom of trade, but covering itself with protections; which would arrange for free circulation and credit, but by stipulating an interest for its capital; which, finally, makes wisdom consist in keeping the balance as equal, as much as possible, between authority and freedom, the *status quo* and progress, private interest and general interest; without ever understanding that authority inevitably engenders liberty, that philosophy is the inevitable product of religion, that monarchy is continually transformed into democracy, and, consequently, that the last term of progress is that where, through the succession of reforms, individual interest is identical to the general interest, and freedom is synonymous with order.

Demagogy, so known in France for 60 years under the name of Jacobinism, is the happy medium disguised under a mask of violence and revolutionary affectations. Jacobinism is after places, not institutions; it accuses men, not principles, endeavoring to change names without touching ideas and things. Thus, while it presents kings and priests as tyrants and impostors, moderates as mystifiers and ambitious, it is careful to make every reservation for the maintenance of the authority it covets, and of the prejudice that it hopes to use. The *anarchists* and freethinkers are its greatest enemies. Robespierre sending to the scaffold at the same time the partisans of the old regime, the defenders of the Constitution, Hébert, Leclerc, Jacques Roux, Anacharsis Clootz, Danton and his friends, is the incarnation of Jacobinism.

The happy medium is the hypocrisy of conservation;

Demagogy is the hypocrisy of progress.

The happy medium is addressed by preference to the bourgeoisie, hostile to the nobility and the clergy, whose immobility it reproaches and of whose prerogatives it is jealous, but which rejects radical tendencies and stiffens against the egalitarian conclusions of progress.

Jacobinism better suits the multitude, more irritable than enlightened, for whom revolutions are hardly anything more than dismissals.

Thus demagogy and the happy medium are opposed to each other, as absolutism and socialism are opposed to each other: these four parties form, if I may say so, the four cardinal points of history. A necessary result of our perfectibility, they are contemporaneous in society as in reason, and indestructible. Under a thousand different names, Greek and barbarian, citizen and slave, Spartan and Helot, patrician and proletarian, Guelf and Ghibelline, cleric and layman, noble and serf, bourgeois and journeyman, capitalist and worker, you will find them, in all centuries and among all peoples. All have had their crimes and their follies, as they have their share of truth and their usefulness in humanitarian evolution. Instigators of opinion, agents and moderators of progress, they personify in themselves the faculties of the collective being,

Absolutism is distinguished above all by its force of inertia: what is true about it is its spirit of conservation, without which progress itself, lacking a basis, would be but an empty word. This is why the absolutist party is also called the *conservative* party .

What distinguishes the happy medium, or doctrinairism, is a character of sophistry and arbitrariness: its true idea is that it is up to society to govern itself, to be its providence and its God. The law, for the doctrinaire, is the pure product of governmental thought, and therefore eminently *subjective* .

Jacobinism is recognized by its philosophical nullity and the emptiness of its speech. Addressing itself less to the reason of the people than to its passions, it agitates them, but it does not know how to make them act. But this very agitation is the useful side of Jacobinism: where the people fall into indifference, society is near perishing.

Socialism conceives the social order as the result of a positive and *objective* science; but, like all scientific development, it is liable to take its hypotheses for realities, its utopias for institutions.

Absolutism, strong in its priority, I almost said its birthright, but duped by its principle, the whole efficacy of which is to abrogate itself, always in the work of restoration, only serves to fuel revolutions; — the happy medium strives to stop the revolutionary chariot, and only succeeds in speeding it up; — Jacobinism claims to accelerate the movement and makes it react; — socialism, doing violence to traditions, often ends up excommunicating itself from society.

Moreover, it is with political parties as with systems of philosophy. They engender and contradict each other reciprocally, like all extreme terms, arouse each other, exclude each other, sometimes seem to die out only to reappear at long intervals. Any man who reasons and seeks to account for his opinions, whether in politics or in philosophy, immediately classifies himself, by the mere fact of the judgment he expresses, in any party or system whatsoever: he alone who does not think belongs to no party, no philosophy, no religion. And such is precisely the habitual state of the masses, who, apart from times of agitation, seem completely indifferent to political and religious speculations. But this calm, this superficial ataraxia of the people is not sterile. It is the people who, spontaneous creations, modify, reform and absorb the projects of politicians and the doctrines of philosophers, and

who, constantly creating a new reality, incessantly change the basis of politics and philosophy.

Absolutism, dominant in France until the end of the last century, has been in continuous decline ever since; — doctrinairism, manifested with a certain brilliance following the revolution of July, passed away with the reign of eighteen years. As for Jacobinism and socialism, the first, warmed up by the revolutionary novelists, reappeared in February, to repress the revolution in the days of March 17, April 16, May 15, and sink into that of June 15; — the second, after dragging out its mystical existence for twenty years, is very close to dissolving. At the time of writing, there are no longer any parties in France; there remains, under the banner of the Republic, only a coalition of ruined bourgeois against a coalition of starving proletarians. Common misery will have produced what general reason could not do:

What I have just said of the parties that fundamentally divide all society is still only a definition: Well! That's already the whole story. It is the very philosophy of progress, the death of social mysticism, *finis theologiæ*! Let the skeptic and the visionary argue endlessly about the value and legitimacy of human reason, what does their doubt matter if reason fatefully imposes its formulas on us? What does it matter to us to know that we might not be men? It is the privilege of reason, it is its misery, if you will, to reduce to simple and lucid ideas the most gigantic, the most confused phenomena of civilization and nature. Just as the greatest rivers are but streams at their source, so, for the reason of the philosopher, the most terrible revolutions depend on naively simple causes. Faith does not teach us to judge things with this vulgar discernment: it is because faith, like God from whom it is a gift, does not reason.

The determination that I have just made of parties, of their principles and their tendencies, is true, because it is necessary and universal, common to all centuries and to all peoples, whatever the variety of parties, their origins, their interests, their goal: it is true, because it cannot not be true.

It is the expression of the most general aspects of the history and the primitive attractions of society. Society, a living and perfectible being, which develops over time, contrary to God, whom we assume to be immobile in eternity, necessarily has two poles, one that looks at the past, the other turned towards the future. In society, where ideas and opinions are divided and ranked like temperaments and interests, there are therefore also two main parties: the absolutist party, which strives to preserve and reconstruct the past, and the socialist party, which tends incessantly to free and produce the future.

But society, by virtue of the analytical reason with which man is endowed, oscillates and deviates continually to the right and to the left of the line of progress, following the diversity of the passions that serve as its motors. There are therefore also, between the two extreme parties, two middle parties, in parliamentary terms, a center right and a center left, which incessantly push or keep the Revolution out of their way.

All of this is almost mathematically obvious, experimentally certain. Such is the exactness of this topography, that it suffices to glance at it to immediately have the key to all the evolutions and retrogradations of humanity.

III.

NATURE AND PURPOSE OF GOVERNMENT.

It is necessary, says Holy Scripture, that there be parties: *Oportet hæreses esse*. — A terrible *It is necessary!* exclaims Bossuet in deep adoration, without daring to seek the reason for this *It is necessary!*

A little reflection has revealed to us the principle and meaning of the parties: it is a matter of knowing their aim and end.

All men are equal and free: society, by nature and destination, is therefore autonomous, as it were ungovernable. The sphere of activity of each citizen being determined by the natural division of labor and by his choice of profession, social functions so combined as to produce a harmonious effect, order results from the free action of all; there is no government. Whoever lays hands on me to govern me is a usurper and a tyrant; I declare him my enemy.

But social physiology does not at first include this egalitarian organization: the idea of Providence, which appears among the first ideas in society, rejects it. Equality comes to us by a succession of tyrannies and governments, in which Liberty is continually grappling with absolutism, as Israel grappled with Jehovah. Equality therefore arises continually for us from inequality; Liberty has as its point of departure Government

When the first men gathered at the edge of the forest to found society, they did not say to each other, as the shareholders of a limited partnership would: Let us organize our rights and our duties, so as to produce for each and for all the greatest sum of well-being, and at the same time bring about our equality and our independence. So much reason was beyond the reach of the first men, and in contradiction with the theory of the revelators. We had a completely different language: Let us constitute in our midst an AUTHORITY that watches over and governs us, *Constituamus super nos regem!* This is how our peasants understood it, on December 10, 1848, when they gave their votes to Louis Bonaparte. The voice of the people is the voice of the power, until it becomes the voice of liberty. So all authority is by divine right: *Omnis potestas à Deo*, says Saint Paul.

Authority, then, was the first social idea of the human race.

And the second was to labor immediately for the abolition of authority, each wanting to make it serve as an instrument of his own liberty against the liberty of others: such is the destiny, such is the work of parties.

Authority was no sooner inaugurated in the world than it became the object of universal competition. Authority, Government, Power, State — these words all designate the same thing — everyone sees in them the means of oppressing and exploiting his fellows. Absolutists, doctrinaires, demagogues and socialists incessantly turned their gaze towards authority, as towards their unique pole.

Hence this aphorism of the Jacobin party, which the doctrinaires and the absolutists would certainly not disavow: *The social revolution is the goal; political revolution* (i.e. the displacement of authority) *is the means* . Which means: Give us the right of life and death over your persons and your property, and we will set you free!.... Kings and priests have been telling us this for more than six thousand years!

Thus, the Government and the Parties are reciprocally to on another Cause, End and Means. Their destiny is common: it is to call peoples to emancipation every day; is to energetically solicit their initiative by the hindrance of their faculties; it is to mold their minds and continually push them towards progress by prejudice, by restrictions, by a calculated resistance to all their ideas, to all their needs. You shall not do this; you will abstain from that: the Government, whatever party reigns, has never known how to say anything else. Since Eden, PROHIBITION has been the education system of the human race. But once man has reached the age of majority, the Government and the Parties must disappear. This conclusion arrives here with the same rigor of logic, with the same necessity of tendency as we have seen in socialism emerging from absolutism, philosophy born from religion, equality arising from inequality itself.

When, by philosophical analysis, we want to realize authority, its principle, its forms, its effects, we soon recognize that the constitution of authority, spiritual and temporal, is nothing other than a preparatory organism, essentially parasitic and corruptible, incapable by itself of producing anything, whatever its form, whatever its idea it represents, but tyranny and misery. Philosophy therefore affirms, contrary to faith, that the constitution of an authority over the people is only a transitional establishment; that power, not being a conclusion of science, but a product of spontaneity, vanishes as soon as it is discussed; that, far from becoming stronger and growing with time, as the rival parties who besiege it suppose, it must be reduced indefinitely and absorbed into industrial organization; that consequently it should not be placed over, but under society; and, turning round the aphorism of the Jacobins, it concludes: *Political revolution*, that is to say, the abolition of authority among men, *is the end; social revolution is the means*.

This is why, adds the philosopher, all parties, without exception, as they affect the power, are varieties of absolutism, and why there will be freedom for citizens, order for societies, union among workers, only when the renunciation of authority will have replaced faith in authority in the political catechism.

No more Parties;

No more authority;

Absolute freedom of man and citizen;

In three phrases, this is our profession of political and social faith.

It is in this spirit of governmental negation that we said one day to a man of rare intelligence, but who had the weakness to want to be a minister:

“Conspire with us to tear down the government. Become a revolutionary for the transformation of Europe and the world, and remain a journalist.” (*Représentant du peuple*, June 5, 1848).

We were told:

“There are two ways of being revolutionary: *from above*, which is revolution by initiative, by intelligence, by progress, by ideas; — *from below*, which is revolution by insurrection, by force, by despair, by paving-stones.

I was, I still am a revolutionary *from above*; I have never been, I will never be a revolutionary *from below*.

So don't count on me ever to conspire for the demolition of any government, my mind would refuse to do so. It is accessible only to one thought: to improve the government. (*La Presse*, June 6, 1848.)

There is in this distinction: *from above*, *from below*, much clutter and very little truth. M. de Girardin, in expressing himself in this way, thought he was saying something as new as it was profound: he was only reproducing the eternal illusion of the demagogues who, thinking, with the help of the power, to advance the revolutions, have never known how to make them retreat. Let us examine closely the thought of M. de Girardin.

It pleases this ingenious publicist to call revolution by initiative, by intelligence, progress and ideas, *revolution from above*; he likes to call revolution by insurrection and despair, *revolution from below*, but it is just the opposite that is true.

From above, in the mind of the author whom I quote, obviously signifies the power; *from below*, means the people. On the one hand the action of the government; on the other the initiative of the masses.

It is therefore a question of knowing which of these two initiatives, that of the government or that of the people, is the more intelligent, the more progressive, the more peaceful.

Now, revolution from above is inevitably, and I will explain the reason for this later, revolution by the good pleasure of the prince, by the arbitrariness of a minister, by the trial and error of an assembly, by the violence of a club; it is revolution through dictatorship and despotism.

Thus it was practiced by Louis XIV, Robespierre, Napoleon, Charles X; so will it be practiced by MM. Guizot, Louis Blanc, Léon Faucher. The whites, the blues, the reds are all in agreement on this point.

Revolution through the initiative of the masses is the revolution through the concert of the citizens, through the experience of the workers, through the progress and the diffusion of knowledge, revolution through liberty. Condorcet, Turgot, Danton, sought revolution from below, true democracy. One of the men who revolutionized the most, and who governed the least, was Saint Louis. France, in the time of Saint Louis, had made herself;

she had produced, as a vine grows her buds, her lords and her vassals: when the king published his famous regulations, he was only the recorder of public wishes.

Socialism has given way completely to the illusion of Jacobinism; the divine Plato, more than two thousand years ago, was a sad example. Saint-Simon, Fourier, Owen, Cabet, Louis Blanc, all partisans of the organization of labor by the State, by capital, by some authority, call, like M. de Girardin, for revolution *from above*. Instead of teaching the people to organize themselves, appealing to their experience and their reason, they ask them for power! How do they differ from despots? So they are utopians like all despots: these go away, those cannot take root.

It implies that the government can never be revolutionary, for the very simple reason that it is government. Society alone, the mass imbued with intelligence, can revolutionize itself, because it alone can rationally deploy its spontaneity, analyze, explain the mystery of its destiny and its origin, change its faith and its philosophy; because alone, finally, it is able to fight against its author, and to produce its fruit. Governments are the scourges of God, established to *discipline* the world; and you want them to destroy themselves, to create freedom, to make revolutions!

It cannot be so. All revolutions, from the coronation of the first king to the declaration of the rights of man, have been accomplished by the spontaneity of the people; if sometimes the rulers have followed the popular initiative, it has been as if forced and constrained. Almost always they prevented, compressed, struck; never, of their own accord, have they revolutionized anything. Their role is not to procure progress, but to retain it. Even when, as they are loathe to do, they would have revolutionary science, social science, they could not apply it, and they would not have the right to do so. They would first have to pass their science on to the people, so they obtain the consent of the citizens, which is to misunderstand the nature of authority and power.

The facts here confirm the theory. The freest nations are those where the power has the least initiative, where its role is the most restricted: let us cite only the United States of America, Switzerland, England, Holland. On the contrary, the most enslaved nations are those where the power is the best organized and the strongest: witness our own. And yet, we constantly complain that we are not governed; we ask for a strong power, ever stronger!

The Church used to say, speaking like a tender mother: Everything for the people, but everything by the priests.

The monarchy came after the Church: Everything for the people, but everything by the prince.

The doctrinaires: Everything for the people, but everything by the bourgeoisie.

The Jacobins did not change the principle for having changed the formula: Everything for the people, but everything by the State.

It is still the same governmentalism, the same communism.

Who, then, will finally dare to say: Everything for the people, and everything by the people, even the government? — Everything for the people: Agriculture, commerce, industry, philosophy, religion, police, etc. Everything by the people: government and religion, as well as agriculture and commerce. Democracy is the abolition of all powers, spiritual and temporal; legislative, executive, judicial, proprietary. It is not the Bible, no doubt, that reveals it to us; it is the logic of societies, it is the sequence of revolutionary acts, it is all of modern philosophy.

According to M. de Lamartine, in agreement with M. de Genoude, it is up to the government to say: *I want*. The country has only to respond: *I agree*.

But the experience of centuries tells them that the best government is the one that best manages to render itself useless. Do we need parasites in order to labor and priests in order to talk to God? We have no more need of elected officials to govern us.

The exploitation of man by man, someone said, is theft. Well! The government of man by man is servitude; and all positive religion, leading to the dogma of papal infallibility, is itself nothing other than the worship of man by man, idolatry.

Absolutism, establishing at once the power of the altar, of the throne and of the strongbox, has multiplied, like a web, the chains over humanity. After the exploitation of man by man, after the government of man by man, after the worship of man by man, we still have:

The judgment of man by man,

The condemnation of man by man,

And, to end the series, the punishment of man by man!

These religious, political, judicial institutions, of which we are so proud, which we must respect, which must be obeyed, until, through the process of time, they wither and fall, as the fruit falls in its season, are the instruments of our apprenticeship, visible signs of the government of instinct over humanity, weakened but not disfigured remnants of the bloodthirsty customs that signaled our earliest age. Anthropophagy disappeared a long time ago, but not without resistance from the authority, however, with its atrocious rites. It persists everywhere in the spirit of our institutions. I attest to this in the sacrament of the Eucharist and the Penal Code.

Philosophical reason repudiates this savage symbolism; it proscribes these exaggerated forms of *human respect*. And yet it does not intend, with the Jacobins and the doctrinaires, that one can proceed to this reform by legislative authority; it does not admit that anyone has the right to procure the good of the people in spite of the people, that it is lawful to set free a nation that wishes to be governed. Philosophy gives its confidence only to reforms arising from the free will of societies. The only revolutions it avows are those that proceed from the initiative of the masses: it denies, in the most absolute way, the revolutionary competence of governments.

In summary:

If we only question faith, the split in society appears as the terrible effect of the original decline of man. This is what Greek mythology expressed through the fable of the warriors born from the teeth of the serpent, who all killed each other after their birth. God, according to this myth, has left the government of humanity in the hands of antagonistic parties, so that discord may establish its reign on earth, and so that man may learn, under perpetual tyranny, to turn his thoughts towards another resting place.

Before reason, governments and parties are only the staging of the fundamental concepts of society, a realization of abstractions, a metaphysical pantomime, the meaning of which is LIBERTY.

This double definition of government and parties constitutes our profession of political faith. You know, reader, the allegorical characters who, in this account, will fill the leading roles; you know what the subject of the performance is: now pay attention to what I am about to tell you.

IV.

1789 — 1830.

ACTS OF GOVERNMENT.

Children are taught morality with fables: peoples learn philosophy through the manifestations of history.

Revolutions are the apologues of nations.

History is a gargantuan and magical fable where the laws of society are taught to us in the marvelous adventures of a character alternately grotesque and sublime, worthy of both love and pity, whom the ancient Orientals called ADAM, Humanity. Adam is accompanied by a good and a bad angel: the latter, which I call Fantasy,² similar to Proteus, deceives us under a thousand figures, seduces us and pushes us to evil; but we are constantly led back to good by our good genius, which is Experience.

Thus, the events in which Providence likes to make us appear both as actors and spectators, having nothing definitive about them, are *unreal*; they are myths in action, great dramas that are played out, sometimes for centuries, on the vast stage of the world, for the refutation of our prejudices and the destruction of our detestable practices. All these revolutions, of which we have had the moving spectacle for sixty years, this succession of dynasties, this procession of ministries, these insurrectionary movements, these electoral agitations, these parliamentary coalitions, these diplomatic intrigues, so much noise and so much smoke, all this, I say, has had no other purpose than to make known to our amazed nation this elementary and always paradoxical truth, that it is not by their governments that the peoples are saved, but that they are lost. For more than half a century we have been watching this divine and human comedy without understanding it: it is time for a little philosophy to give us its interpretation.

The power had lasted in France for fourteen centuries. For fourteen centuries it had witnessed the efforts of the Third Estate to constitute the commune and establish liberty. It had itself sometimes taken part in the movement, by overthrowing feudalism, and creating, through despotism, national unity. It had even recognized, on several occasions, the imprescriptible right of the people, by convoking, for the need of its treasury, the *estates-general*. But it had only watched with terror these assemblies where a voice spoke which, at times, no longer had anything divine about it, a voice which was all Reason, the voice, the great voice of the people. The moment had come to complete this great Revolution. The country demanded it with empire. The government could not plead ignorance; it had to comply or perish.

² *Fantaisie* could also simply be rendered as *Imagination*. — TRANSLATOR

But, does power reason? Is it capable of considering the fact and the right? is it established to serve liberty?

Who made the Revolution in 1789? — The Third Estate.

Who opposed the Revolution in 1789? — The government.

The government, in spite of the initiative that it had been forced to take, was so opposed to the Revolution in 1789 that it was necessary, in order to compel it, to call the nation to arms. July 14 was a demonstration where the people dragged the government to the bar, like a sacrificial victim. The days of October, the federations of 90 and 91, the return from Varennes, etc., were only a repetition of this triumphal march, which ended on January 21.

Of course, I am far from claiming that the people, who wanted the Revolution, would not have been right to make it: I am only saying that the government, by resisting, obeyed its nature — and this is what our fathers did not understand. Instead of punishing a man, instead of condemning a form, it was the principle that had to be touched, the government that had to be offered as a burnt offering to the Revolution. It was necessary to ask, not if the dynasty of the Bourbons, if the constitutional monarchy, could serve the new interests; but if the political order, the organization of a public authority, of whatever nature, was compatible with the ideas that the Revolution had just consecrated. The federations or fraternizations that were formed spontaneously on all sides, got things started: they proved that the sovereignty of the People is nothing other than the harmony of interests, resulting from a free contract, and that the centralization of powers, such at least as it is understood and practiced by our statesmen, is the very alienation of liberties. Then, instead of returning to the political regime, we would have sought the economic regime; instead of reconstituting the Power, we would have sought the method to follow in order to see its end sooner. After the negation, the affirmation: what the People had just destroyed, it replaced, not by a patching-up, but by another institution.

It was not so, the governmental prejudice was still too powerful for the revolutionary idea to be understood in its fullness. The movement, barely begun, stopped. All the revolutionary events that we have witnessed since July 14, 1789, have had this concern as their cause.

The power, it was said, has existed since time immemorial. Government is indispensable to society. Some, such as Robespierre, foresaw the possibility of modifying its form: no one would have wanted to suppress it. The old regime officially abolished, it was believed that everything was done, and they set about restoring power, but only on other bases. Power had always, and with good reason, been posed as being of divine right: it was claimed, strange to say, that it emanated from social law, from the sovereignty of the people. People imagined, with the aid of a lie, that they could reconcile power with progress: they were soon undeceived.

Convention. — What comes from God cannot be claimed by man. The power remained what it was: the legitimate son of Jupiter could only be the bastard child of the

sovereignty of the people. Louis XVI, having become, in spite of himself, constitutional monarch, was the greatest enemy of the Constitution, moreover the most honest man in the world. Was it his fault? By confirming his hereditary legitimacy, the Constitution implicitly recognized in him the right which it had claimed to abrogate; and this right was in formal contradiction with the tenor of the contract. Conflict was therefore inevitable between the prince and the nation. No sooner had the new Constitution been put into effect than the government began to obstruct the Revolution. A new convert, he could not get used to constitutional fictions. What did I say? It was in the Constitution itself that he found the means of resisting the Revolution. Another day was needed to overcome this refractory spirit, which was doing nothing less than invoking foreign aid against rebellious subjects. On August 10, 1792, the second act of the Revolution was played out between the men of the movement and those of the resistance.

From that moment, the will of the people no longer encountering any obstacle, the Revolution seemed to establish itself as sovereign. For some years the Convention, to which power had been devolved with the mission of protecting the conquered liberty and of remaking the political Constitution, lived on the energy given to it by the insurrection of August 10, the threats of the counter-revolution and the wishes of 89. As long as it fought for the unity of the Republic, the liberty of the country, the equality of the citizens, the Convention, dominated by the Jacobins, seemed great and sublime. But, admire the power of principles! Scarcely assembled to avenge the Revolution for the perjuries of royalty, these men were seized with a veritable fury for government. Measures for public safety, freed from legal formalities, had become necessary: soon the good pleasure of the dictators was the whole of their reason; they only knew how to proscribe and guillotine. They were the power, and they acted like kings. Absolutism revived in their decrees and in their works. Yet they were philosophers!... It was necessary to react against this despotic frenzy: 9 Thermidor was a warning given by the country to the Jacobin dictatorship. As long as the people had feared for the conquests of the Revolution, for the independence of the territory and the unity of the Republic, they had tolerated the despotism of the committees. The day when the Terror became a system, when this provisional blood seemed to want to become definitive, when utopia penetrated the councils, when Robespierre, the usurper of plebeian vengeance, was no longer decidedly anything but a sect leader, on that day a crisis became inevitable. The logic of the virtuous reformer pushed him to suppress men at the same time as abuses. Moderates and ultras leagued against him; and the People let it happen. It was the power that doomed the Jacobins....

Directory. — The Convention is succeeded by the Directory. After the extremes, the means; after the terrorists, it was the turn of the *moderates*. And it will be the same as long as the political *fantasia* delivers society to the rocking blows of the parties. Now it is in the nature of all authority to blindly obey the principle that gave birth to it: the Directory, like Louis XVI and the Convention, soon provided the evidence. Robespierre's

hand had seemed too rough; that of the Directory was found too weak. Whose fault, again? The Directory, born under the impressions of Thermidor, had emerged from a thought of laxity; never, despite the republicanism of Carnot, the firmness of Lareveillere-Lépeaux, the support of General Bonaparte and the *coup d'état* of Fructidor, could he adopt the attitude of a strong power and obtain respect. What the need of the moment had made him, he became in spite of himself, more and more. The Directory was summed up in Barras, and Barras was the whole corruption of Thermidor. Power, if it is not God, is a brute or an automaton: the will, the reason of individuals can do nothing about it. Raised in power, they themselves soon become what power wants them to be. Louis XIV, representative of an impossible transaction, lies to the Constitution; the Convention, created for peril, no longer includes anything but torture; its intelligence had retired entirely to the scaffold. The Directory, which had been asked to rest, fell into lethargy. When Bonaparte returned from Egypt, the Revolution was in peril, and, as always, through the incapacity of the government. So we must recognize, perhaps to our shame, that the 18th Brumaire was much less the work of the general than of the immense majority of the country. The government was no longer functioning. They changed it: that is all. The Consulate therefore established itself, like the Directory, like the Convention, like the Monarchy of 1790, for the Revolution; even if it meant falling in its turn, when by the deployment of its principle, it managed to raise an obstacle to the Revolution. In Bonaparte the Revolution was therefore, as we have said since, once again incarnated. Was it going to be better served by this new representative of power? This is what we soon saw. Let us follow, under Bonaparte, the fortunes of the government.

Consulate — Empire. — The illusion, then as today, was to count, for public liberty and prosperity, much more on the action of the power than on the initiative of the citizens; to attribute to the State an intelligence and an efficiency that do not belong to it; to look for A MAN, in whom one could recover completely from the care of the Revolution. Fatigue, moreover, was general; we sighed for rest. The country seemed like an assembly of stockholders awaiting a manager: Bonaparte presented himself; he was elected by acclamation.

But power has its logic, an inflexible logic, which does not yield to the hopes of public opinion, which never allows itself to be diverted from the principle, and does not permit accommodations with the circumstances. It is the logic of the bullet, which strikes the mother, the child, the old man, without deviating from a line; the logic of the tiger who gorges himself with blood, because his appetite wants blood; the logic of the mole that digs its tunnel; the logic of fate. Under the Reformed Monarchy, the government had been unfaithful; under the Convention, it had been violent; under the Directory, it was powerless. Now they wanted a strong power to lead the Revolution: they were served all they could wish for. The power in the hand of Bonaparte became so strong that there was soon no place in the Republic except for the man who represented it. The Revolution, it is me said Bonaparte, his hand on the hilt of his sword. He could have said just as well:

divine right, it is me. Never had a conqueror expressed power with so much truth. He wanted the pope to come and crown him in Paris, he, a soldier of fortune, as a sign of his imperial deity. Poor onlookers! We had time to groan over our foolish confidence, when we saw the head of state everywhere putting his will in place of that of the people, confiscating all our liberties one by one, provoking the uprising of Europe against us, and twice in succession to bring the foreigner to the soil of the fatherland. So against a soldier of fortune, as a sign of his imperial deity. Poor onlookers! We had time to groan over our foolish confidence, when we saw the head of state everywhere putting his will in place of that of the people, confiscating all our liberties one by one, provoking the uprising of Europe against us, and twice in succession bringing the foreigner to the soil of the homeland. So against such great evils, it was necessary to rush to great remedies. The nation, inconsistent, repudiated its chosen one. The cause of the despot was separated from that of the country. The anger was so great, the indignation so general, that we saw a people, the proudest of the earth, stretch out their arms to their invaders. The tribunes of the people rushed to Ghent, as formerly the courtiers of the Monarchy had rushed to Coblenz: Waterloo was the expiatory altar that restored our liberty.

It has been repeated since Homer that peoples suffer from the foolishness of kings: *Quidquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi*. Rather the opposite is true. The history of nations is the martyrology of kings: witness Louis XVI, Robespierre and Napoleon. We will see many more.

Restoration. — Bonaparte fallen, they promised to regulate, by an effective pact, the conditions of power. We had the Charter. What was the principle of the Charter? It must be remembered.

Forgetful of the Revolution that had taken him as its leader, Bonaparte had made popular power a power of usurpation. An irreproachable magistrate as long as he was first consul, he no longer appeared on the throne except the abductor of the property of others. What happened? The Restoration posed as a *legitimate power*. It was in 1814, for the first time, that absolutism took this nickname. The Emperor did not take absolutism with him to the Isle of Elba: he left it to us with the Restoration. Now, what did we intend to restore? Two incompatible things: royalty by divine right, represented by the proscribed family of the Bourbons and the emigrant nobility; the constitutional system tried after 89, and overturned on August 10. The Charter of 1814, granted in appearance by the prince, but tacitly imposed by the country, was only a return to the ideas of 1790, violently repressed by the revolutionary agitations, which, not having had time to develop, asked to have their time.

"The declaration of Saint-Ouen of May 2, 1814," says Chateaubriand, "although it was natural to the mind of Louis XVIII, nevertheless belonged neither to him nor to his advisers: it was quite simply Time that started up from its rest. Its wings had been folded, its flight suspended since 1792; it resumed its flight or its course. The excesses of the Terror, the despotism of Bonaparte, had brought back ideas; but as soon as the obstacles

that had been opposed to them were destroyed, they flowed into the bed that they had both to follow and to dig. We resumed things at the point where they had stopped: what had happened was treated as if void. The human species, carried back to the beginning of the Revolution, had only lost twenty-five years of its life. Now, what is twenty-five years in the general life of society? This gap disappeared when the severed sections of Time came together...”

Moreover, the whole of France applauded the return of its king.

“It was the men of the Republic and the Empire,” adds the same Chateaubriand, “who greeted the Restoration with enthusiasm... Imperialists and liberals, it was you who knelt before the son of Henry IV! Who spent his life with the autocrat Alexander, with that brutal Tartar? The classes of the Institute, scholars, men of letters, philosophers, philanthropists, theo-philanthropists and others; they returned charmed, laden with praise and snuffboxes. To whom did Napoleon's dearest friends, Berthier, for example, show their devotion? To legitimacy. Who composed these proclamations, these accusatory and outrageous addresses for Napoleon, with which France was inundated? Royalists? No. The ministers, the generals, the authorities chosen and maintained by Bonaparte. Where was the Restoration fiddling? With royalists? No. At M. de Talleyrand's. With whom? With M. de Pradt, chaplain of the *god Mars* and mitred mountebank. Where were parties given to *infamous foreign princes*? At the castles of the royalists? No. At Malmaison, with the Empress Josephine. (*Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*.)

The monarchy of 1790 had been acclaimed by the people, the Republic acclaimed by the people, the Empire acclaimed by the people; the Restoration was, in its turn, acclaimed by the people. This new apostasy, which the fatal prejudice of the government alone renders excusable, could not remain unpunished. With the legitimate king it was even worse than with the usurper. The Restoration, taking itself seriously, immediately set about restoring everything that the Revolution had abolished or thought it had abolished: feudal rights, divine right, birthright; — and to suppress everything that the Revolution had established: freedom of conscience, freedom of the tribune, freedom of the press, equality before taxation, equal participation in employment, etc. The Revolution is put by the Restoration in a state of siege: one claims the national goods; forming, under the name of Holy Alliance, a pact with foreign despotism; we send an army, called *the Faith*, fighting the Revolution in Spain. The legitimate government followed, as logically as can be, its principle. In short, legitimacy did so much and so well that one day it found itself, inadvertently, outside the law. Paris then erected its barricades: the knight-king was driven out, and all his followers banished from the kingdom. Now, I ask you, on whom should the responsibility for this strange outcome fall? Who had made this power? Who had acclaimed the Restoration, embraced the allies, received the Charter with happiness? When we should have died of shame, if a nation had modesty and if it could die, a monument was erected, an anniversary feast was instituted for the celebration of the *glorious days of July*, and we got back to organizing the power!

Also, we were not at the end of our trials.

New Charter. — In vain the governments fell like puppets under the mass of the revolutionary devil; the country could not recover from its ardent love of authority. People were beginning to suspect that the instincts of power were one thing, the ideas of a people another. But how to do without government? It was so inconceivable that no one even thought of asking the question. The idea had not yet arrived that society moves by itself; that in it the driving force is immanent and perpetual; that it is not a question of communicating movement to it, but of regulating that which is proper to it: they persisted in giving a motor to the eternal mobile.

Government, it was said, is to society what God is to the universe, the cause of movement, the principle of order. *Liberty, Order*, such was the motto under which government began again, I almost said counter-revolution. We had exhausted, in the forty years that had preceded, the government of divine right, the government of insurrection, the government of moderation, the government of force, the government of legitimacy; we did not want to return to the government of the priests. What was left? The government of interests. It was the one we adopted. And, let us be fair; it was impossible in 1830 not to come to this conclusion. It was therefore welcomed by such a powerful majority that we must recognize in it the national will.

It seems, at first sight, that there is almost no difference between the Charter of 1814 and that of 1830; that the country has only changed dynasties, but without changing principles; and that the act that despoiled Charles X and transmitted authority to Louis-Philippe was only an act of popular justice towards the unfaithful depositary of authority.

This would be to completely misunderstand the scope of the July Revolution. 1830 and 1848 are two dates chained to each other with an indissoluble link. In July 1830 the *Democratic and Social Republic* was conceived; February 24, 1848 was, if I may say so, only its hatching. Now, if the transition in July seemed so easy, the Revolution was nonetheless radical, as we will see.

The deposed monarchy had claimed, like that of 89, to depend only on feudal right; it affected a sort of dynastic autocracy, incompatible with the principle of the sovereignty of the people. We wanted one that fell directly within the will of the nation. The charter was no longer *granted*, but *accepted* by the king. The situations were reversed. *Here*, said Lafayette on this occasion, presenting Louis-Philippe to the people, is *the best of the Republics*.

Louis-Philippe, in fact, was the bourgeoisie on the throne; and if this innovation seemed rather mediocre to ardent minds, it was, as we shall see, profoundly revolutionary. The monarchy had just been *humanized*; now, from humanism to socialism, there is only the difference of the word. The parties would have taken a great step towards their conciliation, if they could once have convinced themselves of this truth.

To justify his fatal ordinances, Charles X had invoked art. 14 of the Charter, which, in his view, authorized the Crown to take all measures required for the safety of the State. To

remove from the power any pretext of this kind was to reduce it to submission: it was stipulated that in future the king could neither suspend the laws nor dispense with their execution. *The Charter*, exclaimed Louis-Philippe in a moment of enthusiasm, and I dare say that he was in good faith, *will henceforth be a truth*. But, O fatality of revolutions! O sad lack of foresight of poor humans! O ingratitude of blind peoples! We will presently see the dynasty of Orleans doomed by article 13, like the dynasty of Bourbons had been so by article 14. Neither Louis-Philippe nor Charles X failed in their mandate: it was for having been too faithful to it that they both fell.

The party of the priests had more than once manifested the hope of returning to its temporality, and of recovering the privileges and the influence that the Constitution of 1790 had taken away from it. It claimed to this end another article of the Charter that declared the Catholic religion the *religion of the State*. To tranquilize egoisms as much as consciences, it was decided that in future there would be no more state religion. A disciple of Hegel and Strauss, I would not have asked for it: how are we to admit a justice of the State, an administration of the State, an education, a police of the State, and reject the religion of the State? The doctrinaires did not hesitate. It was the first step towards decentralization, expressed in the wishes of the *Girondins*.

Finally, the seal was put on the reform, by decreeing: "Art. 67. France regains its colors. In future, no cockade other than the tricolor cockade will be worn." — As if one had said: The only thing that is legitimate now, and holy, and sacred, is the Revolution. By this article, the government was declared revolutionary; the power placed beneath the feet of the people; authority subordinated, not to its own principles, but to the judgment of public opinion. A new order of things was created.

Thus, by the Charter of 1830, the ancient absolutism was struck, on the one hand, in royalty, made in the image of the bourgeoisie, of which it was no longer anything more than the agent; then in Catholicism, formerly dispenser and arbiter of the States, now salaried by the State, neither more nor less than the other religions. Until then, the power had remained in heaven: it was made, by this exorcism, to descend from the clouds and take root in the ground. It was mystical: it was made positive and real. From then on one could say that there was none for a long time. Let's face it, we were unfair to the revolutionaries of 1830. By striking Catholicism and the monarchy with the same blow, they did two-thirds of the job: we, their successors, had no other chore than to draw from these premises the legitimate consequence.

The reformers of 1830 only stopped before capital. It was capital that they had worshipped, maintaining the tax at 200 francs, capital that they had made god and government. Before this new power bowed the king, the nobility, the clergy and the people. Remove the capitalist hierarchy, all became equals and brothers. For the monarchical faith, for the authority of the Church, had been substituted the worship of interests, the religion of property. What could be more reassuring, we thought, more inviolable? Despite the excommunication and the stake, philosophy had prevailed against

Catholicism; in spite of the *lits de justice* and the bastilles, the sovereignty of the people had prevailed against the royal prerogative; it had been necessary to come to terms with all these changes and to adapt to the new mores. But what could prevail against property? The establishment of July, it was said, is immortal: 1830 closed the era of revolutions.

Thus reasoned the doctrinaires: ardent revolutionaries against the altar and against the throne, pitiless absolutists when it comes to monopoly.

GOVERNMENT CORRUPTION.

The government of Louis-Philippe is one of the most curious episodes of this long historical period, where one sees nations, abandoned to their providential instinct, wandering at random in the labyrinth of their utopias. All hatreds have coalesced against this memorable reign; all insults have been lavished upon it. I will try to restore the facts in their true light and to avenge the man who was on the throne, after Bonaparte, the most active and intelligent instrument of the Revolution.

The principle of the July government, founded by and for the middle class, was therefore property, capital. In a monarchical form, the essence of this government was *bankocracy*. This is what the wittiest of socialist writers, M. Toussenel, expressed in the title of his curious work: *The Jews, Kings of the Era*.

Every government tends to develop its principle; that of July could not fail in this law. The legislator of 1830, Capital, had said, like the Egyptian Isis: "I am all that is, all that was, all that will be. Nothing exists except through me, and no one has yet lifted my veil." Faithful to its origin, relating everything to its principle, the government therefore began to eat away at and assimilate to itself what remained of the institutions, of the ideas of the past. This was the task of Louis-Philippe, whose unscrupulous genius accomplished this work of dissolution, the prelude to the great palingenesis of the nineteenth century.

Attacked at the same time in its origin, in its policy and in its morality, the government of Louis-Philippe exhausted the hatred and the contempt of the people. And yet, fair history will say that never was a reign better fulfilled, consequently more legitimate, more irreproachable than that of Louis-Philippe.

And first of all, Louis-Philippe is the true representative of July. Who had made the three days? — The people, say the Republicans. — Yes, like Bonaparte's soldiers made Marengo. The popular masses were not in July like the militia of the bourgeoisie. They alone had prepared for fifteen years and organized the victory; to them alone belonged to dispose of the victory. Why are we talking about popular suffrage here? If the people had been consulted on the choice of the prince, since after having changed the principle of the Charter the form was retained, it is clear that the people, for whom the form trumps the substance, would have chosen Henri V. Any other candidate would have been illegitimate in their eyes. But things could not happen like this: it was not only the Charter of 1814 that had to be avenged, it was a new principle that had to be represented in power; and those alone who had inaugurated the principle had the quality to choose its representative. The people could not be consulted in this matter, and it was a blessing for the Revolution. It was a necessity that the government of interests appear in its turn: now the people would never have consented to take the golden calf for their God; the faithful of

legitimacy would never have recognized their king in the pimp of the Malthusians. Louis-Philippe was the only man who could accept the burden of the iniquities of July. Either we must deny the legitimacy of the *glorious*; or else, if we accept the transition, we must admit the legitimacy of the bourgeois king.

As for the policy of Louis-Philippe, as for the *thought of the reign*, it is still easier to justify it. Neglect the details, and occupy yourself, as M. Guizot teaches, only with the essential facts, with those that constitute *great politics*.

What end did the bourgeoisie propose to itself in 1830, when it established, in its truth, the *constitutional* regime, the object of its desires for half a century? Look closely, and you will see that, behind this political form, necessary as a transition for the destinies of France, the bourgeoisie wanted nothing, foresaw nothing; you will see that the Charter was for them only a great negation. The bourgeoisie did not know in 1830, it still does not know in 1849, what it was pursuing through its Reformed Charter and its representative government: it only knew, and very well, what it did not want.

The bourgeoisie did not want a legitimate monarchy, born of a principle other than its will: it had just expelled this monarchy by a coup d'état.

It cared little for a classical or romantic republic, in the fashion of the Greeks and Romans, or such as was desired after February.

It did not like the Jesuits, meaning by Jesuits the Gallicans as well as the Ultramontanes. For it, the Jansenist is only a variety of the Jesuit: if it admired Bossuet, its heart was in Voltaire. It tolerated worship and paid for it; but, as if it had refused to enter into a share with God, it had outlawed religion.

It suffered neither nobility nor aristocracy, no other hierarchy than that of jobs and fortunes, conquered at the peak of labor.

It finally proved, in many circumstances, that it cared neither for regulation, nor for corporations, nor for communism; it does not even accept free trade. Free trade, in the eyes of a conservative, is one of the thousand faces of socialism.

What does this shrewd, annoying, ungovernable bourgeoisie want? If you press it to answer, it will tell you that it wants *business*; the rest is cheap. Opinions and parties it laughs at; of religion we know what it thinks; its representative regime, for which it fought so hard, causes it pity. What the bourgeoisie wants, what the bourgeoisie demands, is well-being, luxury, pleasures; it is to earn money.

And the people, on all these points, are of the opinion of the bourgeoisie. They too claim to have their share of well-being, enjoyment and luxury; they want, in a word, to be free, ready, on this condition, to believe what they will in religion as in politics.

Well! Louis-Philippe's mission, a mission given to him by the pact of 1830, was to make the bourgeois idea predominate, that is to say — let's hear it! — not to ensure labor for these, profit for those, well-being for all; not to open outlets to commerce, and to make himself the purveyor of business to the country — that would have been solving the social problem — but to propagate the morality of self-interest, to inoculate all classes with

political and religious indifference, and, by the ruin of parties, by the depravity of consciences, to dig the foundations of a new society, to force, so to speak, a revolution arrested in the councils of destiny, but that the contemporary society did not accept.

Yes, HE HAD TO; and it is you, dynastics of all shades who wanted it! Ah! you recoil before this dreadful system: I adhere fully and unreservedly to the inexorable government of Louis-Philippe.

In good faith, what do you want a king to do to whom his constituents had said: You will be the corrupter of our generation; and who, by an admirable accord of nature and politics, seemed created expressly for such an era? How could he have resisted his greedy solicitors, waiting for a godsend from him, as the little birds wait for a bite from their mother? How could he have remained without pity for those souls corrupted by vice, whom the sight of virtue made suffer like purgatory?

Place yourself in the point of view of the power of July; recall for yourself the institutions and ideas that had hitherto formed the moral capital of society, which made up, if I dare say so, the armor of consciences: you will find nothing there that deserved the consideration of the Head of State, nothing that was worth the suffering of a prick on the part of the citizens, the sacrifice of the smallest enjoyment.

Is it religious prejudice, monarchical dignity that stops you? — But, read Chateaubriand, there is no royalist who does not smile when he thinks of his kings, no Christian who believes in the eternity of suffering, and who does not find that asceticism has had its day.

Is it the sanctity of justice, the purity of morals? — But there is no longer either morality or justice; there is no certainty of right and duty: the just and the unjust are confused, indistinguishable. I defy you to tell me what constitutes contempt of morals, adultery, perjury, theft, bankruptcy, and murder; to define for me usury, monopolization, combination, extortion, corruption of officials, counterfeit money: with the freedom of feuilletons, speeches, pictures, dances; with freedom of commerce and industry; with the arbitrariness of values and the venality of charges; with extenuating circumstances; with the freedom of association, of circulation, of donation; with the free worker and the free woman! Not that I want, take care, to indict freedom; I only say that, under the Charter of 1830, our liberty, having neither ballast nor compass, is that of all the crimes, and our social order a perfect dissolution.

Is it at least respect for constitutional forms, fidelity to political convictions? But what is politics, with capital as sovereign? A Chinese shadow show, a dance of the dead. On what, I pray you, can opinions and votes bear? On issues of retributive and distributive justice, public morals, police, administration, property. Now, go to the bottom; you will find that free thought has dissected everything, destroyed everything; that chaos is everywhere, whichever way we turn, so that, finally, in order to preserve a remnant of peace and order in this shaken world, there is no longer any resource but arbitrariness. In

this uncertainty, where reflection rationally indicates no choice, where logic proves that white and black are equal, what will decide for you, if not your interest?

So *laissez faire, laissez passer*, everyone and everything, and just wipe up your spills. Neither Christian nor Jew; neither royalist nor democrat; neither academic nor romantic; *Each at home, each for himself*; God, that is to say Fortune, for all, and intolerance only for the intolerant. He alone is a bad citizen, who does not know how to live in an environment where there is an honorable place even for thieves and prostitutes.

This is the inflexible, providential line that the Charter of 1830 prescribed for the monarch to follow. The last term in a revolutionary series, this Charter was like a judgment of Nemesis, condemning us to drink hemlock. Louis-Philippe did nothing other than present the cup to us: once the role of executioner was part of the royal prerogatives.

Of all the reproaches that have been leveled at the government of Louis-Philippe, only one, perhaps, would be serious, if it were justified: it is that addressed to the ministry Molé, who was, if I am not mistaken, the opposition's Thiers-Barrot. "We would do the same things as you," they said, "but we would do them better than you!" This is understandable: once the system has been accepted, the debate only revolves around execution. Louis-Philippe took eighteen years to demoralize France: that's too long. It has cost the country 1,500 million a year for this: it is too expensive. What a misfortune that M. Odilon Barrot was made a minister only under the Republic!

What, then, had they to reproach the man according to their heart, these paragons of virtue and honor, these principled politicians, when they accused him of being a Jesuit and of being an atheist; of speaking alternately of conservation and revolution; of mingling with the common people and caressing the nobles; to handing over childhood to ignoramuses and leaving the youth in the secondary schools without faith; of conspiring with kings and being expelled from the Holy Alliance?

Couldn't they answer:

The contradictions of my policy are the justification for this. What is God, according to you, my masters? A word. — The people? Slaves. — The royalty? A ruin. — The charter? A negation. — The revolution? A mummy. What are you yourself? Whited sepulchers. Hypocrites, you deliver me up to contempt and hatred, because I revealed your secret! Ah! You mourn your lost religion! Why did you drive out Charles X? You mourn your faded glory! Why did you betray the Emperor? You mourn your republican virtue! Why did you slaughter Condorcet, Roland, Vergniaud, Danton, Desmoulins? You groan over your humiliated monarchy, once so noble and so popular! Why did you dethrone Louis XVI? Why, after having dethroned him, did you cowardly condemn him to death, by a majority of five votes? You reproach me for doing nothing for the people! Why did you shoot Babœuf?... Shameless doctrinaires, selfish Malthusians, ungrateful bourgeois! You accuse the corruption of my reign, and you have enthroned me on the dunghill! It only remains for you to strangle yourselves in my person. Finish your work, but first know who you are, and you will know who I am.

It has been said that the February Revolution was the Revolution of contempt. That is true, but who does not see that this is precisely the secret of the marvelous destiny of Louis-Philippe?

As it was to happen to the corrupter of all principles, Louis-Philippe was the most hated, the most despised of all princes, all the more despised, all the more hated, as he had a higher understanding of his mandate.

Louis XIV reigned by the idolatry of his person; Caesar and Bonaparte, by admiration; Sylla and Robespierre, by terror; the Bourbons, by the reaction of Europe against the imperial conquest.

Louis-Philippe is the first, the only one who reigned by contempt.

Did Casimir Périer esteem Louis-Philippe? And Lafayette, and Laffitte, and Dupont (de l'Eure), did they love him? I am not speaking of the Talleyrands, the Thiers, the Dupins, the Guizots, nor of all the others who had been or wanted to be his ministers; they looked too much like their chief to think highly of him. But did we ever see, for example, the academicians, in their sessions, eulogizing Louis-Philippe, as they celebrated the glory of the great king and the great emperor? Do we see, at the theater, the actors complimenting him; the priests in church preach about him; the magistrates celebrate him in their mercuriales?... And yet these men, of which the most honorable were at the bottom of the heart of sincere republicans, had joined together to carry on the shield Louis-Philippe; and, while cursing him, they persisted in supporting him. Lafayette had said of him: *It is the best of the Republics!* Laffitte sacrificed his fortune to him, Odilon Barrot his popularity, MM. Thiers and Guizot their most intimate convictions. Dupont (de l'Eure) asked for him a civil list of 18 millions; Casimir Périer was killed in the breach, taking to the grave the loathing of Republicans and Poles. Will you tell me the reason for so much devotion united with so much hatred?

As on the 18th Brumaire, to ensure the faltering revolution, a man had been needed; likewise, in 1830, in order to accomplish the decay of the old world, one more man was needed. Louis-Philippe was that man.

Examine him closely: he is naively, conscientiously corrupting. Himself above calumny, without reproach in his private life, corrupting, but not corrupted, he knows what he wants and what he does. An abominable destiny calls him: he obeys. He pursues his task with devotion, with happiness, without any divine or human law, without any remorse disturbing him. He holds in his hand the key to consciences; no will resists him. To the politician who speaks to him of the wishes of the country, he offers a scholarship for his son; to the priest who talks to him about the needs of the Church, he asks how many mistresses he has. Consciences fell before him by the thousands, as soldiers fell on the battlefield before Napoleon: and neither was the Emperor touched by this carnage, nor was Louis-Philippe moved by the perdition of these souls. Napoleon, dominated by a fatality that he felt without understanding it, was able to calmly give the signal which precipitated millions of men into death: was he therefore a Nero or a Domitian? Thus

Louis-Philippe, father of a family, severe in his interior, master of himself, made a pact with hell for the damnation of his country: he remains without reproach before God and before men.

Let the wretches whom he corrupts abjure, for a patent, for a place, what they still believe to be virtue, justice and honor: immorality and shame are theirs.

But he, the head of state, the representative of society, the instrument of Providence, in what way is he immoral? Morality, for him, is it not to sacrifice to progress these cadaverous souls? Is it not to procure, *per fas et nefas*, the fulfillment of destinies?

Philosophy and history teach that morality, unalterable in its essence, is changeable in its form. At the house of the Christians, the moral was first to give one's goods to the community; later, to shed his blood in proof of the reality of a myth; then it consisted in exterminating, by iron and by fire, Saracens, heretics and communists. In 93, morality was the hatred of royalty; ten years later, it was the hatred of democracy: five million votes proved that such was then the opinion of France.

Now that religion is in full discredit, philosophy undecided, now that national sovereignty, represented by more or less truthful agents, stumbles like a drunken peasant: everything is confused in morality, everything has once again become arbitrary and of no value, except for one point, which is to live well and to amass money. The moral, you see, is to have only one legitimate wife, hardly any chores, and twenty mistresses, if you can feed them; morality is to fight a duel, on pain of infamy, and not to fight, on pain of the court of assizes; morality is to provide yourself with luxury and pleasures (see the program of the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences for the year 1846) at all costs, except to escape the cases provided for in the Penal Code. My pleasure is my law, I know of no other. For us to rediscover a positive and obligatory morality, society must rebuild itself from top to bottom; and for it to be rebuilt, it must be demolished. How, once again, could the prince, precursor of this great revolution, be guilty of immorality, because he is working courageously at the only thing necessary and at this moment possible, at the discrediting of old prejudices, at social decomposition?

Let us therefore deign to remember that, in humanity, reasons are not words, but deeds and gestures; that demonstration is experience, that noumenon is phenomenon.

Louis-Philippe was given the mission to demonstrate that the constitutional system is the negation of negations, a supreme utopia, like empire and legitimacy. Statesman, practical man above all, he does not reason; he acts. He attacks the parliamentary principle by influences; he kills the monarchical principle by a ridiculous exhibition, bourgeois royalty, the only one that existed in the century. Same method for Catholicism. Of what use are the people, who do not read, the Encyclopedia, Voltaire, Rousseau, Dupuis, Volney, Lessing, Kant, Hegel, Strauss, Feuerbach? A million volumes do not disillusion, in a century, four thousand readers: Providence does things differently. It puts religion and interest in opposition; it attacks faith by selfishness: and the demonstration is made.

Dare to say it: the moral man, because he was the man of the time, was Louis-Philippe. Let us not be afraid of this word corruption, so terrible to our unhealthy consciences: corruption was the whole morality of the government of July. The Charter had wanted it so; Providence had given us from all eternity the precept for it.

Louis-Philippe is the only man in Europe who, for nineteen years, has been constant in his role. So, until the hour set for his departure, everything has worked out for him. He escaped the bullets of the regicides, blind in their thoughts and uncertain of their blows; he conquered factions and intrigues; odious to all, he trampled them under foot, he defied their audacity. Weak himself as a sovereign, and as a prince devoid of prestige, he was nonetheless the fateful man, the one whom the world adored: the antagonism of the principles he fought was his strength.

What pettiness it takes not to understand how profound and great such a role was! What! Louis-Philippe is a despicable cheat, an ignoble miser, a soul without faith, a mediocre genius, a selfish bourgeois, an insipid talker; his government, if possible, is still worse than him. His ministers admit it; his ex-ministers spread it; France knows it; the gamin of Paris repeats it; nobody, nobody! has for him a word of esteem. Lafayette, Dupont (from Eure), Laffite, C. Pérrier, have said of him in turn, borrowing to paint him the language of the halls: *Le b..... deceives us!* And that lasted eighteen years! All that was generous, vital, heroic in France was pulverized before this devastating influence; everything was gangrenous; corruption has come out of our noses and ears; and for eighteen years France was not moved. And today when he fell, today when the Republic has *crushed the infamous*, France still regrets it! Wouldn't it all be over?... No, for the honor of my country, for the respect of the French name, I cannot believe in such a power of evil. This man whom you charge with your iniquities, whom you accuse of your miseries, is in my eyes only the Attila of false consciences, the last scourge of revolutionary justice.

Breaking characters, ruining convictions, reducing everything to mercantile positivism, everything to money, until the day when a theory of money would signal the hour and the principle of resurrection: this was the work of Louis-Philippe is his glory. What I see Louis-Philippe reproached for smallness of views, petty cunning, triviality, gossip, false taste, hollow eloquence, hypochondriac philanthropy, bigoted complacency, all this seems to me sublime in irony and sense of timing. What could you hope for that is more crushing for your parliamentary and talkative regime than these speeches from the crown that say nothing, precisely because legislators with 500 francs in contribution as well as 25 francs in indemnity have and cannot have nothing to say?

Louis-Philippe's life would be incomplete; he would have lacked something in his reign, if he had not at the end found a worthy minister. This was M. Guizot, to whom, according to the testimony of his enemies and his rivals, no passion ever approached, except that of power. Like his master, pure in the midst of the peat of his victims, this great corrupter could apply the word of the psalmist to himself: *Non appropinquabit ad me*

malum, corruption does not come to me. Only he knew the *thought of the reign*, he alone was the friend of Louis-Philippe, as Apémantus was the friend of Timon. — Yes, you were sublime, oh great minister, oh great man, when, at the Lisieux banquet, you dared to reveal the secret of your power in a toast to corruption. Yes, these legitimists, these radicals, these puritans of the opposition, these Jesuits, these economists, they are vile scoundrels, slaves to their senses and their pride, and of whom you well know that with a little gold you would always be right. These moralists are the lovers of old courtesans; these artists are craftsmen of luxury and lust: the flood of their impurity passes at your feet and does not defile them. These so-called progressives, who don't have the courage of their venality, you said it, *they don't know each other!* But you, you know them, you know the price of their virtue; and if they pretend to deny you, you still rejoice: they have reached the height of the crime; they are corrupt in bad faith.

Alas! Corruption, if it was a powerful revolutionary means in the hands of these two men, must not be the state destined for us by fate. Without that, M. Guizot would be a minister, and the dynasty of Louis-Philippe would reign forever. Capital had established itself in 1830 as the only principle that, after divine right and the right of force, had a chance of lasting; it turned out, in 1848, that the government of capital was the plague of society, *abominatio desolationis!* A parliamentary quarrel threw the great prostitute into the mud. The same bourgeois who had enthusiastically acclaimed the accession of Louis-Philippe to the throne rushed him in a fit of disgust; the public conscience had risen again against the Minister of the Supreme Wills. The people found themselves behind the ranks of the National Guard to give the catastrophe its true meaning: for eighteen years they had been waiting for this initiative of the bourgeoisie, and stood ready. Let my contemporaries deny it, if they dare, or let them get over it, if they can! But I am neither sold yesterday nor a renegade tomorrow; and I swear that the French bourgeoisie, by overthrowing the dynasty which it had created, destroyed in it the principle of property.

VI.
FEBRUARY 24:

PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT.

I wrote somewhere that society is *metaphysics in action*, a kind of logic that plays out in proverbs. What the general study of history and the more profound study of political economy had revealed to me, the events accomplished over the past two years have brought to my fingertips.

Every government is established in contradiction to that which preceded it: this is its reason for evolving, its title to existence. The government of July was an opposition to legitimacy, legitimacy an opposition to the Empire, the latter an opposition to the Directory, which had established itself in hatred of the Convention, itself summoned to put an end to the malformed monarchy of Louis XVI.

According to this law of evolution, the government of Louis-Philippe, unexpectedly overthrown, called for its opposite. On February 24 had taken place the forfeiture of Capital; on the 25th the government of *Labor* was inaugurated. The decree of the Provisional Government that guarantees the right to work was the birth certificate of the February Republic. God! Did it take six thousand years of revolutionary arguments to bring us to this conclusion?...

Here, then, is the antinomic theory confirmed anew by experience: let those who admit no philosophy in the direction of human affairs, and who relate everything to an invisible power, finally tell us how reason explains everything, even error and crime, while faith alone explains nothing?

Not only was the succession of the government of the workers to that of the capitalists logical, it was just. Capital, which had set itself up as the principle and end of social institutions, had been unable to sustain itself; we had acquired the proof that, far from being a principle, it is a *product*, and that property is not, any more than divine right or the sword, the motive and plastic force of society. After having corrupted everything, the capitalist theory had made capital itself collapse.

The facts, in this respect, were flagrant; their testimony spoke loudly. At the time of the February Revolution, commerce and industry, which had been suffering for several years, were in distressing stagnation, agriculture overburdened, the workshops out of work, the shops overflowing for lack of outlets, the finances of the State as badly treated as those of individuals. In spite of the periodic increase in the budget which, from 1830 to 1848, had risen progressively from 1 billion to 1,500 millions, the Chambers had noted a deficit, according to some of 800 millions, according to others of 1 billion; the salaries of civil servants figured alone in this increase in expenses for an annual sum of 65 millions. The *bankocrats*, who in 1830 had made a revolution in the name of self-interest, who had promised *cheap* government, who affected the title of economists much more than

politicians, the philosophers of *Debit* and *Credit* spent half again as much as the government of legitimacy, once as much as the imperial government, without being able to align their receipts and expenditures.

The proof was made. It was not *capital*, *agio*, *usury*, *parasitism*, *monopoly*, that the legislator of 1830 had wanted to name, it was *labor*. Decidedly, the so-called principle of July was as incapable of producing *Order* as *Liberty*. It was necessary to go back higher, that is to say to descend lower; it was necessary to reach the proletariat, to reach nothingness. The February Revolution was therefore logically, precisely, the revolution of the workers. How could the bourgeoisie of 89, 90, 1814 and 1830, how could this bourgeoisie, which had traversed the descending chain of governments, from Catholicism and feudalism to capital, which only asked to produce and to exchange, which had risen to power only through work and the economy, how could it see in the republic of labor a threat to its interests?

Thus, the February Revolution imposed itself on people's minds with the authority of fact and right. The bourgeoisie vanquished, I do not say by the people, — thank God! there had been no conflict in February between the bourgeoisie and the people, — but conquered by itself, admitted its defeat. Although taken unawares, and full of worries about the spirit and tendencies of the Republic, it nevertheless agreed that the constitutional monarchy was out of date, that the government had to be reformed from top to bottom. It therefore resigned itself; it was ready to support, with its adhesion, and even with its capital, the new establishment. Had it not, by its opposition, by its impatience, precipitated a reign that had become a material obstacle to its commerce, to its industry, to its well-being?... So, the advent of the Republic experienced even fewer contradictions than that of Louis-Philippe, so much did people begin to understand times and revolutions!

It is now that I claim the full attention of my readers; for, if the lesson does not profit us, it is useless to concern ourselves any more with public affairs. Let the nations go adrift: let each of us buy a rifle, a dagger, pistols, and barricade his door. Society is only a vain utopia: the natural state of man, the legal state, is war.

The government of labor! Ah! That one will be a government of initiative, no doubt, a government of progress and intelligence!...

But what is the government of labor? Can labor become government? Can labor govern or be governed? What do labor and the power have in common?

Such a question, no one had foreseen it. It doesn't matter. Led on by governmental prejudice, the people were in no hurry to do anything more than first of all to remake a government for themselves. The power, having fallen into their laborious hands, was immediately handed over by them to a certain number of men of their choice, charged with founding the Republic, and with solving, along with the political problem, the social problem, the problem of the proletariat. — We'll give you three months, they told them, and, always sublime in their simplicity, always tender in their heroism, they added: *We*

have three months of misery in the service of the Republic! Antiquity and the Revolution of 92 have nothing comparable to this cry from the bowels of the people of February.

The men chosen by the people, installed at the Hôtel-de-Ville, were called the *Provisional Government*, which must be translated government without idea, without goal. Those who, for eighteen years, gazing impatiently at the development of socialist ideas, had repeated in all tones: *The social revolution is the goal, the political revolution is the means*, were embarrassed, — God knows! — when, once in possession of the means, it was necessary for them to arrive at the goal and put their hands to the task. They thought about it, I'm sure; and soon they had to recognize what M. Thiers later revealed, what President Sauzet had said before him, that the government is not made to give labor to the worker, that the safest course for them was to continue the *status quo* of Louis-Philippe and to resist all innovation, so long as the people did not impose a reform by authority.

Yet they were not lacking in intelligence, these thirty-year conspirators, who had combated all despotisms, criticized all ministries, written the history of all revolutions; each of whom had a political and social theory in his portfolio. They asked nothing better than to take some initiative, these adventurers of progress; neither did the counselors fail them. How then did they remain three months without producing the smallest reforming act, without advancing the Revolution one line? How, after having guaranteed by a decree the right to work, did they not seem to concern themselves, all the time that they were in business, with the means of fulfilling their promise? Why was there not the slightest attempt at agricultural or industrial organization? Why did they deprive themselves of that decisive argument against utopia, experience?...

How! For what! Should I say it? Must it be I, a socialist, who justifies the Provisional Government? It is, you see, because they were the government; it is because in matters of revolution initiative is repugnant to the State, as much as labor is repugnant to capital; it is because government and labor are incompatible, like reason and faith.³ This is the key to all the facts that have taken place since February in France and in Europe, and which could very well take place for a long time to come.

This is the place to expose the legal reason for the revolutionary incapacity of any government.

What makes the government by nature immobilist, conservative, refractory to any initiative, let us even say counter-revolutionary, is that a revolution is an *organic* thing, a matter of *creation*, and power is a mechanical thing or matter of execution. Let me explain.

I call *organic*, not the laws, purely conventional, that affect the most general elements of administration and power, such as municipal and departmental law, the law on

³ See *The General idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century*, where the contradiction between the political regime and the economic regime is demonstrated. — Paris, Garnier frères, 1851.

recruitment, the law on public instruction, etc. The word *organic* used in this sense is quite abusive, and Mr. Odilon Barrot was right to say that such laws have nothing organic about them at all. This so-called organism, the invention of Bonaparte, is nothing but the governmental machinery. By *organic* I mean what constitutes the intimate, secular constitution of society, superior to any political system, to any constitution of the state.

Thus, we will say that marriage is an organic thing. It belongs to the legislative power to take the initiative of any law concerning the relations of interest and of public and domestic order to which the conjugal society gives rise; it is not up to it to touch the essence of this society. Is marriage an institution of absolute or doubtful morality, an institution in progress or in decline? We can argue about this as much as we want: never will a government, an assembly of legislators, have to take the initiative in this regard. It is up to the spontaneous development of mores, to general civilization, to what I will call humanitarian Providence, to modify what can be modified, to bring about the reforms that time alone reveals. And that, by the way, is what has prevented divorce from taking hold in France. After long and serious discussions, after a few years' experience, the legislator had to recognize that such a delicate and serious question was not within his province; that the time had passed for us when divorce could have entered our institutions without danger to the family and without offense to mores, and that in wanting to cut this knot, the government ran the risk of degrading precisely what it wanted to ennoble.⁴

I am not suspected of superstitious weakness and religious prejudices of any kind: I will say, however, that religion, like marriage, is not a regulatory issues, a matter of pure discipline, but something organic, consequently removed from the direct action of the power. It belonged, such is at least my opinion, to the ancient Constituent Assembly, by virtue of the distinction between the spiritual and the temporal, long admitted in the Gallican Church, to regulate the temporal affairs of the clergy and to remake the episcopal circumscriptions; but I deny that the Convention had the right to close the churches. I recognize all the less in the communal authority and the society of the Jacobins the power to establish a new cult, as this attempt could only succeed in strengthening the old one. Worship was organic in France when the Revolution broke out; and if, by the progress of philosophy, one could then proclaim the right to abstain, if we can predict today the extinction or the approaching transformation of Catholicism, we are not therefore

⁴ On the question of divorce, the best solution is still that of the Church. In principle, the Church does not allow marriage, regularly contracted, to be dissolved; but, by a casuistical fiction, it declares, in certain cases, that it does not exist, or that it has ceased to exist. Clandestineness, impotence, a crime leading to civil death, error about the person, etc., are for it, like death, so many cases of the diremption of marriage. Perhaps it would be possible to equally satisfy the needs of society, the requirements of morality and respect for families, by perfecting that theory, without going as far as divorce, by means of which the marriage contract is no longer in reality anything but a contract regarding cohabitation.

authorized to repeal it. The Concordat of 1802 was not, whatever has been said, an act of consular reaction; it was a simple reparation demanded by the immense majority of the people following the vain parades of Hébert and Robespierre. — I still believe, and on the basis of the same considerations, that it was up to the Chamber of 1830 to ensure through the Charter the liberty, the respect and the remuneration of all the cults; I would not answer that it was permitted, while maintaining the monarchical principle, to say that the Catholic religion was only a religion of the majority. Certainly, I would not support today the revision, in the sense that I indicate, of article 7 of the Constitution of 1848: what is accomplished, whatever it has cost, is accomplished, and I hold it irrevocable. One could do better and more for the emancipation of the human conscience; but I would not have voted for Article 6 of the Charter of 1830.

These examples suffice to explain my thought. A revolution is an explosion of organic force, an evolution of society from within to without; it is legitimate only insofar as it is spontaneous, peaceful and traditional. There is equal tyranny in repressing it as in doing violence to it.

The *organization of labor*, regarding which the Provisional Government was asked to take the initiative after February, touched on property and, consequently, on marriage and the family; it even implied, in the terms in which it was posed, an abolition or, if you prefer, a redemption of property. Socialists who, after so much work on the subject, persist in denying it, or who deplore that other socialists have said so, have not even the sad excuse of ignorance; they are simply in bad faith.

The Provisional Government, before acting, before taking any deliberation, must therefore first distinguish the *organic question* from the *executive question*, in other words, what was within the competence of the power and what was not. Then, this distinction made, its only duty, its only right, was to invite the citizens to produce themselves, through the full exercise of their liberty, the new facts on which it, the government, would later be called upon to exercise either a supervision or, if necessary, a direction.

It is probable that the Provisional Government was not led by such lofty considerations; it is even to be believed that such scruples would not have restrained it. It asked only to revolutionize: only it did not know how to go about it. It was made up of conservatives, doctrinaires, Jacobins, socialists, each speaking a separate language. It would have been marvelous, when they had so much difficulty in agreeing on the slightest question of policy, if they managed to agree on something like a revolution. The discord that reigned in the camp, much more than the prudence of the generals, preserved the country from the Utopias of the Provisional Government: the disagreements that agitated it took the place of philosophy.

The fault, the very great fault of the Provisional Government was not in not having known how to build, it was in not having known how to demolish.

Thus, it was necessary to repeal the laws repressing individual liberty, to put an end to the scandal of arbitrary arrests, to set the limits on detention... We thought only of

defending the prerogatives of the judiciary, and the freedom of citizens was more than ever handed over to arbitrariness of the public prosecutor. It pleases the high police to convert a restaurant into a mousetrap; two hundred citizens gathered for dinner are taken away from their wives and children, beaten, thrown into prison, accused of conspiracy, then released, after the examining magistrate, who himself does not know what the police are accusing them of, convinced himself at length that there was no charge against them.

It was necessary to disarm the power, to dismiss half the army, to abolish conscription, to organize a *landsturm*, to drive the troops away from the capital, to declare that the executive power could not, in any case, and under any pretext, dissolve and disarm the National Guard. — Instead of that, we occupied ourselves with the formation of these twenty-four mobile battalions, the usefulness and patriotism of which we were taught later, in June. As they were wary of the National Guard, they were far from declaring it inviolable: so the governments that were heirs to the *provisional* did not fail to dismiss it.

It was necessary to ensure freedom of assembly, first by repealing the law of 1790 and all those that could lead to ambiguity, then by organizing the clubs around the representatives of the people, and bringing them into parliamentary life. The organization of popular societies was the pivot of democracy, the cornerstone of the republican order. In place of organization, the Provisional Government had only to offer the clubs tolerance and oversight, while waiting for public indifference and reaction to put them to an end.

It was necessary to pull the nails and the teeth of the power, to transfer the public force of the government to the citizens, not only so that the government could undertake nothing against liberty, but also in order to wrest from the governmental utopias their last hope. April 16, May 15, did they not prove the power of the country against minority businesses? Now, there would have been neither April 16th nor May 15th, if the government, with its irresistible force, had not been like an irresistible temptation to the impatience of the democrats.

Everything was taken the wrong way the day after February. What it was not up to the government to undertake, we wanted it to do; and it is for this reason that the power has been preserved as if it had been taken from the monarchy of July, for this reason that its force has even been increased. What we had to do, we did not do; and that is why, from March 17, the Revolution was repressed, in the name of power, by those very people who appeared to be its most energetic representatives. Instead of giving back to the people their initiating fecundity by subordinating the power to their will, they sought to solve, through the power, problems on which time had not enlightened the masses; in order to supposedly ensure the Revolution, liberty was made to disappear! Nothing offered itself to the reformers of what had been seen in the great revolutionary epochs: no impulse from below, no indication of opinion; not a principle, not a discovery that had received the sanction of the people. And this people, they daily alarmed their reason by decrees that they themselves condemned. Unable to justify them by principles, they pretended to excuse

them, these decrees, in the name of necessity! It was no longer, like the day before, antagonism, it was the hullabaloo of freedom and power.

So read history again, and see how revolutions come about and how they end.

Before Luther, Descartes and the Encyclopedia, the State, the faithful expression of society, handed over heretics and philosophers to the executioners! Jean Hus, the precursor of the Reform, is burnt in Constance, after the condemnation of the council, by the secular arm. But little by little philosophy insinuated itself into the heart of the masses: the State immediately granted amnesty to the innovators, it takes them as guides and consecrates their rights. The Revolution of '89 started from the same source: it was made in public opinion when it was declared by the power. On another note, when did the state deal with canals and railways? When did it want to have a steam navy? After the multiplied trials, and the publicly recognized success of the first entrepreneurs.

It was reserved for our time to attempt, something that had never been seen before, a revolution by the power, and then to have it rejected by the nation. Socialism existed and spread for eighteen years, under the protection of the Charter, which recognized *the right of all French people to publish and have their opinions printed*. The demagogues of February had the secret, by dragging socialism into power, of stirring up intolerance against it and of proscribing even its ideas. It was they who, by this fatal reversal of principles, caused the antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the people to burst forth, an antagonism that had not appeared in the three days of 1848, any more than in those of 1830, which did not spring from the revolutionary idea, and which was to end in the bloodiest catastrophe, in the most ridiculous debacle.

While the Provisional Government, devoid of the genius of the Revolutions, separating itself both from the bourgeoisie and from the people, wasted days and weeks in sterile trial and error, agitations and circulars, a certain governmental socialism infuriated souls, affected the dictatorship, and, an astonishing thing for anyone who has not studied the mechanics of these contradictions, gave itself, against its own theory, the signal for resistance.

VII.
MARCH 17:

REACTION OF LOUIS BLANC.

QUESTION. — Given the following situation for a country:

The revolution of contempt overthrew the government established by the materialist principle of interests. This revolution, which condemns capital, thereby inaugurates and brings labor to government. Now, according to the generally widespread prejudice, labor, having become government, must proceed by governmental means; in other words, it is up to the government to do henceforth what had always been done without it and against it, to take the initiative and to develop the revolution. Because, says the prejudice, the revolution must come from above, since it is above that intelligence and strength are found.

But experience attests, and philosophy demonstrates, contrary to prejudice, that any revolution, to be effective, must be spontaneous, springing not from the head of power, but from the entrails of the people; that the government is rather reactionary than progressive; that it cannot understand revolutions, since society, to which alone this secret belongs, does not reveal itself by legislative decrees, but by the spontaneity of its manifestations; that, finally, the only relationship that exists between government and labor is that labor, by organizing itself, has the mission of abrogating government.

In this situation, a certain number of citizens, carried away by the common prejudice, and yielding to a legitimate impatience, want to force the government to advance, that is to say to start the revolution and organize labor: a very just ambition, according to prejudice, but untenable, according to philosophy and history. For its part, the government, feeling its incapacity and supported by another part of the citizens, refuses to act, or rather it *reacts* against the petitioners: a legitimate reaction, from the point of view of true democratic and social right, but supremely unjust. according to prejudice, to which the encroachments of the power unceasingly lend new force.

We ask what will become of this conflict.

ANSWER. — The only way to reconcile the parties would be to demonstrate to them the natural incompetence of the Power, and its necessary dissolution. No notice being produced, the struggle is inevitable. The force of *resistance* will therefore be in proportion to the intensity of the *movement*: moreover, if it happens that the struggle is prolonged, the revolution, instead of developing in the Government according to the direction of its original impulse, will cause it to go through a series of positions diametrically opposed to that which, according to the wishes of the people, it should have followed. So that the more the men of the movement seek to lead the power, the more those of the resistance will make it retreat.

That's what the theory says: let us see the history.

Hardly a fortnight had elapsed since the proclamation of the Republic, when anxiety took hold of minds. According to received ideas, the government could do anything, and it was never seen to undertake anything. Those most ardent on the side of the people complained that it did nothing for the Revolution; those most trembling among the bourgeois accused it, on the contrary, of doing too much. The decrees on the hours of labor and bargaining, much more than the famous circulars of Ledru-Rollin, were of a nature to deeply alarm the bourgeois class. However, it was not so much to the Luxembourg that reactionary opinion was directed at the time, but to the Hôtel-de-Ville. The workers were not unaware that Louis Blanc and Albert had no means of carrying out their audacious projects, and that their influence on the provisional government was almost nil; but the bourgeoisie, on the basis of a few circulars that escaped from the Ministry of the Interior, imagined that the Republic was going to lay hands on revenues and property. From all sides, therefore, it was towards the government, it was towards Ledru-Rollin that apprehensions and wishes arose. Everybody looking for an opportunity, it couldn't be faulted for long; a puerile pretext furnishes it.

On March 16, a few hundred National Guards presented themselves at the Hôtel-de-Ville to protest against the ordinance that suppressed the elite companies, and consequently prohibited the wearing of fur caps. This demonstration, directed above all against Ledru-Rollin, was at the wrong address: there was then nothing in common between the political ideas of the Minister of the Interior and the socialist theories of the President of Luxembourg. But things were set in motion; destinies were about to be fulfilled.

The government stood firm against the *furry caps*: aided by a few hastily assembled patriots, it drove back the demonstration. The report had no sooner spread than the alarm was given to the suburbs. They had dared to attack the provisional government: a counter-demonstration was assigned to the next day to support it. Now this new manifestation was itself soon, as had been the first, only a pretext. In the minds of a certain number of leaders, it was no less a question of modifying the composition of the government, of forcing it to take a vigorous initiative, and, in order to give full latitude to its action, of obtaining first an adjournment more or less distant from the elections. Lists circulated from hand to hand, and Huber, my neighbor at the Conciergerie, one of the promoters of the movement, assured me that my name was on a few!... The intention of the demonstration was therefore threefold: some, and this was the greatest number, only intended to give moral support to the Provisional Government; others demanded the postponement of the elections; the last, finally, wanted a purge. Besides, here is how Louis Blanc, witness and actor in this drama, gives an account of the event:

“As soon as it emerged from popular acclaim, the Provisional Government had to ask itself how it would define itself. Would it consider itself a DICTATORIAL AUTHORITY, consecrated by a revolution that had become necessary, and only having to render it accounts by universal suffrage after having done all the good that needed to be done?

Would it, on the contrary, confine its mission to immediately convening the National Assembly, confining itself to emergency measures, to acts of administration of secondary importance?

“The council agreed with this last opinion.

“As for me, I had an opinion entirely opposed to that which prevailed, and I looked upon the adoption of the other party as bound to exercise the happiest influence on the destinies of the new Republic.

“Considering then the state of profound ignorance and moral enslavement in which the countryside in France lives immersed, the immensity of the resources that the *enemies of progress* afford to the exclusive possession of all the means of influence and all the avenues of wealth, so many impure germs deposited at the bottom of society by half a century of imperial or monarchical corruption, finally the numerical superiority of the ignorant people of the countryside over the enlightened people of the cities, I thought:

“That we should have postponed the moment of the elections *as far as possible*;

“That we were commanded to take, in the interval, and that loudly, boldly, except to answer for it on our heads, the initiative of the vast reforms to be accomplished, reserve made for the National Assembly of the right to strengthen then, *or to overturn* our work with a sovereign hand.”

We see, without my needing to remark on it, that Louis Blanc's arguments for taking over the dictatorship are exactly the same as those that the *honest* and *moderate* republicans used after him to legitimize twice in a row the state of siege, to give the dictatorship to General Cavaignac, to put Louis Bonaparte in the presidency, to declare the socialists *enemies of society*, and to create, under the Republic, such a despotism that one would be tempted to regard as a liberator the first pretender who would take the crown. Where can a nation go, when friends and enemies are sure to magnetize it alternately with the same phrases?

“My opinion was in conformity with that of the people of Paris... I learned in Luxembourg, several days before March 17, that the people of Paris were preparing to make an imposing demonstration, with the double aim of obtaining the postponement of the elections and the removal of the troops still occupying Paris.”

What Louis Blanc says about the removal of the troops is true. The people demanded it earnestly: only Louis Blanc did not notice that this second reason contradicted the other. What did the withdrawal of the troops really mean to the people? The disarmament of the power, the impotence of the government. The people, when left to their own instincts, always see more accurately than when they are led by the politics of their leaders: they felt, and it was an old saying for them, that government is never better than when it is without virtue. *Our enemy is our master!* said old La Fontaine, the man of the people par excellence.

Here, then, was the plan of the leaders, led by Louis Blanc: first, to ask the Provisional Government to postpone the elections, in order to assure to it that *dictatorial authority*,

without which, says Louis Blanc, *it could not do good*; second, to modify the composition of the government. For, and it is again Louis Blanc who admits it, there existed between the various members of the Provisional Government *serious disagreements*, incompatible with the exercise of the dictatorship: now, whoever wills the end wills the means. What good was a dictatorial authority if the government remained heterogeneous?

But who would be the dictators?...

To this delicate question, we were going, marvelously enough, to find the only answer in reaction! Listen to the faithful narrator.

"But, I admit, the idea of the demonstration itself frightened me. I found it hard to believe that more than 150,000 workmen would pass through all of Paris without causing the slightest commotion, without giving rise to the slightest disorder..."

Once in power men are all alike. It is always the same zeal for authority, the same distrust of the people, the same fanaticism for order. Isn't it pleasant to see that, on March 17, the preoccupations that agitated Louis Blanc, the secret instigator of the demonstration, were precisely the same as those that, three weeks earlier, had agitated M. Guizot?

"The people were to go en masse to the Hôtel-de-Ville to obtain the postponement of the elections. Would this great step be without danger? Until then Paris, the Paris of the revolution, had been admirable in its tranquil majesty and powerful repose; should we not see to it that it kept this noble attitude to the end..."

Tranquil majesty and powerful repose, that is to say, the abstention of the people, the obedience of the sovereign. Without that you will have the revolution, M. Guizot had said; without that you will not have the revolution, said Louis Blanc.

How, then, to *prevent the announced manifestation*? It is Louis Blanc who asks himself the question. — And *if it were true that unknown agitators wanted to cause some storm to arise from the depths of the multitude set in motion*, how *could their plans be foiled*? It is still Louis Blanc who foresees the case. *Agitators!* he cries. M. Guizot said: *rebels!*

The means proposed by Louis Blanc should be cited: it deserved to be proposed by M. Guizot. The revolution would have been hijacked on February 22, as the alleged dictatorship of Blanqui was on March 17.

It was necessary, says Louis Blanc, to grant the multitude what it asked for, that is to say, *the postponement of the elections* (the only thing mentioned in the petition of the delegates), putting as a condition *the integrity of the Provisional Government*. — In two words, accept the letter of the petition, and pretend not to see its spirit; to grant the adjournment, were it only for a fortnight, and to maintain the government. This is how Louis Blanc imagined deceiving the petitioners. Another time, when the people get involved in petitioning, they will know that with the power one must explain oneself clearly and categorically.

But why was Louis Blanc, who supported the motives of the demonstration, who had developed them in the council, who had made them penetrate the masses, so reluctant to mutilate the Provisional Government? Was it only out of consideration and friendship for his colleagues? Not at all. Listen to the historian:

"These dissidences, which, from the point of view of unity of action, would have made the Provisional Government a very bad power, *constituted its originality* as a transitional government, destined to keep the place of sovereignty. Yes, *the very heterogeneity of the elements of which it was composed was of a nature to save the situation, because it tended to MAINTAIN IN EQUILIBRIUM the various forces of society ...*"

Therefore the Provisional Government, charged solely with *maintaining the equilibrium*, had no duty to direct the revolutionary movement, any more in one direction than in the other; therefore, since it was *conservative*, it was not an initiator; therefore it had nothing to do with a *dictatorial authority*; therefore the postponement of the elections was more than useless, it was impolitic. It was an attack on the sovereignty of the people; so the demonstration was absurd. This is the consequence that Louis Blanc was to draw from his own premises, and if he did not draw it, events did it for him...

"We were waiting... Suddenly, at one end of the Place de Grève, a dark, compact mass appeared. It was the corporations. Separated from each other by equal intervals and preceded by their various banners, they arrived gravely, in silence, in order and with the discipline of an army..."

"The delegates having gone up to the Hôtel-de-Ville, and one of them, the citizen Géraud, having read the petition, I saw, among the assistants, *unknown figures*, whose expression was somehow *sinister*."

They were apparently the same which have since been noticed, by honest and moderate, on the 15th of May and in the days of June. The men of the government are subject to singular hallucinations.

"I understood immediately that people outside the corporations had gotten involved in the movement (Why not? Was it only the Luxembourg corporations that were worthy of representing the people?) and that those who presented themselves as deputies by the multitude were not all really so, or at least in the same capacity. There were men impatient to overthrow, in favor of the opinion represented by Ledru-Rollin, Flocon, Albert and myself, those members of the Provisional Government who represented a contrary opinion."

The admission is decent, but naive. The dictatorship is good, as long as Louis Blanc hopes it for himself; as soon as Blanqui appears, Blanqui suspected of also aspiring to the dictatorship, Louis Blanc no longer wants it. He returns to his habits, he is doctrinaire! What a policy, that one which thus varies according to personal considerations! But let's see the end.

As is customary in such circumstances, Louis Blanc, Ledru-Rollin, Lamartine amuse the people with speeches; Sobrier, Gabet, Barbès and others sided with the Provisional

Government against Flotte, Huber, Blanqui and others. Threatening voices demand a *positive* response: they are told that the Government cannot act unless it is allowed to deliberate. A man rushes towards Louis Blanc, and seizing his arm: *So you are a traitor, too!* he said to him. "Thinking of this injustice of the passions," said Louis Blanc, "I could not help smiling bitterly, and that was all." Finally, the members of the Government show themselves on the balcony, and the comedy ends in a procession.

"Such was," adds Louis Blanc, "this day of March 17, *the greatest perhaps of all the historical days in the memory of men!...*"

MM. Ledru-Rollin, Crémieux and Lamartine had the right to say that March 17 was a beautiful day, and to claim its honor. They did not want a dictatorship, and that day France was perhaps saved from the dictators. But Louis Blanc and those who, following his example, demanded the indefinite postponement of the elections, so that the government, vested with unlimited authority, would have time to *do good*, these must admit that it was a pitiful day for them. What! Here is a man convinced that dictatorship is necessary to do the good of the people; that the men in power, his colleagues, are hostile to progress; that the Revolution is in danger if we do not succeed in replacing them: he knows that the opportunity is rare; that once escaped it never returns; that a single moment is given to him to strike a decisive blow; and when that moment arrives, he just takes advantage of it to drive back those who bring him their devotion and their arms, he turns away from their sinister faces! And you wouldn't believe that there was something in this man that, unbeknownst to him, spoke louder than his convictions?

On March 17 began that long reaction that we are about to see pass successively from socialism to Jacobinism, from Jacobinism to doctrinarism, from doctrinarism to Jesuitism, and which, if public reason does not put it in order, does not seem ready to end. It began within the Provisional Government itself, and by whom? Good God! By the very man who encouraged the movement, by Louis Blanc. I do not accuse him of it, of course; I proved in his defense that instinct had been surer in him than judgment.⁵ I would only have preferred that he not put himself in the necessity of reacting against men who, while posing their competition, only expressed his own thoughts: for any reaction is regrettable. But will I be granted that if the Republic has kept none of its promises; if socialism has remained in the state of utopia, the cause could well not be entirely in the incapacity of

⁵ Time has revealed, since the first publication of this writing, that in Louis Blanc judgment and instinct, policy and tendency, means and end, were in perfect agreement. Louis Blanc, admirer and disciple of Robespierre, is a declared enemy of freedom. His theory, which consists in submitting Labor to the Government; his recent formula: *Equality — Fraternity — Liberty*; the little-known opposition he made after February to freedom of the press, to the abolition of security and stamp duty; his eulogy of Louis-Philippe; finally, his constitutional doctrinarism, made clearer in his last pamphlet: *Plus de Girondins!* gave the measure of his deep antipathy for the Revolution.

the Provisional Government and the bourgeois intrigues? The cause belongs to all those who would have liked to bring about the revolution by governmental means, before having brought it into the public consciousness, and who, in order to carry out this chimerical enterprise, have aroused the mistrust of the country by delaying by a day, by an hour, the exercise of universal suffrage.

VIII.
APRIL 16:

REACTION OF LEDRU-ROLLIN.

The governmental democracy, deceived in its hopes by its own leaders, could henceforth regard itself as eliminated. There was no longer any risk that it would regain the upper hand. The split was consummated: the demagogic and social party now had its right and its left, its moderates and its ultras. The new Jacobins imposed silence on the new Cordeliers. The country was on the alert; the bourgeoisie had only to hold itself ready, and to throw itself as a support on the side which would incline towards it, at the first symptom of contradiction.

It was not to be expected, in fact, that the opinion so loudly professed by Louis Blanc and his friends, and which has so many roots in France, would soon pass and be considered defeated; the more so as the events of each day, and the pettiness of the acts of the Provisional Government did not cease to revive it. What we flattered ourselves that we had only repressed on March 17, was not the dictatorship, which was deemed more necessary than ever; it was Blanqui. Blanqui pushed aside by the reprobation of the Luxembourg, crushed by the defamation from the Hôtel-de-Ville, it was hoped to recapture without opposition, above all without rivalry, the dictatorial omnipotence. As if just now, by pushing the man away, we hadn't condemned the idea!...

This idea lived everywhere. The Provisional Government, condemned by its nature and by the heterogeneity of its elements to confine itself to the role of conservative, was bubbling with revolution: it wanted, all the same, to revolutionize. The breath of public opinion impelling it, it endeavored to seize any initiative whatever. Sad initiative! Posterity would refuse to believe in the acts of the Government of February, if history had not taken care to record the documents. Apart from a few measures of public economy and general utility, the urgency of which time had revealed and which the circumstances demanded, all the rest was but farce, parade, nonsense and against good sense. They say that power makes witty people stupid. The Provisional Government is not the only one, since February, that has experienced this.

If the circulars of Ledru-Rollin, if the 45 centimes of Garnier-Pagès were faults in politics and finance, which we could still contest at all costs, these faults at least had a meaning, an intention, a scope. We knew what their authors wanted or did not want; they were neither flat nor absurd. But what about those proclamations, as pointless as they were childish, in which the Provisional Government announced the trial of M. Guizot and his colleagues, abolished titles of nobility, released officials from their oaths, changed the arrangement of colors on the flag? tricolor, erased the monarchical names of the monuments, and gave them the names of so-called republicans, made the Tuileries the *Invalides du Peuple*, etc., etc.? — The Provisional Government took its time!

In an emphatic address, it exclaimed, through the mouth of M. Lamartine: *The doors of liberty are open!* ... Elsewhere, it put *disinterestedness* on the agenda, and let everyone know that true politics is *magnanimity*. Another time, on the proposal of Louis Blanc, *it invited the people to be patient*, saying that the question of labor was COMPLEX, that *it could not be solved in an instant*, which no one except the Provisional Government had ever doubted until then.

The people had demanded the removal of the troops. A journalist, M. Emile de Girardin, better advised still, proposed to immediately reduce the army by 200,000 men. That was marching towards revolution; that was going towards freedom. The Provisional Government responded to the wishes of the people, at the same time as to the proposal of the journalist, first, by decreeing the creation of twenty-four battalions of Mobile Guards; second, by making a call for 80,000 men shortly afterwards; third, by inviting the youth of the schools to enlist in the sections. Not to mention that the troops did not move away from Paris. What the Provisional Government was taking as an initiative was only an imitation of 93. So what did it want to do with all these soldiers? June, June twice, we would learn.

As it could not by itself occupy itself with the great question of the age, and as it would, moreover, have been very embarrassed to resolve it, the Provisional Government had taken the wise course of burying it. It was to this, above all, that it applied its initiative. Thus, it appointed a commission (there is the government!) to *examine* the question of labor; another commission to *examine* the question of credit; a third commission to suppress the *scramble for seats!* The fair sex was not forgotten: an ordinance from the Minister of Public Instruction authorized Citizen Legouvé to open a course in the *Moral History of Women* at the Sorbonne. Then the Provisional Government organized celebrations: an invitation was made by its order to the minister of worship to have the *Domine salvam fac rempublicam sung*, and to call upon the Republic the *divine blessing*. Caussidiere himself, the terrible Caussidiere, had the Church of the Assumption, of which the patriots had made a club, returned to the service of worship. And you are surprised that the pope is now more master in Paris than in Rome!... Abbé Lacordaire became at the same time representative and ordinary preacher of the Republic, while the archbishop of Paris, Affre, with a mischievous bonhomie, made the churches sing the ironic verse: *Domine salvum fac populum*, O God save this people, for they do not know what they are doing.

Moreover, the public and the press were at the height of authority. A placard demanded that the government *prevent the outflow of capital*, and that Mr. Rothschild be put under surveillance. Another proposed to sell the diamonds of the crown, and to invite all the citizens to bring their plate to the Mint; a third spoke of transporting the remains of Armand Carrel to the Pantheon. The *Démocratie Pacifique*, also taking the initiative, demanded that the smock should be adopted as the uniform of all the national guards of the republic; as *referral* and *placement offices* for the workers were organized by the State;

that professors were sent to the departments to demonstrate to the peasants the superiority of the democratic form over the monarchy, etc. Georges Sand sang hymns to the proletarians; the Society of Men of Letters put itself at the disposal of the government. Why do it? That's what it didn't say, and what we didn't ever knew! A petition bearing 5,000 signatures urgently demanded the *Ministry of Progress!* One would never have believed, without the February revolution, that there was so much stupidity at the bottom of a French public. One would have said it was the world of Panurge. Was Blanqui, or rather his party, so wrong to want, with a popular broom, to clean these stables of Augeas, the Luxembourg and the Hôtel-de-Ville?

All this, it is understood, did not count the workers any more than the bourgeois. The days followed each other and resembled each other, that is to say that absolutely nothing was done. The Revolution was evaporating like alcohol in the drain: soon there would be nothing left but the *laisser-passer*, a date!... The corporations of Luxembourg and the clubs resolved to return to the charge. Socialism, carried along by the mad imaginations of the neo-Jacobins, gave full play to the project. A set of decrees had been drawn up in the Luxembourg, which I did not read, since they were not published, but which could not fail to be very fine: they were decrees. The safety of the people was taken in hand: to reject it, or even to postpone it, would have been a crime. A demonstration was organized for Sunday, April 16, by the workers of the corporations: the pretext was the appointment of fourteen officers of the staff, following which they were to go to the Hôtel-de-Ville to present a petition with a patriotic offering. "It is up to us, men of action and devotion," said the petitioners, "to declare to the Provisional Government that the people want a democratic Republic; that the people want the abolition of the exploitation of man by man; that the people want the organization of labor through association." Measures were planned in advance by the men of Luxembourg, so that people unfamiliar with the demonstration would not, as on March 17, try to change its character and purpose: but we

had reckoned without Blanqui.⁶ While Luxembourg summoned the authorities to take care of the *organization of labor through association*, the clubs, recounts M. de Lamartine, and my information agrees with his, set themselves up permanently, appointed a Committee of Public Safety, and were preparing, as on March 17, to take the lead of the demonstration, and to bring about the purge of the Provisional Government.

Louis Blanc, whose thought brought everything back to the Luxembourg, on April 16 does not seem to have had a clear awareness of what was preparing: in his *Revue* of September 15, he denies the existence of a plot. I confess that while doing justice to his feelings towards his colleagues, while acknowledging the peaceful character he tried to imprint on the demonstration, I would have preferred, for the honor of his intelligence and the morality of his situation, to see him enter boldly into Blanqui's politics, instead of thwarting it constantly by a deaf and petty hostility. Everything invited him, everything excused him. From the point of view of the old dynastic opposition, which had provoked the Revolution of February, as well as of the republican party, which had so boldly executed it, Louis Blanc could undertake anything: his right depended only on his strength. Since the men whom the people had first chosen to form part of the provisional government were not acting, nothing could be simpler than to replace them with others who are acting: the mandate of April 16 would have been just as authentic as that of February 25. To remain any longer in the *status quo* was to betray the Revolution; it was necessary to advance: unless it was absurd, the demonstration of April 16 cannot be

⁶ When I report the presence of Blanqui in the demonstration of April 16, it is above all the party that I mean, much more than the man. It turns out that this demonstration started from the Luxembourg: some even claim that it was secretly supported by the police headquarters, and directed at the same time against the influence of Blanqui and that of the *National*. So that, according to this version, which has all the characteristics of the truth, and which moreover does not exclude the other, the authors of the demonstration of April 16, ultra-revolutionaries with regard to the Republicans of the *National* and of the *Réforme*, were nothing more than third parties with regard to the Communists, at the head of which were placed, *ex-æquo*, Cabet and Blanqui. It is therefore unlikely that the latter took any initiative in a movement that was intended, in part, to sacrifice him. But in revolution, the leaders propose and the people dispose. On April 16, as on March 17, Blanqui's friends, who were almost everywhere, at the police headquarters as well as in Luxembourg, and who were the most energetic, set the tone for the movement, and what had been premeditated to do against the two extreme fractions of the democratic party turned to the profit of the conservative reaction. When will democracy be rid of all these intrigues that destroy and dishonor it?

Moreover, numerous confidences have made me certain of it: from February 25 to June 26, everything, in the government and outside the government, conspired. Even M. de Lamartine. The confusion was universal. The dictatorship had no less than five or six competitors. Power being the focus of all ideas as well as all ambitions, each on his side was preparing to appeal to force. The competition of candidates alone prevented the usurpation.

interpreted otherwise. And if my information does not deceive me, I dare say that none of those who knowingly took part in it will disavow me.

Moreover, if the two members of the Provisional Government who sat in the Luxembourg misunderstood the role that, whether they liked it or not, the demonstration assigned to them, the people were not mistaken; let us add that the government and the national guard were not mistaken there either. The account that Louis Blanc gives of this day, tending to establish the perfect harmlessness of the demonstration, is too naive, I would even say too insulting to the intelligence of the democrats. In a few hours Paris was on its feet: everyone taking sides, some for the demonstration, some for the Provisional Government. And this time again it was the democratic faction opposed to Blanqui and the Communists that gave the signal for reaction. While Ledru-Rollin, — deceived, Louis Blanc assures us, by false reports, but in reality very keen at that time on socialism and the politics of Luxembourg, — had the recall sounded, Barbès, in the name of the club of the Revolution, to which I belonged with Pierre Leroux, and which then sat permanently, went to the government to support it and offer it our support. We didn't really know what was going on; whether it was the whites or the reds who threatened the Republic. In the uncertainty, we lined up around the Minister of the Interior, as around the flag of the Revolution. Ledru-Rollin reaped from this beaten recall a long and unjust unpopularity; Barbès, understanding, but too late, the fatality of his position, wept, it is said, tears of regret. But anti-government opinion was the strongest. Decidedly, the country did not want to allow itself to be revolutionized from above; and while Barbès, yielding to repulsions that were perhaps too personal, believed that he could only resist the fanatics of the clubs, the Bayard of democracy was on the true principles: he represented, against his own inclinations, the intimate thought of the people. The National Guards, who until four o'clock had been ignorant of the cause of the movement, only had to bother appearing to put an end to it. On the balcony of the Hôtel-de-Ville, during the procession, Louis Blanc and Albert were seen pale and dismayed, in the midst of their colleagues, who seemed to address them with the liveliest reproaches for their imprudence. In the evening the cry of *Down with the Communists!* came to testify that in France the government is placed with respect to the country under the same conditions as Figaro with respect to the censorship: it is allowed to say everything and do everything, on the condition of sharing everyone's opinion.

Louis Blanc had had the honor of the reaction on March 17; Ledru-Rollin had the honor of the reaction of April 16. As much as the first had been founded to oppose the real or supposed dictatorship of Blanqui, so much the second was in its opposition to the dictatorship of Louis Blanc. On April 16, Ledru-Rollin was neither a socialist nor a communist; he scoffed at his colleague's theories. People's delegate to the Ministry of the Interior, responsible for order and freedom in the country, responsible for defending all interests, he could see in the demonstration of April 16 only an attempt at usurpation: he resisted. Who would dare condemn him? Surely it is not Louis Blanc.

April 16, like March 17, was none the less a failure of the Revolution; for any attack on power with the aim of using it to violate the instincts of a country, whether or not this attack is successful, is a failure of progress, a retreat. Did Louis Blanc hope to bring about the triumph, by *coup d'état* and dictatorial authority, of a system of economic reform which can be summed up in these three propositions:

1. *To create in the power a great force of initiative;*
2. *To create and sponsor public workshops at State expense;*
3. *To extinguish private industry under the competition of national industry.*

It would have been a great illusion on his part. Now, if the economic system of Louis Blanc is nothing but oppression; if the means he intended to use to apply it is only usurpation, how can the attempt of April 16 be qualified? How are we to excuse it, I do not say before conscience — the good faith of the publicist perhaps covers up intentions of the statesman — but before reason?

It was from April 16 that socialism became particularly odious in the country. Socialism had existed since 1830. Since 1830, Saint-Simonians, Phalansterians, Communists, humanitarians and others had entertained the public with their innocent daydreams; and neither M. Thiers nor M. Guizot had deigned to concern themselves with it. They weren't afraid of socialism then, and they were right not to fear it so long as there was no question of applying it at the expense of the State and by public authority. After April 16, socialism aroused all the anger against it: we had seen it, an imperceptible minority, touch the government!

What makes parties hate each other is much less the divergence of their ideas than their tendency to dominate one another. We care little about opinions; we only have anxiety regarding the power. If there were no government, there would be no parties; if there were no parties, there would be no government. When will we break out of this circle?

IX .
MAY 15:

REACTION OF BASTIDE AND MARRAST.

The idea of a sovereign, initiating and moderating power, constituted under the name of Government, State or Authority, above the nation, to direct it, govern it, dictate laws to it, prescribe regulations to it, impose judgments and penalties; this idea, I say, is none other than the very principle of despotism that we vainly combat in dynasties and kings. What makes royalty is not the king, it is not heredity; it is, as we will see below, speaking of the Constitution, the accumulation of powers; it is the hierarchical concentration of all the political and social faculties in a single and indivisible function, which is the government, whether this government is represented by a hereditary prince, or by one or more removable and elective representatives.

All the errors, all the miscalculations of the democracy come from the fact that the people, or rather the leaders of insurrectionary bands, after having smashed the throne and driven out the dynast, believed they were revolutionizing society because they were revolutionizing the monarchical personnel, and that by preserving royalty completely organized, they no longer related it to divine right, but to the sovereignty of the people. An error of fact and of right, which in practice has never been able to establish itself, and against which all revolutions protest.

On the one hand, the logic of events has constantly proven that by preserving for society its monarchical constitution, it was necessary sooner or later to return to the sincerity of the monarchy; and it is strictly true to say that democracy, for not having known how to define its own principle, has hitherto been only a defection towards royalty. We are not Republicans; we are, according to M. Guizot, *dissenters*.

On the other hand, the politicians of divine right, arguing for the very constitution of so-called democratic power, demonstrated to their adversaries that this power necessarily stemmed from a principle other than the sovereignty of the people, that it stemmed from theocracy, of which the monarchy is, as I have said, only a dismemberment. Governmentalism, please note, is not the result of a philosophical doctrine, it is born of a theory of Providence. Among the moderns, as in antiquity, the priesthood is the father of government. We must first go back to Gregory VII, then from him to Moses and the Egyptians, to find the filiation, among Christian peoples, of governmental ideas, and the origin of this disastrous theory of the competence of the state in matters of perfectibility and progress.

Moses, persisting in making a society of deists out of an idolatrous tribe barely out of cannibalistic habits, only succeeded in tormenting it for twelve centuries. All the misfortunes of Israel came to it from his cult. A unique phenomenon in history, the Hebrew people present the spectacle of a nation constantly unfaithful to its national god,

let us speak more precisely, to its legal god, for Jehovah is only a Jew by adoption — who is only beginning to become attached to it, when after having lost its territory, not having a rock where it can erect an altar, it arrives at the metaphysical idea of God through the destruction of the idol. It was around the time of the Maccabees, and especially at the apparition of Christ, that the Jews fell in love with the Mosaic cult: it was the destiny of this race to be always behind its institutions.

More than 2,000 years after Moses, almost in the same places and among the same people, another reformer was able to accomplish in one generation what Moses and the priesthood he had founded to continue his work had not been able to accomplish in twelve centuries. The deism of Mahomet is the same as that of Moses; Arab commentaries on the Koran seem to come from the same source as the traditions of the rabbis. Where does this prodigious difference in success come from? It is because Moses had, as the Bible says, called Israel; while Mahomet had been called by Edom.

Following the example of Moses and the Aaronic priesthood, the popes, their successors, also wanted to knead the naive populations of the Middle Ages according to their fierce Catholicism. The reign of this initiating papacy was for the Christian races, as the influence of the priesthood had been for the Jews, a long torture. I will cite, for the moment, only this single example: the peoples of the Middle Ages, in agreement with the lower clergy, were not averse to the marriage of ecclesiastics; the concubinary priests caused no scandal until the day when they were struck with the anathemas of the Church of Rome. But the celibacy of priests was, for theocracy, a condition of existence. Through marriage, the priest belonged more to the city than to the Church: Roman centralization was impossible. Let democracy perish, let humanity perish rather than the Pope! The will of the pontiff bent the will of the people; married priests were marked with infamy, their wives treated as concubines, their children declared bastards. To make matters worse, the question of ecclesiastical marriage, identified with that of investitures, completed, perhaps even better than the papal wrath, the depopularization of married priests. The people, like the Pope, were Guelphs; the priests, by marriage, became Ghibellines. After a long struggle, spiritual authority prevailed; but the submission was never complete, and the reprisals were terrible. From the ashes of the Albigensians came the Waldensians, from the Hussites came Luther, that other Marius — Luther, less great for having abolished indulgences, images, sacraments, auricular confession and ecclesiastical celibacy, than for having struck Catholicism to the heart, and advanced the hour of universal emancipation.

I resume my tale.

Finally, although a little late, universal suffrage had made itself heard. The National Assembly gathered, the Provisional Government had resigned its powers, the executive commission was installed, and still nothing was being done, nothing was being prepared. The state, immobile, remained, so to speak, at “shoulder arms.”

The governmentalist democrats resolved to attempt a new effort. This time they showed themselves to be more skillful: there was no talk of socialism or dictatorship; the

question was exclusively political. They addressed themselves to the dearest sentiments of the Assembly. The emancipation of Poland was the pretext for this third day. A question of nationality for a friendly people, formerly the rampart of Christianity against the Ottomans, and not long ago still that of France against the hordes of the North; a question of democratic propaganda, and consequently of governmental initiative for socialism: the emancipation of Poland, supported by the suffrage of the people, was to carry off the sympathies of the representatives, and promised success to all ideas of reform. Whether the Assembly declared Poland free (which meant war with Europe, as democratic politics desired), or whether it organized labor, as socialism demanded of it, was, for the time being, absolutely the same thing. The speeches of citizens Wolowski, Blanqui, Barbès and Raspail have proven this.

The situation made it even more palpable. To tell the government to take the initiative for the emancipation of nationalities was to say to it in other words: For three months, you have done nothing for the Revolution, nothing for the organization of labor and the liberty of the people, two absolutely identical things. Twice you have rejected the initiative that belongs to you, and labor does not resume, and you do not know what to do with all these proletarians who ask you for work or bread, who will soon ask you for bread or lead. Make of these men a propaganda army, until you can make an industrial army of them; ensure by war the government of democracy in Europe, while waiting to be able to remake the economy of societies. You are politicians, you say; you don't want to be socialists; take a political initiative, if you don't dare to take a social initiative.

The war, in a word, as a means of temporarily escaping the question of labor: that was the policy of the advanced fraction of the Republican Party on May 15.

The moment had been admirably chosen. The agenda called for the interpellations of the citizen of Aragon on the subject of Poland: one would have said that the speakers of the Assembly had planned, with those of the clubs, to organize the escalation of the government. At the moment when Citizen Wolowski, one of the warmest partisans of Polish emancipation, ascended the tribune, the head of the petitioning column entered the courtyard of the Assembly. Citizen Wolowski, one of the most moderate and conservative men in the Assembly, friend of M. Odilon Barrot, brother-in-law of M. Léon Faucher, had unwittingly made himself that day, and without suspecting it, the advocate of neo-Jacobinism, the orator of the insurrection. Such examples should open the eyes of men who call themselves politicians, and make them understand how odious and stupid are the revenges of reactions.

Citizen Wolowski begins by summarizing, like a true member of the clubs, the platitudes that have been uttered over the past eighteen years about Poland.

“Citizen representatives, never perhaps a more serious and solemn question has been raised before you: *it can carry in its folds peace or war* .

“I do not hide from myself the difficulties of the problem, and yet I bring it before you with confidence: for I believe that *all ideas are in unison* on this great question. I will not

insult anyone in this chamber if he is not entirely devoted, strongly devoted to the cause of Poland.

(We hear outside the cries of the People: *Long live Poland!*)

"France, citizens, is the heart of nations: it feels within itself the pulsations of all humanity. And it is above all when it is a question of a nation to which the name of Northern France has been rightly given; when it is a question of a people where all the ideas, all the tendencies are common with the people of France; when it comes to a people who have always supported the same cause, who have always shed their blood with you on the battlefields, that I am certain of meeting here the liveliest, the deepest sympathies. The only question that it seems to me ought to be debated is that *of the means to be taken to achieve* what we want from a unanimous agreement, to achieve more promptly *the restoration of* Poland.

(Cries from outside redouble: *Long live Poland!*)

"France does not fear war; France, with its army of 500,000 men, with the national guard, which is the entire people, does not fear war; and that is why she can speak firmly to the nations; it is for this reason that she can *impose her thought, her* IDEA, without having recourse to what was to be the last reason of the monarchy.

"France, by her strength that no one can dispute, France *will use this truly republican policy*, which above all has confidence in the power of the IDEA, in the power of justice.

(New cries are heard: *Long live Poland!*)

"The Polish question is not only, as one would have us suppose, a question of chivalry. In the question of Poland, reason confirms what the heart inspires. *The People, with admirable instinct, got straight to the CRUX OF THE MATTER*; they understood perfectly that, *in the restoration of Poland, there will be found the firmest basis for peace and freedom for the whole of Europe.*

(The cries increase in intensity. The speaker breaks off. He resumes):

"I say that popular thought has admirably grasped the knot of the question, and has solved it by linking *the idea of the resurrection of Poland to the idea of liberty* .

"The restoration of Poland is the only guarantee of a lasting peace and the *definitive emancipation* of the peoples.

"The world has understood what has always been the glorious destiny of Poland, the mission to which she has always devoted herself. When she was alive, Poland was the shield of civilization and Christianity; and when, after the partition, we thought we had killed her, even though she was not dead, but was sleeping..."

(A terrible rumor interrupts the orator: the people invade the hall.) (*Excerpt from the Moniteur universelle.*)

On February 22, 1848, I was heading along the Quai d'Orsay, on the side of the Chamber of Deputies. Paris had risen like one man, the bourgeoisie in the vanguard, the people in the rear. The opposition was quivering, the ministry trembling. What! Italy had

awakened, the Sunderbund was defeated, the treaties of 1815 torn up, the Revolution had resumed its glorious march in Europe. Only France showed herself to be reactionary! Remember, M. Thiers had said, that if we are for the July Monarchy, *we are above all for the revolution!* An indictment was about to be filed, by M. Odilon Barrot, against the ministers. At this moment I met M. Wolowski. — Where are we going, I said to him, "and what does M. Barrot claim?... — That is precisely, M. Wolowski responded to me, what I just asked: *My dear Barrot, where are you leading us?...*

Eighty days later, Citizen Wolowski had taken over the role of M. Barrot. Wouldn't I have had the right to say to him: *My dear Wolowski, where are you leading us?*

We know the rest. The National Assembly was literally carried off, cast into the street. For an hour Paris thought it had changed its government. But we do not know so well what made the demonstration abort: that is what is important to make known.

Already, on the very basis of the Polish question, the Republicans in power and their friends had again become singularly cold. Intervention in favor of Poland, or, what amounts to the same thing, war with Europe, seemed to them to be what it was in fact, universal socialism, the Revolution of Humanity through the initiative of the governments. Like all newcomers to business, they had felt their chivalrous feelings vanish before the sad reality of the facts. In this same meeting of May 15, one of the most honorable men of the party, M. Bastide, then Minister for Foreign Affairs, had declared that in the eyes of the Executive Commission, the emancipation of Poland was *a question of European sovereignty, on which the French Republic was not entitled to pronounce on its own*; and that to call the arms on a matter of this nature was to undertake an inextricable war, and to begin again, for the benefit of a nation, what the Holy Alliance had done in 1814 for the benefit of a dynasty.

Thus, on the very question that served as a pretext for the demonstration, the democracy was divided; what would it be, when we realized that it was not only a question of Poland, but of Europe? That European and social revolution was the end, and intervention in Poland the means? The cause of the petitioners was lost in advance: it sufficed, to bring about an irresistible reaction, that the thought of the movement should manifest itself in all its truth. This was soon to happen.

The demonstration, quite spontaneous in its origin, and organized, it seems, against the wishes of the leaders of the clubs, had ended up involving the popular notables. Blanqui shows himself: terrified spirits see in him the mediator, — what am I saying? — the future beneficiary of the movement. Barbès, to ward off this threatening dictatorship, and already believing everything lost, throws himself into the revolutionary flood. He seizes the rostrum: *It is in your interest, all of you*, he shouts to those who protest against his vehemence. *I ask that we give the floor to the delegates of the clubs to read their petition.* The petition is read. Blanqui, brought to the rostrum, speaks. He calls for the punishment of the bourgeois guard of Rouen, talks about labor and a host of things foreign to Poland. That was the conclusion of Wolowski's speech. Barbès outbids Blanqui, and proposes a

billion in taxes on the rich. Finally Huber, by a sudden inspiration, for which he alone claimed all responsibility, pronounced the dissolution of the Assembly, and decided the part in favor of Barbès. The representatives retire: Barbès and his friends go to the Hôtel-de-Ville; Blanqui and his following do not appear there. What followed was only a stampede: the National Guards, recalled with great difficulty, encountered no resistance. The people had passed like a stormy rain. Finding, apparently, that those who talked so much about acting were only talkers like the others, and hoping for nothing from all these governments that were stirred up like cobblestones, they had gone, the Assembly dissolved and the session adjourned, to rest from the emotions of the day.

The demonstration of May 15, entirely parliamentary at the beginning, raised, apart from the question of labor, which dominated everything, two other very serious questions: a constitutional question, namely, whether, in a Republic, the right to make peace and to declare war belongs to the government; a political question, whether, in the particular circumstances in which the French Republic found itself, three months after the February Revolution, it was useful or not for the country to go to war?

The demonstration of May 15, by a double error, resolved these two questions in the affirmative. By pushing the Government to war, in order to serve the wishes of the democratic minority, the men of May 15 justified in advance the expedition to Rome, undertaken by the government to serve the interests of the conservative majority.

As for the very cause that it claimed to serve, on May 15, by a war of propaganda, the truth is that this cause would have been more quickly, more surely lost by intervention than by peace. The government of July could have, with infinitely more advantages than the Republic of February, brought aid to Poland; its armies would not have dragged in their train this formidable social question, with which the republican government was so miserably embarrassed. A State has no power except that which it draws from within: if the interior life is wanting, it will be in vain that it will endeavor to act without; its action will turn against itself. After the February revolution, the internal question was everything: the republican party did not understand it enough, nor did it understand the full gravity of its position. The government was without money, without horses, without soldiers; the discussions of the Constituent Assembly revealed that the army available after February was not 60,000 men. Commerce shouted thank you, the workman was out of work; we did not have, like our fathers of 89 and 93, 45 billion of national goods on hand: and we were talking about going to war!

Let us admit that, despite all these difficulties, the Executive Commission and the National Assembly, obeying propagandist inspirations, had sent an army beyond the Alps, another to the Rhine, that they had supported, provoked the insurrection of the Peninsula, dragged along the German democracy, rekindled the torch of Polish nationality. At the same time the social question was posed in Italy and throughout the Germanic Confederation. And since this question was nowhere understood and resolved, the conservative reaction began immediately, and after a European February, we would have

had a March 17, an April 16, a May 15, and European June days. Do you believe that Hungary, which, towards the end of 1848, through a very culpable selfishness of nationality, offered to Austria to march on Italy, do you believe, I say, that Hungary, once satisfied, would have supported the democratic movement? Do you believe that Mazzini, who in 1851, in the name of I don't know what religiosity, protested against socialism and its anti-theistic and anti-governmental tendencies, would have favored the Revolution?... It would have been the same everywhere: the liberal, but not yet socialist portion of countries that we would have liked to emancipate would have rallied to the governments: and what would our situation have been then! It is painful to say: it would have been exactly the same with regard to all of Europe as it has just been in the affair of Rome, with this difference that in the latter were victors, and in the former we would have inevitably been vanquished.

For my part, convinced of the uselessness even more than the impotence of our arms for the success of the revolution, I had not hesitated to pronounce myself, in the *Représentant du Peuple*, against the May 15 demonstration. I did not believe that France, embarrassed by this fatal question of the proletariat, which could not, did not want, should not suffer adjournment, was in a position to dodge the solution and carry the war anywhere. Moreover, I considered the means of economic action, if we knew how to use them, as much more effective with respect to foreign countries than all the armies of the Convention and the Empire, while an armed intervention, complicated with bastard socialism, would arouse against us all the bourgeoisies, all the peasants of Europe. Finally, as for what concerned the nationalities that we had to safeguard, I was convinced that the attitude of France would be for them the best safeguard, the most powerful auxiliary. Rome, Venice, Hungary, succumbing one after another to the news that democracy has been defeated in Paris, are proof of this. The election of December 10 was for the insurgent peoples like the loss of a great battle; June 13, 1849 was their Waterloo. Ah! If at this moment liberty succumbs, it is not because we have not rescued it, it is because we have stabbed it. Let us not seek to justify our faults by our misfortunes; the Revolution would be triumphant in all parts of Europe if, instead of wanting it through politics, we had wanted it through social economy.

Despite my publicly expressed opposition to the demonstration of May 15, I was appointed, at the Hôtel-de-Ville, to be part of the new government. I do not know to whom I was indebted for this perilous honor, perhaps to my unfortunate compatriot and friend, Captain Laviron, who went to Rome to consummate his martyrdom. But I cannot help thinking that if, on the morning of May 15, I had published a quarter of M. Wolowski's speech, I would infallibly have been arrested that evening, taken to Vincennes, brought before the court of Bourges, and then locked up in Doullens, to teach me to have exact ideas about the policy of intervention and neutrality. O political justice! Dealer in false weights! What infamy there is under the pan of your balance!

Thus the reaction unfolded with clockwork regularity, and became generalized with each convulsion of the revolutionary party.

On March 17, it had begun against Blanqui and the ultra-democrats, on the signal of Louis Blanc.

On April 16, it continued against Louis Blanc, to the drumbeats of Ledru-Rollin.

On May 15, it continued against Ledru-Rollin, Flocon and the men represented by the *Reforme*, by Bastide, Marrast, Garnier-Pagès, Marie, Arago and Duclerc, who formed the majority of the government, and had the *National* as their organ. The reaction, it is true, ostensibly struck only the most energetic democrats, seized pell-mell and confounded in the same raid: Barbès, Albert, Sobrier, Blanqui, Flotte, Raspail, General Courtais, and soon Louis Blanc and Caussidiere. But if Ledru-Rollin and Flocon were not attacked in their persons, their influence perished on May 15, as that of Louis Blanc had perished on April 16. In political reactions, the insurrection and the power under which it arrives are always united.

Soon we'll see the republicans of the *National*, last of the day before, fall in their turn and give way to the Republicans of the following day. After these will come the doctrinaires, who, seizing, by means of an electoral coalition, the government of the Republic, will believe they are recovering a usurped heritage. Finally, the reactionary fortune giving a last turn of the wheel, the government will return to its authors, to the Catholic absolutists, beyond whom there is no further demotion. All these men, obeying the same prejudice, will in turn fall martyrs and victims, until finally Democracy, recognizing its mistake, overthrows all its opponents from universal suffrage, choosing as its representatives men who, instead of demanding progress from power, demand it from liberty.

On May 15, the era of political revenge begins for the February Revolution. The provisional government had pardoned the attempt of March 17, pardoned that of April 16... The National Assembly, despite Flocon's warnings, did not pardon May 15. The vaults of the keep of Vincennes received these sad victims of the most execrable prejudice, Blanqui, Barbès, half of whose life has already passed in state prisons! The most unfortunate of all was Huber, who, after fourteen years in prison, barely brought to light, returned to seek a life sentence, in order to respond to a demagogic calumny. What was the crime of all these men?

In 1839, Blanqui and Barbès, acting in concert, and counting on the adhesion of the people, undertook, by a bold *coup de main*, to put an end to the scandal of the war of the portfolios, which, from the first year of the reign, afflicted, dishonored the country. Were they wrong, these men, to appeal to the people, to the majority of the citizens, to universal suffrage, in a word, regarding the shameful cabals of the regime at 200 fr.? The appeal could not be heard: ten years' imprisonment made the two conspirators atone for their attack on the monopoly.

In 1848, Blanqui, the indefatigable initiator, carried away by one of those whiffs of the multitude that the most influential tribunes cannot resist, made himself, before the hesitant National Assembly, the organ of a thought that everything told him to be that of the people, which had been shared for eighteen years by the majority of the bourgeoisie. Barbès, misled by terror, opposes Blanqui by exaggerating his proposals, and, for the third time in three months, becomes a reactor, to save his country from an imaginary dictatorship. Suppose for a moment these two men agree; suppose that the dissolution of the National Assembly, pronounced unexpectedly by Huber, had been prepared, organized in advance, who can say where the Revolution, where Europe would be today?....

These are those whom the dread of the countryside imagines as malevolent geniuses unleashed on the earth to set the world ablaze; these are the men whom the constitutional system for eighteen years has made its expiatory victims, and who were not to be the last. M. de Lamartine, in one of his poetic hallucinations, said, in the middle of the National Assembly, that he had once approached Blanqui, as the lightning rod approaches the cloud to extract the exterminating fluid. By dint of dreaming of ogres and giants, M. de Lamartine ended up taking himself for Little Poucet.⁷ But it is not entirely his fault that our story since February has been like a fairy tale. When will we stop playing throne and revolution? When will we truly be men and citizens?

⁷ A character in a fairy tale by Charles Perrault.

X.
JUNE 23 — 26:

THE REACTION OF CAVAIGNAC.

If, however, you persist in saying to me, the Provisional Government had been composed of more homogeneous elements, of more energetic men; if Barbès and Blanqui, instead of opposing each other, had been able to come to an understanding; if the elections had taken place a month earlier; if the socialists had concealed their theories for some time; if..... if..... if....., etc.: admit that things would have happened quite differently. The Provisional Government would have completed the Revolution in a fortnight; the National Assembly, all made up of Republicans, would have combined, developed its work; we would have had neither March 17, nor April 16, nor May 15; and you, subtle historian, would classify it with your theory of the impotence of power, and of the revolutionary incapacity of government.

Let us therefore reason; and, since facts abound, let us quote facts. March 17, April 16, May 15 did not convince you: I am going to tell you a story that will give you food for thought. But first let us understand a little what history is.

There are two ways of studying history: one that I will call the *providential* method, the other, which is the *philosophical* method.

The first consists in relating the cause of events, either to a higher will directing the course of things from above, and which is God; or to a human will temporarily placed in such a way as to act on events by its free will, like God. This method does not absolutely exclude any design, any systematic premeditation in history, but this design has nothing necessary about it, and could be revoked at any time at the whim of its author; it depends entirely on the determination of the characters, and on the sovereign will of God. Just as God, according to theologians, could have created an infinity of worlds different from the present world; so Providence could have directed the course of events in an infinite number of other ways. If, for example, Alexander the Great, instead of dying at thirty-two, had lived to be sixty; if Caesar had been defeated at Pharsalus; if Constantine had not gone to establish himself in Byzantium; if Charlemagne had not founded or consolidated the temporal power of the popes; if the Bastille had not allowed itself to be taken on July 14, or if a detachment of grenadiers had chased the representatives of the people from the tennis court, as those of Bonaparte did at Saint-Cloud, is it not true, asks the providential historian, that civilization would have taken another course, that Catholicism would not have had the same character, and that Henry V or Louis XVII would be king?

We see that basically this theory is nothing other than that of chance. What the believer calls PROVIDENCE, the skeptic calls FORTUNE: it is all one. Morey and Alibaud, believing to hasten the triumph of democracy by regicide; Bossuet, relating universal history to the establishment of the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church, were from the

same school. In the matter of historical science, there is no difference between absolute Pyrrhonism and the deepest superstition. This policy of the last reign, without system in spite of its pompous verbiage, a policy of *bascule* and expedients, is worth, in fact, as much as that of Gregory VII. It was a routine that followed, like Catholicism, its development in profound blindness, without knowing where it would end.

The philosophical method, while recognizing that particular facts have nothing fatal about them, that they can vary *ad infinitum*, according to the wills that produce them, nevertheless considers them all as dependent on general laws, inherent in nature and humanity. These laws are the eternal, invariable thought of history: as for the facts that translate them, they are, like the characters of writing that paint the word, like the terms that express ideas, the arbitrary side of history. They could be changed indefinitely, without the immanent thought they cover suffering.

Thus, in order to answer the objection made to me, it was possible that the Provisional Government was composed of other men; that Louis Blanc was not one of them; that Barbès and Blanqui should not complicate with their rival influence a situation already so complex; that the majority of the National Assembly should be more democratic: all that, I say, and many other things were possible; the events would have been quite different from what we saw: this is the accidental, factitious side of the story.

But the revolutionary series in the midst of which the modern world is engaged, a series that itself results from the conditions of the human mind, being given, plus a prejudice, accepted by everyone and at the same time combatted by everyone, according to which it is up to the authority constituted on the nation to take the initiative of the reforms and to direct the movement, I say that the events that were to be deduced from it, whatever they were, happy or unhappy, could only be the expression of the struggle that would inevitably be engaged between tradition and the Revolution.

All the incidents that we have witnessed since February draw their significance from this double fact. On the one hand, an economic and social revolution, which comes, if I dare say so, most punctually, to impose itself following twenty previous revolutions, political, philosophical, religious; on the other, faith in power, which instantly distorts this Revolution, presenting it in an anti-liberal and absurd guise. Once again, the February Revolution could have another twist, other actors, different roles or motives. The spectacle, instead of being a tragedy, could only be a melodrama: the meaning, the morality of the play would remain the same.

According to this philosophical conception of history, general facts are classified, engender one another with a rigor of deduction that nothing in the positive sciences surpasses; and as it is possible for reason to give its philosophy, it is possible for human prudence to direct its course. In the providential theory, on the contrary, history is nothing more than a romantic imbroglio, without principle, without reason, without goal; an argument for superstition as for atheism, the scandal of the mind and of conscience.

What maintains faith in Providence is the involuntary confusion of the *laws* of society with the *accidents* that form its staging. The vulgar, perceiving a certain logic in general facts, and referring to the same source the facts of detail, of which they discover neither the aim nor the necessity, since in fact this necessity does not exist, concludes that there must be a providential Will that sovereignly regulates the small things as well as the greatest, the *contingent* and the *necessary*, as they say in school, which is quite simply a contradiction. For us, Providence in history is the same thing as supernatural revelation in philosophy, arbitrariness in government, abuse in property.

We will see, in the event that I have to relate, democracy, on the one hand, and the conservative party, on the other, obeying the same passions, striving with equal ardor to exercise on events a pressure favorable to their ideas, while history unfolds according to its own laws with the precision of a syllogism.

The Provisional Government had guaranteed, in the most formal manner, the right to work. This guarantee it had given by virtue of its alleged initiative, and the people had accepted it as such. The commitment had been made on both sides in good faith. How many men in France, on February 24, even among the fiercest adversaries of socialism, believed it was impossible for a state as strongly organized as ours, as abundantly endowed with resources, to provide work for a few hundred thousand workers? None. The thing seemed so easy, so simple; the conviction in this respect was so general that those most refractory to the new order of things would have found themselves happy to end the Revolution at this price. Besides, there was no haggling: the people were masters, and when, after having borne the weight of the day and the heat, they only asked for the honor of their sovereignty to labor again, the people could rightly be considered the most just of kings and the most moderate of conquerors.

Three months had been given to the Provisional Government to honor its obligation. The three months had passed, and the work had not come. The demonstration of May 15 having brought some disorder into the relations, the bill drawn by the people on the government had been renewed; but the deadline was approaching, without any reason to believe that the draft would be paid.

"Make us work yourselves," the workers had said to the government, "if the contractors cannot resume their production."

To this proposal of the workers, the government opposed a triple objection of inadmissibility.

"I have no money," it said, "and consequently I cannot assure you of salaries."

"I have nothing to do with your products myself, and I don't know who to sell them to."

"And even if I could sell them, that would get me absolutely nothing, because, by my competition, free industry, finding itself stopped, would send me back its workers."

"In that case, take charge of all industry, all transport, even agriculture," continued the workers.

"I cannot," replied the government. "Such a regime would be community, absolute and universal servitude, against which the immense majority of citizens protest. They proved it on March 17, April 16, May 15; they proved it by sending us an assembly composed of nine-tenths partisans of free competition, free commerce, free and independent property. What do you want me to do against the will of 35 million citizens, against yours, O unfortunate workers, who saved me from the dictatorship on March 17?"

"Give us credit, advance us capital, organize state sponsorship."

"You have no pledge to offer me," observed the government. "And then I told you, everyone knows, I have no money."

"*It is up to the state to give credit, not to receive it!*" we have been told, and we have not forgotten it. "Create paper money; we accept it in advance and will make others receive it."

"Forced exchange! Assignats!" replied the government in despair. "I can force the payment, but I cannot force the sale; your paper money will fall in three months under depreciation, and your misery will be worse."

"So the February Revolution means nothing!" the workers said to themselves with concern. "Must we still die for having made it?"

The Provisional Government, being unable either to organize labor or to give credit, and being routine like all governments, had hoped that with time and order it would restore *confidence*, that the work would re-establish itself; that it would suffice in the meantime to offer the working masses, who could not be abandoned to their distress, a food subsidy.

Such was the thought of *the national workshops*, a thought full of humanity and of good will, but a striking confession of impotence. It would have been painful, perhaps dangerous, to abruptly tell these men who had believed for a moment in their approaching emancipation, to return to their workshops, to again solicit the benevolence of their bosses. It would have been taken for a betrayal of the people, and until May 15, if it was not the government, the people were king. But, on the other hand, the Provisional Government had soon realized that an economic renewal, such as would have been necessary to give satisfaction to the people, was not a matter for the State. It had experienced that the nation rejected this revolutionary method; it felt more and more that what had been offered to it under the name *organization of labor*, which had been thought so easy, was forbidden to it. Seeing no way out of this labyrinth, it had decided to remain on the sidelines, and, at the same time as he would do his best to bring about the resumption of business, to feed the unemployed workers, which no one assuredly could make a crime.

But, here again, the government was lulled into the most fatal illusion.

The doctrinaire party, rallied to the absolutist party, had been talking loudly since the debacle of May 15. It was this part that directed the government and the Assembly, and which, from the tribune and through its newspapers, gave the watchword to France, republican if you like, but above all conservative. While the democrats, by dint of

squeezing power, were in the process of precipitating it, the doctrinaires, urged on by the Jesuits, were preparing to seize it again. The opportunity showing itself favorable; they could not let it escape.

The adversaries of the government therefore claimed that the re-establishment of order, and consequently the return of confidence, was incompatible with the existence of the national workshops; that if one seriously wanted to revive work, one had to begin by dissolving these workshops. So that the government found itself entwined in a double circle, forced into the face of twin impossibilities, whether it wanted to procure work for the workers, or simply give them credit, or whether it wanted to send them home, or decided to feed them for a while.

The reaction showed itself all the more intractable in that it thought, not without reason, that the national workshops, then numbering more than 100,000 men, were the boulevard of Socialism; that this army once dispersed, we would have cheap both democracy and the executive commission; perhaps they thought that one could, before discussing the Constitution, put an end to the Republic. The game was good: they were determined to follow their luck and profit from their fortune. These men, so touchy about bankruptcy when it comes to their rents, were ready to violate the promise made in the name of the country by the Provisional Government, to bankrupt the workers of the labor that had been guaranteed to them, and, if need be, to support this bankruptcy by force.

So this was the situation:

As the price of the February Revolution, and as a consequence of the opinion that we had of the quality of power, it had been agreed between the Provisional Government and the people that the latter relinquished its sovereignty, and that in taking power, the Government undertook to guarantee work within three months.

The execution of the treaty being impossible, the National Assembly refused to subscribe to it.

One of two things was inevitable: either there would be a transaction; or else, if the two parties were obstinate, there would be a catastrophe.

To some, humanity, respect for sworn faith, care for peace; to others the financial embarrassments of the Republic, the difficulties of the question, the demonstrated incompetence of the power, compelled them to lend themselves to an accommodation. This is what was understood by the national workshops, represented by their delegates, but above all by their new director Lalanne and by the Minister of Public Works Trélat, who in these deplorable days behaved like a man of heart, and did his duty.

As this part of the facts relating to the June insurrection has hitherto remained very obscure, as the *Rapport d'enquête* on the June affairs has taken care not to mention it, and as there was revealed at the same time, for the great majority of workers, the cause and, for a small number, hired by royalist agents and Bonapartists, the occasion and the pretext for those bloody days, I will enter into a few details. The people must know what enemies they had to deal with and how revolutions slip away; the bourgeoisie must know in its turn

how its terrors are exploited, and what intriguers make their feelings of loyal moderation serve their execrable policy. The main information was provided to me by Mr. Lalanne himself, who showed me, on this occasion, a kindness for which I cannot thank him too much here.

The Executive Commission had just set up a ministry. On May 12, Trélat was called to the public works, the department responsible for the national workshops. He immediately perceived the dangers of the situation, and sought without delay the means of countering them. From the 17th, despite the trouble caused by the day of the 15th, he set up a commission that he instructed to report to him on the national workshops, and to propose a solution. The next day, the 18th, this commission met; it deliberated without stopping for the whole day. The report was drawn up the following night, read to the commission on the morning of the 19th, discussed and finalized in this second session, copied and delivered immediately to the minister. After having heard it read, Trélat declared that he adopted all the conclusions, gave orders to have it printed immediately; and on the 20th, at two o'clock, the national printing press had printed the 1,200 copies intended for the Constituent Assembly and the principal administrations. The distribution was to take place the same day.

Suddenly the order is given to suspend the distribution; not a copy should leave the cabinet of the Minister, the Executive Commission has so decided. It feared that the conclusions of the *Report*, that certain principles expressed therein, the right to work among others, raised violent opposition in the National Assembly. Since May 15, hostile passions had begun to emerge: they must not be given a pretext to burst out. Thus, when audacity alone could save it, the Executive Commission abandoned itself to fear: the hour of its retirement had come.

Arrested from the beginning on the path of both prudent and radical reform on which he was embarking, the minister was not discouraged. He sought to at least eradicate the most flagrant abuses among those whom the Commission has pointed out to him; but he only received from the young director, who had presided over the creation of the national workshops from the outset, promises that had not been followed up. One would have said that a fatal genius was bent on aggravating the evil while preventing its remedy. A few days are thus wasted in useless efforts. Trélat wanted to overcome the inertia he encountered, to give more authority to his orders, to surround himself with more enlightenment; to this end, he reconstituted the Commission and brought into it experienced administrators who represented various ministerial departments. This Commission met on May 26, under the chairmanship of the Minister; it called the director, and soon recognized that it had nothing to expect from him. He is replaced the same day.

From this moment, the *Commission of the National Workshops* is established permanently; it takes up one by one, modifies, extends or restricts the proposals that were the subject of the first report. First, it deals with the reform of abuses; it reduces the

offices that had taken an excessive development; replaces day work with piece work; organizes, with the help of the municipal authorities, oversight and immediately recognizes that out of 120,000 names registered, 25,000 must be crossed out for double or triple use. But all these measures are pure repression; it is not a question of gradually reducing the executives of this great army, it is necessary to provide for the labor of the men whom one dismisses: the commission feels it, and it is the object of incessant concern.

It successively presents the minister with special proposals likely to reassure the workers about the government's intentions. Encouragement for workers' associations, Algerian colonization on a vast scale, a law on industrial tribunals, the organization of a system of pension and assistance funds, such is the part it proposes to give to the legitimate demands of the working class. Export bonuses, advances on wages, direct orders, a guarantee on certain manufactured articles, are the measures that it indicates in favor of merchants and industrialists. The bourgeois and the worker had an equal share in the solicitude of the commission: as in its thought their interests were united, it did not separate them in its projects of encouragement and credit. It estimated the total expenditure to be distributed among the various ministerial departments at 200 million; but it was convinced that this is a productive expense, an apparent and not real burden, much less heavy for the country than the consequences of longer unemployment.

Trélat fully adopted these views. It was no longer a question, in fact, of communism, or of egalitarian organization, or of universal control by the state over labor and property. It was simply a question of returning to the *status quo*, of returning to the rut from which the February tremor had brought us out. Trélat sought to introduce these ideas into the commissions of the National Assembly, but in vain. The objection was made to the shortage of the Treasury; and they did not want to see that it was a question of saving the Treasury itself, by restoring to it, through a large distribution of credit, its annihilated receipts. They affected not to understand that the sacrifices made at work benefit the worker even less than the boss, and that after all the bourgeoisie is still the party most interested in this tutelary resumption of work. — "200 millions to disband an army of 100,000 men," exclaimed the calculating Baron Charles Dupin! As if the 100,000 men in the national workshops had not been a tiny fraction of the working class then without work! Ah! If instead of the workers there had been a question of a railway company!... — "200 million!" Is that very expensive? It would be a shame to admit that, in order to preserve public peace, you had to pay each of your 100,000 workers a bonus of 2,000 francs. We would never agree to it. At most one could, by pronouncing the immediate dissolution, give to each man the salary of three months, that is to say 100 francs, in all 10 millions, which is far from 200. With this advance, the workmen would doubtless retire satisfied."

And in three months?... asked the director Lalanne.

But it was a matter of reasoning, really! Clamors rose against any project likely to manage the transitions; they wanted to BE DONE WITH IT. They say so in a low voice at first, and they prudently contented themselves with making a silent opposition to the acts of the government. But soon they grew bolder, they decided to take their chances on a terrible struggle. That voice that repeated incessantly that *we have to end it*, and which escaped through the doors of the offices of the Assembly, carried into the masses the confusion and the exasperation. And yet the workers, already far removed from that time when they assigned a term of three months to the agricultural-industrial organization, all consented to return to their bosses, with the only guarantee given to them the new labor law, voted on the initiative of Flocon, then Minister of Commerce. — *Work! Useful work!* such was the cry that was uttered with a unanimous voice during the whole month of June by more than one hundred thousand men. — *Yes*, exclaimed Trélat, in one of the finest inspirations that had resounded from the French tribune, *the National Assembly must decree work, as the Convention formerly decreed victory!* This noble language excited the smiles of the Malthusians. In vain, in agreement with the minister, the director Lalanne came to announce, on June 18, to a commission of the Assembly and, and on the 20th, at the Labor Committee, that we were touching on a catastrophe; the ears remained deaf to the truth, the eyes closed to the light. The spell was cast! The dissolution is resolved; it will be executed, come what may. At the session of June 23, the citizen of Falloux came to read the report which concluded with the immediate dismissal of the workers, in return for an unemployment benefit of three million, or about *thirty francs* per man!... Thirty francs, for having founded the Republic! Thirty francs for the ransom of the monopoly! Thirty francs in exchange for an eternity of misery! This recalls the thirty pieces of silver paid to Judas for the blood of Jesus Christ! To this offer of thirty francs, the workers responded with barricades.

I said what was done on the side of the national workshops to reach a peaceful conclusion. I am going, faithful historian, to give the counterpart of this story, so that the reader knows what were the intentions of both sides, what share of responsibility belongs to each in this dismal drama.

All my documents are taken from the *Moniteur*.

In a hurry to get it over with, the government, by a ministerial decision, had first offered workers aged 17 to 25 the alternative, either of contracting enlistments in the army or, if they refused, of seeing themselves excluded from the national workshops. Famine or slavery: this is how the doctrinaires intended to proceed with the dissolution of the national workshops.

On June 21, the Executive Commission gives orders for enrollment to begin immediately. "The public and the workers themselves," says the *Moniteur*, "*will see with pleasure that by this measure we are finally beginning the solution of this serious question.*" The national workshops have been an unavoidable necessity for some time: now *they are an obstacle* to the re-establishment of industry and labor. It is therefore important, *in the*

most pressing interest of the workmen themselves, that the workshops be dissolved; and we are convinced that the working people will easily understand this, thanks to the common sense and intelligent patriotism that they have so often shown.”

On June 22, the government informed the workers that, in the state of the legislation, engagements could only be contracted at eighteen years of age; but that, to facilitate the dissolution of the national workshops, a proposed decree, at this moment submitted to the National Assembly, *lowers to seventeen years the limit of the age* required for voluntary enlistment.

The age of apprenticeship has become the age of conscription! What touching solicitude! What a commentary on Malthus's theory!

While the Executive Commission attends to this urgent care, while the Workers' Committee buries itself in inquiries, reports, discussions, projects, the Jesuit reaction harasses the Minister of Public Works, terrifies the National Assembly about the consequences *Communists* of the takeover of the railroads, shows everywhere the hand of the state ready to seize free labor and property. M. de Montalembert, with the most perfidious aptness, quotes the following passage from the journal *La République*, written under the inspiration of the theory of governmental initiative that then prevailed:

“We will not seek to circumvent the difficulty; nothing is gained by cunning with business people... *Yes, it is a question of your property and your society*; yes, it is a question of substituting legitimate property for usurped property, society between all the members of the human family and the political city, for the society of wolves against wolves, which is the object of your regrets. Yes, the handing over of the public domain of circulation to the State, which you have dispossessed, is the first link in the chain of social questions that the Revolution of 1848 retains in the folds of its virile robe.”

But, honest Jesuit, take for the execution and the exploitation of the railroads whatever system you want, provided that the country is not stolen, that the transport is done at low cost, that the workmen labor; and leave the *République* with the *Gazette* and the *Constitutionnel*!...

But it is in the session of June 23, where each speech, each sentence that falls from the tribune, makes you hear the roar of the cannon and the roll of the fusillade, that you must follow the plot of the *Jesuitico-Juste-milieu* coalition.

The session begins with a military bulletin. The President informs the Assembly that the Republican Guard, marching with the National Guard, has just removed two barricades in the Rue Planche-Mibray, and that the troops of the line have fired by platoon several times on the boulevards.

After this communication, Citizen Bineau asked to speak on a point of order. The day before, at the end of the session, the Minister of Public Works had submitted a request for a credit of 6 million for the work to be carried out on the railway from Châlon to Lyon, around Collonge. This is because in Lyons, as in Paris, there were masses of workers who demanded work; and the minister could not have done better than to employ them on this

line, the execution of which was permanently stopped. However, citizen Bineau objected that the credit could not be allocated, since, that the terms of redemption not having been voted on, it would be irregular to start the work before having allocated the credit.

Trélat protests that he cannot conceive of such an opposition, since, if the redemption is not voted on, the company will have to reimburse the amount of the labor; and that consequently nothing prevents the workmen from always occupying themselves on this point. However, on the motion of Citizen Duclerc, Minister of Finance, the discussion of the draft credit was adjourned.

The incident settled, Flocon, Minister of Commerce and Agriculture, ascends the rostrum. He speaks of the gravity of the events, he says that the government is at its post; and, believing no doubt to hold back the insurgent masses by throwing dishonor on the insurrection, he declares, *very loudly*, he says, *so that it will be heard from outside*, that the agitators have no other flag than that of disorder, and that behind them hides more than one suitor, supported by the foreigner. He therefore begs all good republicans to separate themselves from the cause of despotism.

This unfortunate policy succeeded only in inflaming the National Guards, without appeasing the workers, and in rendering the repression more pitiless.

Once the fight had begun, there was no going back. M. de Falloux chose this moment to lay on the platform the report relating to the dissolution of the national workshops, a report whose conclusions had, as we have seen, been known to the workers for two days. We can say of him that he lit the incendiary fuse that produced the conflagration of June. In vain, the citizen Raynal opposed to the reading of the report: *I do not believe*, he exclaimed, *that there is opportunity for it in the current moment*. — From all sides: *Read! read!*

And M. de Falloux reads.

Corbon observes that the Workers' Committee, while being in favor of dissolution, had nevertheless recognized that it should not be done until the workers had been given the guarantees to which they were entitled; that the Committee had prepared a decree for this purpose, the provisions of which it makes known. The decree is disavowed.

Here, the discussion is again interrupted by a communication from the president on the feats of arms that are happening outside. He announces that the shooting is engaged on the boulevards, that the barricades rise in the city, that a woman of the people was wounded in the shoulder. All Paris is in arms!

At these words, Creton, unstoppable, asks for the floor in order to have the *urgency* of a proposal thus conceived declared:

“The Executive Commission will deposit as soon as possible the detailed statement of all the receipts and all the expenses effected during the one hundred and twenty-seven days that elapsed from February 24 to July 1, 1848.”

This was the case made by the Provisional Government and the Executive Commission. While they were being forced to disband the national workshops, the only

support they had left; while, to please their enemies, they shot their own soldiers in the street, and while each of their members risked his life on the barricades, they brought them to the bar, they demanded their accounts. No wasted time for the men of God: Providence protects them. The urgency is granted.

The discussion of the plan to take over the railways was then resumed. Citizen Jobez has the floor.

"However grave the circumstances, I think that the discussion must undergo the phases that it would have followed in a moment of calm and peace... A decided partisan of the execution of great public works by the State, I come however to fight the takeover project presented to you, and support the conclusions of your finance committee."

And why did this young representative, one of the most *honest* and *moderate* of all the republicans of the next day, come to abjure his opinion with such brilliance?

Ah! It was because the Government had made it understood that it was counting on the adoption of the plan to buy back the railways to give useful labor to the workers, and that by depriving the Government of this resource, the Revolution was being caught between two fires. The workers demand work! No, no work, says Jobez, whose thought corresponds to that of Bineau.

"Since the meeting of the Assembly," he continues, "every time someone talks about the national workshops, someone answers you with the purchase of the railways. And when it is said: But without this redemption you have 311 millions of works to carry out, carry there all or part of the national workshops; they answer: Give us the law of redemption. The arguments are always the same and, by a singular coincidence, it happens that this inventory of national workshops requested since the meeting of the Assembly has not yet been completed, and that the works that have been chosen are all at the gate of Paris."

Pure quibble. It was not a question of the works that the Government had to carry out, as it has for them several billion, but of the sums it could put into it. However, he believed that the law of repurchase of the railroads having to get it more money and especially more credit, this law was eminently favorable to the occupation of the workmen.

On March 17, the people had asked the Provisional Government to withdraw the troops, and had been unable to obtain it. On June 23, the reaction imposed on the Executive Commission the dispersal of the national workshops, that is to say the removal of the people; it was granted immediately. There is quite a revelation in this rapprochement.

No sooner had Citizen Jobez descended from the tribune than the Minister of War, General Cavaignac, ascended it to give new information on the insurrection. The riot has been driven out of the Saint-Denis and Saint-Martin suburbs; it only occupies the Saint-Jacques and Saint-Antoine districts. The National Guard, the Mobile Guard, the Republican Guard, finally the troops of the line (for all the forces at the disposal of power were then united against the people), are animated by the best spirit.

Thus, it was with gunshots that the National Assembly paid the debt of the Provisional Government! Well! I ask: who were the most culpable, the insurgents of March, April, May, or the provocateurs of June? Those who solicited the Government, in order to obtain work from it, or of those who made it spend 2,500,000 cartridges to refuse it?

But what could the cannon have done against innocence, if it had not had the reinforcement of calumny? At the same hour when General Cavaignac informed the Assembly of his strategic dispositions, the mayor of Paris, A. Marrast, wrote to the municipalities of the twelve arrondissements the following circular: it looks like an edict of Diocletian.

"Paris, June 23, 1848, three o'clock in the afternoon.

"Citizen Mayor,

"You have witnessed since this morning the efforts made by *a small number of turbulent* people to raise the greatest alarm among the population.

"The enemies of the Republic assume all the masks; they exploit all the misfortunes, all the difficulties produced by events." — (Who then exploited the difficulty, if not the very ones who affected to complain of it the most?) — "Foreign agents join them, excite them and pay them. It is not only civil war that they would like to ignite among us; *it is pillage, social disorganization*, it is the ruin of France that they are preparing, and one can guess for what purpose.

"Paris is the principal seat of these infamous intrigues; Paris will not become the capital of disorder. Let the National Guard, which is the first guardian of public peace *and of property*, understand well that it is above all this that is in question, *its interests, its credit*, its honor. If it were to abandon itself, it would leave the whole country up to chance; *it is families and properties that it would leave exposed to the most frightful calamities*.

"The troops of the garrison are under arms, *numerous and perfectly disposed*. Let the National Guards station themselves in their quarters, at the edges of the streets. The authorities will do their duty: let the National Guard do theirs."

Senard's proclamation is even more furious. I will only quote these words:

.....

"They are not asking for the Republic! It is proclaimed.

"Universal suffrage! It has been fully accepted and practiced.

"So what do they want? We know it now: they want anarchy, fire, pillage!..."

Was ever a plot pursued with more implacable perseverance? Were famine and civil war ever exploited with more villainous skill? And yet we would be mistaken if we believed that I accuse all these men of having wanted, for the interest of coterie, the

misery and massacre of a hundred thousand of their brothers. There is in all this only a collective thought that develops with all the more relentlessness as each of those who express it are less conscious of its disastrous role, and as, using their right of initiative, they cannot be held responsible for their words. Individuals are susceptible to clemency; parties are ruthless. The spirit of conciliation had been great on the side of the national workshops: it was because they were organized, because there were men speaking in their name and answering for them, Trélat and Lalanne. The reactionary party, left to its fanatical instincts, would listen to nothing, because it was not represented and acted without answering. Do you want, in a political struggle, to assassinate your adversary, without incurring the odious crime? No deliberation, and the secret ballot.

After Cavaignac, Garnier-Pagès, his soul bewildered, his voice full of sobs, brings the reactionary exaltation to its height. — *We must put an end to it!* he exclaims (Yes! Yes!); *we must put an end to the agitators!* (Yes! Yes! Bravo! Bravo!)

Citizen Bonjean proposes that a commission be appointed to march with the National Guard and the troops, *and die if necessary, at their head, for the defense of order!* The motion is accepted enthusiastically.

Mauguin demands that the Assembly be constituted permanently. Adopted. Reports cross, news from the battlefield becomes more and more serious. Considerant proposes to address a proclamation to the workers, in order to reassure them about their fate, and to put an end to this fratricidal war. But the parties are ruthless. They do not want reconciliation; even the author of the proposition is not allowed to read it. It is ruled out by the previous question. — “Our duty is to remain impassive in our place, answers the stoic Baze, without deliberation with the riot, without any pact with it through the discussion of a proclamation.”

The blood boils in Caussidière. It was night. — “I ask,” he exclaimed, “that a proclamation be made by torchlight, and that a certain number of deputies go, accompanied by a member of the Executive Commission, into the heart of the insurrection. — The cries: *Order! you talk like a rebel! Mr. President, suspend the meeting!* welcome the words of the Montagnard. Minister Duclerc, who will soon fall under the blows of the reaction, himself calls this proposal senseless.

Beaune joins Caussidière. More cries: *Suspend the session!*

On new details provided by General Cavaignac, Lagrange returns to the charge. — From all sides: *Suspend the session!*

Finally the denouement approaches, the message of the plot is revealed. Pascal Duprat proposes that Paris be declared in a state of siege, and all powers handed over to General Cavaignac.

I oppose the dictatorship! cries Larabit.

TRÉVENEUC: The National Guard demands a state of siege on all sides.

LANGLOIS: This is the wish of the population.

BASTIDE: Hurry up; in an hour the Hôtel-de-Ville will be taken.

GERMAIN SARRUT: In the name of the memories of 1832, we protest against the state of siege. (Cries: *Order!*)

Quentin Bauchart and others want us to add to Pascal Duprat's proposal an additional article worded as follows: "The Executive Commission immediately ceases its functions. — It is a grudge, replies Minister Duclerc disdainfully.

Finally, it was announced that the Executive Commission, which for twenty-four hours, running from barricade to barricade, had been firing on its own troops on behalf of *honest* and *moderate* people, not expecting to be dismissed, resigned its functions.

Now it is up to the saber to do the rest: the canvas falls on the fourth act of the February Revolution.

"O working people! disinherited, vexed, proscribed people! People who are imprisoned, judged and killed! People flouted, people withered! Will you not cease to lend your ear to these orators of mysticism, who, instead of soliciting your initiative, speak to you incessantly both of Heaven and of the State, promising salvation sometimes by religion, sometimes by government, and whose vehement and sonorous speech captivates you?.....

"The power, the instrument of collective power, created in society to serve as a mediator between labor and capital, finds itself fatally chained to capital and directed against the proletariat. No political reform can resolve this contradiction, since, according to the politicians themselves, such a reform would only result in giving more energy and extension to the power, and unless it overturns the hierarchy and dissolves society, the power cannot touch the prerogatives of the monopoly. The problem therefore consists, for the working classes, not in conquering, but in overcoming both the power and the monopoly, which means bringing forth from the entrails of the people, from the depths of labor, a greater activity, a more powerful act that envelops capital and the state and subjugates them. Every proposition for reform that does not satisfy that condition is only one more scourge, a watchman's stick, *virgam vigilantem*, said a prophet, that threatens the proletariat. — (*Economic contradictions*, Paris, Guillaumin.)

These lines, written in 1845, are the prophecy of the events that we saw unfold in 1848 and 1849. It was for having obstinately wanted revolution by the power, social reform through political reform, that the February Revolution been postponed and the cause of the proletariat and the nationalities lost in the first instance by all of Europe.⁸

Combattants of June! The principle of your defeat is in the decree of February 25. They deceived you, those who made you, in the name of the power, a promise that the power was incapable of keeping. To overcome the power, that is to say to reabsorb the power into the people by the separate centralization of political and social functions; to conquer capital by the mutual guarantee of circulation and credit: this was to be the policy of the democracy. Is that so hard to understand?

See note at end of chapter.

In March, in April, in May, instead of organizing yourselves for labor and liberty, taking advantage of the political advantages that the victory of February gave you, you ran to the Government, you demanded from it what you alone could give yourselves, and you set the revolution back three stages. In June, victims of an odious lack of faith, you had the misfortune to give in to indignation and anger: it was throwing yourselves into the trap that for six weeks was set for you. Your mistake was to demand from the power the fulfillment of a promise that it could not keep; your wrong, to rebel against the national representation and the government of the Republic. Doubtless your enemies have not reaped the fruit of their intrigue; no doubt your martyrdom has made you grow. You are a hundred times stronger today than under the first state of siege, and you can relate your later successes to the justice of your cause. But, it must be recognized, since the victory could give you nothing more than what you already possessed, the ability to labor together for production and the market, the victory was lost for you in advance. You were the soldiers of the Republic, that is true, and the Republicans did not understand it; but the National Guards were also the soldiers of the Republic, the soldiers of universal suffrage and of liberty. Never accuse a whole fraction, the most considerable, of the people of felony; bear no grudges for those of your deceived brethren who fought you. Let only those who have seduced you by disastrous utopias beat their breasts; as for those who, in these days of mourning, had intelligence only to exploit your misery, I hope that they will never abuse their power of a moment enough to attract on their heads too just reprisals.

For me, the memory of the days of June will weigh eternally like remorse on my heart. I admit it with pain: until the 25th I predicted nothing, knew nothing, guessed nothing. Elected a fortnight before, representing the people, I had entered the National Assembly with the timidity of a child, with the ardor of a neophyte. Diligent, from 9 o'clock, with the meetings of the offices and the committees, I did not leave the Assembly until the evening, exhausted with fatigue and disgust. Since I had set foot on the parliamentary Sinai, I had ceased to be in touch with the masses: by dint of absorbing myself in my legislative work, I had entirely lost sight of common things. I knew nothing, neither of the situation of the national workshops, nor of the policy of the government, nor of the intrigues that crossed within the Assembly. It is necessary to have lived in this voting booth that is called a National Assembly, to conceive how the men who are most completely ignorant of the state of a country are almost always those who represent it. I had begun to read everything that the distribution office gives to the representatives, proposals, reports, brochures, up to the *Moniteur* and the *Bulletin des Lois*. Most of my colleagues on the left and the extreme left were in the same perplexity of mind, in the same ignorance of daily facts. People spoke of the national workshops only with a sort of dread; for the fear of the people is the evil of all those who belong to authority; the people, for the power, are the enemy. Every day we voted for new subsidies for the national workshops, shuddering at the incapacity of the power and at our own impotence.

A disastrous apprenticeship! The effect of this representative mess in which I had to live was that I had no intelligence for anything; that on the 23rd, when Flocon declared in the open gallery that the movement was led by political factions or bribed from abroad, I let myself be taken in by this ministerial duck; and that on the 24th I asked again if the insurrection really had as its motive the dissolution of the national workshops!!! No, Monsieur Senard, I was not a coward in June, as you threw the insult at me in the face of the Assembly; I was like you and like so many others, a fool. I failed, through parliamentary stupor, in my duty as a representative. I was there to see, and I did not see; to sound the alarm, and I didn't shout! I acted like the dog that does not bark in the presence of the enemy. I, an elected representative of the plebs, a journalist of the proletariat, should not have left this mass without direction and without advice: 100,000 enlisted men deserved that I take care of them. It would have been better than languishing in your offices. I have since done what I could to repair my irreparable fault; I was not always fortunate; I have often been wrong: my conscience no longer blames me for anything.

NOTE 7. — Five months after the days of June, an intrigue, formed within the party called honest and moderate Republican, tried to throw on General Cavaignac alone the entire responsibility for the civil war. If the general, it was said, in acceding to the warnings and entreaties of the executive commission, had summoned the troops demanded of him sooner and in greater numbers; if, from the first day, he had launched his soldiers on the barricades instead of letting the insurrection develop freely, things would have happened in another way, and Paris would not have been delivered, for four days, to the horrors of civil war.

It was concluded in a whisper that the riot had been favored, the massacre prepared, organized by General Cavaignac, in connivance with MM. Senart and Marrast, with the aim of seizing the government between them, and forming a triumvirate.

These rumors gave rise, on November 25, 1848, to a solemn discussion of the Constituent Assembly, which, on the motion of Dupont (de l'Eure), declared that General Cavaignac had deserved well of the fatherland. But the blow was struck; the extreme left, which the circumstances in which the accusation arose, the memory of the facts, the loyalty with which General Cavaignac had handed over power, should have kept them on their guard against such gossip, welcomed them with avidity; and General Cavaignac, whose explanations were not as peremptory as one might have hoped, given that in his position all recrimination was forbidden to him, General Cavaignac, the victor of June, remained the scapegoat.

We, whom no coterie interest, no personal grievance, no rivalry of ambition animates, we can tell the truth.

Yes, there was provocation, machination, conspiracy, against the Republic, in June 1848: the facts that we have related, and which are all authentic, prove it. The national workshops were the pretext for this; the dissolution of these workshops served as a signal.

But, in this plot, everyone was involved, directly or indirectly, with premeditation or without premeditation: first, the Legitimists, the Orleanists, the Bonapartists, whose orators led the Assembly and public opinion, while their agents were rioting; in the second place, the moderate republicans, among whom must be reckoned MM. Arago, Garnier-Pagès, Duclerc, Pagnerre, etc., all of whom played an active role in the repression; finally the Mountain, whose inertia in these deplorable moments deserves in the highest degree the blame of history.

Undoubtedly, General Cavaignac had his share in the intrigues that were agitated within the Assembly, within and below the Executive Commission. But to make him the leader of a plot, and again out of ambition, he who never dreamed of getting rid, when he could, of the competition of Louis Bonaparte, is to suppose in him gratuitously, *beforehand*, ideas that his sudden elevation would not make him even conceive *afterwards*.

General Cavaignac was the instrument of an anonymous and, so to speak, headless reaction, formed against the Socialist Republic by the hostility of some, the inertia of others, the fear and madness of all. As for the general's much-incriminated strategic dispositions, I will say, without being the judge, that it is not up to the *reds* to criticize them; that to reproach Cavaignac for having lacked energy and speed in suppressing the riot is to show solidarity, from another point of view, with the provocation, by approving the recall of the troops against which the People protested; finally, that if the non-bloody victories of General Changarnier on January 29 and June 13, 1849 seem to accuse the capacity of General Cavaignac, we should not make too little of the strength and courage of the insurgents of June 1848. By accusing General Cavaignac, we end up slandering the insurrection and pouring contempt on all the great popular days, from July 14, 1789 to February 24, 1848.

XI .

WHO AM I?

Thus the Democracy was consuming itself, in pursuit of this power that its aim was precisely to annihilate by distributing it. All the fractions of the party had fallen one after the other: the Executive Commission dismissed, we were up to the Republicans of the next day, we were touching on the doctrinaires. If we did not succeed in averting this retreat, or at least in confining it within the constitutional circle, the Republic was in danger, but for that it was necessary to change tack. It was necessary to establish ourselves in opposition, to put the power on the defensive, to enlarge the field of battle, to simplify, by generalizing it, the social question; to surprise the enemy through the audacity of the proposals, to act henceforth on the people rather than on their representatives, to oppose bluntly to the blind passions of reaction the philosophical and revolutionary idea of February. A party would not have lent itself to this tactic; it demanded a resolute, even eccentric individuality, a soul tempered with protest and negation. From pride or vertigo, I believed that my turn had come. It is up to me, I told myself, to throw myself into the whirlwind. The democrats, seduced by the memories of our glorious revolution, wanted to repeat in 1848 the drama of 1789: while they play comedy, let us try to make history. The Republic is only going to I tell myself, to throw myself into the whirlpool. The democrats, seduced by the memories of our glorious revolution, wanted to repeat in 1848 the drama of 1789: while they play comedy, let us try to make history. The Republic will only go forward under the guardianship of God. While blind force drives the power in one direction, can't we move society forward in another? The direction of minds being changed, the result would be that the government, continuing to react, would then, without suspecting it, make a revolution... And from my seat as a spectator, I rushed, a new actor, onstage.

My name for eighteen months has made enough noise for me to be forgiven for providing here some explanations, some excuses for my sad celebrity. Good or bad, I had my share of influence on the destinies of my country: who knows what this influence, more powerful today by the compression itself, can still produce? It is therefore important that my contemporaries know what I wanted, what I did, what I am. I am not boasting: I would only be flattered if my readers remained convinced, after reading, that there is neither madness nor fury in my act. The only vanity that ever held my heart was to believe that no man had acted in all his life with more premeditation, more reflection, more discernment than I have done.⁹ Perhaps the history of my meditations, inseparable from that of my acts, will not be without profit for those who, whatever their opinions, like to seek in experience the justification of their ideas: for the freethinkers, who

⁹ 1. See above, § X.

recognize no authority in human affairs except that of pure reason; for the believers, who love to rest their conscience on the soft pillow of faith; for the men, finally, of action, who, before engaging in a political career, would be curious to know where a rigorous mind can be led by the impartial demonstrations and the disinterested principles of science.

I have nothing to say about my private life: it does not concern others. I've always had little taste for autobiographies, and don't care about anyone's business. History itself and the novel have no attraction for me except insofar as I find there, as in our immortal revolution, the adventures of the idea.

My public life began in 1837, in the midst of Phillipist corruption.

The Academy of Besançon had to award the three-year pension, bequeathed by Mr. Suard, secretary of the French Academy, to young Franc-Comtois without fortune who are destined for a career in letters or sciences. I joined the ranks. In the memoir that I addressed to the Academy, and which exists in its archives, I said to it:

“Born and brought up in the bosom of the working class, still belonging to it by heart and affections, above all by the community of sufferings and wishes, my greatest joy, if I obtained the votes of the Academy, would be to work tirelessly, through philosophy and science, with all the energy of my will and all the powers of my mind, for the physical, moral and intellectual improvement of those whom I like to call my brothers and my companions; to be able to scatter among them the seeds of a doctrine that I regard as the law of the moral world, and, while awaiting the success of my efforts, to find myself already, gentlemen, as their representative with regard to you.”

My protest, as you can see, dates back a long time. I was still young and full of faith when I took my vows. My fellow citizens will say if I was faithful to it. My socialism received the baptism of a learned company; I had for sponsors an academy; and if my vocation, long since decided, had been able to waver, the encouragement that I then received from my honorable compatriots would have confirmed it irrevocably.

I immediately set to work. I did not ask for enlightenment from the socialist schools that existed at that time, which were already beginning to go out of fashion. I left the men of the party and of journalism in the same way, too occupied with their daily struggles to think of the consequences of their own ideas. I didn't know or research the secret societies any better: everyone seemed to me to be as far removed from the goal I was pursuing as the eclectics and the Jesuits.

I began my solitary conspiratorial work with the study of socialist antiquities, necessary, in my opinion, to determine the theoretical and practical law of the movement. These antiquities I first found in the Bible. Speaking to Christians, the Bible had to be the first authority for me. A memoir on the sabbatical institution, considered from the point of view of morality, hygiene, family and civic relations, earned me a bronze medal from my academy. From the faith in which I had been brought up, I therefore rushed, head bowed, into pure reason and already, a singular thing, and a good omen for me, for having made

Moses a philosopher and a socialist, I received applause. If I am now in error, the fault is not mine alone. Was there ever such a seduction?

But I mainly studied in order to realize. I cared little for academic palms; I didn't have the time to become a scholar, let alone a writer or an archaeologist. I immediately approached political economy.

I had taken as a rule of my judgments that any principle that, pushed to its ultimate consequences, would end in a contradiction, must be held to be false and denied; and, if this principle had given rise to an institution, the institution itself had to be considered as factitious, as a utopia.

Armed with this criterion, I chose as a subject of experiment the one that I had found in society as oldest, most respectable, most universal, least controversial: Property. We know what happened to me. After a long, meticulous, and above all impartial analysis, I arrived, like an algebraist led by his equations, at this surprising conclusion: That property, whichever way it is turned, to whichever principle it is related, is... a contradictory idea! And the negation of property taking away that of authority, I immediately deduced from my definition this no less paradoxical corollary: The true form of government is *an-archy*. Finally, finding by a mathematical demonstration that no improvement in the economy of society could happen by the sole power of its primitive constitution, and without the concurrence and the considered will of all; thus recognizing that there was a marked hour in the life of societies when progress, at first thoughtless, demanded the intervention of the free reason of man, I conclude that this force of spontaneous impulse that what we call Providence is not everything in the things of this world. From that moment, without being what is rather unphilosophically called an atheist, I ceased to worship God. — There will come a day when you will worship him, *Le Constitutionnel* said to me one day on this subject. — Perhaps.

Was it clumsiness on my part in handling the dialectical instrument, an illusion produced by this very instrument and inherent in its construction; or rather, was the conclusion that I had just expressed only the first term of a formula that the backward state of society, and consequently of my studies, left incomplete? I did not know it at first, and did not stop to verify it. I believed my work disturbing enough in itself to deserve the attention of the public, and to arouse the solicitude of scholars. I sent my memoir to the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences: the benevolent reception it received, the praise that the recorder, M. Blanqui, thought he should give to the writer, gave me reason to think that the Academy, without taking responsibility for my theory, was satisfied with my work, and I continued my research.

M. Blanqui's observations had not related to the contradiction pointed out by me in the principle of property: a contradiction that consists above all in the fact that, on the one hand, the appropriation of things, by labor or in any other way, leads naturally, necessarily, in the state of economic imperfection in which society has lived up to this day, to the institution of farm rent, rent and interest, as has been perfectly demonstrated by Mr.

Thiers, in his book on *Property*; while on the other hand, farm rent, rent, interest, in a word the price of the loan, is incompatible with the laws of circulation, and tends incessantly to be annihilate. Without going into the substance of the controversy, the learned economist had contented himself with opposing my reasonings with a plea of inadmissibility that would have been decisive, if it had been well-founded. — “As far as property is concerned,” said M. Blanqui, “practice gives the striking lie to theory. It is proven, in fact, that if property is illegitimate in the eyes of philosophical reason, it is in constant progress in social reason. Either the logic must therefore be insufficient and illusory, which, according to philosophers, has been seen more than once; or social reason is mistaken, which is inadmissible.” — If these are not Mr. Blanqui's own words, it is at least their sense.

I established, in a second memoir, that the facts had been badly appreciated by Mr. Blanqui; that the truth was precisely the opposite of what he had thought he saw; that property, which he said was in progress, was, on the contrary, in decline, or, to put it better, in metamorphosis; and that it was so with religion, with the power, and generally with all ideas which, like property, had a positive side and a negative side. We see them in one direction while they already exist and are passing in the other: to have an accurate representation of them, we must change our position, and turn the telescope upside down, so to speak. And, so that nothing was missing from the proof, I gave the economic reason for this phenomenon. On this ground I was sure of the advantage: economists, when it is only a question of science, do not believe in property any more than in government.

In a third memoir addressed to M. Considerant, I reproduced, not without a certain anger, the same conclusions; and I insisted, in the interest of order and the security of the proprietors, on the necessity of reforming the teaching of political economy and right as soon as possible. Dialectics intoxicated me: a certain fanaticism, peculiar to logicians, had gone to my brain, and had made my memoir a pamphlet. The public prosecutor's office of Besançon having thought it necessary to take action against this brochure, I was brought before the Court of Assizes of the department of Doubs, under the quadruple indictment of attack on property, of incitement to contempt of the government, of insult to religion and mores. I did what I could to explain to the jury how, in the present state of mercantile circulation, useful value and exchange value being two immeasurable quantities in perpetual opposition, property is both illogical and unstable, and this is the reason why the workers are increasingly poor, and the owners are less and less wealthy. The jury did not seem to understand much of my demonstration: they said it was scientific matter, therefore beyond its jurisdiction, and rendered in my favor a verdict of acquittal.

While, alone in my school, I was digging the trench in the glaxis of the old political economy; while P. Leroux, Villegardelle, Vidal, and a few others followed, in slightly different directions, this learned march of demolition, what were the organs of the democracy doing? What were they doing? Alas! Let them allow me to remind them, so that the Socialists do not bear sole responsibility for the misfortunes of the Republic: they

gave themselves up to their parliamentary concerns; stubbornly disregarding, for fear of frightening their subscribers, social questions, they prepared the mystification of February; they organized by this voluntary negligence the *national workshops*; they kept track of the decrees of the provisional government, and laid, without knowing it, the foundations of an *honest* and *moderate* republic. The *National*, — I am no longer angry with it, — cursing socialism, had the fortifications of Paris passed; the *Réforme*, strong in its good intentions, stuck to universal suffrage and the governmentalism of Louis Blanc. Utopia was allowed to grow, when it had to be uprooted; they disdained the schools that were one day to set the country ablaze, and, by their aspirations to power, to demote the Republic. It took no less than the experience of February to convince our statesmen that a revolution neither stops nor is improvised: I would not respond, however, that they are still to accuse, with Mr. Lamartine, socialism for their rout. What a pity, in truth, for the glory of these gentlemen, that the people, after having relinquished their powers into their hands, thought it their duty to ask them for a deposit!

However, it is not enough for criticism to demolish, it must affirm and reconstruct. Without this, socialism would remain an object of pure curiosity, alarming for the bourgeoisie, and useless for the people. That's what I told myself every day: I didn't need the warnings of the utopians for that, any more than those of the conservatives.

Here, the method that had been used to construct, became powerless to edify. The process by which the mind affirms is not the same as that by which it denies: it was necessary, before building, to get out of the contradiction, and create a method of revolutionary invention, a philosophy, no longer negative, but, to borrow the language of M. Auguste Comte, *positive*. Society alone, the collective being, can, without fear of an absolute and immediate error, follow its instinct and abandon itself to its free will; the superior reason that is in it, which emerges little by little through the manifestations of the multitude and the reflection of individuals, always brings it back to the straight path. But the philosopher is incapable of discovering the truth by intuition; and if it is society itself that he proposes to direct, he runs the risk of putting his own views, which are always faulty, in the place of the eternal laws of order, and of pushing society into the abyss.

He needs a guide: but what can this guide be, if not the law of development, the immanent logic of humanity itself? Holding in one hand the thread of ideas, and in the other that of history, I must, I imagined, penetrate the intimate thought of society; I became a prophet without ceasing to be a philosopher.

So here I was beginning, under the title of *Creation of Order in Humanity*, a new series of studies, the most abstruse in which human intelligence can indulge, but, in the situation in which I found myself, absolutely indispensable. The work that I published on this occasion, although I have very little to retract from it, does not satisfy me: also, in spite of a second edition, it seems to me to have obtained rather little esteem from the

public, and this is perhaps justice.¹⁰ This book, a real infernal machine, which was to contain all the instruments of creation and destruction, is badly done, and far below what I could have produced if I had taken the time to choose and arrange my materials. But, I said, I was not working for glory; I was, like everyone at this time, in a hurry to get it over with. The spirit of reform had become in me a spirit of war, and conquerors do not wait. Despite its originality, my work is below mediocre: let that be my punishment!

Still, however defective it may seem today, it was then enough for my purpose. The important thing was that I come to understand myself: as the Contradiction had served me to demolish, the Series had to serve me to edify. My intellectual education was done. The *Creation of Order* had barely seen the light of day, when immediately applying the creative method, I understood that, in order to acquire an understanding of the revolutions of society, the first thing to do was to construct the entire Series of its antinomies, the *System of its contradictions*.

It would be difficult for me to give those who have not read it an idea of this work. However, I will try, using the language, now understood by everyone, of the bookkeeper; for if I managed, in a few lines, to give a clear idea of what I consider to be the true economic method, it is difficult that it would not soon force all convictions.

In my first memoirs, attacking the established order head-on, I said, for example: *Property is theft!* It was a question of protesting, of putting into relief, so to speak, the nothingness of our institutions. I didn't have to worry about anything else then. Also, in the memoir where I demonstrated, by $A + B$, this dizzying proposition, I took care to protest against any communist conclusion.

¹⁰ The part of the *Creation of Order*, to which I attach the most importance, after the serial method, is, of course, the determination of the fundamental *concepts*, or categories. I have returned many times since 1843 to this question, and always I have arrived at the same result. The categories are the forms of reason, no doubt: but it seems to me very difficult not to admit, according to Kant himself, that these forms are *given*, and not just *suggested* by nature. First they all suppose a *subject* and an *object*, proper, the first to receive them, the second to give birth to them. They are not the product of a reflection, like the image in the mirror, nor of an impression like that of the seal on the wax; nor are they innate, since before being in contact with the world, man does not think. To say that they are *suggested* to the mind, on the occasion of the perceptions it receives of sensible things, is a pure equivocation: what is this suggestion?...

For me, the concepts or categories of pure reason are to the mind what *liquidity*, *solidity*, *gaseousness*, *elasticity*, etc., are to matter. These forms, or primitive qualities of bodies, are ESSENTIAL, although not innate or inherent. They are due to the presence or absence of caloric, which does not prevent the physicist from conceiving them in bodies, independent of the existence of caloric. All the same, the ideas of *time* and *space*, of *substance* and *cause*, are conceived by the mind, in the presence of nature, and become essential to reason, to such an extent that it is can longer disregard them, even though, by hypothesis, it would have destroyed nature; but they are not originally in reason, since separated from nature, reason itself does not exist.

In the *System of Economic Contradictions*, after having recalled and confirmed my first definition, I added one entirely contrary, but founded on considerations of another order, which could neither destroy the first argument nor be destroyed by it: *property is liberty*. Property is theft; property is liberty: these two propositions are equally demonstrated and subsist side by side in the *System of Contradictions*. I operate in the same way, on each of the economic categories, the *Division of Labor*, *Competition*, the *State*, *Credit*, *Community*, etc., showing in turn how each of these ideas, and consequently how the institutions they engender, have a positive side and a negative side; how they give rise to a double series of diametrically opposed results: and I always conclude that an agreement, conciliation or synthesis is necessary. Property therefore appeared here, with the other economic categories, with its *raison d'être* and its reason for *non-being*, that is to say, as a two-sided element of the economic and social system.

Thus exhibited, it seemed sophistical, contradictory, tainted with equivocation and bad faith. I am going to try to make it more intelligible, by taking property as an example.

Property, considered in the ensemble of social institutions, has, so to speak, two open accounts: one is that of the goods it procures, which flow directly from its essence; the other is that of the inconveniences that it produces, of the *expenses* which it costs, which result, like the goods, directly also from its nature.

The same is true for competition, monopoly, the state, etc.

In property, as in all economic elements, the evil or abuse is inseparable from the good, just as, in double-entry bookkeeping, *debit* is inseparable from the *credit*. One necessarily engenders the other. To want to suppress the abuses of property is to destroy property itself, just as deleting an item on the debit side of an account is destroying it on the credit side. All that it is possible to do against the abuses or inconveniences of property is to merge, synthesize, organize or balance them with a contrary element, which is to it what the creditor is to the debtor, the shareholder to the general partner, etc. (such will be, for example, *Community*); so that, without the two principles altering or destroying each other mutually, the good of one comes to cover the evil of the other, as in a balance sheet the parts, after having been reciprocally settled, lead to a end result that is either all loss or all profit.

The solution of the problem of poverty therefore consists in raising to a higher expression the science of the accountant, in assembling the accounts of society, in establishing the *assets* and the *liabilities* of each institution, taking as general accounts or divisions of the social ledger, no longer the terms of ordinary accounting, *Capital*, *Cash*, *General Merchandise*, *Drafts and remittances*, etc., but those of philosophy, legislation and politics: *Competition* and *Monopoly*, *Property* and *Community*, *Citizen* and *State*, *Man* and *God*, etc. — Finally, and to complete my comparison, it is necessary to keep the accounts

up to date, that is to say, to determine with precision the rights and the duties, so as to be able, at each moment, to note the order or the disorder, and present the BALANCE.¹¹

I have devoted two volumes to explaining the principles of this accounting, which I will call, if you will, transcendent; I have recalled a hundred times, since February, these elementary ideas, common to bookkeeping and to metaphysics. Routine economists laughed in my face; political ideologues politely invited me to write for the people. As for those whose interests I had taken so much to heart, they treated me even worse. The Communists do not forgive me for having criticized community, as if a nation were a great polypary, and as if alongside social right there was no individual right. The proprietors want me dead for having said that property, alone and by itself, is theft; as if property did not derive all of its value (rent) from the circulation of products, and consequently did not come under a fact superior to it, the collective force, the solidarity of labor. The politicians, finally, whatever their banner, are invincibly revolted by *an-archy*, which they take for disorder, as if democracy could be realized otherwise than by the distribution of authority, and as if the true meaning of the word democracy was not the dismissal of the government. These people all look like that horse-dealer who, having hired a clerk to sort out his accounts, thought he was robbed, because he saw the parts arranged in two columns, one *debit*, the other *credit*. "I make all my purchases in cash," he exclaimed! "I owe nothing to anyone, and claim to never owe anything!" — M. Thiers, exposing with his marvelous lucidity the origin and development of property, without wishing to hear of its corruptibility and its decadence, is the counterpart of this horse-dealer. This does not prevent M. Thiers from being today the savior of the family and of property. As a reward for his economic science, he will soon be a minister, while I, poor verifier of accounts, am a public plague, and they put me in prison. Between community and property, do not put your finger!...

The System of Economic Contradictions or LEDGER of mores and institutions, regardless of the number of books, general accounts or categories, is the true system of society, not as it develops historically and in the order of generations, but in what is necessary. and eternal. As in an industrial enterprise, new relations give rise every day to new accounts, and incessantly modify the internal organization of work, the distribution of workers and employees, the use of machines, etc.; thus, in society, new insights, great discoveries, incessantly produce new mores and modify the general economy. But just as, in any commercial or industrial society, the principles of accountancy, the general system of accounts is invariable; as the books are the representation of operations, the observatory from which the manager directs the whole course of business: similarly, in society, the theory of antinomies is both the representation and the basis of all movement. Mores and institutions can vary from people to people, just as craftsmanship and mechanics vary

¹¹ See *The General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century*, where the author gives an overview of this organization of economic forces.

from century to century, from city to city: the laws that govern their development are inflexible like algebra. Wherever there are men grouped by labor; wherever the idea of market value has taken root, where by the separation of industries, there is a circulation of values and products: there, on pain of disturbance, deficit, bankruptcy of society towards itself, on pain of misery and proletariat, the antinomic forces of society, inherent in any deployment of collective activity, as in any individual reason, must be kept in constant balance; and the antagonism, perpetually reproduced by the fundamental opposition of society and individuality, must be perpetually reduced to synthesis.

People were scandalized to see figure in this system, in opposition to one another, God and man; they found it strange that I wanted to establish, as I had done for property and community, the accounts of human Liberty and of a hypothetical Providence; tartufes have cried atheism and sacrilege. And yet this part of the *Contradictions* is nothing other than Catholicism explained by philosophy, reality substituted for symbol.

What is Catholicism? The *mystical* system of relations between God and Humanity. The theory of contradictions abolishes this mysticism: it makes theology the *positive* science of the relationship between the Creator, or nature, mother of all beings, *alma parens rerum natura*, and man, its highest expression, consequently its antithesis.

Creation, considered in its spiritual manifestations, appears in a double flight, as instinct and reason. What characterizes instinct is promptness, intuition, spontaneity, infallibility; what distinguishes reason is memory, reflection, imagination, reasoning, *error* or vagrancy of thought, progress. The first is properly speaking the form of intelligence in nature; the second is the form of intelligence in man.

It is in human society that instinct and reason, manifesting themselves in parallel, rise at the same time to the highest degree. Humanity and Divinity, in the social Person, are united, but at first antagonistic. The manifestations of instinct constitute the government of God or providence; the manifestations of philosophy, the reign of liberty. Religions, empires, poetry and ancient monuments are creations of social spontaneity, which reason revises and rejuvenates indefinitely.

But, in society and in the individual, reason always wins over instinct, reflection over spontaneity: this is the characteristic of our species and what constitutes progress in us. It follows from this that Nature in us seems to recede, while Reason arrives; in other words, God is leaving, Humanity is coming.

Man first worshipped himself as God or Nature; he began in Jesus Christ to worship himself as Humanity. The religious movement has gone from heaven to earth: but liberty must gradually abolish all idolatry, and man, by asserting himself more and more in the place of God, worship himself that much less as comes to know himself better.

I do not find it at all bad that this philosophy is rejected: what does it matter to me? Am I so anxious to have disciples? But let it be made, under the pretext of atheism, a means of counter-revolution, that is what I forbid to all the cockroaches, papists and neo-Christians, on pain of reprisals. We are stronger than you, gentlemen: beware!

I had published, as early as 1846, the *antinomic* part of this system; I was working on the *synthesis*, when the February Revolution broke out. I was careful, as you can imagine, of throwing myself into this politico-socialist mess where M. de Lamartine translated into poetic prose the commonplaces of diplomacy; where there was talk of successively putting into associations all commerce, all industry and soon all agriculture; talk of buying back all the properties, and of exploiting them administratively; of centralizing capitals and capacities in the hands of the state; then of bringing to the peoples of Europe, at the head of our triumphant armies, this governmental system. I thought it more useful to continue my laborious studies in retirement, convinced that it was the only way I had to serve the Revolution, and of course that neither the Provisional Government nor the neo-Jacobins would get ahead of me.

The first two installments of this new work appeared towards the end of March. It was barely noticed by the Democrats. I was little known, and my debut must not have pleased them. Could they be interested in a pamphlet whose author believed himself obliged to demonstrate, by the highest considerations of public right and history, the legitimacy of the Revolution, and then advised those in power to abstain from any reform initiative? What's the point! did they think, of giving rise to such a controversy? Isn't the democracy sovereign? Doesn't the Provisional Government make itself obeyed? Does it take so much reasoning to convince those who are subjugated by the *fait accompli*! The Republic is like the sun: blind is the man who denies it!

Well! What do those powerful then say about it today? Is it clear now that the sovereignty of the people, alone capable of legitimizing a revolution, is neither that brutal violence that devastates palaces, sets fire to castles; nor that fanatical drive that, after having made a March 17, an April 16, and a May 15, culminates its blunders with a December 10; nor the alternative oppression of majorities by minorities, of minorities by majorities? Where then is the sovereignty, the reason of the people? The Constitution consecrates its own revision; all the parties are preparing to carry out this revision in the direction of their interests. Show me, in this conflict of ideas, the will, the true will of the country?

Was I then wrong to say to these makers of decrees:

"Oh! great politicians, you shake your fist at capital, and there you are, prostrate before the hundred-sou piece! You want to exterminate the *Jews, kings of the era*, and you love (swearing, it is true!) the Golden Calf! You say, or allow yourself to be told, that the State is going to seize the railways, the canals, the inland waterways, the haulage, the mines, the salts; that no more taxes will be established except on the rich, sumptuary tax, progressive tax, tax on servants, horses, carriages and all expensive objects; that one will reduce, with the number of the employments, the figure of the wages, the rents, the property. You provoke the depreciation of all financial, industrial and real estate values; you dry up the source of all income; you freeze the blood in the veins in commerce, in industry, and then you conjure cash to circulate; you beg the frightened rich not to keep it. Believe me,

citizen dictators, if this is all your science, hasten to reconcile with the Jews; renounce these demonstrations of terrorism that make capital run after the revolution like dogs after police officers. Return to this conservative *status quo* beyond which you see nothing, and which you should never have left; because, in the equivocal situation in which you are, you can refrain from touching property; and, if you lay your hands on property, you are lost. Everyone already has one foot in bankruptcy...

“... No, you don't understand anything about the Revolution. You know neither its principle, nor its logic, nor its justice; you don't speak its language. What you take for the voice of the people is only the roar of the multitude, ignorant like you of the thoughts of the people. Repress these clamors that invade you. Respect for people, tolerance for opinions, but disdain for the sects which crawl at your feet and advise you only in order to compromise you better. Sects are the vipers of the Revolution: the people belong to no sect. Abstain as much as you can from requisitions, confiscations, above all from legislation, and be sober from depositions! Keep the store of the Republic intact, and let the light shine on its own. You will have deserved well of the homeland.”

I did not, after the days of June, protest against the abuse that ignoramuses could have made of some of my aphorisms, and renounce my popular inclinations; I did not insult the expiring lion. But neither did I wait until the days of June to attack governmental tendencies, and manifest my sentiments of intelligent conservation. I have always had, I will eternally have the power against me. Is this the tactic of an ambitious man and a coward?

Elsewhere, taking stock of power, I proved that a governmental democracy is only a reversed monarchy; I demonstrated that it would cost more than the monarchy, according to this principle of elementary economy, that the condition in which the product, with regard to the expense, is the greatest possible, is that in which the producer acts alone and without the assistance of any worker or employee; and reciprocally, that in any enterprise liable to expand, the general expenses grow more rapidly than the product and the profit.

“Democracy is the idea of the state extended to infinity: it is the union of all the agricultural holdings into a single agricultural holding, of all the industrial enterprises into a single industrial enterprise, of all the commercial houses in a single trading house, of all sponsorships in a single sponsorship. It is, therefore, not the infinite decrease in general expenses, as it must have been under the Republic, but the infinite increase in general expenses. Organization by the State, pushed to its limits, would therefore have this definitive result: while the national expenditure would be like 12, the receipts would be like 6.”

Certainly, it was not timeliness that was lacking in my publication: but my ideas made the mistake of running counter to prejudice. The fatal error of socialism has been until now to believe that the sum of the costs, compared to the product, decreases in proportion as the operations increase, and as one brings into the workshop a greater number of professions and individuals. It is on this that we have built all the plans for community,

association, and organization of labor by the State. On the contrary, I maintained, on the one hand, that if all the trades, manufactures, etc., could be carried on by workers independent of each other, the total sum of the overheads in the country would be zero, and that if, on the contrary, one formed of all the industries, professions, arts, etc., a single exploitation, the sum of these same costs would exceed that of the products by 100 per cent. Obviously only a madman would advance such enormities. My pamphlet had no common sense. This man, they said, has acrid blood; he must demolish everything, property, community, monarchy and democracy, God and the devil. He is not even satisfied with himself!...

Happy, thrice happy are those who can be content with themselves! I had the patience, for six months, to listen to the financiers of the Constituent Assembly declaim against the system of organization of labor by the State; I have not seen a single one make the observation that I have just indicated, and which I had presented, as early as the month of March, to my blind co-religionists.

Impatience winning within me, I decided to suspend my publication, and to summarize, in a booklet of forty pages, my ideas on *Credit*. It was there that I proposed, for the first time, and in an affirmative way, to bring about the Revolution from *below*, by appealing to the reason and interest of each citizen, and by demanding of the power only the notoriety and the impetus that it alone, today, is capable of giving to an idea. Instead of a system, I brought a simple, practical, legal formula, justified by a thousand examples, which only needed to make its way, to be generalized and brought to light.

It is clear that I could not be understood. My project was nothing less than a declaration of forfeiture for the power. I was proposing to create a precedent which, if successful, would have resulted in the gradual abolition of the entire machinery of government. The State was no longer anything, the State, with its army of 500,000 men, with its 600,000 employees, with its budget of two billion! It was monstrous, unbelievable. Demagogy was in power, socialism itself was represented there. Could it be that with all the forces of the Republic, with the support of the workers and the humble submission of the bourgeois, the Provisional Government, such devoted citizens, such pure patriots, would achieve just nothing? That the three months of misery granted by the people would pass without fruit? That all wanting the good, all would be powerless to produce it? That, on the contrary, in order to prevent each other from doing evil, they would destroy each other one after the other? Could it be that, having the ear of the people, they would let them commit the enormous fault of May 15? That in June they could only respond to the 100,000 men of the national workshops with gunshots? that a Constitution full of ambiguities would be voted in spite of them, almost without them? That in December, a nephew of the Emperor, without rank, without title, without fortune, would have himself elected President of the Republic, by a majority of five and a half million, against the Ledru-Rollins, the Cavaignacs, the Lamartines? No, no! I was a

utopian, a rebellious, a malcontent. It was necessary to keep intact the power, which the people had conquered in February, and to use it for their happiness,

Then came the April elections. I had the fancy to put myself forward as a candidate. In the circular that I addressed to the voters of Doubs, under the date of April 3, 1848, I said:

“The social question is posed: you will not escape it. To solve it, men are needed who unite the extreme of the radical spirit with the extreme of the conservative spirit. Workers, reach out to your bosses; and you, bosses, do not reject the advance of those who were your employees.”

When I spoke thus, the democratic influence was still in full force. I did not wait for a reversal of fortune to preach, as the goal and meaning of socialism, universal reconciliation.

April 16 came to nullify my candidacy. After this deplorable day, no one wanted to hear any more talk of *extreme radicalism*; they preferred to compromise everything by throwing themselves into *extreme conservation*. I would like to know from my honored compatriots what they think they have gained to listen to their selfish prevention? What has the happy medium of the Constituent Assembly produced? What will legislative absolutism produce? Our *Montagnards* are turning red; In two years, the peasants will cry, from one end of Catholic and monarchical Franche-Comté to the other: *Long live the democratic and social Republic!*

Ousted candidate, publicist without readers, I had to fall back on the press. People tell me every day: Make books, that's better than newspapers. I agree: but books, we don't read them; and while the author of the *Positive Philosophy*, M. Auguste Comte, scarcely unites at his courts two hundred faithful, the *Faubourien*, the *Père Duchene*, and the *Vraie République* lead the country. You spend ten years of your life writing your in-octavo; fifty enthusiasts buy it, then comes the journalist who throws you into his cart, and that is that. Books no longer serve anything but the apprenticeship of the journalist: the highest genre in literature, in our century, is the *premier-Paris*, the *feuilleton*.

The days of March 17 and April 16, the unfortunate affairs of Risquons-Tout and Kehl, the agitation produced in the departments by the dispatch of the commissioners, the meaningless declamations of the clubs, etc., etc., had enlightened on the retrospective tendencies of the revolutionaries of February. To combat these plagiarisms of Jacobinism, to bring the Revolution back on its true course, was the principal object of *Le Représentant du Peuple*. We endeavored above all, my collaborators and I, to make it understood that the properties being no longer independent, precisely thanks to the separation of industries, and deriving all their value from circulation, present-day France, although richer, could not, like the old one, endure ten years of a revolutionary state; that the February Revolution did not look at all like that of 89-92; that it was necessary to abandon the old wanderings, to put aside utopias, and get into the positive aspects of questions as quickly as possible. Useless effort! The *Représentant du Peuple* achieved success only in the realm of

esteem: it conquered its place in the sun of publicity, but, whatever it had foreseen, it did not have the credit of obtaining anything, of preventing anything.

It was around this time that I came into contact with M. de Girardin. This eminent writer will not deny me, especially today when his theory of taxation establishes so many points in common between us: he approved of my ideas on credit, but, following his inclinations as a statesman, and expecting nothing but authority, he refused any initiative coming from the people. — *One hour of power*, he said, *is better than ten years of journalism*. These words reveal the secret of M. de Girardin's politics and of his oscillations.

From the point of view of his administrative and financial theories, M. de Girardin is a pure socialist: one would even say that he borrowed from Pierre Leroux the idea of his triune ministry. For M. de Girardin, the economic question is everything, politics very little. While he sets great store by government, he is skeptical of the form: he cares little for the sovereignty of the people or divine right, so long as the result is government doing the business of the nation. But this political indifference does not alter in M. de Girardin the governmental spirit: in this respect, he goes hand in hand with communism as well as with the doctrine. Also, since he does not seek what general reason wants, but only what seems the most probable and the best as an initiative of the power, as all his solutions are recipes, and as the data of the problem constantly change, it happens despite the prudence and subtlety of the writer, that he always falls into some contradiction, either with the facts, or with the opinion of the day, or with himself.

I thought for a moment, after the election of December 10, that M. de Girardin, arriving with his protegee in business, was going to give us a brilliant demonstration of his governmental theory, which, at bottom, is only the communitarian theory. Why did Louis Bonaparte not make M. de Girardin minister of finance? The revolution would have been started *from above*; M. de Girardin would have accomplished what Blanqui, Barbès, Louis Blanc wanted, what the national workshops supposed. Why, I say, today even more than under the ministry of M. Guizot, does M. de Girardin find himself the antagonist of the power? Alas! It is because Mr. de Girardin is a man of revolutionary ideas, and because MM. Thiers, Barrot, Falloux, Changarnier, etc., wanted no more revolution for the government of December 20 than the Provisional Government and the Executive Commission had wanted for themselves, than Louis-Philippe and Charles X had wanted. It is because the bourgeois, no more than the peasant and the worker, does not want to be revolutionized.¹²

¹² Since the publication of the *Confessions*, the ideas of M. de Girardin seem to have changed profoundly. Clinging more each day to the theory of unlimited freedom, he gradually forgets power; already he has even met with MM. Ledru-Rollin and Considerant on a terrain bordering *anarchy*. The day is not far off, perhaps, when all the forces of democracy will find themselves united under the same anti-political profession of faith. — (July 1851).

When I think of everything that I have said, written, published over the past ten years on the role of the state in society, on the subordination of power and the revolutionary incapacity of government, I am tempted to believe that my election in June 1848 was the result of a mistake on the part of the people. These ideas date back for me from the time of my first meditations; they are contemporaneous with my vocation in Socialism. Study and experience have developed them; they have constantly directed me in my writings and my conduct; they inspired all of the acts of which I am going to give an account: it is strange that after the guarantee that they present, which is the highest that an innovator can offer, I could appear for a single moment, to the Society that I take as a judge and to the the Power which I do not want, a formidable agitator.

XII.
JULY 31 :

NEW MANIFESTATION OF SOCIALISM.

I resume my narrative at the point where I left it before this digression.

The insurrection vanquished, the dictator general Cavaignac hastened to put down the powers that had been entrusted to him. The National Assembly maintained the state of siege, appointed the general president of the council and head of the executive power, and charged him with putting together a ministry. The socialist newspapers were suspended: the *Représentant du peuple* was at first spared; but as, instead of crying out with the Brennus of reaction: *Woe to the vanquished!* it takes it into his head to come to their defense, it does not take long to suffer the fate of its colleagues. Councils of war seize the unfortunates whom the shooting has spared. A few men from the day before, such as Bastide, Marie, Vaulabelle, are preserved. But the color of the government soon fades; the coming to power of MM. Senard, Vivien, Dufaure announce that the Republicans of the day before are definitely succeeding the Republicans of the next day.

It was the logical, I almost said the legitimate consequence of the victory of *Order*. The left nonetheless protests against this restoration of a politics that was believed to be forever buried under the cobblestones of February. Couldn't the parties therefore put more frankness into their strategy? To reproach an adversary for pursuing the fruit of his success is to forbid the victorious general from profiting from the victory. Since, thanks to governmental fanaticism, civilization is, like barbarism, a state of war, there is no legislation, constitution, theory, experiment that holds: as long as we fight for power, the victors will not lack pretexts for oppressing the vanquished: statesmen will find reasons to deny their principles, and everyone will always be right. — I am defeated, kill me, said Barbès to his judges, after the coup de main of May 12, 1839. It is just what the Mountain would have to respond, in August 1848, to Cavaignac and, in July 1848, to Louis Bonaparte. — We are defeated, make use of your fortune, and do not dispute. Just remember that there are returns to things here below, and that when the occasion arises we will do as you do!

It was against this brutal fatalism, which endlessly spins society in a circle of disappointment and violence, that I was determined to fight. The task was immense. What would be my plan of operations?

We must, I told myself, turn the counter-revolution itself to the advantage of the Revolution, by pushing it to its climax, and exhausting it with fear and fatigue.

We must teach the victors of June that they have not *finished*, as they suppose; that nothing has even begun, and that the only fruit they have reaped from their victory is an increase in difficulties.

We must raise the morale of the workers, avenge the June insurrection for the slanders of the reaction; pose, with redoubled energy, with a kind of terrorism, the social question; expand it further, making it traditional and European; consolidate the Revolution, by forcing the conservatives to practice democracy themselves for the defense of their privileges, and by this means casting monarchy on a secondary level.

It is necessary to defeat the power, by asking nothing of it, to prove the parasitism of capital, by supplementing it with credit; to establish the liberty of individuals, by organizing the initiative of the masses.

In a word, we need a deuterosis of the revolutionary idea, a new manifestation of socialism.

God forbid that I wanted to increase my role! I tell you my dreams. I know how little the thought of a man weighs in the resolutions of society; I myself am living proof of the slowness with which the idea penetrates the masses. But, by following the story of my socialist meditations with that of my political acts, I am only continuing the same story, the story of a thinker drawn in spite of himself into the somnambulism of his nation. And besides, to pass from speculation to action is not to change roles: to act is always to think; to say is to do, *dictum factum*. There is no difference in my eyes between the author who meditates, the legislator who proposes, the journalist who writes, and the statesman who executes. This is why I ask permission to talk about what I have done, as if I were still talking about what I wrote: my conduct and my ideas having no object but the Revolution, it will always be talk about the Revolution.

So then, I continued, as the State, by the nature of its principle, is counter-revolutionary; as the only legitimate initiative is that of the citizen, and as the right of proposal belongs to all, let us propose something, not to the government, as it would reject it, but to the National Assembly, but to the country. Let us reveal to society, if possible, one of its latent ideas; let us show it, as in a mirror, something of its own consciousness. At first it will recoil in terror; it will deny itself, curse itself: that is to be expected. Each time humanity acquires a higher revelation of itself, it is horrified. Of course, this horror, these curses of society are addressed, not to itself, but to the revealers. But what does it matter? If we were at leisure, we could have recourse to oratorical precautions, draw out the idea at length, appeal to candid minds for it; we would conceal, we would disguise the dreadful paradox as well as we could. But time is running out: *we must end it!* Crude truth is the best here, homeopathic medication the only rational one. Scandal and hatred will produce the same effect as adoration and love. And what is hatred? Still love. Apart from the person, what does it do to the conscience, to the understanding, that these children take the one who speaks to them for the monster of perdition or for the angel of salvation, if the result is identically the same?

But what to offer? The opportunity did not take long to present itself.

Immediately after the June Days, the *Représentant du peuple* began to tear the bloody veil in which the perpetrators and instigators of the catastrophe sought to wrap

themselves: it took up the cause of the victims against the murderers; at the same time, it threw in economic ideas here and there. In an article on the *term*, dated July 13, an article that led to the suspension of the newspaper, it dared to say that the events accomplished since February constituted for the vast majority of tenants a case of *force majeure*, which they could legitimately avail themselves of to obtain a reduction and an adjournment. The cause of *force majeure*, resulting from the act of the State, was not an invention which was peculiar to the writer: it is found in all the jurists. But the point was from a socialist: the conservatives saw it as an attack on property, and I was reported to the tribune as preaching spoliation and civil war.

It was no longer possible for me to remain silent: from an idea thrown into a newspaper, I made a financial proposal, which was sent, *urgency declared* — we wanted to get it over with! — to the Finance Committee.

What is the Finance Committee?

We then noticed MM. Thiers, Berryer, Duvergier de Hauranne, Léon Faucher, Bastiat, Gouin, Goudchaux, Duclerc, Garnier-Pagès, Ferdinand de Lasteyrie, etc. Pierre Leroux, who had himself registered there at the same time as me, came there once, and never reappeared. — They are imbeciles! he told me. — That was not fair, with regard to the persons; but was profoundly true, with regard to the Committee.

What I reproach the Finance Committee for is that it never knew how to do anything other than point out the articles of the budget; it is that, with all their erudition, the honorable representatives who compose it do less for the arrangement of the public fortune than the clerks of the ministry.

The Finance Committee has never had a theory, either of taxation, or of wages, or of money, or of foreign trade, or of credit and circulation, or of value, or of any of the things that must make up the science of a Finance Committee. The Finance Committee was never able to complete a project to *redesign the billon coins*. To judge from the discussions of the Committee on this subject, one would have to believe that the creation of this species of money was a prodigy of economic genius, which could not have been accomplished without a supernatural influence. The Finance Committee conceives very well the possibility of increasing or decreasing taxes, and, up to a certain point, of varying the types: it will never ask itself the question of reducing taxes, which are the revenue of the state, to a unique form. The unity of taxation, demanded by popular common sense, is for it the philosopher's stone. The Finance Committee is systematically opposed to any innovation in matters of public credit: all circulation paper, whatever the security, is invariably an assignat for it; as if the banknote, whose special pledge is silver, as if silver itself were not an assignat! It would be enough, in fact, to increase tenfold or hundredfold the mass of specie, so that, money being reduced, by its very abundance, to a tenth or a hundredth of its value, the bank-notes immediately lose credit. But it would not be otherwise with 50 billion notes mortgaged on a double or triple value of properties: the properties could retain their value, while the notes would have none. What, then,

constitutes the paper of credit, and what distinguishes it from the assignat? What makes specie itself, accepted in any payment, the sign of all values? The finance committee does not know.

The Finance Committee knows only one thing: to oppose all innovation. Because, as it knows no better the reason for what exists than the reason for what could be, it always seems to it that the world is going to collapse: it is like a man who sees through his body the play of his organs, and who would tremble every moment to see them break. If the Finance Committee had lived in the time of Sesostrius, it would have stopped humanity at Egyptian civilization. Not only does it do nothing; it does not allow others to think, it does not support discussion of the *status quo*, even to preserve it. M. Thiers is the philosopher of this immobility; M. Léon Faucher is its fanatic. The first is content to deny movement; the second would burn, if he could, those who affirm it. M. Thiers, mystified as much as M. Guizot by the February Revolution, perhaps regretting not having immediately rallied to the Republic, has his pride to avenge. M. Léon Faucher, castigated by the socialist rods, renegade of socialism, has his apostasy to expiate, his hatreds to satisfy.

It was before this court that I had to appear and develop my proposal. A strange proposition, it must be admitted, for a finance committee.

Credit, I told them, from the point of view of private relations, is quite simply a *loan*; from the point of view of social relations, it is *mutualism*, an exchange.

From this exchange, circulation is born.

When, in fact, we consider society as a whole, we see that circulation is reduced to the following operation: A certain number of citizens make the advance of the land to society, represented by the farmers: these are the proprietors; — another category of citizens advances capital and cash to the same society, represented by merchants and industrialists: these are the bankers and capitalists; — a third makes to society, represented by the State, the advance or deposit of its savings, which constitutes the public debt: these are the rentiers; — the greatest number, in default of lands, houses, capital or savings, make to society, represented by all the citizens, the advance of its services: these are all the workers.

It is understood that the creditors of society, owners, capitalists, workers, are at the same time, as well as the farmers, the merchants and the State, representatives of society.

Now, it is evident that the society that receives is the same moral being as the society that lends: whence it follows that what the proprietor calls *leasing*, the banker *discounts*, the capitalist *limited*, the usurer *lending*, etc., reduced to a general formula, is exchange, or, as the theologians say, *mutuum*, mutuality. The same operation, considered from the point of view of the private interest and the social interest, takes on a different character in turn: here it is the loan, distinguished according to species; there it is reciprocity, credit.

The movement or transport of values, from one citizen to another, that results from this exchange, is therefore circulation, the great economic function of society. The special conditions to which this exchange gives rise, create, for each species of creditors and

debtors, a particular system of relations, the science of which constitutes, according to the point of view from which it is considered, the domestic economy or the social economy. From the point of view of domestic economy, the owner lends his land in return for *land rent*; the capitalist, his funds, in return for a *rent*; the banker makes the discount, with *interest* deducted; the trader takes a *profit*; the broker, a *commission*, etc. From the point of view of social economy, the services of citizens are only exchanged for each other, according to a rule of proportion, which constitutes their relative value; restraint does not exist.

Is the traffic coming to a halt?

This means that the annuitant, for whatever reason, refuses to advance his funds to the State, and even sells his debts at a loss; — that the banker refuses to discount the values of the merchants; — the capitalist, to sponsor the industrialist and to lend to the laborer; — the trader, to take on goods without guarantee of outlet; — the manufacturer, to produce without orders; — that the owner, uncertain of his income, can no longer sustain his expenses, and that the laborer without work no longer consumes.

To restore this suspended circulation, what is needed? A very simple thing: it is that everyone, by common agreement, and by a public convention, do what they did before with tacit consent, and without realizing it.

Now, this voluntary and reasoned resumption of economic relations can be carried out in a thousand ways, all of which will lead to the same result. The government of July, after the Revolution of 1830, gave an example of this; the *National Workshops Commission*, whose project I reported on the occasion of the June insurrection, furnished another. Here is a third that has the merit of generalizing them all, replacing ordinary rental with a discount.

Let the creditor of the State, instead of granting a new loan, which the State does not ask of him, relinquishes, by way of relief or contribution, 1 percent on his annuities; — let the proprietor, instead of furnishing the agricultural population with new and better land, which is not in his power, remit part of the rent due; — let the banker, instead of receiving at a discount the securities he distrusts, which would be too imprudent for him, reduce his commission and his interest; — let the worker, in order to contribute as far as he is concerned to the general effort, instead of working half an hour more a day, which would perhaps exceed the measure of his strength, leave to the entrepreneur a twentieth of his salary: it is clear that in all these cases the result obtained by the second mode of credit will be the same as that which would have been obtained by the first. The circulation of everything from which each debtor will have obtained discharge from the creditor will increase; and, the exchange of services, instead of being done exclusively according to the principles of the private economy, that is to say with levy, withholding, or interest, will be carried out more from the point of view of the social economy, that is to say without deduction or levy.

As the measure, to arrive at the highest degree of efficiency and justice, must reach all citizens, rentiers, capitalists, owners, civil servants, merchants, manufacturers, workers, etc., without exception, it follows:

1. That, by the generality of the credit given and received, a compensation is established for everyone, and that each contributing to the sacrifice, no one loses anything;
2. That, on the contrary, the more the credit increases, in other words, the more the rent or wages, as much of the capitalists, proprietors and entrepreneurs as of the workers, decreases, the more society, and consequently the individual, is enriched. — Lower wages for the same amount of work, or increased work for the same wages: it is the same thing. Now, the salary figure being the expression of the dividend due to each citizen on the totality of the products, and this totality, as we have just said, being increased, it follows that a general fall in wages is equivalent for each and for all to increase in wealth.

In short, do you want on a given day, on a given signal, the whole nation, obedient like a battalion to the voice of its commander, to produce more, and consequently consume more, or produce less, and consequently consume less? There is no power, dictatorship, or devotion that can work such a miracle. The only way, the unique, but infallible way, is to increase or decrease the price of all products and services.

Let us add that the proposed system, requiring the support and participation of all, thereby implies general conciliation. Citizens learn to act collectively, not to rule and exploit each other. Class hatreds are extinguished in this initiative of the masses, instead of being exalted by the dispute over the power. We unlearn tyranny; we strengthen ourselves, by a fruitful transaction, in liberty.

Such were the principles on which the proposal that I had to develop was conceived. As for the details and the application, they could be modified according to the convenience of the interests. The measurement of the transitions was left to the wisdom of the Assembly.

It was impossible for the financial economists of the committee to understand anything about it. They persisted in judging the affairs of society by the appearances of private relations, not conceiving that economic phenomena, looked upon from above, are exactly the reverse of what they seem, seen from below. — You will never make us understand, said M. Thiers, how the more the proprietor gives up his income, the more he earns, and how the more the laborer loses his salary, the richer he becomes! — No doubt, I answered; as long as you refuse to balance what he pays with one hand and what he has to receive with the other! — They had decided to deny, and they denied it. They quibbled over figures; they quibbled over the third and the quarter, as if, in a proposition of this nature, which had for its object to introduce into the public economy a new principle, to make society conscious of its operations instead of abandoning it passively to its patriarchal routine, the figures had not been the least essential thing. It was no use saying that this was neither an income tax nor a progressive tax; that in my eyes the income tax was either a lie or a chimera, and that it was to escape it that I proposed a law of *exception*, by

which each was to make, for three years, a slight sacrifice on his salary or income, the general situation being saved and the public fortune increased, it would be easy to plan for the future. They accused me of preaching theft, they said that I wanted to *take* a third of its income from property. In short, my proposal was declared scandalous, immoral, absurd, detrimental to religion, to the family and to property. And even today, whenever there is a question of *taxing income*, something that has never entered my brain, against which I have never ceased to protest vigorously, and which I refer to the responsibility of MM. Garnier-Pagès, Léon Faucher, Goudchaux, Passy and other economists, they do not fail to say that this tax project is resurrected from my proposal.

So much bad faith or cretinism would have outraged a saint. I resolved to break the ice, and since M. Thiers was a pasquinade, I myself would be a fascinator. Ah, yes! Instead of seriously discussing an economic proposition, you ask the author to account for his beliefs; you flatter yourself that you crush him under his own confession; you claim to eradicate socialism at a stroke, by showing it to France such as it is! *Pardieu*, gentlemen, here is your man. I'll give you a fair game: and if it is over, as you say, I hold that you are the greatest politicians in the world.

Nature has denied me the gift of speaking well. Why did I need it? My hammered speech only produced more effect. The laughter didn't last long. It was a question of who would show his indignation the loudest. To Charenton! one shouted. — To the menagerie! said another. — Sixty years ago, your name was Marat! — He had to go, on June 26, to the barricades! — He's too cowardly! — A part of the Mountain, ashamed, terrified, but not wanting to condemn a co-religionist, fled. Louis Blanc voted, with the conservative majority, the reasoned agenda. The socialists reproached him for this. They were wrong. His vote was the most conscientious in the Assembly. Louis Blanc represents governmental socialism, revolution through the power, as I represent democratic socialism, revolution by the people. An abyss exists between us. But what was there in my discourse, in these new forms of *free and reciprocal credit*, of suppression of interest, of continuous increase of well-being by the progressive reduction of wages and income, of social liquidation, etc., etc.? There was this: without capitalist aristocracy, no more authority, and without authority, no more government. Labor emancipated from the suzerainty of capital, the people cannot delay being liberated from governmental initiative: all these proposals are homologous and interdependent. Socialism, as I profess it, is the opposite of the socialism of Louis Blanc. This opposition is fatal: and if I put so much insistence on raising it, it is not for the pleasure of contradicting the head of a school; it is because I believe it necessary for the education of the people.

Flocon said to me one day, about my speech of July 31: *It is you who have killed the right to work*. — Say rather, I answered him, that I slit the throat of capital. All my fear, moreover, had been that the reasoned agenda would not pass. The absurd blame inflicted on my proposal was an act of abdication from bankocratic routine.

My speech ended with these words which had nothing threatening except the expression: *Capital will not return; socialism has its eyes on it.*

Which meant: The social question is posed, and you will solve it or you will not finish!

That was almost eighteen months ago. Well! Mr. Thiers, is it finished? Did you kill socialism? Will capital return with the same privileges as before? Have the proprietors, who for two years have seen the largest part of their rents and rents vanish, gained a lot from your rigor? You have had the state of siege twice, the law against the clubs twice, the laws against the press twice; you have had the complacency of Cavaignac and the unfailing docility of Louis Bonaparte; after having conquered March 17, April 16, May 15, June 26, you conquered again in September, December, on May 13, June 13, July 8; you made the Constitution more or less as you wanted it; you wounded the democracy in Rome, in Germany, in Hungary, throughout Europe; we are gagged, muzzled, on the run or in prison. You have all the power that comes from fanaticism, prejudice, selfishness, cunning, brute force. When will socialism end? When will capital return? There were in France, before February, half a dozen utopians: now, there is no conservative who does not have his system. The revolution takes you. Here already you are forced to rely on the Constitution, you make opposition to the pope, you cover yourself, but turning the cloak, with the policy of the montagnards! You would even vote, and with a good heart, if you thought you could get away for so little, for the income tax. Ah! You don't want reciprocal credit! So dare, since you are at your best with the powers, to send your 300,000 bayonets home!...

After July 31, the February revolution became irrevocable: the social question had finally received a positive meaning. Under the threat of a social upheaval, the monarchy felt its impotence, and made its retreat; the socialized people escapes it irretrievably. In 89, the fear of imaginary brigands who roamed the countryside, it was said, to cut the wheat, made the whole nation arm, and the revolution was made. In 1848, the fear of socialism, which was supposed to take all property, forced everyone to reflect on the conditions of labor and property, and the revolution was made. The suitors can come, the majorities try *coups d'état*: we will have done nothing, we will have the order in the cities and the countryside compromised more and more, until the worker's question is answered. Because, in the capitalist system, a system of both individualism and subordination, incompatible with the data of an egalitarian democracy, there is no longer any other way of putting an end to socialism than by grapeshot, poison and drowning. It is necessary, if one persists in remaining in the old state of things, either to reckon with the working class, that is to say to vote its budget for it, to deduct exclusively from revenue, from the purest part of the property; we must create a whole administration for it, give it its share in the State, recognize it as a new power in the Constitution; or else organize, according to the law of Malthus, the suppression of useless outlets. No middle ground for that: universal suffrage, henceforth indestructible, is a contradiction to the subordination of labor to capital. Abandon the mutualist principle, the principle of revolution by the

cooperation and the solidarity of the citizens, and you no longer have, under an inescapable democracy, any other alternative than this: the tax of the proletariat, or the murder of the poor; the division of revenue or the *jacquerie*.

So from July 31st, I became, according to the expression of a journalist, the *man-terror*. I don't think there has ever been an example of such outbursts. I have been preached, played, sung, plastered, biographed, caricatured, blamed, outraged, cursed; I was reported to contempt and hatred, delivered to justice by my colleagues, accused, judged, condemned by those who had given me a mandate, suspected by my political friends, spied on by my collaborators, denounced by my members, denied by my co-religionists. The devotees have threatened me, in anonymous letters, with the wrath of God; pious women have sent me blessed medals; the prostitutes and the convicts sent me congratulations whose obscene irony testified to the aberrations of public opinion. Petitions have reached the National Assembly asking for my expulsion as unworthy.¹³ When God allowed Satan to torment the holy man Job, he said to him: I leave him to you in body and in his soul, but I forbid you to touch his life. Life is thought. I have been mistreated more than Job: my thoughts have continued to be disgracefully disguised. I was, for a time, the theoretician of theft, the panegyrist of prostitution, the personal enemy of God, the Antichrist, a nameless being. What I had foreseen happened: as the sinner, in receiving the body of Jesus Christ, eats

¹³ In a work signed Donoso-Cortès, *Marquis de Valdagamas*, Ambassador of Spain, and published by the *Catholic Library*, under the direction of Mr. Louis Veuillot, I am represented as possessed by the demon, almost like the demon. "Never has mortal sinned so grievously against humanity and against the Holy Spirit. When this cord of his heart resounds, it is always with an eloquent and vigorous sound. No, it is not he who speaks then, it is another who is him, who holds him, who possesses him and who throws him panting into his epileptic convulsions; it is another who is more than himself, and who maintains a perpetual conversation with him. What he says sometimes is so strange, and he says it in such a strange way, that the mind hangs in suspense, not knowing whether it is a man speaking, or a demon; whether he is speaking seriously, or whether he is making fun. As for him, if by his will he could order things to his desire, he would rather be considered a demon than be considered a man. Man or demon, what is certain here is that on his shoulders weigh with a crushing weight three reprobate centuries." (*Essay on Catholicism, Liberalism and Socialism*.)

May my readers be reassured, and do not be afraid when reading me to breathe an infernal odor. What Mr. Donoso-Cortès says about me is word for word what the Jesuits of Jerusalem said about Jesus, nearly 1,900 years ago: He has the devil in his body! *Doemonium habet!* After the Jews, the Pagans used the same argument to martyr the first Christians, the Church to burn heretics and sorcerers. M. Donoso-Cortès, who is no less, it seems, of his religion than of his country, could not fail to follow these examples. As much as it is in him, he passes me the sulfured shirt, he covers me with san-benito, and at the next auto-da-fé, he will shout to the executioner: To the torch!

and drinks his condemnation, society, in calumniating the socialists, condemns itself; it was swallowing its judgment.

It has been given to me, by the effect of circumstances that I had not provoked, to stir to a depth hitherto unknown the conscience of an entire people, and to make an experiment on society such as it will never be given to a philosopher to attempt a second time. This race, I said to myself, so skeptical, so libertine, so corrupt, has it renounced its God and its soul? Has it lost all idea of the moral law? What does it think of family and marriage? This sensualist, greedy world, what does it say, in its heart, of the utilitarian theory? These Malthusians, who want neither to deprive themselves of enjoyment nor to accept its products, are they disciples of Fourier or of Saint-Simon? Who do they believe in more, passion or free will? Are these Voltaireans as firm as they appear in their incredulity, these shopkeepers as ferocious in their selfishness? Alas! While they execrated in my person the so-called apostle of their abominations, I happily applied to them the words of Louis XIV on the Duc d'Orléans: *They are braggarts of vices!* Yes, this licentious and sacrilegious society trembles at the idea of another life. It doesn't dare laugh at God; it thinks you have to believe in something! These adulterers revolt at the idea of communal polygamy; these public thieves are the glorifiers of labor. Catholicism is dead in all these hearts: human sentiment is more alive there than ever. Continence afflicts them: they adore chastity. Not a hand that is pure from the property of others: all detest the doctrine of interest. Courage, oh my soul, France is not lost. The powers of humanity throb within this corpse; it will be reborn from its ashes: I swear it on my head, dedicated to the infernal gods!...

Charged, like the scapegoat, with the iniquities of Israel, I had made for myself a stoicism that did not suit my temperament: it was through this that the proprietary *vendetta* was to reach me. Besides, the sort of dictatorship that I had arrogated to myself by doing violence to public opinion could not remain without punishment. On July 31, in pushing the nation into socialism despite itself, I had taken a more serious resolution than that of Huber, pronouncing, on May 15, by his sole authority, the dissolution of the National Assembly. Did I have the right? Is there one of those moments, in the life of a people, when a citizen can legitimately think and act for all, having sovereign control over their conscience and their reason? I cannot admit it; and I would bring against myself an irremissible condemnation, if I believed that I was completely free, when from the same platform where Huber had pronounced, but without success, the dissolution of the Assembly, I pronounced, with certainty absolute, the dissolution of society. My excuse is in this answer that I made without thinking to one of my interruptors: *When I say WE, I identify myself with the proletariat, and when I say YOU, I identify you with the bourgeois class.* It was no longer I who spoke from the podium, it was all the workers.

Be that as it may, sometime in August 1848, the request for authorization to prosecute Louis Blanc and Caussidière arrived. Paris was in a state of siege, the councils of war proceeded to the summary judgment of 14,000 accused. Thousands of families left for

Algeria; they were sent, driven by distress, ignorant of the climate, to fatten the African soil with their bodies for future possessors. But that was not enough: it was necessary to achieve socialist democracy in its representatives; the retroactive justice of the doctrinaires began. Louis Blanc and Caussidière, accused of having taken part in the *attack* of May 15, plus having prepared the days of June, were handed over to the prosecution. General Cavaignac gratuitously made himself the minister of these resentments, and presented himself the request for authorization. Something worse was in store for me. The *charges* not having seemed sufficient to include me in the trial, the commission of inquiry tried to kill me by defamation. Quentin Bauchart represented me, in his report, coldly admiring, on June 26, on the square of the Bastille, *the sublime horror of the cannonade*.

Hearing this travesty of my words from my seat, I weakened for a moment, and could not restrain a cry of horror. "*I flatly deny the report;*" these words escaped my indignant chest. But I quickly calmed down, and shut myself up more than ever in my silence. The line was cast: hatred was going to seize it, peddle it, comment on it: any protest became useless. *Se non è vero, è ben trovato*: a year later, Montalembert, making his famous declaration of war on ideas, repeated it again. A National Guardsman, who had seen me shed tears at the moment when I was accompanying the body of General Négrier to the Hôtel-de-Ville, struck by a bullet a few paces from me, came and offered to testify to my sensitivity. I thanked this brave man, and made the same answer to the spontaneous testimony of some of my colleagues, who had been able to judge of my countenance during the insurrection. Why protest? What does an energetic gesture, a passionate gaze, a moved voice prove in this century of actors? Was it necessary for me to come down from my dignity as a one slandered, to take the role of one absolved? And when the June insurgents were called brigands and incendiaries, couldn't I put up with being taken for the Nero of the gang? Jesuits, do your job: between you and us the war is without quarter. Were you thirty-six million, we would not pardon you.

Louis Blanc and Caussidière put up a long defense: in their place, I would have defied the Assembly. I need not say that I voted with the Mountain on all the questions, but God is my witness that I did not listen to a word of the two pleas. Since February 22, 1848, have there been political offenses in France? Are not all the principles, all the rights, all the notions of power and freedom confused today? Did neither Louis Blanc and Caussidière, nor their accusing fanatics, ever knew what they were doing?

Say that Raspail and Blanqui were malcontents; Barbès, Sobrier, Huber, dazed; Louis Blanc a utopian full of inconsistency; say that the June insurgents made the mistake of yielding to a frightful provocation: that's the spirit! Add that the Provisional Government itself showed in everything a rare imbecility, the Executive Commission a stupid blindness, the reactionary party an infernal selfishness, the National Assembly a hopeless softness: I pass condemnation. But conspirators! Men guilty of political attack! In France!

Since the Revolution! Old backslider! Therefore begin by petitioning against yourself; twenty times you have deserved the pontoons and the penal colony.

XIII.
SEPTEMBER 17:

PROGRESS OF SOCIALISM: CONVERSION OF THE MOUNTAIN.

General Cavaignac, by lending his hands to the accusation of Louis Blanc and Caussidiere, had fallen into the same fault as the Executive Commission, when it had repelled by the force of bayonets the request of the national workshops: he had killed it in its authors. From now on it appeared that the reaction, in which everyone could boast of having dipped their hands, from the president of the Luxembourg to the president of the state of siege, would only stop at the most remote point of the revolutionary line. It might be honorable to fight it again; but, until it had come to an end, all efforts to hold it back would only serve to precipitate it.

An unexpected event soon taught me that we were not nearing the end of our apocalypse: I mean the conversion of the Mountain. Let us first say what determined it.

After the June days, the only thing that had to be done before undertaking anything was to raise the socialist flag, to revive public opinion and to discipline people's minds. Socialism had hitherto been only a sect, less than that, a plurality of sects: it had not sat at the banquet of political life. It was necessary to make a party of them, numerous, energetic, definite. The reactionary current was carrying us backwards: it was necessary to determine a counter-current of radical ideas that would carry us forward. Hatred between the classes grew worse: it was necessary to deflect the redoubtable passions of the people by discussing economic questions with them; to divert them from the riot, by making them enter as an actor in the parliamentary struggles; to exalt them patience, by showing them the greatness of the Revolution;

The enterprise had its dangers. On the one hand, by posing the revolutionary question in its generality and its depth, the reaction was going to cry out for alarm and call upon the innovators for new persecutions; on the other hand, by preaching, through fiery polemics, calm and patience, we risked being taken for sleepers and traitors: the popularity of socialism depended on it. But the cons were outweighed by the pros. As long as socialism respects order and stands by legality, the reaction will be for it its growls and impotence; as long as the men of action of democracy have no system, as long as their policy would be confined to its memories and would be limited to pursuing the government, they remained convinced, by their own acts, of being only doctrinaires in disguise, and their declamations fell through their insignificance.

We can say that at this time the direction of minds was with the first occupant. There was no need for high politics, nor long speeches. It was enough to show yourself, to stand up to the reaction, in order to have the masses behind you. The slightest opposition, even legal and peaceful, was cited as a bold move: there was every advantage in following this march. The success was so complete that people were quite surprised one day, in the

National Assembly, to hear the minister Dufaure testify to the spirit of order, of peace, of loyal discussion, that animated the socialist banquets. I gained, on my own account, by becoming suspect to the mountaineers, scandalized at seeing me get along so well with the government. This suspicion still haunts me.

Socialism had represented the Revolution in the elections of June: it held the elections of September 17. When everything united to crush it, 70,000 men rose at its call to protest against the victory of June, and named Raspail their representative. It was in the offices of the *Peuple* that the democratic electoral committee held its meetings. Against an immoderate reaction, democracy took its strongest organ as its flag. The Mountain, in this dazzling manifestation of Socialism, only figured as an ally.

From that moment it became clear to everyone that the political situation had changed. The question was no longer between monarchy and democracy, but between labor and capital. Social ideas, so long disdained, were a force: for this reason, while they raised the hatred of some, they were to excite the ambition of others. What is the use, indeed, of calling oneself a democrat, if one is not of the people's party? Now, the popular party was now the socialist party: those who at first had misunderstood the reality of socialism thought from then on of appropriating its power.

I come to a time which, in this marvelous legend, was for Socialism a veritable temptation of Saint Anthony. Less fortunate or less shrewd than the recluse of Thebaid, it allowed himself to be seduced by the charms of the siren: it cost it dearly, as we shall see.

I have said that until October 1848, seven months after the inauguration of a republic made in the name of social ideas, the most advanced fraction of the democratic party, that represented in the National Assembly by the extreme left, and in the press, the *Réform*, had held itself, with regard to Socialism, in an extreme reserve: it had not made its *pronouncement*. For the very reason that it advocated Robespierre, it did not accept Baboeuf. Neither the eloquence and governmentalism of Louis Blanc, nor the repeated demonstrations of the proletariat had been able to bring about neo-Jacobinism: since February, it viewed only with concern and distrust what 94 had taught it to hate, what for eighteen years it had refused to see.

A decisive event alone could bring it out of its tradition and its essence. The elections of September 17, the banquet of the Faubourg Poissonniere, determined this movement. The people, it was no longer possible to deny it, were going to socialism, were abandoning Robespierre: it was decided that they would declare themselves socialists.

But, in adhering to socialism, into what unknown were they throwing themselves? What would be the symbol of the party so suddenly transfigured? Who would undertake to make the profession of faith? What would they change, what would they add to the old ideas? What change would the party make to its policy?

A social, cosmological, theological, industrial and agricultural system is something that cannot be improvised with the stroke of a pen. After Saint-Simon and Fourier, there was

nothing left to glean from the field of fantasy; and they do not reform who want religion, philosophy and social economy.

To undertake scholarly and profound criticism, to methodically proceed to the discovery of social laws; this presupposes long studies, a habit of abstraction, a calculating mind, incompatible with the declamatory pace of the Jacobins.

To accept a ready-made theory, to enter a school *en masse*, as one entered Socialism, was to put oneself in the tail of a sect: the dignity of the party did not allow it.

On closer inspection, the mountaineers would have understood that they had nothing better to do than to remain temporarily what they were, hardly to be anything at all; they would have seen that a party is not modified at the whim of its leaders, and according to the conveniences of a policy of the moment; far from it, they would have convinced themselves that the distinction between parties being given by the very constitution of society, they can only merge by ceasing to exist, and that consequently the only question for them is this, *to be or not to be*, life or death.

Could the Mountain consent to absorb itself into Socialism, or be content to take its direction and govern itself in the direction of its politics? This is what the mountaineers, before declaring themselves, should have asked themselves. Now, if they had posed the question thus, they would have said to themselves, that of these two alternatives, the first was not in their hearts, and the second escaped their capacity; they would have left socialism to itself, as after February the doctrinaires had left the republicans, and faithful to their old line of conduct, they would have awaited events.

This policy, from the point of view of party interest, was unquestionably the wisest; for either socialism, left to itself, would soon perish through the contradiction, the ridiculousness, and the impracticability of its utopias; and then the Mountain, uncompromised, would regain influence; or else Socialism would succeed in establishing itself in a practical and positive way and, in this case, the Mountain still retained its initiative by taking it under its protection. It did not have the honor of the discovery, it is true; but it had the advantage, far more important for a body politic, of certainty. Moreover, nothing obliged it to show either malevolence or sympathy towards the socialist party: it was enough for it to remain neutral.

The impatience of neo-Jacobinism could not put up with this caution. They acted as usual: they took a resolution, dictated, it seems, by wisdom, but which showed the most deplorable impotence. They wanted to have a socialism of their own, to sort out the utopias in vogue, and ended up, something easy to predict, with a golden mean.

Let no one try to deny it: the Mountain, engaging, without knowing it, in democratic and social eclecticism, was simply becoming doctrinaire. Its so-called socialism, which it was not for me to prevent, was only a lying philanthropy whose good intentions barely covered its sterility. This is what the Monyagnards would have quickly seen, if the governmental hopes that they nourished had not completely deceived them.

Social revolution is the goal, they had said long before February; *political revolution is the means*. So, they concluded, it is up to us, who are above all politicians; it is up to us, who are continuing the tradition of '93, and who made the Republic in February, to found true socialism on the initiative of the government; it is up to us to absorb into our synthesis all the divergent schools, seizing, with the political rudder, the economic rudder.

Thus, the Mountain, always on the lookout for the power, took up at once the ideas of Robespierre, Baboeuf, and Louis Blanc; it proclaimed, louder than anyone had done before it, the necessity of *imposing* the Revolution from above, — and what Revolution? — instead of *proposing* it, as I wanted, from below.

I was not one who could be fooled by this reversal, whose doctrinal contradictions no one then discovered, and which I deplored with all my soul, for the future of the Mountain no less than for that of the Revolution. The socialism of the extreme left was, in my eyes, only a phantasmagoria of which I recognized all the sincerity, but whose value I estimated as nil. We were going, in my opinion, to provoke a resurgence of the reaction, by starting again on a larger scale the attempts of March 17, April 16, May 15. After having failed three times in its attempts, the neo-Jacobin party was preparing to engulf with it, in a final rout, socialism. The conversion of the montagnards had, in my eyes, no other meaning.

Such a radical divergence of principles and views could not fail to result in a war of the pen, and soon in a rivalry of parties. It was certainly the least of the inconveniences; and I was a man to defy, if necessary, the blind anger of the montagnards, like the much more conscientious curses of the Malthusians.

But serious considerations held me back.

The Montagnard party brought immense strength to socialism. Was it politic to push it back?

By declaring itself socialist, it irrevocably committed itself, it committed with it a notable portion of the Republic. It also responded to the wishes of the people, who had first proclaimed the merger by naming the Republic *democratic and social*. Socialism, coupled with democracy, imposed reaction. Should this advantage be neglected?

If the program of the montagnards left everything to be explained and defined, by that very fact it reserved everything. Now, Socialism had not yet produced anything that would impose itself with the authority of the masses. By what right would I have rejected the eclectics, when I only accepted the dogmatics under the benefit of an inventory?

The conversion *en masse* of the Mountain party, annihilating the small churches, could even be regarded as progress. The catholicity of the Revolution was established, although its dogma was not defined. And what notoriety, what power would bring to social ideas, as they were produced, the alliance of an energetic, organized party, which formed the most active portion of the democracy?

Such were the reflections with which I was besieged, and which betrayed themselves more than once in the polemics of the *Peuple*, from October 19th to December 23rd. In this

inextricable situation, I felt my free will being ripped away; the most scholarly dialectic no longer served me anything; the political influence, the passionate action carried me away in spite of myself. For the rest, the discussions with the organs of the Mountain were little made to enlighten me. The reasons intersected, but without answering each other. They survived side by side; they did not destroy each other. The two parties, being unable to agree or live apart, had to fight. It is the solution to all conflicts, when the adversaries no longer understand each other. Some personalities mingled in the fight...

Party leaders too often forget that they are only heralds-in-arms, speaking on behalf of their constituents, and that their first duty is to consider themselves reciprocally as sacred personages. I was no more free from passion and violence than anyone else. Surprised unexpectedly, I have largely paid the tribute to human weakness. I thought I even noticed then, — philosophy forgives me! — that the more development reflection acquires in us, the more passion, when it is unleashed, gains in brutality. It seems then that the angel and the biped, whose intimate union constitutes our humanity, instead of confusing their attributes, live only in company. If this is where progress leads us, what is the use of it?...

Consumed with worries, I impatiently awaited the results of the December election, which was to put an end to all dissent. In the meantime the Constitution was voted on: I must say what part I took in it, and justify my opinion.

XIV.
NOVEMBER 4:

THE CONSTITUTION.

On November 4, 1848, the Constitution was passed as a whole. 769 representatives attended the meeting: 739 voted for, 30 against. Of these 30 Protestant votes, there were 16 Socialist Democrats, 14 Legitimists. Mr. Odilon Barrot, who was the first to apply the Constitution, had abstained.

On the very day of the vote, I thought it my duty to explain, in a letter inserted in the *Moniteur*, the motives that had determined me. Here is that letter:

“Mr. Editor.

“The National Assembly has just proclaimed the Constitution to prolonged cries of: *Long live the Republic!*

“I took part in the wishes of my colleagues for the Republic; I deposited in the urn a blue ticket against the Constitution. I would not have understood, in such a solemn circumstance, and after four months of discussion, how I could abstain; I would not understand, after my vote, that I should not be permitted to explain myself.

“I voted against the Constitution, not out of a vain spirit of opposition, or revolutionary agitation, because the Constitution contains things that I would like to remove, or because others are not in it that I would like to put there. If such reasons could prevail in the mind of a representative, there would never be a vote on any law.

“I voted against the Constitution, because it is a Constitution.

“What constitutes the essence of a constitution — I mean of a political constitution, there can be no question of any other — is the division of sovereignty, in other words, the separation of powers into two, legislative and executive. This is the principle and the essence of any political constitution; beyond that, there is no longer a constitution, in the present sense of the word, there is only a sovereign authority, making its laws, and executing them through its committees and its ministers.¹⁴

“We are not accustomed to such an organization of sovereignty; in my opinion, republican government is nothing else.

“I therefore find that a constitution, in a republic, is a perfectly useless thing; I think that the provisional one that we had had for eight months could very well, with a little

¹⁴ This sentence is shady. I should have written: Beyond that, there is no longer a Constitution, in the present sense of the word; there is only one of these two things, a dictatorship, monarchical or oligarchical, making its laws and executing them through its ministers; or a mass of free citizens, compromising on their interests, sometimes individually, sometimes in councils, and fulfilling, without intermediaries, all the burdens of labor and of society.

more regularity, a little less respect for monarchical traditions, be made definitive; I am convinced that the Constitution, the first act of which will be to create a presidency, with its prerogatives, its ambitions, its culpable hopes, will be rather a danger than a guarantee for liberty.

“Greetings and fraternity.

“P.-J. Proudhon,
“*Representative of the Seine*,

“Paris, November 4, 1848.”

This letter is sufficient for the legislator: the publicist owes his readers further explanations. We are so infatuated with power, we have been so monarchized, we love to be governed so much, that we cannot conceive of the possibility of living free. We believe ourselves to be democrats because we have overthrown hereditary royalty four times: some, going so far as to deny the elective presidency, except to then bring together the powers in a Convention led by a committee of public safety, believe themselves to have reached the pillars of Hercules of radicalism. But we do not see that, persisting in this fixed idea of Government, we are, all of us who wage war for the exercise of power, only varieties of absolutists!

What is a *political* constitution?

Can a society subsist without a *political* constitution?

What will we put in the place of the *political* constitution?

Such are the questions that I propose to resolve, perhaps in less words than others would need just to set them out. The ideas I will produce are as old as democracy, as simple as universal suffrage; I will have no other merit than to systematize them, by giving them a little continuity and order. They will nonetheless appear a revelation of it, one more utopia, even to the democrats, most of whom, taking their right hand for their left hand, have never been able to extract from the sovereignty of the people anything other than dictatorship.

§ I¹⁵

I distinguish in every society two kinds of constitutions: one which I call the SOCIAL constitution, the other, which is the *political* constitution; the first, intimate to humanity, liberal, necessary, and whose development consists above all in weakening and gradually pushing aside the second, essentially factitious, restrictive and transitory.

¹⁵ This chapter, very obscure in the first editions, has been completely recast and elucidated according to the principles developed in the *General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century*.

The social constitution is nothing other than the balance of interests based on free CONTRACT and the organization of ECONOMIC FORCES, which are, in general: *Labor, Division of Labor, Collective Force, Competition, Commerce, Money, Machines, Credit, Property, Equality in transactions, Reciprocity of guarantees*, etc.

The political constitution has AUTHORITY as its principle. Its forms are: the Distinction of Classes, the Separation of Powers, Administrative Centralization, Judicial Hierarchy, the Representation of Sovereignty by Election, etc. It was imagined and completed successively, in the interest of order, in the absence of the Social Constitution, the principles and rules of which could only be discovered after long experiments, and still today the object of socialist controversies.

These two constitutions, as it is easy to see, are of an absolutely diverse and even incompatible nature, but, as it is the destiny of the Political Constitution to incessantly provoke and produce the Social Constitution, always something of it slips and settles into the former, which, soon made insufficient, appearing contradictory and odious, finds itself pushed from concession to concession to a definitive abrogation.

It is from this point of view that we are going to appreciate the general theory of political constitutions, reserving the study of the social constitution for another time.

At the beginning, the political idea is vague and indefinite; it is reduced to the notion of Authority. In high antiquity, where the legislator always speaks in the name of GOD, authority is immense; constitutional determination is almost nil. There is nothing in the whole of the Pentateuch that resembles, closely or remotely, a *Separation of powers*, a *fortiori* so-called *organic* laws, having as their object to define the attributions of powers, and to bring the system into play. Moses had no idea of a first power, called *legislative*; a second, *executive*; and of a third, bastard of the other two, *judicial order*. *Conflicts of attributions* and *jurisdictions* had not revealed to him the necessity of a *Council of State*; still less had political dissension, the inevitable result of constitutional machinery, made him feel the importance of a *high court*. The constitutional idea had remained a closed letter for the Prophet: it was only after four centuries of resistance by the people to the Law that this idea for the first time appeared in Israel, and that precisely in order to motivate the election of the first king. The Mosaic government had been found weak; they wanted to fortify it: it was a revolution. For the first time the constitutional idea manifested itself in its true character, the separation of powers. At that time, as in the time of Philippe-le-Bel and Boniface VIII, only two could be known, the *spiritual* and the *temporal*. One grasps the distinction: next to the Pontiff appeared the King. It was not without protest, or to speak the language of the time, without a threatening revelation from the priesthood.

“Here shall be the *royal statute*,” the constitution of government, had said Samuel, when the delegates of the people came to summon them to consecrate a king. Notice this: it is the priest who gives the investiture to the king; among all peoples, even in revolt against the priesthood, power is by divine right. “He will take your sons to make them

conscripts, and your daughters to make canteen keepers and chambermaids. And when he has made himself a *force*, he will impose taxes on persons, on houses, furniture, land, wine, salt, meat, merchandise, etc., in order to maintain his soldiers, to pay his employees and his mistresses.

“And you will be his servants.”

It is in these terms that Samuel, the successor of Moses, exposed the future political constitution; and all our publicists, from the Abbé Sieyès to M. de Cormenin, agree with him. But what could an anticipated criticism do against the necessity of the moment? The priesthood had badly served order; it was eliminated; it was right. If the new government showed itself unfaithful or incapable, it would be treated in the same way, until liberty and well-being had been achieved; but there would be no turning back: that is the argument of all revolutions. Moreover, the covetousnesses of the day, in accordance with the needs of the time, far from being frightened by the sinister warnings of the priest, found there their most ardent excitations. The political constitution, in fact, that is to say royalty, was it not, first of all, tax and, consequently, sinecures? Was it not monopoly, rent, large property and, consequently, the exploitation of man by man, the proletariat? Was it not, finally, *liberty in order*, as Louis Blanc said, liberty surrounded by pikes and arrows, and consequently the omnipotence of the soldier? Everyone therefore wanted it: the Phoenicians, the English of that time, had enjoyed it for a long time; how could the Jewish people, who also called themselves the Messiah of the nations, like us French, Poles, Hungarians and Cossacks, because it seems that it is a mania, we have the vanity to say to ourselves, could they have remained behind their neighbors? In truth, there is nothing new under the sun, not even constitutionalism, Christomania and Anglomania.

The mainspring of political constitutions is therefore, as I say in my letter to the *Moniteur*, principally the *separation of powers*, that is to say the distinction between two natures, neither more nor less, in the government, *spiritual* nature and *temporal* nature, or, what amounts to the same thing, *legislative* nature and *executive* nature, as in Jesus Christ, God and man together: it is surprising that at the bottom of our politics we always find theology.

But, it will be said, can't the people absolutely do without this mechanism? The people, who make the kingships and the priesthoods, can they not, for their government, do without both, instead of maintaining them conjointly? And supposing that for the duties of their worship and the protection of their interests, they need a double Authority, what need to further subdivide the temporal? What good is a constitution? What can be the use of this distinction between two powers, with their prerogatives, their conflicts, their ambitions and all their dangers? Is it not enough for an Assembly that, as an expression of the needs of the country, makes laws, and, through the ministers it chooses from within, executes them?

Thus spoke, among others, in the Assembly of 1848, the honorable M. Valette (of the Jura).

It is here that the logical fatality appears, which leads peoples and determines revolutions.

Man is destined to live in society. This society can only exist in two ways: either by the organization of the economic faculties and the balance of interests; or else by the institution of an authority that, in the absence of the industrial organism, serves as arbiter, represses and protects. This last way of conceiving and realizing order in society is what is called the State, or Government. Its essential attribute, the condition of its effectiveness, is *centralization*.

The Government, therefore, being able to define itself as the *centralization of the forces*, such as they are, of the nation, will be abolished, if the center is unique; it will be constitutional or liberal, if the center is double. The separation of powers has no other meaning.

Without object in a small state, where the assembly of citizens can intervene daily in public affairs, it is indispensable in a nation of several millions of men, forced, by their sheer number, to delegate their powers to representatives. It then becomes a guarantee of public liberties.

Suppose all the powers are concentrated in a single assembly, you will only have increased the perils of liberty by depriving it of its last guarantees. Government by the assembly will be just as formidable as government by the despot, and you will have less responsibility. Experience even proves that the despotism of assemblies is a hundred times worse than the autocracy of a single person, for the reason that a collective being is inaccessible to considerations of humanity, moderation, respect for opinion, etc., which govern individuals. If therefore the unity of powers, that is the absence of a political constitution, has no other effect than to absorb the powers of a responsible president into the powers of an irresponsible majority, the conditions of government remaining elsewhere the same, what will have been advanced? Isn't it better to divide the authority, to make one of the powers the controller of the other, to restore the freedom of action to the executive, by giving it as a counterweight the control of the legislature? So, either the separation of powers, or the absolutism of power: the dilemma is inevitable.

The democracy has never given any serious answer to this argument. Undoubtedly, as the critics have very well observed, the division of authority into two powers is the source of all those conflicts which, for 60 years, have tormented our country, and not, less than despotism, pushes it to revolutions. But that does not destroy the fundamental objection that, apart from the separation of powers, there is only absolute government, and that to cut it off from the Republic is to constitute a dictatorship in perpetuity.

Also the democratic Republic, the Republic without distinction of powers, has never seemed to unprejudiced minds anything but a contradiction in terms, a veritable evasion of liberty. And I admit, for my part, that given the hypothesis of a centralization where all the social faculties converge in a single center, initiator and sovereign dominator, I much prefer to the absolute and irresponsible government of a convention, the separate and

responsible government of a presidency controlled by an assembly, and to the government of an elective presidency, that of a constitutional royalty. Whatever the government to be divided, monarchy or senate, the separation of powers is the first step towards the social constitution.

Such, then, is the datum on which society, ignorant of its own constitution, has hitherto sought to create within itself and to maintain order:

First, a centralization of all its forces, material and moral, political and economic, in a word, a royalty, a government;

Second, and to escape the drawbacks of this absolutism, a central duality or plurality, that is to say the separation and opposition of powers.

This last point obtained, the question for the political theorists was only to constitute the separate powers in such a way that they could never coalesce or enter into conflict, and so that society was helped not repressed by them in the manifestation of its wishes and the development of its interests.

It is this triple problem that all ancient and modern constitutions have claimed to solve, and in which all have met their stumbling block. The Constitution of 1848 succumbed to it like the others.

The Constitution of 1848, an imitation of the Charter of 1830, socialist in substance, is political or *bascule* in form. By its socialist side, it promises instruction, credit, labor, assistance; it creates universal suffrage, and submits to progress: these are so many new principles that the ancient legislators did not recognize, and which the Constituent Assembly added to the *Credo*. — By its political form, its object is to guarantee the exercise of ancient rights, to maintain order and peace.

However, like its predecessors, the Constitution of 1848 is powerless to keep any of its promises, political or social; and, if the people were to take it too seriously, I dare say that the government would find itself daily placed in the alternative of a February 24 or a June 26.

The reason for this impotence is, as we will see, on the one hand, that the socialist prescriptions introduced into the Constitution are incompatible with the political attributions; on the other hand, that the tendency of the government is always to reduce, whatever one does, centralization to a single term, I mean to resolve the constituted powers into absolutism.

And it is not the parties that should be blamed for these contradictions: they are the natural product of ideas and of the time. Governmentalism dated from eternity; it was in the majority in the Assembly, no one could claim to exclude it. As for Socialism, it existed in people's minds long before the convocation of the Constituent Assembly and the February Revolution; it had to take place officially, even without representatives, as a need of the time and a consequence of the revolution. Louis-Philippe would have remained on the throne had the same movement, which was accomplished by his fall, been accomplished under his authority.

Three things form the socialist part of the new pact:

1. The *declaration of rights and duties*, in which is found, failing this and as compensation for the RIGHT TO WORK, the *right to assistance*.
2. The idea of *progress*, from which has arisen article 111, which establishes for the country the perpetual faculty of revision.
3. *Universal suffrage*, the effect of which, as yet unperceived, but inevitable, will be to change public right from top to bottom, by suppressing government.

Now, I say that these elements, in which it is proper to see an incomplete, disguised expression of the social Constitution, are by themselves incompatible with all governmentalism; that, moreover, where the powers have been separated, it is inevitable that such declarations will become for them a perpetual subject of division and conflict. So that not only are the powers powerless to fulfill the duties that the Constitution imposes on them, but, thanks to these duties, they cannot fail to enter into conflict and, if necessary, to provoke, either one or the other, or both, civil war.

Facts being the best demonstration of ideas, let us take for example the *right to assistance*.

Who does not see first that the right to assistance, guaranteed by the government *in the absence of work*, is the same thing as the right to work, disguised under a formula of selfishness? It is IN HATRED of the right to work that the right to assistance has been granted; it is as a redemption of rent, as a ransom for property, that the Government has undertaken to reorganize public charity. Now, for any man who has a sense of logic and of right, who knows the way in which obligations between men are carried out, it is obvious that the right to assistance, equally odious to those who enjoy it and to those who discharge it, cannot enter, at least in this form, into the institutions of a society, consequently, that it cannot be the object of a mandate of the sovereign People in the government.

I am not speaking of the difficulties of execution: they are almost insurmountable. — Is assistance alms? No. Almsgiving is not organized; it cannot be the subject of a contract; it has no place in the laws; it is only a matter of consciousness. Assistance, falling under the scope of the law, being able to be the subject of an administrative or judicial action, recognized as a right by the Constitution, is therefore something other than alms: it is an *indemnity*. However, if the right to assistance is an indemnity, what will be the minimum indemnity delivered by way of assistance? Will it be 25, 50, 75 cents? Will it be equal to the minimum salary?... What will be the maximum? Which individuals will be entitled to assistance? What will be the reward, according to age, sex, profession, infirmities, domicile? Will conditions be imposed on the indigent? Will they be forced, for example, to live in special establishments and specific localities? In the countryside rather than in the city? We fall into the regime of prisons: assistance, compensation for labor, becomes, monstrous thing, compensation for liberty. That's not all. Who will fund the assistance? The proprietors? 200 million will not be enough; it will therefore be necessary to create

new taxes, to crush property in order to provide a subsidy for the proletariat. Will there be a system of deduction from wages? So, it is no longer the state, it is no longer the proprietors and the capitalists who assist; it is the workers who assist each other: the laborer who works pays for the one who does not work, the good for the bad, the steward for the prodigal and the debauched. In any case, assistance becomes a retreat for misconduct, a reward for laziness: it is the buttress of begging, the providence of misery. Pauperism thus becomes a constitutional thing; it is a social function, a profession consecrated by law, paid, encouraged, multiplied. The poor tax is an argument for disorder against savings banks, pension funds, tontines, etc. While you moralize the people by your provident and credit institutions, you demoralize them by assistance. Once again, I do not want to agitate these delicate questions, where abuse mixes everywhere with the good and the useful, where justice is only privilege. I ask what can be the action of power in an institution whose principles are envy on the one hand and hatred on the other? An institution that establishes, maintains, sanctifies the antagonism of two castes, and which seems to figure in the Declaration of Rights and Duties as the stepping stone of a social war?

Obviously, the right to assistance, as well as the right to work, is beyond the jurisdiction of the government. These two principles, which the universal conscience affirms, belong to an entirely distinct order of ideas, incompatible with the political order, the basis of which is authority, and the sanction of which is force. It may be, and as for me, I affirm it, that the right to work, the right to assistance, the right to property, etc., find their reality in another Constitution; but this Constitution has nothing in common with that which governs us at the moment; it is diametrically opposed to it, and completely antagonistic.

I contributed, without having wanted to, to having the right to work rejected from the Constitution — and I do not regret having spared my colleagues, my country, this new lie — by an answer which I made to M. Thiers, at the finance committee. *Give me the right to work*, I told him, *and I'll give you the right of property*. I wanted to indicate by this that labor incessantly modifying property, and consequently the Constitution and the exercise of authority, the guarantee of work would be the signal for a complete reform of institutions. But that was not how it was taken. My words were regarded as a threat to property; and I was in no mood for further explanation. From then on, the Conservatives promised themselves that labor would be protected, but not guaranteed: which, from their point of view, seemed fair enough, since they did not guarantee property either. They thought they were doing wonders and exhausting the subtleties of the tactic, by passing, *in the absence of labor*, THE RIGHT TO ASSISTANCE, a nonsense instead of an impossibility. Couldn't I have said to these blind people: *Well! Give me the right to assistance, and I give you the right to work?*... Then, in hatred of the right to assistance, which has become for all minds as perilous as the right to work, it would have been necessary to fall back on another guarantee, or grant nothing at all, which was impossible. And since, with each

proposition of conservative philanthropy, I could have always reproduced the same argument, and that *ad infinitum*; as social guarantees are, after all, only the reverse of political guarantees, I was sure, if I had wanted to, by pressing the latter, of causing the very idea of a constitution to be rejected.

This is true, in fact, of all the political and economic elements on which society is based, such as the right to work and the right to assistance: they can all supplement each other, because they convert, transform, are incessantly absorbed in each other, because they are both correlative and contradictory.

Grant me free education, I said on another occasion, *and I give you liberty of education*.

Similarly, I could have said again, grant me the right to credit, and I leave you, at the same time, both the right to work and the right to assistance.

Grant me equality of worship, and I will allow you to have a state religion.

Grant me the faculty of revision, and I will obey the Constitution forever.

Grant me the exercise of universal suffrage in perpetuity, and I accept in advance all the products of universal suffrage.

Grant me freedom of the press, and, bolder than you, who forbid the discussion of principles, I allow you to discuss the very principle of liberty.

Society, an essentially intelligible thing, rests entirely on these oppositions, synonymies, or equivalences, which all enter one into the other, and whose system is infinite. And the solution of the social problem consists in posing the different terms of the problem, no longer in *contradiction* of each other, as they first appear in the first periods of social formation, and as the Constitution of 1848 still presents them, but in deduction : in such a way, for example, that the right to work, the right to credit, the right to assistance, all these rights, the realization of which is impossible by way of Government, are deduced from a first transaction external and superior to the political order, such as would be the Constitution of property, the balance of values, the mutual guarantee of exchange, etc.; and, instead of waiting for the initiative of the public authority, subordinate it itself.

It is our ignorance of these transformations, at the same time as our republican negligence, that makes us blind to our means and makes us always desire to inscribe in the text of our constitutions and to bring into the catalog of our laws promises that it is not in the power of any government to fulfill, which are antipathetic to it, however organized, as absolute government, constitutional government, republican government.

In short: do you want only to produce political acts in society, to organize war against foreign countries, to ensure within the preponderance of an aristocracy, the subordination of the working class, to maintain the privilege against the enterprises of emancipation of the proletariat? The governmental order, with or without distinctions of powers, suffices. It was invented for this purpose, and has never been used for anything else. The separation of powers, which you are offered as *the first condition of a free government*, is only a way of making the favored classes participate for the benefit of the government.

Do you want, on the contrary, to guarantee to all, with legitimately acquired property, the work, assistance, exchange, credit, instruction, cheapness, freedom of opinion, faculty of publication, equality of means, in short? Only the constitution of economic forces can satisfy you. But, far from this constitution being able to be established by way of authority, to be grafted, in some way, onto the political constitution, it is the negation of authority itself. Its principle is neither strength nor numbers: it is a transaction, a contract.

To vote for the Constitution of 1848, where social guarantees are considered as an emanation of authority, was therefore to put the social constitution below the political constitution, the rights of the producer after the rights of the citizen; it was to abjure socialism, to deny the Revolution.

Neither Article 1 of the Preamble, which lays down the principle of *progress*, nor Article 13, which expresses the right to assistance, nor article 24, which establishes *universal suffrage*, could determine my adhesion: these three principles, in spite of their high socialist and anti-governmental scope, being subordinated, in the Constitution, to the political order, and the facts, not less than logic, soon to prove that it would be, before the new power, progress, with the right to assistance and universal suffrage, as it had been with the right to work before the constituent assembly.

Progress! But it is obvious that as far as economic ideas are concerned, the State is essentially stationary.

To organize labor, credit, assistance, is to affirm the social constitution. Now, the social constitution subordinates, denies the political constitution. How can we expect the Government to take the initiative of such progress? Progress, for the Government, is in the opposite direction from what it should be for the worker: also, and all history proves it, far from progressing, the Government tends only to retrograde. Where do you want it to go, in fact, with its constitutive principle, the separation of powers? To a growing division? It would be going to its ruin. From the point of view of political constitutions, the quadrennial presidency and the unity of national representation, far from being progress, are already a degeneration of the system. The true formula of the constitutional regime is the Charter of 1830, as the perfection of government is absolute power. Do we want to return to the July Monarchy? Do we want to go back to Louis XIV, because it is only in this direction that power can progress? Let those who don't have enough say so!

Universal suffrage! But how could I have taken it into account, in a Constitution that had reserved for itself, with the means to make it lie, even that of restricting it? It is by establishing electoral indignities that the Constitution opened the door to the resolution of May 31; and as for the veracity of universal suffrage, the authenticity of its decisions, what is the relationship between the elastic product of a vote and popular thought, synthetic and indivisible? How would universal suffrage succeed in manifesting the thought, the true thought of the people, when the people are divided, by the inequality of fortunes, into classes subordinate to each other, voting out of servility or hatred; when this same people, held on a leash by power, cannot, despite its sovereignty, make its thoughts

heard regarding anything; when the exercise of its rights is limited to choosing, every three or four years, its chiefs and its charlatans; when its reason, fashioned on the antagonism of ideas and interests, can only go from one contradiction to another contradiction; when its good faith is at the mercy of a telegraphic dispatch, an unforeseen event, a captivating question; when, instead of questioning one's conscience, one evokes one's memories; when, by division of parties, it can only avoid one danger by rushing into another, and that on pain of failing in its safety, it is forced to lie to its conscience? Society, under the 200-franc regime, was motionless: a poet had personified it in the god Terme. Since universal suffrage was established, it turns, but on the spot. Previously it stagnated in its lethargy; now it is dizzy. Will we then be more advanced, richer and freer when we have done a million pirouettes?...

But if now the government, as the Constitution of 1848 did, can guarantee neither work, nor credit, nor assistance, nor instruction, nor progress, nor the sincerity of universal suffrage, nor nothing of what constitutes the social state, how would it guarantee the political state itself? How would it ensure order? Unique thing! This political reform, which was to give us social reform, appears to us, from whatever side we undertake it, as a perpetual anomaly. It is not only with itself, through the separation of its powers, that the government is in conflict; it is with society, by the incompatibility of its attributions. Without the distinction between the legislative and the executive, the government leaves no guarantee to liberty; without a declaration of social rights, it is only the force given as a sanction to wealth against misery. But with the separation of powers, you open the door to conflicts, corruptions, coalitions, heartbreaks, competitions; with the declaration of rights, you create in power an end of inadmissibility for all its decisions and actions: whatever you do, the Constitution, which should reconcile everything, can only organize discord. Civil war is at the bottom of your so-called social pact.

Is it possible to find a way out of this maze? To pass without a jolt from the political constitution to the social constitution? I dare say so. But I warn the reader that it will be neither by compromise, nor by eclecticism, nor by the sacrifice of any idea, nor by any adjustment of forces and balances; it will be by the elevation to their highest power of all the constitutional and social principles now in conflict: centralization and separation, universal suffrage and government, work and credit, liberty and order. At first sight, it seems that this method must increase the antagonism: it will have the result of making it cease. Only, we will no longer have this distinction of political constitution and social constitution: government and society will be identified, indistinguishable.

I therefore say that the vice of any constitution, political or social, which brings about conflicts and creates antagonism in society, is, on the one hand, — and to stick to the only question that I want to examine at this time — that the separation of powers, or to put it better, the separation of functions, is badly done and incomplete; on the other hand, that the centralization, not respecting any more the law of specialty, is insufficient. Whence it follows that collective power is almost everywhere without action, and thought, or universal suffrage, without exercise. It is necessary to push the separation, barely begun, as far as it is possible, and to centralize each faculty separately; to organize universal suffrage according to its genus and species, in its plenitude, and to restore to the people the energy, the activity that it lacks.

Such is the principle: to demonstrate it, to explain the social mechanism, I have no need henceforth of reasoning; examples will suffice. Here, as in the positive sciences, the practice is the theory; the exact observation of the fact is science itself.

For many centuries, the *spiritual* power has been separated, within accepted limits, from the *temporal* power.

I observe in passing that the political principle of the separation of powers, or of functions, is the same as the economic principle of the separation of industries, or division of labor: by which we see already dawning the identity of the political constitution. and social constitution.

I will also point out that the more a function, industrial or otherwise, contains in itself reality and fecundity, the more it grows, is realized and becomes productive by separation and centralization: so that the maximum power of a function corresponds to its highest degree of division and convergence, the minimum to the lowest degree. Indivision and impotence are synonymous terms here. Separation and centralization, such is therefore the double criterion by means of which we recognize whether a function is real or fictitious.

Now, not only have the temporal and spiritual powers, and most of the political functions, not been distinguished and grouped according to the laws of economy; but we are going to see again that these powers and these functions, far from being fortified by the

¹⁶ I have given in the *General idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century*, with the principles and forms of the economic constitution, the manner of solving, through the social liquidation and the organization of industrial forces, the problem of the annihilation of the Government. What I wanted to demonstrate in this section is that the principles of centralization and separation, which constitute the political mechanism, pushed in all their consequences, also lead to the absolute suppression of the State. In short, while in the *General Idea* I show the economic constitution being produced from scratch and replacing the political constitution, by eliminating the latter, I limit myself to showing, in the *Confessions*, the political constitution being transformed into an economic constitution. — It is always the same equation obtained by different processes.

principles of organization invoked for them, on the contrary wither away and are annihilated by this very organization, so that what, according to theory, must keep authority alive, is precisely what kills it.

Thus, first of all, there would be a complete separation between the spiritual and the temporal, if the latter not only did not interfere in any way with the celebration of the mysteries, the administration of the sacraments, the government of the parishes, etc.; but if it did not intervene either in the appointment of bishops. There would then be greater centralization, and consequently more regular government, if the people, in each parish, had the right to choose their own priests and branch offices, as well as to take none at all; if the priests in each diocese elected their own bishop; if the assembly of bishops or a primate of Gaul alone regulated religious affairs, the teaching of theology, and worship. By this separation, the clergy would cease to be, in the hands of political power, an instrument of tyranny over the people; nor would it retain the secret hope of regaining political preponderance; and by this application of universal suffrage, the ecclesiastical government, centralized in itself, receiving its inspirations from the people, not from the government or the pope, would be in constant harmony with the needs of society, and the moral and intellectual state of the citizens.

For it is nothing for the centralization of a country that the ministers of religion, the agents of power, like any other social function, come under a center, if the center itself does not come originally under the people; if it is placed above the people, and independent of them. In this case, centralization is no longer centralization; it is despotism. Where the sovereignty of the people is taken for dogma, political centralization is nothing other than the people themselves centralized as a political force: to withdraw the central agency from the direct action of the people is to deny them sovereignty, and give them, instead of centralization, tyranny. The suffrage of the subordinates is the starting point of any central administration.

Instead of this system, democratic and rational, what do we see? The Government, it is true, does not interfere in matters of worship; it does not teach the catechism; it does not profess in the seminary. But it chose the bishops who, having no relation between them, and without superiors, found their center only in Rome, in the person of the pope. The chosen bishops establish the parish priests and branch offices, and send them to the parishes, without the slightest participation of popular suffrage, often even in spite of the people. So that the Church and the State, meshed with each other, sometimes at war, form a kind of offensive and defensive league apart from the people, against their freedom and their initiative. Their cumulative government, instead of serving the country, burdens the country. It is useless for me to bring out the consequences of this order of things: they arise before all eyes.

It is therefore necessary, to return to the organic, political, economic or social truth, because here it is all one: 1. To abolish the constitutional cumulation, by removing from the State the appointment of bishops, and definitively separating the spiritual from the

temporal; — 2. to centralize the Church in itself, by a system of graduated elections; — 3. to base the ecclesiastical power, as all the other powers of the state, on the suffrage of the citizens.

By this system, what today is GOVERNMENT is no longer anything but *administration*; the whole of France, as far as ecclesiastical functions are concerned, is centralized; the country, by the mere fact of its electoral initiative, governs itself, as much in matters of salvation as in those of the century; it is no longer governed. Whether the exterior worship should be maintained or suppressed after this: that is not the question for the moment. If it is preserved, it will be by the energy that is intrinsic to it; if it dies out, it will be through lack of vitality: in any case, its destiny, whatever it may be, will be the expression of the sovereignty of the people, manifested by the absolute separation and regular centralization of functions, in other words, by the organization, as far as worship is concerned, of universal suffrage. And it is already foreseen that if it were possible to organize the whole country, in the temporal, according to the bases that we have just indicated for its spiritual organization, the most perfect order, the most centralization vigorous would exist, without there being anything of what we today call constituted authority, or government, and which is only a sham of centralization.

Another example:

Formerly, there was, in addition to the legislative power and the executive, a third power, the *judicial* power. It was a departure from separative dualism, a further step towards the general distinction between political functions and industries. The Constitution of 1848, like the charters of 1830 and 1814, speaks only of the *judiciary order*.

Order, power, or function, I find here, as in the Church, and under the pretext of centralization, a new example of the accumulation of the State, and, consequently, a new attack on the sovereignty of the people.

The judicial functions, by their different specialties, their hierarchy, their convergence in a single ministry, testify to an unequivocal tendency to separation and centralization.

But they are in no way the responsibility of the litigants; they are all at the disposal of the executive power, appointed every four years, and with irremovable powers, by the people; subordinated, not to the country by election, but to the government, president or prince, by appointment. As a result, litigants are handed over to their so-called natural judges, like parishioners to their priests; the people belong to the magistrate as an inheritance; the litigant belongs to the judge, not the judge to the litigant.

Apply universal suffrage and graduated election to judicial functions as well as to ecclesiastical functions; abolish security of tenure, which is the alienation of the electoral right; deprive the State of all action, of all influence over the judicial order; let this order, centralized in itself and apart, no longer depends on anything but the people alone: and first of all, you will have robbed the power of its most powerful instrument of tyranny; you will have made justice a principle of liberty as much as of order. And, unless we

suppose that the people, from whom must emanate, by universal suffrage, all powers, to be in contradiction with themselves, that what they want in religion, they do not want in justice, you are assured that the separation of power cannot generate any conflict; you can boldly posit in principle, that *separation* and *balance* are now synonymous.

Thus, by a sincere separation of powers and centralization, the people obtain the upper hand over the church and over justice; the civil servants of these two orders depend, directly or indirectly, on them; they no longer obey, but command; they are not governed, but govern themselves.

But the consequences of a well-done separation and centralization do not stop there. There are, as we have said, artificial functions in society that primitive barbarism suggested and made necessary, but which civilization tends to make disappear, first by the practice of liberty, then by the progress of the separation itself. Of this number are worship and the courts.

If opinions in matters of faith are truly free; if through the effect of this liberty all religions, born or to be born, are declared equal before the law; if consequently each citizen is allowed to name the ministers and to vote for the expenses of his cult without being obliged to contribute to maintenance of the others: it follows, first, that each being the judge of last resort in a matter devoid of rational certainty and of positive sanction, the unity or the centralization of worship is rendered impossible, all the more impossible as the divergence of professions of faith will spread further; second, that the importance of religious opinions will be weakened, and the consideration of the churches diminished, by the very cause that was to increase them; third, finally, that the ecclesiastical function, incompatible with universal suffrage and with the laws of social organization, will be put out of service little by little, and the personnel of worship reduced, sooner or later, to zero.

In short, while the separation of industries is the condition of their equilibrium and the cause of wealth, religious liberty is the ruin of religion, as power and social function. What more do we want? The Church, before society, does not exist.

The same thing must happen to justice. The election of magistrates by the People, every five or ten years, is not the last consequence of the principle: it is necessary to go so far as to recognize that in each case, the litigant or the accused has the right to choose his judges. What did I say? We must admit with Plato that the true judge, for every man, is his own conscience, which leads to replacing the system of courts and laws with the system of personal obligations and contracts, that is to say, to suppressing the judiciary....

Thus, the hypothesis of absolute government once set aside, and it cannot not be set aside, the governmental principle, in the order of religion and justice, results, through the development of its own laws, in separation of the faculties and their centralization, to the negation of itself: it is a contradictory idea.

I pass to another order of facts, the *military state*.

Is it not true that the army is the proper possession of the Government? That it belongs, with all due respect to constitutional fictions, much less to the country than to the

State? Formerly, the general staff of the army was properly the *Household of the King*; under the empire, the meeting of the elite corps bore the name of *imperial guard*, young and old. It is the Government which, each year, takes eighty thousand recruits, not the country that gives them; — it is the Power that, for its personal policy, and to have its wishes respected, appoints the chiefs, orders the movements of troops, at the same time as it disarms the national guards; not the nation that, spontaneously arming itself for its defense, disposes of the public force, of the purest of its blood. Here again the social order is compromised. And why? Because, on the one hand, military centralization not depending on the people, existing outside the people, is nothing but pure despotism; on the other hand, because the Ministry of War, however independent it may be from other ministries, is nonetheless a prerogative of the Executive Power, which recognizes only one head, the President.

The people have the confused instinct of this anomaly when, at each revolution, they insist on the removal of the troops; when they ask for a law on military recruitment, the organization of the national guard and the army. And the authors of the Constitution foresaw the danger when they said, in Art 50: *The President of the Republic disposes of the armed force, without ever being able to command it in person*. Prudent legislators, indeed! And what does it matter if he doesn't order it in person, if he has it, if he can send it wherever he pleases, to Rome or Mogador? If it is he who gives commands, who appoints to ranks, who awards crosses and pensions? if he has generals who command for him?

It is up to citizens to designate hierarchically their military chiefs, privates and national guards appointing to lower ranks, officers appointing to superiors.

Thus organized, the army retains its civic sentiments; it is no longer a nation within the nation, a fatherland within the fatherland, a sort of traveling colony where the citizen, naturalized soldier, learns to fight against his own country. It is the nation itself centralized in its strength and its youth, independent of the Power, which can, like any magistrate of the judicial order or of the police, require the public force in the name of the law, not command it or dispose of it. As for the case of war, the army owes obedience only to the national representation and to the chiefs whom it designates.

Does it follow from this that I regard the military state as a natural institution, inherent in society, in which I find no fault but a defective organization, compromising freedom? That would be to suppose that I have a very mediocre understanding of the Revolution. I wanted to show how, while waiting for it to please the nations, the only ones competent to judge the advisability of a general disarmament, to emerge from armed peace, the People should organize their military state, in such a way as to guarantee at once its defense and its liberties. But who does not see that war is like justice and worship, and that the surest way to abolish it, after reconciling international interests, would be by organizing a military state, as I just indicated, and as required by the principles of 93,

I continue.

Societies have always felt the need to protect their trade and industry against foreign importation: the power or function that in each country protects native labor and guarantees to it the national market, is customs.

I do not intend in any way to prejudge here the morality or the immorality, the utility or the uselessness of customs: I take it as society offers it to me, and I limit myself to examining it from the point of view of the constitution of powers. Later, when from the political and social question we will pass to the purely economic question, we will seek a solution of its own to the problem of the balance of trade, and we will see if indigenous production can be protected without incurring any neither duty nor supervision, in a word, without customs.

Customs, simply because it exists, is a centralized function: its origin, like its action, excludes any idea of fragmentation. But how is it that this function, which is especially the responsibility of merchants and industrialists, which should come exclusively from the authority of the chambers of commerce, is still a dependency of the State?

France maintains, for the protection of its industry, an army of more than 40,000 customs officers, all armed with guns and sabres, costing the country, each year, the sum of 26 millions. This army has the task, at the same time as of hunting down smugglers, of collecting, on import and export goods, a tax of 100 to 110 millions.

Now, who can know better than industry itself in what and how much it needs to be protected, what compensation should be taken, what products deserve bonuses and encouragement? And as for the customs service itself, is it not obvious that it is up to those concerned to calculate the cost of it, not up to the power to make it a source of emoluments for its creatures, as it makes of the differential right a revenue for its profusions?

As long as the customs administration remains in the hands of the authorities, the protectionist system, which I do not judge in itself, will necessarily be defective; it will lack sincerity and justice; the tariffs imposed by the customs will be an extortion, and smuggling, according to the expression of the honorable M. Blanqui, a right and a duty.

In addition to the Ministries of *Religious Affairs*, *Justice*, *War*, *International Trade* or *Customs*, the government combines still others: these are the Ministry of *Agriculture and Commerce*, the Ministry of *Public Works*, the Ministry of *Public Instruction*; there is finally, above all that, and to settle all that, the Ministry of *Finance*! Our alleged separation of powers is only the accumulation of all powers, our centralization only an absorption.

Doesn't it seem to you then that the farmers, already fully organized in their communes and their comities, could very well operate their centralization and manage their general interests, without passing through the hands of the State?

That the merchants, manufacturers, industrialists of all kinds, having their executives wide open in the chambers of commerce, could equally, without the help of power, without waiting for their salvation from its good pleasure, or their ruin from its

inexperience, organize by themselves, at their expense, a central administration, discuss their affairs in general assembly, correspond with other administrations, make all useful decisions, without waiting for the visa of the President of the Republic, and then, entrust the execution of their wishes to one of them, elected by his peers, and who would be a minister?

That public works, which all relate either to agriculture, industry and commerce, or to departments and municipalities, should therefore be distributed between the local and central administrations concerned, and no longer form, along with the army, the customs, the management, etc., a corporation apart, entirely placed in the hands of the State, having its hierarchy, its privileges, its ministry, all so that the State may deal in mines, canals, railroads, gamble on the Stock Exchange, speculate on shares, pass on ninety-nine-year leases to companies of friends, award the works of roads, bridges, ports, dykes, drillings, diggings, locks, dredging, etc., etc., to a legion of entrepreneurs, speculators, speculators, corruptors and embezzlers, living off the public fortune, the exploitation of craftsmen and laborers, and State foolishness?

Doesn't it seem to you that public education would be UNIVERSALIZED as well, administered, ruled; the well-chosen teachers, professors, rectors and inspectors; the system of studies also perfectly in keeping with interests and mores, if the municipal and general councils were called upon to confer the institution on the masters, while the University would only have to issue them diplomas; if, in public instruction as in military careers, the records of service in the lower ranks were required for promotion to superiors; if every great dignitary of the University had had to pass through the functions of primary schoolteacher and master of studies? Do you believe that this perfectly democratic regime would harm the discipline of schools, the morality of education, the dignity of teaching, the security of families?

And, since the nerve of any administration is money, the budget is made for the country, not the country for the budget; that the tax must be voted freely, each year, by the representatives of the people; that this is the primitive, inalienable right of the nation, as well under the monarchy as under the Republic; since both expenditure and revenue must be approved by the country before being organized by the government: do you not find that the consequence of this financial initiative, so formally recognized to the citizens by all our constitutions, would be that the ministry of finance, all this fiscal organization, in a word, belonged to the country, not to the prince; that it depend directly on those who pay the budget, not on those who eat it; that there would be infinitely less abuse in the management of the public treasury, less squandering, less deficits, if the State had no more control over public finances than over worship, justice, army, customs, public works, public education, etc.?

Undoubtedly, as far as Agriculture, Commerce, Industry, Public Works, Education, Finances are concerned, separation will not end in annihilation, as we have shown of the Cults, Justice, War, and Customs. In this respect one could believe that the development of

economic faculties compensating, and beyond, the suppression of the political powers, the principle of authority will regain on the one hand what it will have lost on the other, and that the governmental idea, instead of disappearing, will become stronger.

But who does not see that the Government, which just now found its end in the extinction of its faculties, encounters it here in their absolute independence, as much as in the mode of their centralization, the principle of which is no longer authority, but contract?

What constitutes centralization in the States, despotic and representative, is the authority, hereditary or elective, which from the King, President or Directory descends on the Country and absorbs its faculties. On the contrary, what constitutes centralization in a society of free men, who group themselves according to the nature of their industries or their interests, and among whom sovereignty, collective and individual, does not abdicate or never delegates, is the contract. The principle is therefore changed: from then on the economy is no longer the same; the organism, proceeding from another law, is overthrown. Social unity, instead of resulting, as before, from the accumulation and confiscation of forces by a so-called representative of the people, is the product of the free adherence of citizens. In fact and in right, the Government, by universal suffrage, has ceased to exist.¹⁷

I will not multiply the examples any further. It is easy, from what precedes, to continue the series and to see the difference that there is between centralization and despotism, between the separation of social functions and the separation of these two abstractions that we have rather unphilosophically named *legislative* power and *executive power*; finally, between the administration and the government. Do you believe, I say, that with this truly democratic regime, where unity is *at the bottom* and separation *at the top*, contrary to what exists in all our constitutions, there would not be more severity in expenditure, more precision in services, more responsibility for civil servants, more benevolence on the part of the administrations towards the citizens, and less servility, less *esprit de corps*, less conflict, in a word, less disorder? Do you believe that reforms would then seem so difficult; that the influence of authority would corrupt the judgment of citizens; that corruption would serve as the basis of morals, and that, to be a hundred times less governed, we would not be a thousand times better administered?

To create national unity, it was believed that it was necessary to concentrate all the public faculties in a single authority; then, as we very quickly realized that by proceeding in this way, we only created despotism, we thought that we could remedy this inconvenience by the dualism of powers, as if, to prevent the war of the government

¹⁷ See *General idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century*, how, through economic organization, these various categories of services are entirely constituted outside of any form of government.

against the people, there existed no other means than to organize the war of the government against the government!

It is necessary, I repeat, for a nation to manifest itself in its unity, for this nation to be centralized in its religion, centralized in its justice, centralized in its military force, centralized in its agriculture, its industry and its commerce, centralized in its finances, centralized in a word in all its functions and faculties; centralization must be effected from bottom to top, from the circumference to the centre, and all the functions must be independent and govern themselves each by itself.

Would you then like to make visible, by a special organ, or by an Assembly, this purely economic and invisible unity; to preserve, through love of your traditions, the image of the ancient government?

Group, by their heads, these different administrations: you have your council of ministers, your *executive power*, which could very well then dispense with a council of state.

Raise above all this a grand jury, legislature, or national assembly, appointed directly by the whole country, and charged, not with appointing the ministers — they hold their investiture from their special principals — but with verifying the accounts, making the laws, establishing the budget, judging the disagreements between the administrations, all after having heard the conclusions of the public ministry, or minister of the interior, to which will be reduced from now on the whole of the government: and you have a centralization all the stronger, the more you multiply the centers, a responsibility all the more real, the separation between powers will be clearer: you have a constitution that is both political and social.

There, the government, the state, the power, whatever name you give it, reduced to its just limits, which are, not to *legislate* or to *execute*, not even to *fight* or to *judge*, but to attend, as commissioner, the sermons, if there are sermons; to attend the debates of the courts and to the debates of the parliament, if there are courts and a parliament; to supervise the generals and the armies, if circumstances oblige you to retain armies and generals; to recall the meaning of the laws and to prevent their contradictions; to procure their execution, and to prosecute offenses: there, I say, the government is nothing but the headmaster of society, the sentinel of the people. Or rather, the government no longer exists, since, by the progress of their separation and their centralization, the faculties which the government formerly united have all, some disappeared, others escaped its initiative: from the *an-archy* has emerged order. There, finally, you have the liberty of the citizens, the truth of institutions, the sincerity of universal suffrage, the integrity of administration, the impartiality of justice, the patriotism of bayonets, the submission of parties, the impotence of sects, the convergence of all wills. Your society is organized, lively, progressive; it thinks, speaks, acts like a man, and this precisely because it is no longer represented by a man, because it no longer recognizes any personal authority,

because in itself, as in every organized being and living, as in Pascal's infinity, the center is everywhere, the circumference nowhere.

It is to this anti-governmental constitution that our democratic traditions, our revolutionary tendencies, our need for centralization and unity, our love of liberty and equality, and the purely economic, but so imperfectly applied principle of all our constitutions, lead us inevitably. And that is what I had wanted to make clear, in a few words to the Constituent Assembly, if that Assembly, impatient for platitudes, had been capable of listening to anything other than platitudes; if, in its blind prejudice against every new idea, in its disloyal provocations to the Socialists, it had not seemed to say to them: I defy you to convince me!

But it is with assemblies as with nations: they learn only through misfortune. We have not suffered enough, we have not been punished enough for our monarchical servility and our governmental fanaticism, for us to immediately love liberty and order. Everything in us still conspires, with the exploitation of man by man, the government of man by man.

Louis Blanc needs a strong power to do what he calls *good*, which is the application of his system, and to tame *evil*, which is everything that opposes this system.

M. Léon Faucher needs a strong and pitiless power, in order to contain the Republicans and exterminate the Socialists, to the glory of English political economy and of Malthus.

It takes Messrs. Thiers and Guizot an almost absolute power, which allows them to exercise their great talents as tightrope walkers. What is a nation from which the man of genius would be forced to exile himself, for want of finding there men to govern, a parliamentary opposition to combat, and intrigues to pursue with all the governments?

It takes Messrs. de Falloux and Montalembert a divine power, before which every knee bends, every head bows, every conscience bows down, so that kings are no more than the police of the pope, vicar of God on earth.

M. Barrot needs a double power, legislative and executive, so that the contradiction is eternal in the parliament, and so that society has no other end, in this life and in the next, than to attend the constitutional representations.

Ah! Cain and servile race that we are! Who pay 1,800 million a year for the follies of our rulers and our own shame; who maintain 500,000 soldiers to machine-gun our children; who vote bastilles to our tyrants, in order to be held by them in a perpetual siege; who summon the nations to independence, and abandon them to their despots; who make war on our neighbors and our allies, today for the revenge of a priest, yesterday for the pleasure of a courtesan; who have esteem only for our flatterers, respect only for our parasites, love only for our prostitutes, hatred only for our workers and our poor; once a race of heroes, now a race of tartuffes and sycophants: if it is true that we are the Christ of the nations, may we then soon exhaust the chalice of our iniquities; or else, if we have decidedly abdicated liberty, to serve, by dint of misery, as an eternal example to cowardly peoples and perjurers!

XV.

BANK OF THE PEOPLE.

Society, my friend Villegardelle told me, a year before the February Revolution, is sick with a disease that will kill the doctors. Notice to reform entrepreneurs!

Never was there such a good prophet as my friend Villegardelle. Ledru-Rollin, the father of universal suffrage, is in exile; Louis Blanc, who raised the issue of guaranteed labor, in exile; Considérant, the successor of Fourier, in exile; Cabet, the founder of Icarie, judged as a crook, emigrated, and I, the theoretician of free credit, in prison. I pass over in silence the few thousand others who died, who suffered, who still suffer for the Republic. When I quote Ledru-Rollin, Louis Blanc, Considerant, Cabet, or myself, it is as if I were quoting the names of all our companions in misfortune: some for all.

To suffer, to lose, if necessary, life, for a doctor who understands the duties of his condition, is nothing when the patient is cured. But will he recover? That's the question. He just does not want to take the remedy. In the uncertainty of success, I would as much like to run around the countryside, with my friend Villegardelle.

I do not want to begin here a discussion on free credit and on the economic combinations by which the founders of the Banque du Peuple thought of giving rise to their enterprise. I have published enough articles and pamphlets on this subject to enable me, at this moment, to spare my readers a dissertation on paper money. Moreover, I propose, in the appropriate time and place, to come back to it. We have not, as my readers take it for granted, given up on our projects. Those who claimed that we had been charmed to find in a judgment of the Court of Assizes a pretext to liquidate the Bank of the People, spoke of our intentions, which they do not know any more than our means, in the indignity of their conscience. It is a postponement, gentlemen, trust our word; and believe that with us, as with the good women, *what is postponed is not lost*.

I only want to report on the main idea that, apart from any financial speculation, had presided over the creation of the Bank of the People, intended, in the opinion of the founders, to reform the system of credit institutions and, consequently, the entire economy of society.

The Bank of the People was founded for three purposes:

1. To apply the principles of social constitution set forth above, and serve as a prelude to political reform through an example of spontaneous, independent and specific centralization;
2. To attack governmentalism, which is nothing but the exaggeration of communism, by giving rise to popular initiative and increasing providing individual liberty through mutuality;

3. To ensure labor and well-being for all producers, by organizing them with respect to each other as the principle and end of production, in other words, as capitalists and as consumers.

By the principle of its formation, the Bank of the People was therefore not destined to become a state bank. The State, besides the fact that it cannot give credit, since it has neither securities nor mortgages, is not qualified to become a banker, any more than to become an industrialist or a merchant.

Nor was it a bank operating for the benefit of a society of shareholders, offering the people more or less advantageous credit conditions, but operating in its own interest, like the society of cooks or that of tailors. A society of the Bank of the People, conceived according to this principle, would have been, like all workers' associations now existing, only a monopoly institution. It was to return to privilege, and privilege, however popular it may be, is always the negation of equilibrium, something antisocial.

The Bank of the People was to be the property of all the citizens who accepted its services; who, for this purpose, would sponsor it with their capital, if they judged that a metallic base was still essential for it; who, in any case, promised it the preference of their discounts and received its acknowledgement in payment. According to this, the Bank of the People, operating for the benefit of those who formed its clientele, had neither interest to collect for its advances, nor commission to take for its discounts; it had to take only a minimal remuneration for wages and expenses. The credit was therefore FREE!... Once the principle was realized, the consequences unfolded *ad infinitum*.

How had our economists, our financiers, our capitalists, our large landowners, our large industrialists, all these men of order, of philanthropy, these friends of work, of commerce, of cheapness and of progress, never had that idea? Why, when a socialist, in the interest of production, of circulation, of consumption, in the interest of workers, merchants, farmers, of everyone, had put it forward, did they all push it back? Why do they want the peasant, who could, by this system, borrow at 1/2 percent interest and long term, to continue to pay 12 and 15 percent, thanks to the necessity of renewing his loan every three or four years? Why, when the *general partnership* of the Bank of the People, deprived of its leader, was forced to liquidate itself, did they rejoice? Was the Bank of the People wronging them? Was it asking something of capital and rent? Was it attacking property and the government?... I will not push my questions any further: I am only asking these gentlemen, whom I do not suppose to be entirely bound by a pact of usury, why this astonishing reprobation on their part? Why?...

The Bank of the People, giving the example of popular initiative, both for the government and for the public economy, henceforth identified in the same synthesis, thus became, for the proletariat, both principle and instrument of emancipation: it created political and industrial liberty. And as all philosophy, all religion is the metaphysical or symbolic expression of the social economy, the Bank of the People, changing the material

basis of society, served as a prelude to the philosophical and religious revolution: at least that is how the founders conceived it.

Moreover, to bring out the revolutionary thought that presided over the founding of the Bank of the People, I cannot do better, after recalling its principle, than to compare it with the Luxembourg formula, reported by Louis Blanc.

I.

The starting point of the Bank of the People, the goal it pursued, was therefore liberty. It was through a greater development of individual liberty that it aspired to found collective liberty, a society that is both divergent and convergent, the true solidarity of intelligences. It was through liberty that it aspired to realize the republican motto: *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*.

First of all, what is liberty?

Liberty is of two kinds: simple, it is that of the barbarian, even of the civilized, as long as he recognizes no other law than that of *each at home, each for himself*; — compound, when it supposes, for its existence, the conjunction of two or more liberties.

From the barbarian point of view, liberty is synonymous with isolation: he is the freest whose action is the least limited by that of others; the existence of a single individual on the whole face of the globe would thus give the idea of the highest possible liberty. — From the social point of view, liberty and solidarity are identical terms: the liberty of each encountering in the liberty of others, no longer a limit, as stated in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen of 1793, but a auxiliary, the freest man is the one who has the most relations with his fellows.

These two ways of conceiving liberty being mutually exclusive, it follows that the liberty of the savage cannot be rationally and justly claimed by man living in society: one must choose.

Two nations are separated by an arm of the sea, or a chain of mountains. They are respectively free, as long as they do not communicate with each other, but they are poor; it is simple liberty: they will be freer and richer if they exchange their products; this is what I call compound liberty. The particular activity of each of these two nations being that much more extended as they mutually provide each other with more objects of consumption and labor, their liberty also becomes greater: for liberty is action. So exchange creates relations between nations which, while making their freedoms interdependent, increase their extent: liberty grows, like force, through union, *Vis unita major*. This elementary fact reveals to us a whole system of new developments for liberty, a system in which the exchange of products is only the first step.

Indeed: exchange would soon become a cause of subjugation, subordination, extreme embarrassment for the peoples, if it were always to be carried out according to the primitive mode, in kind. A means is needed that, without taking anything away from the

solidarity created by exchange, and consequently without diminishing the importance of exchanges, increases it on the contrary, and makes exchange as easy, as free as production itself.

This means is money. By the invention of money, *exchange* became COMMERCE, that is, property and community, individuality and solidarity combined together, in a word, liberty raised to its third power.

Thus, the man who labors, that is to say, who puts himself in a relationship of exchange with nature, is freer than he who ravages it, who steals it, like the barbarian. — Two workers who exchange their products, without otherwise associating, are freer than if they did not exchange them; — they will become even more so if, instead of exchange in kind, they adopt, in agreement with a large number of other producers, a common sign of circulation, such as money. Their freedom grows to the extent, I am not saying that they associate, but that they make a permutation of their services: this is once again what I call in turn simple liberty and compound liberty.

Now, just as exchange, without money, would have become a cause and a means of servitude; in the same way money, after having created among individuals more liberty and more action, would soon bring them back to a financial and corporative feudalism, to an organized servitude, a hundred times more unbearable than the previous misery, if, by a new means, analogous to metallic money, it was not possible to remedy this tendency of subordination, and consequently to raise liberty to a still higher degree.

Such is the problem that the Bank of the People has set out to solve.

It is a fact of experience that *cash*, that is to say, the most idealized, the most exchangeable, the most exact value; that which is used for all transactions, which was an instrument of economic liberty at the time when trade was done by exchange, becomes again an instrument of exploitation and parasitism when, thanks to the division of labor, industry and commerce have acquired a high degree of development, and then, by a sort of separation of economic powers, analogous to the separation of political powers, the producers come to be classified into two antagonistic parties, the entrepreneurs-capitalists-proprietors, and workers or employees.

It is therefore a question of restoring to freedom those whom money holds under its dependence; to free, in a word, the serfs of capital, as money itself had freed the serfs from the soil.

This, for the present, is the capital work of socialism.

However, it cannot be overlooked that such an innovation touches the foundations of the social economy; that this is an essentially organic question, which consequently requires the intervention of an authority superior to that of all established governments, the intervention of collective Reason, which is none other than Liberty itself.

And just as gold and silver, despite their price, did not originally have compulsory currency, and the use of them became established and generalized in commerce gradually and from the full will of all parties; likewise the new system of circulation, if one

discovers another, will have to be established spontaneously, by the free cooperation of the citizens, outside of any instigation and coercion of the power.

Which almost amounts to saying: For liberty to exist, liberty must be free. Invent, speculate, combine as much as you please, provided you do not impose your combinations on the people. Liberty, always liberty, nothing but liberty, and no governmentalism: that is the whole revolutionary catechism.

What therefore distinguishes, *a priori*, socialism, as it was professed at the Bank of the People, from that of the other schools; what sets it apart, independently of its speculative and synthetic value, is that its only condition and means of realization is liberty. Rooted in tradition, in accord with the Constitution and the laws, able to adapt to all usages, being itself, at its point of departure, only the broad application of a particular case of industrial circulation, it asks nothing of the State, it does not offend any legitimate interest, and it threatens no liberty.

It is not thus, it must be said, that socialism is understood elsewhere.

Louis Blanc waited, before acting, until he was a government, or at least a minister of progress: he needed, as he wrote himself, a dictatorial authority to do good.

Considerant and his friends have been asking for a credit of four million and a square league of land for twenty years to organize the model commune: they refuse to operate in today's world, they can get nothing out of it, and so they make a clean sweep of it. So that, if the model commune succeeded, the whole human race would have to move: which would be, it must be admitted, a revolution without example in the splendors of humanity, which however has not lacked innovations and metamorphoses. What did I say? Four million and a square league of land are not yet sufficient for the foundation of the phalanstery: it is necessary to choose, to sort out, from the young generation, a colony of four to five hundred children, who have not received from civilized society any fatal imprint. Fourierism needs, in order to experiment, virgin souls that it may knead as he pleases; as for the old adepts, depraved by civilization, they do not have enough faith in themselves; they would not dare to take themselves to compose their test staff.

Finally communism has completely despaired of the country. As if socialism, born in France, should not above all apply to France, the author of *Icaria* has made a split with the old world; he has gone to pitch his tent near the Redskins, on the banks of the Mississippi.

This ignorance of the goal and this contradiction of the means, which are found among most utopians, is the unequivocal sign of the impracticality of the theories as well as the impotence of the reformers. What! You want to make men freer, wiser, more beautiful and stronger, and you ask them, as a preliminary condition of the happiness you promise them, to abandon to you their body, their soul, their intelligence, their traditions, their goods, to make complete abjuration of their being into your hands! Who are you to substitute your quarter-hour wisdom for eternal, universal reason? Everything useful in the economy of nations, true in their beliefs, just in their institutions, beautiful and great in their monuments, has come about by liberty and by the logical deduction of prior facts. As for

the power itself, it only exists to protect acquired rights and maintain peace: to attribute to it a greater share of action is to act as protector-oppressor, as justice of the peace sergeant of pioneers. In anything other than the police, the regulations of the State are hindrances; its work is extortion; its encouragements, privileges; its influence, corruption. This thesis would require volumes: the history of the embezzlements of governments in politics, religion, industry, public works, finances, taxes, etc., etc., etc., would at this moment be the work most useful to democracy.

Have you then conceived a fortunate idea? Do you have any important discovery? Hasten to communicate it to your fellow citizens; then put your hand to the work yourself, undertake, act and neither solicit nor attack the Government. It is madness and injustice to beat down the walls of the Authority with your democratic and social ram; turn it rather against the inertia of the masses, against the governmental prejudice that checks all popular enthusiasm, and drop despotism for its very uselessness. Arouse this collective action, without which the condition of the people will be eternally miserable and their efforts impotent. Instead of chasing the power, just beg it not to meddle in anything; and teach the people to make for themselves, without the help of the power, wealth and order.

This, in my soul and conscience, is how I have always understood socialism. That is what kept me away from other schools, what I wanted before February, what my friends and I tried to achieve afterwards. Apart from my proposal of July 31, the sole purpose of which was to invite the State to give the necessary notoriety to the new principles of the social economy, by establishing a mutual tax, I have never proposed to the state to do anything; I have not brought to the tribune any kind of project. As long as I had the honor of representing the people, I let my parliamentary initiative sleep: my silence was the most useful and intelligent act of my political career. My votes were almost always negative. It was a question, most of the time, of preventing the utopias or the bad will of the majority from occurring: I would have voted with the same resolution against the utopias of the minority.

The Bank of the People was, on the part of the citizens who then rallied to the ideas put forward by *Le Peuple*, the effect of this spirit of enterprise, so natural to our country, but which our mania for government tends to make ever rarer. After the vote on the Constitution and the election of Louis Bonaparte, the need to act seemed imperative to us. The moderate government of General Cavaignac, the more reactionary one of Louis Bonaparte, left little hope to the schools; as for the Mountain, its various programs are there to prove that apart from popular action, it would have been like the conservative party, completely sterile. There was charlatanism and cowardice, in our opinion, in talking eternally about socialism, without undertaking anything socialist.

As much as the necessity was pressing, the opportunity presented itself. Although the fervor was no longer the same as at the time of the demonstrations of the Luxembourg, minds that had become more reasoning, were more enlightened. Socialism as a whole had to accept the principle of *Free Credit*: the idea had caught on so well that counterfeits were

already being published. Some, affecting to confuse the Bank of the People with the Mazel Bank, went so far as to reproach me with having stolen the idea of this economist; others, stirring up their store funds, had discovered in it a so-called theory of free credit, according to which it was proved to me that I understood nothing of the matter, and that true free credit was not free from the everything. Misery of parties and sects! The day when, by the application of a vulgar fact, it was believed that the society of the Bank of the People was on the eve of becoming a power, the director was accused, called a thief and a plagiarist, by those very people who, for eight years, had been fighting the negative formula of free credit, in the well-known definition of property.

Everything urged us to act, the dignity of the party, the favorable opportunity, the impatience of the workers. The people began to understand that the circulation of values, which must not be confused with the transport of goods, as Mazel did, could and should take place without compensation; that this operation being carried out free of charge, all commercial matters were settled, *ipso facto*, in cash; that thus the discount, the limited partnership, the loan at interest, the amortization, the leases on land and rent, the investments with a life or perpetual annuity, etc., became formulas of credit henceforth without object, institutions outside on duty.

And now this enterprise, of which I have just made known the anti-governmental principle, the economic scope, the spirit of high initiative and profound liberalism, was it then, in respect of the execution, so difficult? I affirm, after what three months, I cannot say of setting in motion, but of preparations, revealed to us, that nothing is simpler.

The *circulation of values* being taken as the starting point of economic reform, contrary to the Banque Mazel, whose principle is the *circulation of products*, that is to say exchange, the whole question was to create a center circulation where the ordinary commercial securities, on a particular basis, fixed term, individual subscription, came to be exchanged, under the conditions of security and ordinary guarantee, against general securities bearing the social character, which, passing from hand to hand, like endorsed bills, would produce, without entries, the effect of a transfer of parties between all the customers, however numerous, of the Bank.

Theoretically, operations could begin as soon as there were two members of the Bank; the more, afterwards, the number of adherents rose, the more prompt, the more decisive were to be the effects of the institution.

One of the main ones was, as the members arrived at the Bank, to withdraw little by little from circulation the cash, which had become useless; consequently to restore to the producers a capital currently employed in pure loss. At the same time, the very important problem of the balance of trade was solved: with the parasitism of money, the parasitism of customs fell.

Such, in a few words, is the economic idea—simpler than that of money—which was to form the basis of the operations of the Bank of the People, and which had the advantage

of being misunderstood and disdained by the socialists, hissed by the economists, declared unintelligible by the democrats, factious by the doctrinaires, and sacrilege by the Jesuits. Let a man say: I have an engine that runs without air, without water, without steam, without fuel; whose construction, raw material costs included, does not cost a hundred cents per horsepower, and whose maintenance expense is zero; an engine that makes all your machines, your construction sites, your draft and plow animals useless; which eliminates from the outset three-quarters of the workforce, and saves six billion on the cost of production; — such a man will be treated as a public enemy, and pursued like a monster by everyone. The poor will complain that he takes away their work; the rich that he robs them of their income; the politically afflicted will ask how, by eliminating six billions of manpower, it is possible to increase the public fortune by six billions; priests and devotees will accuse this man of materialism; the radicals and the doctrinaires will reproach him for neglecting political interests, the socialists for slyly reconstructing the proprietary regime. We will see the pamphlets fall like hail, the newspapers fulminate, and the Academy of Moral Sciences, in a motivated agenda, cry anathema to the unfortunate inventor.

The Bank of the People was, like the proposal for a withholding on all income and wages, a particular application of the principle of mutuality, the basis of the social economy. I have already remarked that by virtue of this principle the phenomena of social economy are inverse to those of domestic economy, so inappropriately called *political economy* .. Let us add that the common error of parties, Communists as well as Conservatives, comes from the fact that both persist in dealing with the affairs of society and the State according to the routine of self-interest. individual and forms of citizen-to-citizen transactions. It is thus that the system of Louis Blanc, which aroused at the same time such great enthusiasm and such energetic reprobation, is nothing other than the government of M. Thiers, extended to agricultural and industrial production, which the State had, up to this day, respected. The economic ideas of these two writers are absolutely the same, except for the generality of application: it is always the domestic economy serving as the rule of the state, the management of the father of the family taken as a type of government. In both, the state sells, buys, lends, borrows, pays interest and collects income, makes profits, pays clerks, directors, employees, saves, hoards, amortizes, sponsors, etc., just like an owner or a limited company. In a word, the habits and customs of the family, of individual property, of private industry, of private commerce, applied to the State: here is the cause of all the embarrassments, of all the obstructions of society; that is why the Socialists have until now been only Malthusians in disguise, just as the Jacobins, with their politics, are only a counterfeit of absolutism.

It is, moreover, what will come out, with the last evidence, from the examination of the Luxembourg *Formula*, which Louis Blanc was to propose for adoption by the Provisional Government. We will see that the author of the *Organization of Labor* deserved neither so much love nor so much hatred for his theory: he was an outspoken

writer who, in imitation of all those who dealt with these matters, applying to society what can only be true of the particular, arrived all the more surely at the absurd as he deduced more logically the consequences of his hypothesis.

II.

Draft Decree.

(*Excerpt from the* NOUVEAU MONDE, September 15, 1849.)

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

— *Observations.* — The government is without competence to accomplish a social revolution. The hope of bringing about peacefully, in this way, the abolition of the proletariat is a utopia, and the ministry of progress a sinecure.

Art. 2. — For this, the Ministry of Progress would be charged: 1. With redeeming by means of rents from the State, the railways and the mines;

Society buys nothing, nor stipulates nor pays annuities. The creation of a public debt is an error of social economy, suggested by the habits of domestic economy, which has as its invariable corollary bankruptcy.

2. Transforming the Banque de France into a State Bank;

The State does not make the Bank. The theory of Law is still an error of social economy, renewed from domestic economy.

3. Centralizing, to the great advantage of all and to the benefit of the State, insurance;

The state is not an insurer. Insurance, from the point of view of society, is an essentially mutualist operation, which excludes any idea of profit. Suppose, by a law of public utility, the tax reduced to a single form to be converted into an insurance premium established by the State on the net capital of each taxpayer, the insurance, in this case, would no longer be an operation of profitable commerce, but an act of mutuality, the effect of which would be precisely to cancel the interest on capital, the usurious profits of commerce, and consequently, which would leave the State no species of profit.

4. Establishing, under the direction of responsible officials, vast warehouses, where producers and manufacturers would be allowed to deposit their goods and their commodities, which would be represented by receipts having a negotiable value, and which could serve as paper money. perfectly guaranteed, since it would have as pledge a specific, appraised commodity.

The State does not engage in warehouse trade. The goods must go straight from the place of production to that of consumption, without stopping en route in stations and stores. — Receipts for merchandise brought to the warehouse are very imperfectly guaranteed paper money, since it is not enough, to constitute a VALUE, that the merchandise be *appraised*, it must be SOLD AND DELIVERED.

Art. 3. — Of the profits that the railways, the mines, the insurance companies, the Bank, bring to-day to private speculation, and which under the new system would return to the State, together with those which would result from the rights of warehouse, the Ministry of Progress would make up its special budget, the workers' budget.

The state does not make profits. The *net* product, in society, is not distinguished from the *gross* product. — To say that the profits of private speculation would revert, through the channel of the State and the Ministry of Progress, to the workers, is to say that they would revert to private speculation, which, in the hypothesis, is a contradiction.

Art. 4. — The interest and the amortization of the sums due as a result of the preceding operations would be deducted from the budget of the workers; the rest would be used, 1st, to sponsor labor associations; 2^d to found agricultural colonies.

The State contracting no debts, does not have to pay interest and amortization. And since it has no income either, it does not sponsor associations, does not found colonies. — The solution to the problem does not consist in dispossessing the current farmers to replace them with other farmers, associated or not, but in ensuring that the producers obtain credit at the lowest possible rate, which is zero; that consumers buy the products at the lowest possible price, which is the cost price; that the worker receives a salary equal to his service, neither less nor more; that commerce finds in the country itself an always sufficient outlet, which means always equal to production, however high it rises. Under these conditions, there are no longer either exploiters nor exploited. Organization by the state is nonsense.

Art. 5. — To be called upon to enjoy the sponsorship of the State, workers' associations should be instituted according to the principle of a fraternal solidarity, so as to be able to acquire a collective, inalienable and ever-growing capital: the only way to manage to kill usury, large or small, to make capital no longer an instrument of tyranny, the possession of the instruments of labor a privilege, credit a commodity, well-being an exception, idleness a right.

Solidarity, if it is based on something other than mutuality, is the negation of individual freedom: it is communism, the government of man by man. If it is based on mutuality, it has nothing to do with state sponsorship; it does not even need association. Association, as you understand it, as you define it according to the Civil Code and the Commercial Code, is yet another renewed idea of the patriarchal economy, which, far from tending to multiply, tends on the contrary, to disappear: where working conditions

make it necessary to have recourse to it, it is not a force, it is a burden. As for usury and credit, how can you hope to kill the first, when you stipulate interest and profit? And how can you say that the second will cease to be a commodity, when you establish a right of warehousing?

Art. 6. — Consequently, any workers' association wishing to enjoy the sponsorship of the State, would be required to accept, as the constituent bases of its existence, the following provisions:

It is not for the state to regulate the conditions of association of workers. It is to destroy corporate freedom, at the same time as individual freedom; it is to reproduce at the same time, in another form, both the feudal obstacles to the freedom of commerce and industry, and the monarchical laws against the meetings and associations of citizens. For the rest, let us see your statutes:

After deducting the price of wages, interest on capital, maintenance and equipment costs, the profit will be distributed as follows:

A quarter for the amortization of the capital belonging to the proprietor with whom the State would have dealt;

A quarter for the establishment of a relief fund for the aged, the sick, the wounded, etc.;

A quarter to be shared among the laborers as a profit, as will be indicated below;

Finally, a quarter for the formation of a reserve fund, the destination of which will be indicated below.

Thus will be constituted the association in a workshop.

You constantly talk about wages, interest, depreciation, profits, all things that, together with the price of the raw material, constitute the selling price. But what is the measure of wages? What is a working day? What will be the price of the loan then? How much profit should be made? Should the price of the thing be measured by the needs of the worker, or should the needs of the worker be regulated by the price of the thing? Finally, what is value? This is what you should know, before talking about remuneration and sharing; this is the bear that must be killed before selling its skin. Without it, you build in the air; and the *constitutive bases* of your associations are nothing else, according to yourself, than hypotheses. Let us follow.

It would remain to extend the association between all the workshops of the same industry, in order to make them solidary with one another.

Two conditions would suffice.

First, the cost price would be determined; one would fix, having regard to the situation of the industrial world, the figure of the licit profit above the cost price, so as to arrive at a uniform price and to prevent any competition between the workshops of the same industry.

Then one would establish in all the workshops of the same industry a salary not equal, but proportional, the conditions of the material life not being identical on all the points of France.

Always communist solidarity, instead of mutualist solidarity; always government of man by man, always servitude.

One would determine the cost price! It is almost as if you were to say: we will find perpetual motion, we will square the circle. The cost price is made up, in the last analysis, of wages. Now, what is wages? What is the working day? Is the wage measured by the needs of the worker, or by the price that the consumer can give for the commodity? what is the price what is value? You always have to come back to that.

The figure of the lawful profit would be fixed. It is as if you were still saying: we will fix the figure for the lawful theft. It is with profit as with interest, as with price, as with value: it is determined either by the competition of producers or by the need of the consumer; it has no legal measure. It must be rejected entirely or admitted in all its possibilities, with all its oscillations.

In order to arrive at a uniform price and to prevent any competition. Monopoly, coalition, immobility. The price, like the value, is something essentially mobile, consequently essentially variable, which, in its variations, is regulated only by competition, that is to say by the that which the consumer finds in himself. or in others to dispense with the services of the one who overrates them. Take away the competition, things no longer have a price; value is just a word; the exchange is arbitrary; circulation has lost its balance wheel; society, deprived of motive power, stops like a pendulum whose spring is relaxed.

A proportional wage would be established in the workshops of the same industry. The same question always comes up. What makes the price? What constitutes value? What is, for Paris and for each commune, the limit or proportion of the salary?.... The solution of these problems supposes a whole science, the most difficult, the most bristling with contradictions: it is to make fun of its readers that to tell them, as the only information: *we will determine, we will establish, we will fix.*

Solidarity thus established between all the workshops of the same industry, there would finally be to realize the sovereign condition of order, that which will have to make hatreds, wars, REVOLUTIONS forever impossible: this would be to establish solidarity between all the various industries, between all the members of society.

Here we find the man of March 17. Louis Blanc, like all men in government, is an enemy of revolutions. It is to prevent revolutions that he creates a solidarity of marble and bronze, first between all the workers of the same workshop, then between all the workshops of the same industry, then between all the industries. The world thus solidified, it can be challenged to make a movement. The Bank of the People, on the contrary, wants to regularize the revolution, to establish it permanently, to make it the legal, constitutional

and juridical state of society. We are systematically revolutionary: Louis Blanc is systematically counter-revolutionary.

Two conditions are essential for this:

To calculate the total sum of the profits of each industry, and to divide this total sum among all the workers.

The sum total of the profits of each industry is an idea that involves contradiction. In a fragmented society and in anarchic competition, the profit of one is made up of the deficit of the other; profit indicates a relationship of rivalry and antagonism specific to the domestic economy. But where all the workers in the same industry, where all the industries in the State, are associated and united, there is no longer room for profit. For if the lawful profit is equal for all, it is zero, there is identity between the selling price and the cost price, between the *net* product and the *gross product*. Sharing the profits among all the workers in each industry is as absurd as giving everyone £25,000 of unearned income.

Then, from the various reserve funds of which we spoke earlier, to form a fund for mutual assistance between all industries, so that those that, one year, would be suffering, would be helped by those that have prospered. A great capital would thus be formed, which would not belong to anyone in particular, but would belong to all collectively.

The distribution of this capital of the whole society would be entrusted to a board of directors placed at the top of all the workshops. In its hands would be united the reins of all industries, as in the hand of an engineer appointed by the State would be entrusted the direction of each particular industry.

Contradictions upon contradictions! After talking to us about *profits*, Louis Blanc talks to us about *reserve funds*: another idea borrowed from the domestic economy, but which vanishes in the social economy.

The reserve fund is that part of the producer's assets that is neither product, nor instrument of production, nor movable or immovable wealth, but free or realized capital, that is to say money. But money is not wealth for society: it is quite simply a means of circulation, which could very advantageously be replaced by paper, by a substance of zero value. It follows from this that, in society, money cannot become *a reserve fund*. What did I say? There is no reserve fund for society. Everything is machine or commodity, instrument of production or object of consumption. A social reserve! Good God! It is a remainder in an equation.

As for the board of directors, responsible for *distributing the reserve fund of the company*, it is the most pleasant joke that has ever come to the head of a utopian. The reserve of society consists of all the products manufactured in advance by each industry, and which await the consumer in stores. The distribution of this reserve fund is nothing other than circulation, the *exchange of products for products*. — There are times when the

dazed human species can only be brought back to common sense by the grossest platitudes. We are in one of those times.

The State would achieve the realization of this plan by successive measures. It's not about hurting anyone. The State would give its model: next to it would live the private associations, the current economic system. But such is the force of elasticity that we believe in ours, that in a short time, it is our firm belief, it would be spread over all society, drawing rival systems into its bosom by the irresistible pull of its potential. It will be the stone thrown into the water, tracing circles that are born one from the other while growing ever larger.

Art. 7. Agricultural colonies would be founded for the same purpose, according to the same principles, and on the same bases.

After having thus laid out his plan, Louis Blanc urges the workers' associations to consult one another, to tie between them *this precious bond of solidarity that will sustain them*, he says, *against the surrounding environment*; to create, in a word, by their spontaneous organization, the Ministry of Progress. This is to end where it should have begun: it is curious to see the theoretician of organization by the State appealing to popular initiative. Unfortunately, if the advice is good, the means indicated are detestable: I want no other proof of this than this Ministry of Progress which comes back again at the end of the exhortations of Louis Blanc. Outside the Church there is no salvation; outside the Government, there is no liberty: the reformer of Luxembourg does not get out of this!...

I have never doubted, for my part, the good faith of Louis Blanc, the firm belief he has in his *system*, and his determined will to realize it, if the Ministry of Progress had given him the means. It is by this affirmative spirit, by this bold and enterprising genius, much more than by the qualities of his style and the depth of his studies, that Louis Blanc is in my eyes a respectable writer, and one who deserves to be refuted. Today, when the initiative from above is lost for his theory, he urges the workers, with all the force of his eloquence, to realize it by their own initiative, which is already a contradiction to his system, as the practice will show him. That is not all: after having reproduced and developed, from the communist point of view, Law's theory of credit by the State, Louis Blanc, in the first number of the *Nouveau Monde*, sided with the principle of *free credit*, without thinking that free credit is the very negation of credit by the State, as *profit*, *interest*, *depreciation*, *net product*, *uniform wage*, *social reserve*, *solidarity without competition*, *communism*, *governmentalism*, everything that, in a word, constitutes the *organization of labor* and the *association*, according to Louis Blanc.

The Bank of the People was founded in opposition to the theories of Luxembourg, as well as the absolutist and Malthusian theories: it is strange that people want to make of it today a means of communitarian feudalism and mercantile governmentality. Create free credit, credit that ensures both, to each producer, without any condition of solidarity

association, the instrument of labor and the outlet, and community, the government of man by man, in all forms and to all degrees, becomes forever impossible.

The economic question was simplified by the Bank of the People in a striking way. No more communism, Saint-Simonism, Fourierism, neo-Christianity, mysticism. It was only a question of knowing, without regard to the consequences, whether the circulation of values could take place gratuitously or not; whether this circulation was legal or illegal; if capital had the right to a claim against the competition of mutuality; whether the workers, whatever the divergence of the theories of organization presented to them, would accept a combination of credit that, at the first attempt, freed them from a levy of 6 billion, or whether they would reject it. Here, reactionary declamations about family and property had no hold; projects of association, phalanstery, colonization, only appeared to be underpinned; the whole question was reduced to cheapness, to free capital. The peasant then understood that it was one thing to abolish usury, to reduce it progressively, by an established competition between circulating capital and immobile capital., the price of rent; and another thing to dispossess contractors and proprietors, without public utility and without compensation. The problem thus received a peaceful and legal solution: the Revolution passed without hurting or alarming anyone.

The three months of January, February and March 1849, during which the principle of free credit was, if not applied and developed, at least formulated, concretized and thrown into the public consciousness by the Bank of the People, were the best time of my life: I will always regard them, whatever Heaven commands of me, as my most glorious campaign. With the Bank of the People as its center of operations, an industrial army was organized, innumerable, on the peaceful terrain of business, outside the sphere of intrigues and political agitations. It was really the new world, the society of promise, which, grafting itself onto the old one, was transforming it little by little, with the help of the hitherto obscure principle which it borrowed from it. Despite the muted hostility of rival schools,¹⁸ despite the indifference of the Montagnard party, whose attention was absorbed by politics, the number of members of the Bank of the People had risen, in six weeks, to nearly twenty thousand, representing a population of at least sixty thousand people. And the journals of English Political Economy, because they judge a commercial transaction by the number of sponsors, not by the extent of the clientele and the market, dared to gloat about a postponement that the forced retirement of the director made necessary! Can you imagine what twenty thousand producers could do, who, subject to each adherent's liberty of action and personal responsibility, centralized the circulation of all the values produced by them or consumed?

¹⁸ This hostility has come to light in recent publications by Pierre Leroux and Louis Blanc. While acknowledging the principle of free credit, too popular for them to oppose it, these two socialists decry the Bank of the People, which they treat, the first as absurd, because the triad is not there; the second anti-social, because it presupposes the principle, *To each according to his works!*

The Bank of the People would cost nothing to the citizens, nothing to the State. It could one day return to this one an income of 200 millions, while it guaranteed to the others an outlet always open, an endless work. It will be necessary, a little sooner, a little later, to call to aid the burdened State, the desolate Country, this fruitful institution, from which I challenge the routines of commerce and finance to escape, as I challenge the so-called socialists to substitute anything for it. But before that we will have spent hundreds of millions in assistance, armament, transportation costs, colonization, repression, incarceration; we will have tried all the most ridiculous, vexatious, ruinous economic chimeras, mortgage bonds, fictitious circulation, loans with heavy usury, taxes of every sort, progressive, sumptuary, on revenue, inheritance, etc., in order to end in bankruptcy.

Such is the course of Humanity, when it is delivered up to its prejudices, and administered by its truckers and its braggarts. Our unfortunate country must suffer, still suffer, always suffer, for the glory of a handful of ignorant pedants and the satisfaction of the Jesuits. Those who thus exhaust it and assassinate it are called conservatives; and we, who, in order to preserve it from the most horrible catastrophes, only asked it for a little tolerance, we are the enemies of the family and of property! Irony!

XIV.
DECEMBER 10:

LOUIS BONAPARTE.

We must not want to explain everything in history: that would be a pretension as full of perils as it is devoid of philosophy. Wisdom has its limits, said the apostle, beyond which reasoning and reason are only vanity and affliction of spirit. However, there are facts that, at first glance, give the appearance of inexplicable accidents, to be attributed solely to fortune, but for which, with persevering research, one ends up finding the reason. The election of December 10 is one of these.

I have searched, for more than six months, not for the cause, for no one is unaware of it, but the philosophical meaning of the election of Louis Bonaparte to the presidency of the Republic, of this election that delighted some so much, that scandalized others so much, and at which everyone was rightly amazed. Louis Bonaparte, President of the Republic! this was indeed the arbitrary fact against which even a little rigorous reason stiffens, because it finds in it neither motive nor pretext. All the events accomplished since February fell under the law of history: this alone escaped it. It was no longer a real, rational development: it was a creation of electoral pleasure, a legend, a myth, of which the *Moniteur* related the beginning, the middle and the end, but of which it was forbidden to assign the intelligible reason, to make the logical deduction, in a word, to explain the meaning. The decrees of Providence cannot be discussed: we cannot reason with God.

It took me no less, to find the answer to this enigma, than the testimony of Louis Bonaparte himself...Man is the *Self* of Providence as of Nature. It is rare that he does not have an intuition, some feeling of his destiny; and Louis Bonaparte, explaining of his great fortune what no one, without him, would not have been able to understand, is the most striking example of that identity of *subject* and *object* that forms the basis of modern metaphysics.

To appreciate the full depth of Louis Bonaparte's judgment of himself, let us first prove that, following the rules of human prudence, the voters had every conceivable reason to reject this candidate, who signified for each of them only the unknown... The unknown: what an electoral reason!

Whether one considered the person of the candidate, or whether one placed oneself in the point of view of the parties that divided the Republic, it seemed to me impossible to arrive at an explanation. Undoubtedly, the ballot of December 10 had taught me what France did not want: five and a half million votes given to an exile without titles, without illustrious antecedents, without a party, against less than two million unequally distributed between Cavaignac, Ledru-Rollin, Raspail, Changarnier, Lamartine, made him well enough known. But what France wanted, the wish, the idea, political or social, that it pursued by choosing, to represent it in the executive power, Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte,

formerly condemned by the court of peers and locked up in the castle of Ham as guilty of attacking the government: this is what I could not understand,

Nothing is more serious than illogical situations. All our misunderstandings, from December 10, came from the fact that Louis Bonaparte remained for everyone a misunderstood character; from the fact that he himself, despite the intuition he has of his role, has not yet been able to explain philosophically what he represents, what he is. I declare, as far as I am concerned, that the opposition I made to him before and since his election had no other cause than this involuntary ignorance in which I remained so long. What I can't guess is what I hate the most in the world: I would have killed the Sphinx, like Oedipus, or I would have been devoured. — What had Louis Bonaparte done to me?" No offense. On the contrary, he had warned me, and if I only consider our hour-long relationship in terms of politeness, then I am indebted to him. And yet, no sooner was there any mention of this candidacy than, seeking the answer to the riddle and not finding it, I felt that this man, despite the glory of his name, was becoming antipathetic to me, hostile to me. At all other times, I would have pitied this young man, returning, after thirty years of exile, to an unknown country, and making to the people, on the mortgage of his election, promises of good faith no doubt, but as chimerical as those of the Luxembourg and the Hôtel-de-Ville. But after February, after June, after November 4, Louis Bonaparte falling in the middle of that circle of the damned which Legitimists, Orleanists, classical Republicans, Jacobins and Socialists made around the presidency! — It seemed to me so marvelous, incomprehensible, that I, like M. Thiers, could only see in it one more shame for my country.

Let us leave the man aside: it is not a question here of the son of Hortense, but of the country that took him as a sign. What! I said, here is the one whom France, this so-called queen of the peoples, led by her priests, by her novelists and her roués, has gone to choose as its leader, on the faith of his name, like a customer that take a piece of merchandise for the label on the sack! Out of respect for this title of republicans, which we have unworthily usurped; out of respect for our representatives, charged by us with making a republican Constitution, we had, it seems, to choose for President of the Republic a republican. And if great individuals were lacking, significant notabilities were not. Cavaignac was the moderate republic. Hadn't he done everything for the republic? Ledru-Rollin, the red republic; Bugeaud, Changarnier, the military republic. We knew these people: once in the presidency, they could give us no worries. And now, without any plausible reason, without respect for our dignity, only to flout those who had founded and served the Republic, we gave the palm to a dynastic, fantastic, mystical candidacy!...

The more I searched, the more I despaired.

The presidential power, according to the Constitution, must last four years; the outgoing president can only be re-elected after another four years. This provision, which leaves no room for monarchical inclinations, required the choice of a citizen whose sole ambition was to have been, for four years, with dedication and patriotism, the first among

his fellow citizens, and to have registered with honor his name in the annals of our history. But we, as if to defy fortune, we chose a man of breeding, a pretender, it was said, a prince! Already it was assured that one would not wait for the expiration of the four years to revise the Constitution and extend the powers of Louis Bonaparte. In this way, the presidential authority was brought closer to the royal authority, the transition was smoothed, the way was prepared for a restoration. All this, it was added, for the sake of legality and respect for the Constitution. O doctrinaires! more cowardly than the Jesuits! Tear up this Constitution right away! Aren't you the strongest? Isn't the appeal to the people against the Constitution worth today what it will be worth in four years? If you believe that a nation can validly renounce its imprescriptible rights, restore a corrupting royalty, and abolish universal suffrage, your adjournment of four years is cowardice without profit. Against a surreptitious pact, insurrection is the first of rights and the holiest of duties. Just remember that what you have done against the Republic, we will do against the Monarchy! Dare to lead by example.

Thus I exhaled against an imaginary peril, which seemed to me the logical consequence of the election of Louis Bonaparte. And I thought myself all the more justified in my complaints, as I had seemed to see the announcement of such projects in the candidate's circulars.

Since it was a question of an elective, temporary, responsible magistracy, it was the brilliance of the services, the greatness of the talents, the character, which must above all be considered in the President. In the Republic, the magistrate must offer the type of republican virtue, as he is the reflection, under the monarchy, of royal dignity. Now, what title, what reason did Louis Bonaparte give for his candidacy? a kinship, a hereditary claim. He himself had said it: What makes me seek your votes, citizens, is that my name is Bonaparte! *Nominor quia leo*. Even before the election of December 10, this argument had already seemed so decisive, so peremptory, that it had sufficed to determine, in addition to the election of Louis Bonaparte to the national representation, those of Napoleon Bonaparte, Pierre Bonaparte, Lucien Bonaparte, Murat, son of Caroline Bonaparte, all princes of the blood. Let us add Jérôme Bonaparte, governor of the Invalides, at 40,000 fr. salaries; plus Antoine Bonaparte, who has just been elected representative by the department of Yonne. There is only Charles Bonaparte, the Roman, Mazzini's friend, whom we did not want. And we would be the revolutionary race, the initiating people, the Christ of the nations! Who then has said that?... This idea infuriated me.

If from the consideration of the elected I passed to that of the voters, I could find no more reason for their choice. Neither the reds, nor the whites, nor the blues, nor the tricolors, had any reason to push so hard for the thing. Party interest, fidelity to principle, care for the future, compelled everyone to act directly against Louis Bonaparte. Instead, everyone, by dint of hating each other, seemed to have joined forces for him!

As, on this occasion, I had to endure more than one insult, I will relate what passed in the democratic party. By these, judge of the others.

After the vote on the Constitution, the polemic, already started between the *Peuple* and the organs of the Mountain on the social questions, took a new degree of animosity on the subject of the election of the President. All my apprehensions were confirmed.

Socialism, precisely because it is a protest against capital, is a protest against the power. Now the Mountain intended to bring about socialism through the power, and, what is worse, to use socialism to arrive at power!... It was already a very serious question for the socialist party to know whether it would withdraw in a systematic abstention, or if, to count itself and know its strengths, it would adopt some sort of candidate, in two words, if it would make a governmental act or not. The Mountain, on its own authority, had decided the question, by declaring that Ledru-Rollin, against whom we had nothing to object, would be the candidate of the democratic and social Republic.

The *Peuple* first opposed to this decision, which they considered in every way contrary to socialism, the well-known opinion of the Mountain itself on the presidency. It made it understood that it would be dishonorable to the party, after having rejected with so much energy the principle of the separation of powers, to appear to sacrifice democratic dogma to the lure of an election; that it would seem that the presidential institution was feared much less for itself than for the character who could be clothed with it, and so on. — Our friends thought they could remove the difficulty by making the candidate undertake, on his honor, if he were elected, to use his authority to have the Constitution revised immediately, to recognize the right to work, and to abolish the presidency: a precaution which, in our eyes, had the triple defect of being unconstitutional, impracticable and supremely puerile.

The *Peuple* then tried to recall minds to practice. It pointed out that, since we persisted in voting, we had to be convinced of at least one thing, namely: that the candidate of the social democracy had no chance; that consequently the votes that would be given to him, being able only to serve to raise the figure of the absolute majority, would diminish by as much the probabilities in favor of Louis Bonaparte, and would increase in the same proportion the chances of Cavaignac; that thus, to vote for Raspail or Ledru-Rollin, was in reality to vote for the victor of June, the man that at that time we hated the most. Which of these two candidates, Cavaignac or Louis Bonaparte, should socialist democracy fear more to see rise to the presidency? This, said the *Peuple*, was how the question should be posed.

This observation, all arithmetic, seemed a defection. The *Peuple* was banished from the democracy. They invoked, in desperation, the need for union, the need for discipline: it is with this that the hotheads end up getting the better of the timid. The *Peuple* replied that union was only possible on the ground of principles: the candidacy of Raspail was maintained opposite that of Ledru-Rollin.

Poor Montagnards, poor myopics! You wanted power, you were going to have it, but it would be for the last time! Finally, the election of Louis Bonaparte brought harmony among the patriots. In hatred of the democracy, vanquished by itself in March, April, May, June; in contempt of the moderate republic; forgetting the services of Cavaignac, power was awarded to Louis-Napoleon. To the possibility of a Fructidor the nation responded with the possibility of a Brumaire. Once again, was this a reason of state? Was this, for a great nation, mistress of itself, a consideration worthy of such great interest?

It will perhaps be asked, since the candidate of the socialist democracy had no chance, what the party could gain, according to the *People*, either by not voting, or by rallying to the party represented by Cavaignac; what reasons, finally, we had to oppose the accession of Louis Bonaparte.

By not voting, the socialist democracy struck the world with a blatant act of political skepticism; it renounced its governmentalism; it was swelled by all the abstentions, and thus quadrupled its numerical strength. Moreover, it fixed in advance the point on which the revision of the Constitution was to bear in 1852, and thus determined the character of the future constitutional opposition. Finally, if the example of the democrats was not followed, at least they did not suffer the shame of an outrageous defeat.

By voting for Cavaignac, the socialist democracy obeyed the principle of fusion that forms its essence; it rubbed off on the moderate republic; it was beginning to assimilate it; it marked the goal towards which tended, by the force of their common ideal, all the republican fractions; it imposed itself on the country as the government of the future, and advanced its triumph by several years.

These reasons, which then seemed unanswerable to us, were set aside by the popular inspiration of December 10. What intelligence could have guessed then what the general thought concealed?

But, it will be added, because the democratic and socialist party lacked perspicacity on this occasion, was that a reason for you to divide it again? What good is this candidacy of Raspail?

Raspail's candidacy was motivated precisely by that of Ledru-Rollin. A party which, unanimously among its members, lies to its principle, is a lost party. By voting for Cavaignac, the democracy would simply have made an act of obedience to the Constitution; it did not adhere to it, it reserved its principle and maintained its doctrines intact. While by voting for Ledru-Rollin, it declared itself for the governmental theory, it was no longer socialist and became doctrinaire. It was necessary, for the honor of its future opposition, that a protest should arise from its bosom: otherwise it had only, after December 10, to be silent or to conspire.

All these reasons, I recognize today, could well have had some value then: they were far from the lofty wisdom which, by pushing the masses to the election, commanded them in a whisper to vote for Louis Bonaparte. But everything came together then to confuse our judgment.

Could we, then, in this inconceivable entraining of minds in the memory of a despot, see anything other than a blind hatred of the democratic and social revolution, an ignoble protest against the 45 centimes? Now, as we have so often been reproached for it to other Socialists, it is not all to deny, it is necessary to affirm: what was it that the country claimed to affirm by appointing Louis Bonaparte? What inspiration was it obeying? What principle did it intend to lay down? Was it a reactionary idea? Cavaignac could, just as well as the nephew of the Emperor, serve the reactors: he proved it in June. He had, moreover, the merit of not offending either the elder Bourbons or the younger Bourbons. He was a simple president of a republic: we had nothing to fear in him as a pretender. What could have decided the Legitimist party, what had determined the Orleanist party, in favor of a Bonaparte? How could the leaders of these two parties, such skillful men, fail to see that if Louis Bonaparte attached himself to the Republic and took the defense of the Constitution into his own hands, sooner or later he would rally the republicans, and do against the fallen dynasties all that Cavaignac could have done, and better still than Cavaignac? That if, on the contrary, he followed his first inclination, if he returned to his imperial ideas, they would we have in him, for four years, one more competitor? Four years, when it comes to a crown, that's it. The Legitimists, the Orleanists, and all of reaction, had therefore reasoned as falsely as the democrats; they had betrayed their principles, and failed in all the laws of prudence, by rallying to this candidacy that excluded the hope of their dynasties. Alone, with the Republicans of the Left who voted for Cavaignac, with the small number of Socialists who rallied in the name of Raspail, the *Peuple* was on the right path, on the path of logic and loyalty to the Republic. That's why I fought with all my strength against the candidacy of Louis-Napoleon: I thought I was opposing the Empire, while, — wretch! — I stood in the way of the Revolution. I wanted to impede Ezekiel's chariot, to force the hand of Him who reigns in the heavens and who governs the Republics, as Bossuet says; and it was towards Humanity that I made myself a sacrilege! I am punished for it: *Meâ culpâ!*

Frankly, I would not have asked for better, before December 10, than to rally to the candidacy of Louis Bonaparte, and after December 10, than to support his government if he had been able to tell me by what cause, at the name of what principle, by virtue of what historical, political or social necessity, he had been made President of the Republic, rather than Cavaignac, rather than Ledru-Rollin. But rulers leave everything to the ruled to guess; and the more I thought about it, the more, in spite of my good will, I became perplexed. Absorbed in my reflections, I thought one day that I had found the solution I was looking for in these prophetic words of Mirabeau, recalled by Chateaubriand in a circumstance which was not without analogy with December 10, 1848, I mean the coronation of Emperor, December 5, 1804: "We give a new example of that blind and mobile inconsideration that has led us from age to age to all the crises that have successively afflicted us. It seems that our eyes cannot be opened, and that we have

resolved to be, until the consummation of the centuries, children sometimes mischievous and always quarrelsome.”

The papillon! Fourier would have said. Is that a cause? Is it a principle? Is it a necessity? O Providence! You have conquered; your ways are impenetrable!

Finally, Louis Bonaparte spoke: he revealed himself; but the world has not yet understood it.

France, he said, I don't know why, I don't know when, I don't know where, FRANCE ELECTED ME BECAUSE I DON'T BELONG TO ANY PARTY!... Translate: *France elected me because it no longer wants a government* .

Yes, France has appointed Louis Bonaparte President of the Republic, because it is tired of parties, because all the parties are dead, because with the parties the power itself is dead, and there is nothing left to do but bury it. For, as we have seen throughout the course of this narrative, the power and the parties are effect and cause to each other: remove the latter, you destroy the former, and vice versa.

The election of Louis Bonaparte was the suicide of the parties that contributed to his triumph, hence the last gasp of governmental France. It is said that the last words of the great emperor, on his deathbed, were: *Head!... Army!...* The last words of our political society, in the ballot of December 10, were these four names: *Napoleon, Robespierre, Louis XIV, Gregory VII!*

Farewell, Pope!

Farewell, king!

Farewell, dictator!

Farewell, Emperor!

From now on, there will be no more authority, neither temporal, nor spiritual, nor revolutionary, nor legitimate, over my children. Go, Bonaparte, fulfill your task with intelligence, and, if possible, with even more honor than Louis-Philippe. You will be the last of the rulers of France!¹⁹

¹⁹ In the *General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century*, I say: “France elected Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte, because the Emperor is for it the Revolution, and it is above all a revolutionary. This is the same thought expressed in the *Confessions*. None of the parties existing in the nineteenth century, not even the one that invoked the Jacobin tradition, was revolutionary: they showed it. Now, we know today what the Revolution is: work for the worker, land for the peasant, independence for the citizens, the communes, the departments; social equality, and propaganda, armed if necessary, outside.

Louis Bonaparte could fulfill his role in two ways, either by taking the head of the Revolution, or by making, in collusion with the royalists and the Jesuits, an obstacle to progress. He preferred the latter party, which has doomed its uncle, and which is dooming him as well, without causing the Revolution to retreat one inch. On the other hand, the parties converted: while Jacobinism became anti-governmental, legitimacy swore by 89. *Brudimini!* ...

XVII.
1849. JANUARY 29:

BARROT-FALLOUX REACTION; DESTRUCTION OF THE GOVERNMENT.

With the presidency of Louis Bonaparte, the funeral of power begins. This supreme transition was essential to prepare for the advent of the democratic and social Republic. The situation that preceded, the events that followed December 10, and which continue to unfold with inexorable logic, will demonstrate this to us.

France, in making the royalty of 1830, and founding with reflection and liberty, after a struggle of forty years, the constitutional regime, the government of Thiers, Guizot, and Talleyrand, had laid down the principle of a new revolution. Like the worm which has the instinct of its next metamorphosis, it had spun its shroud. By giving itself, after a crisis of nine months, a president, candidate of all the parties and symbol of their abdication, it said its *Consummatum est*, and published, before burying itself, the act of its last wishes.

The corruption of the power had been the work of the constitutional monarchy: the mission of the presidency will be to lead the mourning of the power. Louis Bonaparte, after his defection to the revolutionary cause, is no longer, as Cavaignac or Ledru-Rollin would have been, anything but a testamentary executor. Louis-Philippe has poured the poison on the old society: Louis Bonaparte is taking it to the cemetery. Presently I will cause this mournful procession to pass before you.

France, look at it closely, it is exhausted, finished. Life has withdrawn from it: in place of the heart, there is the metallic coldness of interests; at the seat of thought, it is an unleashing of opinions that all contradict each other and hold each other in check. It already looks like the verminous fermentation of the corpse. Why are you talking about liberty, honor, country? France, as a State, is dead: Rome, Italy, Hungary, Poland, the Rhine, kneeling at its coffin, recite its *De profundis!* Everything that once made the strength and greatness of the French nation, monarchy and Republic, Church and parliament, bourgeoisie and nobility, military glory, science, letters, fine arts, all is dead; everything was mowed down like a grape harvest, and thrown into the revolutionary vat. Beware of stopping the work of decomposition; do not go and mix the living and vermilion liquor with the mud and the marc. That would be killing Lazarus a second time in his grave.

In the nearly twenty years since we began to die, how many times have we thought we were reaching the end of our metamorphosis! There has not been an accident that has not been taken by us for the signal of the resurrection, not the smallest noise that has not sounded in our ears like the trumpet of judgment. However, the years go by, and the big day does not arrive. It's like the mystification of the millennia in the Middle Ages. Poland, Belgium, Switzerland, Ancona, quadruple alliance, visitation rights, secret societies, infernal machines, parliamentary coalitions; then Beirut, Cracow, Pritchard, Spanish

marriages, the Russian loan; then scarcity, electoral reform, the Sunderbund, and, above all, corruption!... Finally, the February Revolution, a spectacle in twelve tableaux, universal suffrage, reaction; and then again, and then always, corruption! What opportunities to let us seen if the remnant of a heart beats within us! What motives for action, if we were a people! Sometimes we have tried to rise up.... the cold of death nailed us back to our coffin. We have thrown our last flames between the pots and the glasses: the toasts of the dynastics, the democrats, the socialists, are all our part in history from July 1847 to September 1849.

We keep accusing, — and me first, unjust as I am! — the government of Louis Bonaparte. So we accused Louis-Philippe. The government of December 10! It could become for us an instrument of resurrection. The ambition of Louis Bonaparte does not have such lofty views. He only exists to put the seal on the mortuary chamber: let him fulfill his function as undertaker. After the gruesome and unequaled task of the July royalty, the duty of the presidency is to lay you in your charnel ground. Louis-Philippe was, through the power, the devastator of society; Louis-Bonaparte will be the demolisher of what Louis-Philippe had left, the power. He himself, by allying himself with Catholicism, limited his task there. The circumstances that accompanied his election, the place he occupies in the revolutionary series, the policy imposed on him by his sponsors, the use that he was led to make of his authority, the perspective open before him: everything impels him, everything precipitates him. It was the revolution itself that taught Louis Bonaparte a lesson. Did he not, like Louis-Philippe, marry together, to dishonor them one by the other, the Jesuit and the doctrinaire? Didn't he say, in his installation speech, that he would continue the policy of Cavaignac, son of a regicide and neo-Christian?... In truth, I tell you: the role of the President of the Republic was written in the book of destinies; this role is to demoralize the power, as Carrier demoralized torture.

This situation understood, the course that socialism had to follow was all mapped out. It had only to push for the demolition of power, by acting, so to speak, in concert with power, and favoring, by a calculated opposition, the work of Louis Bonaparte. By this tactic, necessity and Providence finding themselves in agreement, nothing resisted us. The considerations that, before December 10, had made socialism dread the alliance of the Mountain, no longer remained: this alliance became all profit, all benefit. Louis Bonaparte elected by an overwhelming majority, the reaction made by him so formidable, the hope of regaining power disappeared for a long time from the eyes of the Montagnards, committed by their program, and forced to walk where we would like to lead them.

Two things had to be done: in the first place, to absorb the political question into the social question, by attacking simultaneously and head-on the capitalist principle and the principle of authority; secondly, to make it produce all the consequences of its last formula, in other words, to help the presidency, as much as it would be in us, in its work of suicide.

In this way the old society was torn from its foundations; Jacobinism became pure socialism; democracy became more liberal, more philosophical, more real; socialism itself emerged from its mythological envelope and rested, as if on two columns, on the double negation of usury and the power. Starting from there, the social system emerged from the smoke of utopias; society became conscious of itself, and liberty developed without contradiction, under the wing of popular genius.²⁰

At the same time, the power was peacefully fulfilling its destiny. Liberty, which formerly had produced it, spread the shroud over it: the triumph of socialism was to make it die, as the people naively say, a beautiful death :

But, alongside capital and that power, there was a third force which, for sixty years, had seemed to be sleeping, and whose agony threatened to be much more formidable: it was the Church.

Capital, whose analogue, in the order of politics, is *Government*, has for its synonym, in the order of religion, *Catholicism*. The economic idea of capital, the political idea of government or authority, the theological idea of the Church, are three identical and reciprocally convertible ideas: to attack one is to attack the other, just as all philosophers today know perfectly well. As capital acts on labor, and the state on liberty, the Church acts in its turn on intelligence. This trinity of absolutism is fatal, in practice as in philosophy. To effectively oppress the people, it is necessary to chain it at the same time in its body, in its will, in its reason. If, then, socialism wanted to manifest itself in a complete, positive manner, free from all mysticism, it had only one thing to do, and that was to launch the idea of this trilogy into intellectual circulation.

The leaders of Catholicism, as if they had agreed with us, had come of their own accord to place themselves within the scope of the revolutionary dialectic. They had taken sides with the Holy Alliance against the nationalities, with the governments against their *subjects*, with capital against labor. In Rome the struggle was open between theocracy and revolution; and, as if to render the socialist demonstration more brilliant, the government of Louis Bonaparte openly embraced, in the name of Catholic interests, the cause of the pope. We had only to point out this triple form of social slavery, this conspiracy of the altar, the throne and the strongbox, for it to be immediately understood. While the reaction denounced our atheism, which certainly worried us very little, every morning we told some episode of the holy league, and, without declamation, without argument, the people were demonarchized and decatholicized.

Such was, from December 10, the plan of battle indicated by the *Peuple* and generally followed by the newspapers of the social democracy; and, I dare say it, if this plan has not yet obtained definitive victory, it has already produced imperishable results: the rest is a question of time.

²⁰ These pages were written almost two years ago. We cannot deny today that the projections of the author have been faithfully fulfilled.

Capital will never regain its preponderance: its secret is revealed. Let it celebrate its last orgy: tomorrow it must burn itself, on its treasures, like Sardanapalus.

The power is doomed in France, condemned as it is to do every day, for its own defense, the most terrible things that socialism could invent for its destruction.

Catholicism did not wait for the mask to be removed: the skeleton was uncovered under its shroud. The Christian world cries out for vengeance against the Church and against the Pope. Oudinot's expedition gave the papacy the *coup de grace*: the doctrinaires, who thought only of destroying Jacobinism by attacking it in one of its centers, urged on by the Jesuits, did the job of socialism themselves. In Pius IX the throne of Saint Peter collapsed. Now, the papacy demolished, Catholicism is without virtue: *Dead the beast, dead the venom.*

When the rage of the parties, when the men of God, ignorant of the affairs of philosophy, do things so well, it is highly imprudent, it is almost a crime to quibble with them in their work. We had only to explain the meaning of the facts as the blindness of our enemies brought them to light; to take up the logic, I almost said the loyalty with which the government of Louis Bonaparte tore its entrails out; to approve, even to praise the eloquent demonstrations of the Barrot-Falloux-Faucher ministry, or, what amounted to absolutely the same thing, to denounce them in such a way that their friends constantly found in them new motives for persistence.

Even before February, I had foreseen what would happen. No one was ever better prepared for a cold-blooded struggle. But such is the ardor of political discussions that the wisest are always carried away by passion. When it was enough for me to win, by reason alone, I threw myself with a kind of fury into the arena. The unjust attacks of which I had been the object on the part of some men of the party of the Mountain had wounded me; the election of Louis Bonaparte, insulting, in my opinion, to the republican party, weighed on me. I was like the people when the sting of tyranny touches them, and they rise up, roaring against their masters. The truth and justice of our cause, instead of calming my zeal, only served to stir it up: so true is it that the men who make the most use of their understanding are often the most indomitable in their passions. I have ruined myself with studies, I have dulled my soul by dint of meditations: I have only succeeded in inflaming my irascibility even more. Hardly recovered from a serious illness, I declared war on the President of the Republic. I was going to give battle to the lion: I was not even a gnat.

I admit it, now that I am allowed to judge the facts better: this immoderate aggression on my part towards the Head of State was unjust.

From the first day of taking office, the presidential government, faithful to the order given to it from above, preluded the extinction of the principle of authority, by raising the conflict between the powers. Could I await better than M. Odilon Barrot's summons to the Constituent Assembly, and the famous Râteau proposal? How did what came to confirm my predictions make me lose my temper? What was the use of invectives towards a man who, instrument of fatality, deserved after all, for his diligence, applause?

I knew perfectly well that the government is by its nature counter-revolutionary; either it resists, or it oppresses, or it corrupts, or it rages. The government doesn't know, cannot know and will ever want anything else. Put a Saint Vincent de Paul in power: he will be Guizot or Talleyrand there. Without going back beyond February, hadn't the Provisional Government, the Executive Commission, General Cavaignac, all the Republicans, all the Socialists who had gone into the business, hadn't they made, some the dictatorship, some the reaction? How could Louis Bonaparte not follow in their footsteps? Was it his fault? Weren't his intentions pure? Were his known ideas not a protest against his policy? Why then this fury of accusation, which was going to do nothing less than to incriminate fate? The responsibility that I placed on Louis Bonaparte was in the wrong direction; and, by dint of accusing him of reaction, I was myself, in wanting to prevent it, reactionary.

Nor was I ignorant, — and who ever knew better than me? — that if the President of the Republic, under the express terms of twenty articles of the Constitution, was only the agent and the subordinate of the Assembly, by virtue of the principle of the separation of powers, he was its equal and inevitably its antagonist. It was therefore impossible for there not to be in the government conflict of attributions, rivalry of prerogatives, reciprocal tension, mutual accusations, consequently, the imminent dissolution of authority. The Râteau proposal, or any other similar one, was to spring from constitutional dualism as infallibly that the spark springs from the shock of the pebble against the steel. Add that Louis Bonaparte, a mediocre philosopher, of which I certainly do not make for him a crime, had for advisers Jesuits and doctrinaires, the worst logicians, the most detestable politicians in the world; that moreover he found himself, by the injustice of his position, personally responsible for a policy of which he had only to sign the acts; responsible for the constitutional conflicts, of which he was made the cheerleader; responsible for the stupidity and bad passions of the advisers that the coalition of his electors imposed on him!

When I think of the misery of this Head of State, I am tempted to weep over him, and I bless my prison. Was ever a man more horribly sacrificed? The vulgar marveled at this unprecedented elevation: I see in it only the posthumous punishment of an ambition to the grave, which social justice still pursues, but which the people, of short memory, have already forgotten. As if the nephew had to bear the iniquities of the uncle, Louis Bonaparte, I am afraid, will be only one more martyr of governmental fanaticism: he will follow in their fall the monarchs his predecessors, or else he will join in their misfortune the democrats who paved the way for him, Louis Blanc and Ledru-Rollin, Blanqui and Barbès. For, neither more nor less than all of them, he represents the principle of authority; and, whether by his initiative he wants to precipitate, or whether he tries to repress the revolution, he will succumb to the task, and he will perish. Sad victim! When, while rejoicing at your efforts, I should have pitied you, excused you, defended you perhaps, I only had insults and sarcasm for you: I was mean.

If I had the slightest faith in supernatural vocations, I would say that one of two things must be true: Louis Bonaparte was called to the presidency of the Republic to redeem the French people from the slavery of the power, restored and consolidated by the Emperor, or else to atone for the Emperor's despotism. Two paths, in fact, are open to Louis Bonaparte: one which, by popular initiative and the organic solidarity of interests, leads straight to equality and peace, is that indicated by the socialist analysis and revolutionary history; the other which, through power, will lead him infallibly to catastrophes, is the path of usurpation, disguised or by open force, and in which the chosen one of December 10 finds himself visibly committed. Must we still see this one jump like the others, and is all return closed to him? Ask him himself: as for me, I can't tell you anything more. I am too great an enemy to venture to give advice; it is enough for me that I show you in the past the future of our country reflected as in a mirror. Time will tell!...

There was therefore, before December 10, a thousand to one to bet that the President of the Republic, whoever he was, would place himself on governmental ground, consequently on reactionary ground. As early as the 23rd, Louis Bonaparte, taking the oath to the Constitution, realized this sinister forecast. He would follow, he said, the policy of Cavaignac; and, as a sign of alliance, he gave his hand to his rival. What a revelation for the general when, from the very mouth of Louis Bonaparte, he was told that the acts of his government had only been a preparation for absolutism! How much he must have regretted his disastrous complacency for these *honest* and *moderate* men who had so unworthily betrayed him! And how he must have groaned at not having granted this amnesty, which he doubtless reserved as a sign of reconciliation, for the day of his accession! *Do what you must, come what may!* This feudal maxim was worthy of a republican.

The subjects of opposition arrived quickly, and the suicide of the government began. The Râteau proposal, following the summons of the president of the council, denounced the hostilities. The incompatibility of temper between the powers did not wait until the thirtieth day to reveal itself; at the same time the mutual, instinctive hatred of the people for the government, of the government for the people, manifested itself more ardently. The day of January 29, in which we saw the government and the democracy accusing each other of conspiracy and taking to the streets, ready to give battle, was probably only a panic, the effect of their reciprocal mistrust: what was clearest in this adventure was that between democracy and the President, just as formerly between the opposition and Louis-Philippe, war was brewing.

The *Peuple* stood out among all in the struggle. Our first bets resembled indictments. A minister, Mr. Léon Faucher, returning to his first profession, had the kindness to give us the reply: his insertions in the *Moniteur*, commented on by the Republican press, produced a monstrous effect of anger and pity. This bilious being, whom heaven has made uglier than his caricature, and who has the singular mania of wanting to be worse than

his reputation, did more on his own, against the power he represented, than all the democratic and social diatribes. If patience had been able to hold on to the Mountain, and M. Léon Faucher to the ministry for three more months, the urchins of Paris would have escorted Louis Bonaparte back to the fort of Ham, and his ministers to Charenton. But such success was not reserved for *journalistic* malignity; the social question could not empty itself in this fight against ridicule: it is an honor for it.

Louis Bonaparte, who by the will of the legislator and the selfishness of his advisers had become the agent responsible for a policy of reaction and resentment, lost in three months the best part of the strength that the December election had given him. Compromised by O. Barrot, engaged in a liberticidal expedition by M. de Falloux, dishonored by Léon Faucher, the Government collapsed under the new President, never to rise again. Faith in the power, respect for authority is dead in hearts. What is a power that rests only on the point of a bayonet? Kings and princes no longer believe in it themselves: their interests as capitalists come before their dignity as sovereigns. It is not their crown that they concern themselves with today; it is their properties! They do not protest, as formerly Louis XVIII, the exile of Mittau, against the acts of democracy; they claim their income from him. Trying to establish a monarchy in France, when everyone, including the incumbents themselves, sees it only as a matter of the civil list, is like twisting the dagger in the body.

There is no victory without dead or wounded. I won, in the battle of January 29, fought between the legislative authority and the presidential prerogative, three years in prison. These are the crosses and the pensions that the democratic and social republic promises to its soldiers. I do not complain: He *who seeks peril will perish*, says the Holy Scripture; and, *In War as in War*. But I cannot refrain from pointing out here with what profound wisdom the legislator, careful of the revenge of parties, gave them, in the institution of the jury, an honest means of decimating one another, and restored, for the service of their hatreds, ostracism in our laws.

In attacking Louis Bonaparte, I believed myself, with regard to justice, perfectly in order. The only offense for which I could be reproached, if indeed I had committed one, was to have offended the President of the Republic. However, the President of the Republic being, like any other magistrate, responsible; therefore the prerogatives of the royal person, determined by the law of 1819, not existing for him, I could only be cited in court on the complaint of the President whom I would have offended, not prosecuted *ex officio* by the public prosecutor, who had no reason to meddle in a quarrel between individuals. Thus, it was no longer a political offense that could be imputed to me, but a simple offense or very personal defamation. On this ground, I had nothing to fear. I had not attacked Louis Bonaparte in his private life; I had spoken only of the acts of his power. Before the Constitution and before the law, my position was impregnable. This was felt so well that later, during the discussion of the last law on the press, it was thought necessary,

by a special provision, the attribute to the public prosecutor the prosecution of offenses committed in the press against the President.

But for the casuists of the prosecution, this difficulty, which seemed to me, a scrupulous logician, insurmountable, was only a trifle. To my extreme surprise, I saw myself accused, for a pamphlet in which only the President of the Republic was mentioned, of:

1. Incitement to hatred of the government;
2. Incitement to civil war;
3. Attack on the Constitution and property!

If it had pleased M. Meynard de Franc to charge me again, in connection with an article in the *Peuple* on Louis Bonaparte, with crimes of infanticide, rape, or counterfeit money, he could; the accusation would have passed entirely: there was no reason why I shouldn't have been so well, so judiciously condemned. On his honor and his conscience, before God and before men, by a majority of eight to four, the jury found me guilty of all they wanted, and I got it for my three years. You ask, candid readers, how it is possible to accord honor and conscience with the arbitrariness of such a charge. Here is the answer of the enigma, which will serve you to solve all the problems of the same kind.

"The law," says the Code of Criminal Investigation, art. 342, — "does not ask the jurors to *account for the means* by which they convinced themselves; it does not prescribe to them any *rules* on which they must make the plenitude and sufficiency of a *proof* particularly depend. It does not say to them: *You will hold as true any fact attested by such and such a number of witnesses*. Nor does it say to them: *You will not regard as sufficiently established any proof which will not be formed from such a report, such documents, such witnesses or such clues*. She only asks them this single question, which contains the full extent of their duties: *Do you have an intimate conviction?*"

Do you understand now? They say to the jurors: Do you have the intimate conviction that the citizen P.-J. Proudhon here present is a dangerous subject for the State, inconvenient for the Jesuits, worrying for your capital and your properties? It matters little whether or not there is a *corpus delicti*, whether the public prosecutor brings no proof of his accusation, whether the motives on which he relies are unrelated to the crimes and misdemeanors imputed to the accused. The law does not ask you to account for the means by which you have convinced yourself; it does not prescribe rules for your judgment. And even if the aforesaid Proudhon demonstrates to you — he is quite capable of it — that the facts mentioned in the indictment are fabricated and disguised; when he establishes, by documents and testimonies, that he has done the exact opposite of what he is accused of, and that it is Louis Bonaparte himself who, in the incriminated articles, attacks the Constitution, you are not required to rely on such clues. You know the accused; you have heard of his doctrines: he aims at nothing less, it is said, than to cause capital to lose its income, by competing with it through credit, and to demolish the government by

organizing universal suffrage. . The law asks you only this single question, which contains the measure of your duties: *Do you have, with regard to this man, an intimate conviction?*

In civil trials, the judge is obliged to give reasons for his decision. He must recall the facts, the documents, the testimonies, the texts of the laws, the case law; then, let him reason, induce, lay down principles and conclusions. The *explanatory memorandum*, in a nutshell, is the supporting part of any judgment, just as the *pronouncement* is its essential part.

With the criminal, it is another thing: the juror is exempted from justifying his verdict. All that is asked of him is his *intimate conviction*. He pronounces instinctively, by intuition, like women and animals, in which it has always been believed that the divinity dwells. "*What did Aristide do to you?*" asked an Athenian of this country juror who was about to lay down his black ball against the illustrious outlaw. "*It troubles me,*" replied the honest and free man, "*to hear him always call him THE JUST!*" This is the intimate conviction!

I am careful not to curse my judges: they have only followed the spirit of their unfortunate institution. Besides, this tile, as my friend Langlois says, who is appearing at this moment on his behalf before the jury of Versailles, was bound to fall on my head one day or another. But if I really wanted to be judged, condemned, even imprisoned, at least I had vowed in my heart that it would be for a serious cause, the Bank of the People, for example. Providence, which pursues me, has not judged me worthy to suffer for the truth.

Long live the Democratic and Social Republic!

XVIII.
MARCH 21:

LAW ON THE CLUBS; LEGAL RESISTANCE.

Thus, by the election of December 10, and the formation of the Barrot-Faucher-Falloux ministry, the reaction had made new progress. The government had passed from the republicans of the morrow to the doctrinaires. One more step, one more demonstration of the unintelligent democracy, and we fell into the hands of the Jesuits. It was under the blows of its own theologians, who had thus become the continuators of the Revolution, that the principle of authority was to perish.

Everything is connected in the progress of societies, everything serves the progress of revolutions. And when, poor reasoners that we are, we believe that everything has been lost through one of these blows of our blind policy, everything is saved. Reaction like action pushes us forward, resistance is movement. The President of the Republic, whose historical significance is to dissolve among us the principle of authority, should not address the montagnards to accomplish his work of death. According to the laws of the revolutionary dialectic, which unknowingly lead governments and societies, it would have been, on the part of Louis Bonaparte, a retrograde movement. Since February, the axis of the world having shifted, while we seemed to be retreating, we were moving forward. We have just seen M. Odilon Barrot attack, in the name of the Constitution itself, the *Constitution*, by raising the conflict between the powers: we are going to see Mr. Léon Faucher, the provocateur of January 29, attacking, through the law on the clubs, the *Institutions*. After the institutions, will come the *Principles*, and after the principles, the *Classes* of society. This is how the power comes to the end by its own hand: it can live neither with the Constitution, nor with the institutions, nor with the principles, nor with the men. The demolition of the power by itself forms a series of special acts determined in advance, a sort of analytical operation, which we are going to see the government of Louis Bonaparte carry out with a rigor, a precision that belongs only to our country. The French people are the most logical of all peoples.

Certainly, after the Revolution of February, carried out in the name of the right of assembly, of the right of citizens to discuss among themselves the interests of the country, and to solemnly manifest their opinion on the acts of power; after, I say, this dazzling affirmation of popular initiative, if there were an institution that a democratic power had to respect, and not only respect, but develop, organize, until it had the most powerful means of order and peace, it was the clubs. I say clubs, as I would say meetings, popular societies, casinos, gymnasiums, academies, congresses, comics, etc.; in a word, associations and meetings of every nature and every sort. The name does not matter. Under the name of clubs or any other you please, it is the organization of universal suffrage in all forms,

The Provisional Government had contented itself with keeping the clubs under surveillance: it boasted a great deal of its tolerance. To tolerate! This was already declaring itself hostile; it was denying its principle. After tolerance, inevitably came intolerance. Cavaignac gave the signal; the splenetic Léon Faucher, finding the work of his predecessor insufficient, undertook to complete it. A bill was registered by him, which purely and simply declared the prohibition of clubs.

To prohibit clubs, to abolish the right of assembly, to not allow citizens to assemble in number more than twenty people, for any purpose whatsoever, except with the permission and under the good pleasure of the authority: this is to declare that the power is everything, that to it alone belongs progress, intelligence, ideas; that democracy is only a word, that the true constitution of society is the cellular regime; and that it is necessary, absolutely necessary, for the peace of the world and the order of civilization, that one of these two things perish, either the initiative of the citizens, or that of the State; or liberty, or government. M. Léon Faucher's project did not contain anything other than this dilemma.

When M. Odilon Barrot was the first to lay his hand on the holy ark of government, raising the conflict of powers, we responded to his thought by hanging the sword of Damocles, presidential responsibility, over the head of Louis Bonaparte. M. Léon Faucher attacked institutions: the best thing to do was to oppose him with an institution, a legal resistance.

We remember that famous meeting of March 21, in which Mr. Crémieux, reporter, declared on behalf of the Commission appointed to examine the bill on clubs, that by this bill the Constitution was violated, and that consequently, the Commission ceased to take part in the debate. We know that following this declaration, nearly two hundred members of the Constituent Assembly came out of the deliberation room, and met immediately in the old room, to DECIDE. It was nothing less than the beginning of a demonstration similar to that of June 13, the first step in the way of constitutional resistance. But we were too close to February; and, admire the prudence of the representatives, for fear of weakening authority, they preferred to tolerate a violation than to make a revolution. Thanks to a parliamentary arrangement, the demonstration of the minority had no continuation. But the *Peuple*, from the next day, completed the thought of the opposition, by calling the citizens from that moment, if the Assembly adopted the bill, to resistance.

As the question of legal resistance is of the utmost gravity, as it is part of republican right, as the arbitrariness of power and the parliamentary majority brings it up every day, and as many people confuse it with the right to insurrection recognized by the Declaration of 1793, I am going, before explaining the policy followed by the *Peuple* in this circumstance, to summarize in a few words the true principles.

What is the right to insurrection?

What is meant by legal resistance?

In which cases can one or the other apply?

If it were possible that the government really cared about order, that it respected liberty and sought less arbitrariness, it would hasten to deal with these questions officially: it would not leave this task to a journalist. But the government hates legal matters above all else, and stifles them as much as it can. What occupies it is prosecuting authors, printers, auctioneers, peddlers, posters: it is for them that it reserves its instructions and circulars.

I observe first that the rights of insurrection and resistance are specific to the period of subordination and antagonism: they fall into disuse with the practice of liberty. In a democracy organized on the basis of popular initiative, with multiple foci and without superior authority, there can be no reason for the exercise of such rights. Already, by the establishment of universal suffrage, the Constitution of 1790 had invalidated, while implicitly recognizing it, the right of insurrection. Imperial despotism, the Charters of 1814 and 1830, the cens at 200 francs, suppressing the intervention of the masses in public affairs, have reestablished it. The February Revolution had abolished it again, at the same time as the death penalty: the monstrous doctrine of the omnipotence of parliamentary majorities, which the government would like to make prevail, brings it back again.

So it is not, to tell the truth, a principle of democratic and social institution that we are going to discuss at this moment: it is a principle of absolute and constitutional monarchy, an idea born from privilege. Socialism repudiates the right to insurrection and legal resistance: it has no need, for its theory, of such sanctions. But, forced to defend itself on the ground where the Constitution calls it, it borrows it from the absolutists and doctrinaires, authors or inspirations of this Constitution, and uses it against them as an *ad hominem* argument, as they say in school.

The right to insurrection is that by virtue of which a people can claim their freedom, either against the tyranny of a despot, or against the privileges of an aristocracy, without prior denunciation, and by arms.

It can happen, and this has been the almost constant state of most nations until now, that an immense people, scattered, disarmed, betrayed, finds itself at the mercy of a few thousand satellites under the orders of a despot. In this state, insurrection is automatic: it knows no rules other than those of prudence and opportunity. Of this type were the insurrection of July 14 and that of August 10. Malet's conspiracy in 1812 could have led to an insurrection that would have been equally legitimate. The insurrection of July 1830, where the country sided with the representative majority against a king violating the pact, was irreproachable. That of 1848, where the majority of the country rose up against the representative majority to demand the benefit of the electoral right, was all the more rational because its aim was precisely to abrogate the right of insurrection by reestablishing universal suffrage.

So when the Convention, after having organized the primary assemblies and once again consecrated universal suffrage, wrote into the Constitution of Year II the right to

insurrection, it was, strictly speaking, retrospective legislation; it was taking out a guarantee against a danger that, in principle, no longer existed. The Constituent Assembly of 1848 operated in the same way, when, after having declared, in article 24, direct and universal suffrage, it added, in article 110, as in the Charter of 1830, that it entrusts the deposit of the Constitution and rights that it devotes to the protection and patriotism of all the French people. In principle, let us repeat, universal suffrage abolishes the right of insurrection. In practice, the antagonism of powers and the absolutism of majorities can bring it back to life. How and in what case? This is what needs to be determined.

The right of insurrection therefore offers this characteristic and special feature, that it supposes a people oppressed by a despot, a third estate by an aristocracy, the many by the few. This is the principle. Beyond that, the right to insurrection disappears at the same time as conflicts of opinion and interests. Indeed, as the practice of universal suffrage extends and spreads, and as economic forces become balanced, the social union takes on another character; the empire of minorities is succeeded by that of majorities; then, to this, that of universality, that is to say absolute liberty, which excludes any idea of conflict.

However, there is a case where the right of insurrection could be legitimately invoked by a minority against a majority: this would be when, in a society in transition, the majority, to perpetuate its despotism, would like to abolish universal suffrage, or, at the very least, restrict its exercise. In this case, I say, the minority has the right to resist oppression, even by force.

In fact, universal suffrage is the mode by which the majority and minority manifest themselves; it is from it that the majority derives its right at the same time as its existence, so that, if universal suffrage were abolished, any minority could, without being contradicted, call itself a majority, and consequently call for insurrection. This is what legitimizes the *thirty-year* conspiracy of which we have seen certain members of the Provisional Government take pride in the tribune. From 1814 to 1848, universal suffrage not existing, the legitimacy of the government could always be suspected; and experience has twice proved that in fact, apart from universal suffrage, this legitimacy of government is nonexistent.

In short, and notwithstanding any vote to the contrary by the people or their representatives, the tacit or manifest consent of the people against universal suffrage cannot be presumed.²¹

Such is, according to our imperfect constitutions and our revolutionary traditions, the jurisprudence, if I may so speak, of the right of insurrection. What is most important to remember is that with the progress of democracy this terrible right abrogates itself; and one can affirm that unless there is a restoration, henceforth impossible, of absolutist ideas, the time for conspiracies and revolts is past.

Let us come to the legal resistance.

The right of insurrection, we have said, cannot, in a country where universal suffrage has begun to be organized, be granted to the minority against the majority. However arbitrary the decisions of the latter may be, however flagrant the violation of the pact may seem, a majority can always deny that it is violating it: which reduces the dispute to a simple question of evaluation, and consequently does not leave any pretext for revolt. And even if the minority would avail itself of certain *prior* or *superior* rights to the Constitution, which the majority, according to it, would have disregarded, it would be easy for the latter to invoke in turn other prior or superior rights, such as that of public safety, by virtue of which it would legitimize its will: so that ultimately it would always be necessary to come back to a solution by voting, to the law of numbers. Let us therefore admit, as demonstrated, this proposition: Between the minority and the majority of the citizens, manifested constitutionally by universal suffrage, the conflict by arms is illegitimate.

However, a minority cannot be at the mercy of a majority; justice, which is the negation of force, wants the minority to have its guarantees. Because it can happen, through the effect of political passions and the opposition of interests, that following an act of power the minority affirms that the Constitution is violated, while the majority denies it; then, that the people being called, as supreme judge, to pronounce in the last resort on the dissent, the majority of the citizens join the majority of the representatives, so that truth and justice are found, deliberately, and by an intractable selfishness, trampled underfoot by the very people who, according to the Constitution, should defend them.

²¹ This was written more than six months before the law of May 31, 1850, which deprived more than 3,000,000 citizens of their electoral rights, and replaced universal suffrage with restricted suffrage. During the vote on this law, I was in Doullens, where the administration had had me transferred for an article relating to the April elections. It was not up to my collaborators of the *Voix du Peuple* that the democrats did not put into practice the principles developed in my *Confessions*. The police provided for this in time, by suppressing the newspaper; and the People, better advised, I admit, understood that it was better, for the defense of their rights, to let the Power be doomed by the violation of the pact, than to provide it with the occasion of a useless massacre, and perhaps of a victory. Everything was profitable for the Revolution in this wise conduct, which closed forever the return to Jacobinism.

Then the minority, openly oppressed, is no longer a party of political and parliamentary opposition: it is a proscribed party, an entire class of citizens set outside the law. Such a situation is shame, suicide, the destruction of all social ties. But insurrection, in constitutional terms, is prohibited: what can the minority do in this extreme case?

When the law is audaciously violated; when a fraction of the people is ostracized from society; that the fury of one party has gone so far as to say: *We will never yield*; when there are two nations within the nation, one weaker, which is oppressed, the other more numerous, which oppresses; when the split is acknowledged on both sides, my opinion is that the right of the minority is to consummate this split by declaring it. The social bond being broken, the minority is quit towards the majority of any political commitment: this is what is expressed by the refusal to obey the power, to pay taxes, to do military service, etc. This refusal thus justified was named by the publicists *legal resistance*, because the government places itself outside of legality, the citizens remind it of it by refusing to obey it.

The law on the clubs, the intervention of the police in election meetings, the bombardment of Rome, violating the Constitution and outlawing, so to speak, the democratic party, motivated, as long as the democratic party was in the minority in the country, the application of the principle of legal resistance; and if that party obtained the majority, and the government persisted, then the right of insurrection might follow.

With some ministers, one of whom claimed that the cry of *Long live the Democratic and Social Republic!* which sums up the entire Constitution, is unconstitutional and factious; another of whom denounced the socialist democrats as criminals and looters; a third of whom had them prosecuted, judged and condemned as such; with a government which, under the name of *order*, understood nothing other than the extermination of republican opinion; who, not daring to attack openly the Revolution in Paris, was going to suppress it in Rome; which declared war ON IDEAS; which said aloud: *No concessions!* which repeated at every moment, as on June 23, the fatal saying: *We must put an end to it!* the situation was clear, there was no mistaking it. Persecution was open against the social democracy; we were denounced with contempt and hatred, devotees, the minister who authored the bill made no secret of it, to the vindictiveness of authority. Let us judge by this feature which the *Presse* once reported, and which I would like to chisel on a bronze table, for the eternal shame of the one who was its hero:

“There is something more difficult to qualify than the treatment inflicted on Mr. Furet. It is the letter written by Mr. Léon Faucher, when he was Minister of the Interior, to his colleague the Minister of navy, relative to the regime that the insurgents of June were to undergo in prison. It has not been limited to recommending that no difference should be made between them and the convicts condemned for murders and thefts; the refinement of the repression has been pushed to the point of refusing to those condemned in June the consolation of coupling them together, and to the point of ordering that each insurgent be

attached to a murderer or a thief! Fortunately, the interim of the Ministry of the Interior having been entrusted to Mr. Lacrosse, other very different orders were given."

M. Léon Faucher is one of those types who only is only met once in forty centuries. To find his peer, we must go back to fabulous times, to that Homeric brigand who killed his victims by attaching them to corpses. Well! It is this man who, on January 29, *for the love of order!* — translate, through hatred of the revolution, — invited the national guard to the massacre of the socialists; who, on March 21, presented the brutal law that almost led to the overthrow of the power; who, on May 11, to remove from the national representation the Republican candidates, was guilty of forgery in telegraphic writing; who, expelled from the ministry, and taking showers to calm his fever, still accused his successor of moderation towards the democrats; who formerly agitated the departments, inciting them, in the name of order, to rise against the Constitution... I will stop here. It would take a book to tell all the harm that the passage of this fanatic to the ministry has done, to the country much more than to socialism. Go through the prisons, have the prison registers presented to you, question the prisoners, get information from the lawyers, verify the secret and apparent reasons for the convictions; and then count the wretches who were arbitrarily arrested, held on remand for whole months, taken, chain round their necks, from gendarmerie to gendarmerie, condemned on the most futile pretexts, all because they were socialists. Then count those who, guilty of real crimes, saw their sentence increased, because they were suspected of socialism, because socialism had become, for the judges, an aggravating circumstance; because they wanted to assimilate the socialists to the criminals: and you will tell me, after that, if a party that counts, — the elections of May 13 proved it, — more than a third of the nation, could consider itself unjustly persecuted; if by the law on the clubs the Constitution was knowingly violated in respect thereof; if Léon Faucher's law was not a declaration of social war?

As for me, I believed it was our duty to organize immediately, not the insurrection — we were a minority against a majority, a party against a coalition of parties; — but legal resistance, with all the extension of which it is susceptible.

I have no intention of reproducing at this time a proposal that has had no effect. Since June 13, the circumstances have changed; and if I come to account for the means that I proposed to use then, is that the opportunity, such at least is my hope, has passed without return to make use of it. The Revolution, in its rapid course, has nothing more to do with this rusty clog of legal resistance, and I can, without danger to the public peace, sum up the theory of it. I made a good and hard war against the government of Louis Bonaparte; more than once perhaps, if I had been believed, things would have turned out otherwise. But there were in the socialist army Grouchys and Bourmonts, incompetents and traitors: and it is because in my opinion recourse to legal resistance, in the face of the current complications of politics, would be a fault, almost a crime against the Revolution, that while recalling the *formalities* specific to a measure of this kind, I protest against the abuse that could be made of it.

The means was not new. It is the same as MM. Guizot, Thiers and associates were preparing to employ in 1830, when the Legitimist reaction, precipitating events, gave them a more complete and prompt victory. But if the idea was old, the execution could not be easier and safer.

The Mountain was to proclaim legal resistance, first in threatening form, from the tribune. The democratic press then made it, for a month, the text of its instructions to the people. The representatives wrote to their electors about it: everywhere the government was summoned to stop in its path of reaction. If, in spite of the notifications made to it, the power persisted, then committees were formed for the hermetic blockade of the government; the citizens and the communes agreed to refuse simultaneously the tax, the rights of granting, management, navigation, registration, etc., military service, obedience to the authorities. Public opinion was agitated until resistance, without any other signal, broke out spontaneously and from everywhere. The motive for the resistance was simple and clear: the law on the clubs, the expedition to Rome, the judicial persecutions, were a war waged against the Republic. Was it up to the republicans to supply it the money and the soldiers?...

Can you imagine what an organized resistance could be in the 37,000 communes of France? The democratic party comprised more than a third of the nation: therefore seek garrisoners and policemen to constrain three million taxpayers! The peasants, of whatever opinion they were, would no sooner have heard of the refusal of the tax than, before declaring themselves, they would have begun by no longer paying; the hatred of the tax on salt, that on beverages, and the 45 centimes, was a sure guarantee of their disposition. It would have happened in the cities and the countryside as it happened to the Bank, to the Stock Exchange and in the whole financial and commercial world, at the time of political crises: in the uncertainty of events, and in order not to be fooled, each postpones his payments as long as he can. Would the government have wanted to be rigorous? Prosecutions would have only fanned the flames. Suddenly, without conflict, without bloodshed, our complicated system of taxation was overthrown, and it was necessary to change it from top to bottom; conscription abolished, mortgage reform and credit institutions won. The people, called upon to vote the tax itself, socialism, by this resolution of the minority, became a law of necessity, and entered into the very practice of the State.

It only takes a little knowledge of the people and the machinery of government to understand what was irresistible in such a system of opposition, solemnly announced, energetically supported, especially after the elections of May 13th. The democratic party was alone in finding it petty, impracticable, impossible. There was talk of furniture seized, sold at auction, of frightened peasants in front of the carriers of constraints! The most advanced, furious papers were astonished at this *inconceivable policy*, this *prosecutorial tactic*, as they said. They trembled at the idea of exposing the people to the collective garrison! The more benevolent found the resolution imprudent, risky, and above all anti-

governmental. If the people, they said, once refuse to pay the tax, they will never pay it again, and government will be impossible! If the citizens are taught to split up, if the history of the Roman people on the Sacred Mount is renewed, in connection with a parliamentary conflict, soon the departments, the provinces will separate from each other; centralization will be attacked from all sides; we will fall into federalism: there will be no more Authority! It is always the government that preoccupies the Jacobins. They need the government, and with the government, a budget, secret funds, as much as possible. In short, the counter-revolution was admirably defended by the organs of the revolution; the Jacobins, who detested the Gironde so much, because it protested against central despotism, in the name of local liberties, spoke for the doctrinaires. The *Peuple* collected for its initiative five years of prison and 10,000 fr. in fines, and the *Constitutionnel*, chuckling, had only to remain silent.

What a lesson for me! What a pitiful fall! How I had misjudged my contemporaries, conservatives and friends of *order* down to the marrow of their bones! How little I knew of our so-called revolutionaries, people of power and intrigue, who from the Republic founded in 1792 only included the committee of public safety and the police of Robespierre! And these were the reds that infuriated Léon Faucher! These were the so-called terrorists whom the government of Louis Bonaparte made a scarecrow! Calumny!

Parties are like societies, like men. As they grow older, they return to childhood. The history of Jacobinism, from February 25, 1848 to June 13, 1849, is nothing but a succession of faults. But it's still a confession that I have to make, however painful it may be to my self-esteem. The Revolution was better served by the incapacity of its agents than it would have been by the decisive means that I proposed. Since June 13, we have done with the parties and with the government: that is better than having re-established the Montagnards in place of the doctrinaires and the Jesuits. The force of things leaves us nothing more to do. *Il mondo va da se!*

XIX
APRIL 16:

THE EXPEDITION TO ROME.

My readers have perhaps noticed that the revolutionary dates of 1849 correspond almost day by day to those of 1848, offering moreover with these a surprising opposition.

In January and February 1848, it is the parliamentary quarrel of the opposition Barrot with the ministry Guizot-Duchâtel. — In January and February 1849, we find in the Government the same struggle for prerogatives. Only, the role of the main character has changed. The first time he fought against the government; the second time he fights for the government

March 21, 1849 offers a similar coincidence with March 17, 1848. Here, the democratic party comes to cover power with its protection; the clubs, on hearing that the Provisional Government was threatened, sent a demonstration of 150,000 men to succor it. — In 1849, the power organizes the persecution against democracy, and wants to undermine the right of assembly; it attacks the clubs. The parliament immediately comes to the aid of the citizens; the National Assembly halted for a moment in the course of reaction on which it had embarked: the people's fear caused the government to back down.

Same relation of significance and analogy for April 16. On April 16, 1848, the socialist democracy urged the Provisional Government to carry out the revolutionary idea; — on April 16, 1849, the government of Louis Bonaparte organized an expedition against this idea. Thirty thousand men to re-establish the Papacy: here, a year from the date, is the answer to the Luxembourg petition.

We will similarly find the dates of May and June, and, what will seem even stranger, we will see the reversals of Louis Bonaparte form a sort of compensation for those of Cavaignac. When events are generated, staggered, compensated with this almost mathematical precision, should we not conclude that liberty has its laws like matter, and that human thought can, with legitimate pride, aspire to replace in the government of the world the two powers that have hitherto shared the worship of mortals, Providence and Chance?

Decidedly, the reaction serves as a relay for the revolution, and takes the place of the democrats. Odilon Barrot, Léon Faucher, the doctrinaire and the Malthusian, have done their work: M. de Falloux, the Jesuit, is about to enter the scene.

Everything has been said, from the political point of view, about the affair of Rome. The facts are known. The coins are in everyone's hands: the results come to us every day more shameful and deplorable.

It remains to explain the philosophical and revolutionary meaning of this expedition, which the Mountain fought, which I fought myself, and against which I still protest with all the energy of my thoughts, because the thinking man must never submit to fortune;

but which, in the work of decomposition that our traditional prejudices and our present hesitations have made necessary, had become the only way of getting things done.

The war waged against the Roman Republic is the final blow that the principle of authority dealt to itself by the hand of Louis Bonaparte. — So is metempsychosis a truth? Should we believe, as some assure us, that the souls of the dead live again in their descendants and successors, to continue the good they have done during their previous existence or to repair the evil? It was a Bonaparte who was, at the commencement of the century, the highest personification of authority; it is a Bonaparte who, fifty years later, becomes its most striking negation. Again, is it chance or mystery?...

I have reported how the Government, having fallen into the hands of Louis Bonaparte, had begun to demolish itself, first through the Râteau proposal, then through the bill on the clubs. It is useful to bring out the formula contained in each of these acts, which were like the premises of a syllogism whose final conclusion was to be the expedition to Rome.

1. *Râteau Proposal*. — The separation of powers, says the Constitution, is the condition of all government. We have seen in fact that, without this separation, the government is dictatorial and despotic: this is a fact definitively established in political science, which has passed into theory. But with the separation of powers the government is obsolete; the legislative and the executive branches are necessarily in conflict; as soon as they work, they work reciprocally to wear one another out: like a pair of millstones that, turning one on the other, would soon be reduced to dust if the violence of the whirlwind did not first smash them into pieces. At least seven times in sixty years we have seen sometimes the executive power expel the legislature, sometimes the legislature dismiss the executive. It seemed after February that the experiment must have seemed sufficient, and that one would have nothing better to do in the future than to renounce this mechanism. But, for the vast majority of minds, the question was still doubtful. A final essay was needed which, summing up all the previous experiences, could be reduced to a simple formula, capable of being engraved, like an aphorism, in the memory of the people.

Now, here is the formula:

MAJOR PREMISE. — *Either despotism, or dualism.*

MINOR PREMISE. — *Now, despotism is impossible, dualism also impossible.*

CONCLUSION. — *Thus, government is impossible.*

The Râteau proposal and the day of January 29 are nothing other than the staging of this syllogism.

By asking the Constituent Assembly to retire before the President, M. Barrot and his friends signaled to all eyes the constitutional antagonism. It was as if they had said to the People: Yes, the separation of powers is the first condition of a free government. But this separation should not be taken too strictly; one of the two powers must subordinate itself to the other, otherwise they will both devour each other. This is why we ask that the Constituent Assembly resign its Powers, and make way for a Legislative Assembly better disposed to follow the inspirations of the President.

Under the Charter, which, like the Constitution of 1848, laid down the principle of the separation of powers, it was admitted and passed into custom that the King should choose his ministers from the majority, except to make every effort to obtain a submissive majority from the voters. It was a way of escaping the consequences of separation. Under the Constitution of 1848, the President being responsible, elective, appointed by all the citizens, it was judged, contrary to what happened under the Charter, that it was up to the majority to support the President, not up to the President to rely on the majority: a perfectly logical consequence, but one that lays bare the contradiction and the danger of Authority.

2. *Law on the clubs.* — Facts are the manifestation of ideas. Just as to know the laws of nature, it suffices to observe its phenomena; in the same way, to penetrate the intimate thought of a government, and to predict its destiny, it is only a question of analyzing its acts. The Râteau proposition, by showing us the antagonism in the Power, made us foresee its future dissolution; the law on the clubs, by revealing to us the antagonism between the Country and the Power, changes this presentiment into probability.

The separation of powers is the *essence* of the Constitution; the accord of authority and liberty is its OBJECT. Since 1790, the partisans of the constitutional system have chiefly concerned themselves with this agreement: each of our constitutions, even that of '93, has been an attempt to apply their theory. All have successively claimed to have solved the problem, and all have successively failed at the work. The authors of the Charter of 1830 had above all flattered themselves with giving this solution, and if experience had not, this time any more than the others, confirmed the theory, it was, affirmed the Barrot opposition, the fault of the crown and its ministers, who, by an unfair collusion, perverted the institution; it was, according to the Jacobins, the duality of the chambers, the monarchical prerogative, the electoral privilege, which were the cause of it.

For the experience to be decisive, it had to meet all the conditions demanded by both the Doctrinaires and the Jacobins.

Now, as society, in its progressive march, usually exhausts all transitions and hardly admits of enjambments, it was bound to happen, on the one hand, that the Constitution was modified in the sense of the Jacobins, on the other, that the power was given to the men of the doctrinaire opposition, so that we know what to expect from the motto adopted until this day by all the parties: *Agreement of Liberty and the Power.*

It will perhaps be observed that the test provided by the Constitution of 1848 cannot be regarded as decisive, since the Constitution is not absolutely such, with its President and its single Chamber, as the montagnards and the doctrinaires, each on their side, would have wanted it.

But this observation cannot be accepted. What constitutes authority in a society, in the true sense of the word; what realizes power and constitutes the essence of the monarchy itself is much less, as we have seen with regard to the Constitution, the *personality* of the government, than the ACCUMULATION of the attributions. Now, how would this

accumulation be diminished, how would the monarchical constitution of power be altered and democracy more real, because Louis Bonaparte would have left the chair, and he would remain at the head of the executive power only M. Barrot, with the Council of Ministers, both nominated by the Assembly? With the majority of the Legislative Assembly as sovereign and M. de Falloux as minister, the war against the Roman Republic, indicated in advance by the foolish piety of General Cavaignac towards the pope, had it become less a policy of necessity for the reaction?... As for the duality of the Chambers, as it has no other object than to serve as a control, and, if necessary, to put an end to the conflicts between the powers, by deciding between the wills, the Barrot party would today be ill-founded to argue the absence of an Upper House, given that it is that party that governs and that has the majority.

The Constitution of 1848, with the presence in the business of the former opposition, therefore brings together all the desirable conditions of sincerity and evidence: the test, it is to be hoped, will be final.

Well! The result of this test, the day of March 21 made it known to us: it is that the government, contradictory in its essence, is also in contradiction with its object, with liberty. Called upon to provide its solution, the Dynastic Opposition answered us, through the mouth of Léon Faucher, as the Republicans of the day before had done through the mouth of M. Marie: *We were mistaken!* Republican institutions, freedom of the press, the right of association and of assembly go beyond the measure of the power. We must impose limits on liberty; otherwise the government cannot answer for order!

The dilemma has therefore narrowed; the formula has become more forceful:

Either no liberty,

Or no government.

This is the meaning of the law on the clubs and the latest law regarding the press.

Thus, the government of December 10 exists only as a revolutionary demonstration, as a reduction to the absurd of the principle of authority. Every step it takes is an argument it addresses to liberty: "Kill me, or I'll kill you," it tells it. — Now we are going to see him generalize the *reignicidal* formula, by invoking against the liberty that pursues it its last hope, divine right, by taking refuge in its last asylum, the papacy.

3. *Expedition of Rome.* — From time immemorial, the State had tended to make itself independent of the Church. The *temporal* had made a schism with the *spiritual*; the kings, those first revolutionaries, had slapped the pope with their iron gauntlet. They counted on no longer relying solely on their right and their sword: not understanding that monarchical right is the same thing as canon right, of which the sovereign judge is the pope, and that the right of the sword is nothing other than the right of insurrection, of which the sovereign judge is the people. Liberty spoke to the pope through the mouths of kings, while waiting to speak to the king through the mouths of slaves. Royalty, rebelling against the papacy, began from then on to march to its ruin. Divine right being the only one that kings could invoke in favor of their prerogative, disobedience to the pope

effectively placed the king under a ban, released the subjects from the oath of loyalty, and if the king undertook to subject them by force, the subjects had the right to run after him and slay him. So the casuists had decided long before the republicans of 1688 and 1793 put their lessons into practice.

The schism had therefore existed for centuries between the altar and the throne, to the great damage of the Church and the monarchy, but to the great profit of the peoples, whose emancipation constantly found new strength there. In the sixteenth century, a conspiracy was organized to stop the progress of the new spirit. The Society of Jesus was founded to lead, by preaching and teaching, the kings and the peoples to papal authority, and to reconcile, as far as possible, the progress and needs of the age with the sacred and indefectible rights of the vicar of Jesus Christ. But soon the Puritan school of Jansenius came to unmask the tactics of the children of Loyola. A little later both Voltaire and the Encyclopedia appeared, with the Marquis de Pombal and Pope Clement XIII, who, having the Jesuits expelled from most of the states of Europe, rendered the scission from that point on almost irremediable. The civil constitution of the clergy, then making the church the salaried, from the proprietor that it formerly was, and relegating it to the metaphysics of worship and dogma, took away all reality from its power. The ordinances against the Jesuits, which appeared under Charles X, countersigned by a bishop, were the consecration of the Gallican schism, laid down a century and a half before by Bossuet. Finally, the revision of the Charter in 1830, where the Catholic religion lost its title of religion of State, and was declared simply religion of the majority of the French, consummated the separation of the temporal and the spiritual, or, to speak more correctly, the annihilation of it.

The Church thus humiliated, the principle of authority was struck at its source, the power was only a shadow, the State a fiction. Every citizen could ask the government: Who are you that I should respect you and obey you? Socialism does not fail to show this consequence; and when, in the face of the monarchy, its hand stretched out on a charter that denied the Gospel, it dared to call itself ANARCHIST, negator of all authority, it only drew the conclusion from a reasoning that had been going on for thousands of years, under the revolutionary action of governments and kings.

The moment has therefore come for the powers of Europe, either to abjure themselves before the interrogation of the citizens, or to recall the Jesuits and restore the pope. Who will prevail, the Revolution or the Church? The last hour has come; the tempest that is to sweep away the Holy See and the throne is rising, roaring. The eternal dilemma tightens more and more, and poses itself in its inexorable depth:

*Either no papacy,
Or no liberty.*

It was in these very terms that the question arose in the Constituent Assembly, in the memorable session of February 20, 1849.

Citizen LEDRU-ROLLIN. — “A momentous event, which will leave a long trace in history, has just taken place in Italy. The Republic has just been proclaimed there: the temporal power of the popes has been struck with forfeiture. This is good news for the friends of liberty.” (Murmurs and complaints.)

The orator then denounces the project of intervention that rumors in the stock market attribute to the government, and asks “If it is for or against the Roman Republic, for or against the restoration of the temporal power of the pope that the ministry proposes to intervene.”

Citizen DROUYN DE LHUYS, Minister for Foreign Affairs. — “The government does not admit solidarity between the French Republic and the Roman Republic... Having said this, I say that the question is very delicate, because it presents the necessity of *reconciling the temporal power and the spiritual power*. Ever since there have been souls and bodies in the world, this is the great problem that we have sought to solve. It is the solution of this problem that we will seek in good faith, and with the desire to arrive at a happy result.”

Citizen LEDRU-ROLLIN. — “It is not a question of reconciling the temporal and the spiritual; it is about *separating* them. Your reconciliation is only an accumulation; it is the confiscation of liberty itself.”

Citizens POUJOLAT and AYLIES. — “The existence of the papacy is attached to this reconciliation: all Catholicism is interested in it. Intervention is a right for Europe, not Catholic, but Christian.”

Citizen PROUDHON. — “Liberty comes before catholicity!”

Thus the cause of the government and that of the pope declared themselves united. From the point of view of the preservation of power, the intervention of Louis Bonaparte in the affairs of the Church was logical; it was a necessity. What am I saying, it was an honorable amends to the pope for all the revolts and profanations committed for more than a thousand years against his authority, by the kings, his rebellious children. By restoring the temporal power of the pope, without which the spiritual is only a power of reason, as the soul without the body is only an abstraction, a *shadow*, said the ancients, the government of the French Republic hoped to consolidate itself; by attacking the Mountain in Rome, the absolutist reaction triumphed over the Mountain in Paris. So, once again, either intervention or death, I mean spiritual death, while awaiting physical death: such was the question for the government of Louis Bonaparte, perfectly understood by the socialists and the Jesuits.

However, and it is here that the equivocal character for which the promoters of intervention have been so reproached, the government of Louis Bonaparte, composed in the majority of former liberals, could not, without lying to its constitutional antecedents and to its traditions of liberalism, without offending the democratic and philosophical sentiment of the country, to take up absolutely the defense of the pope. Facts accomplished for centuries, and definitively established in history; our principles of public right, our Gallican mores, our endemic indifference in matters of religion, our legal atheism, all

made it necessary for the power to act only with moderation, and, a singular thing, while it intervened in favor of absolutism, to still stand as guarantor of liberty. Contradiction followed it everywhere. If the government, said Mr. his inviolable prerogative, only to cause the Roman people to enjoy, under a holy and paternal government, a wise and honest liberty. The government did not intend to *confound*, as Ledru-Rollin reproached it, it wanted to reconcile the two powers, spiritual and temporal, in the same way that it had already claimed to reconcile, through the Charter of 1830, monarchy and liberty.

Thus, in the form of a constitutional papacy, matching this constitutional royalty thrice overthrown by those who had created it, the ministers of Louis Bonaparte undertook to solve a problem that philosophy had long declared insoluble; they remade in the name of the pope, and in spite of the pope, the book of this philosopher abbé, *of the Accord of Reason with Faith*, a book from which it follows precisely, against the intention of the author, that Faith and Reason are forever inconsistent. What the doctrinaires were going to try in Rome was what for sixty years the Revolution had shown impossible, the union of authority and liberty, something like squaring the circle and perpetual motion!

We recognize in this policy, partaking as much of illusion as of good faith, the spirit of the happy medium, constantly taking a patching-up for a reconciliation, which, through the fear of extremes, condemns itself inevitably to inertia or throws itself into antagonism. What the eclectic seeks in philosophy, the doctrinaire claims to produce in politics: so true is it that human acts are only the translation of ideas!

You ask the eclectic: Are you a materialistic? — No, he replies.

A spiritualist? — Still no.

What, then? A realist? — God forbid!

An idealist? — I distinguish.

A pantheist? — I do not know.

An atheist? - I wouldn't dare.

A skeptic? - I cannot.

Come then: you are a charlatan or an imbecile!

The policy of the doctrinaire is the exact reproduction of this eclecticism.

What do you think of the Republic? — An accomplished fact.

Of the monarchy? — I'm not breaking the law.

Of the president? — Elected by six million votes.

Of the constitution? — A summary of our political ideas.

Of socialism? — A generous utopia.

Of property? — A necessary abuse.

Do you believe in religion? — I respect it.

Do you believe in equality? — I want it.

Do you believe in progress? — I'm not against it!...

The eclectic and the doctrinaire, above them the Jesuit: these are the three elements that at this moment govern France — I almost said: that have always governed the world.

The last, representative of the absolutist principle, was, like the socialist his opponent, often proscribed; the Church itself, through the voice of its popes and its bishops, has shown itself to be severe towards him more than once. Unfortunately, in the situation in which Europe finds itself today, at a time when the power at bay no longer knows what policy to pursue, the Jesuit influence had to prevail over eclecticism and doctrine, and exclude them for a time.

The conspiracy attempted from the beginning, between the altar and the throne, against liberty, resumed its fatal course. The crime demanded by an implacable theology was consummated by a philosophy without criteria, mother of a politics without compass. On the proposal of M. Odilon Barrot, the National Assembly decreed that a French army would take up a position at Civita-Vecchia. It was a vote for war on the Republic: the facts quickly took care of realizing the idea.

To this attack of absolutism, what was socialism going to answer?

The war waged against the Romans gave it too good a game, and it is inconceivable that, with their much vaunted skill, the Jesuits should go astray at this point. The dilemma posed, as we have just said, between the papacy and liberty, it was evident, whatever the success of the expedition, that the papacy would perish there. Either, left to its own forces, it would disappear under the reforms of Mazzini: the pope, deprived of his temporal authority, being no more than the bishop of Rome, the first employee of the cult followed by the majority of the Romans, was nothing. To confine Catholicism to its churches is to exile it from the earth. Or else, restored by foreign bayonets, cemented with the blood of its rebellious subjects, become an object of horror for the Christian world, the papacy would die of its own victory: a pope, vicar of Christ, who reigns by the sword, is a blasphemer under the tiara. He is the Antichrist.

Reactionary passion carried the Jesuits away. Forgetful of their own maxims, misunderstanding the spirit of their institute, when it was necessary to make room for the antagonistic principle, they wanted, like the Council of Trent with the Reformation, to put an end to it. Devoured by a long thirst for revenge, these men, whose fatal genius had impelled the Constituent Assembly to the funeral of June, had the credit of making it yet another accomplice in the bombardment of Rome. They wanted, in their mad thoughts, to exterminate protest from off the earth: they only succeeded in compromising, in the most deplorable way, the very existence of religion.

After the vote of April 16, war on the Roman republic was inevitable. After the capture of Rome by the French army, the fall of the papacy is no longer doubtful: it must lead, in a given time, to that of Catholicism. If there were still true Christians, they would rise up, they would turn to the bishops. Religion is in danger, they would tell them. Fathers of the Church, advise!

As for me, after the session of April 16, I began to be frightened by the rapidity of events. I almost came to regret the blows dealt to the Church by the hand of its own leaders: if it was not out of interest for religion, it was out of respect for humanity.

Catholicism is the oldest organic element, still the most powerful element of modern societies: as the oldest and most powerful, it can only be revolutionized last. Its transformation presupposes, as preconditions, a political revolution and an economic revolution. The conduct of the Jesuits and of the court of Rome overthrew all the laws of history, all notions of progress: I was almost tempted to see in this policy of despair one more perfidy against the revolution.

However, socialism could not come to the aid of the contradictory principle: its course was traced. Revolutionary duty forbade the organs of the socialist democracy to remain silent. On the contrary, it commanded them to protest, although their protest could have no other effect than to activate the passion of the reactors. It was necessary to call the judgment of the nations upon this great controversy, to give to the expedition directed against the Roman people, to its spirit, its means, its object, its effects, the greatest publicity. It was necessary, since thus the men of God had willed it, to pose in every conscience the fatal dilemma; to show Catholicism from persecuted become persecutor, from martyr executioner; the Roman Church changed in a fury; a father bombarding his flock; cardinals and priests drawing up proscription lists; the workers and the poor, formerly the men of faith, *the best friends of God*, now declared anathema, while incredulous and libertine wealth was caressed and applauded; the government of a republic, finally, stabbing in cold blood, at the signal of the Congregation, another republic, and that because it is government, and because according to the ultramontane theory, any government that does not depend on the papacy is a usurping institution, an illegitimate fact.

The democratic press therefore rivaled the organs of Jesuitism in its disorganizing ardor. The *Peuple*, to its last day, heroically sounded the charge against the homicidal papacy. The propaganda reached even the peasants, the servants, the soldiers. I have never had great faith in the republican virtue of the saber; I have always believed the bayonet to be more brutal than the intelligent, and I had good reason to regard the corps of officers as less sensitive to the honor of the country and the success of the revolution than to respect for what they call *discipline*. The ideological-political question of the Roman war was nonetheless brought to the knowledge of the army, discussed by each soldier, who had become, by his right as elector, the judge of the government. The success exceeded all expectations: the power trembled. A few more months of this propaganda, and we would have led the regiments, no doubt not to abandon their colors and revolt against their leaders, but to take the initiative themselves in a demonstration, the consequences of which would then have been entirely other than those of June 13.

Such combats, for men of ideas, the only true revolutionaries, are far more grandiose than battles where cannon thunder, where iron and lead threaten only the carnal part of man. Sixty years of revolution had not been able to uproot respect for authority in France: and we journalists can say it with pride, in one campaign we defeated the papacy and the

government, spiritual and temporal dominion. We have not degenerated from our fathers!....

The alliance of the doctrinaires with the Jesuits doomed everything: religion, papacy, monarchy, government. Now it seems that repentance grips them. The President of the Republic tried to write to protest against papal absolutism. A useless effort! The woman who gives herself up loses her will with her modesty. The doctrinaires, subjugated by the Jesuits, have no thought but that of the Jesuits. The Jesuits demand that the French army leave Rome, abandoning the people to all priestly revenge; and the French army will obey. Avarice intermingling with the plot, the bankocrats will refuse the credits necessary for the stay of our soldiers: we will have sacrificed 25 million to restore the pope, we will not have an obol to sustain our influence. Guilty to liberty of murder and perjury, the doctrinaire strikes his chest. The Jesuit comes and says: **Let's go?**

Bishops of France, I will speak to you frankly, regardless of the opinion I represent.

Nothing is destroyed in the world, nothing is lost: everything is constantly developing and changing. Such is the law of beings, the law of social institutions. Christianity itself, the highest and most complete expression of religious sentiment up to the present time; the Government, the visible image of political unity; Property, the concrete form of individual freedom, cannot be totally annihilated. Whatever transformation they may have to undergo, these elements will always subsist, at least in their virtuality, in order to impress movement unceasingly on the world, by their essential contradiction. Catholicism, worked for so many centuries by free thought, after having been inspired in turn by Roman genius and by the feudal spirit, was to approach, by the development of social ideas, its Greek and philosophical origins. The war waged on the Roman Republic, raising against the Church the reprobation of the people and dishonoring Catholicism, vitiates the revolution, disturbs consciences, and compromises the peace of Europe. Socialism, whose mission was to convert you, is crushing you. Beware. Separate yourself from the Jesuits, while there is still time; warn your leader Pius IX, or you are lost!

CONSTITUTIONALITY OF THE DEMOCRATIC-SOCIALIST PARTY.

The idea of reducing all of socialism to a single principle, expressed in three symbolic forms, Catholicism or the papacy, monarchy or government, and capital or usury, then of deducing from this principle the whole revolution of February, was bearing fruit. The government, which had fallen into fanatical hands, was destroying itself at will: one would have said that it was obeying the command of *Le Peuple*. Public opinion was changing visibly: everywhere candidates had arisen, and the electors had voted under the influence of this opinion, that in France there were henceforth only two parties, the party of Labor and the Party of Capital. The conservatives had accepted the question thus presented; the monarchy and the papacy were relegated to the background. One was socialist-democrat or one was reactionary.

The Constitution itself lent itself to this classification. As revolutionary as it was conservative, as socialist as it was political, it lent itself to all interpretations: the question was to know which way the balance would tip. It mattered little even that socialism was, for some time yet, in the minority in the country and in the Assembly. Since it had its roots in the Constitution, and since, as a result of the idea under which the elections were held, it was to the capitalist majority what the dynastic opposition had been, under Louis-Philippe, to the immobilist majority, it became what until then one had been able, with more or less appearance, to dispute that it was, a legal and constitutional party. It was already taking possession of the country: its triumph was only a question of time.

The revolutionary situation was therefore, in May 1849, more beautiful than it had been in February, March, April and May 1848, when the socialist idea, ill-defined, even worse represented, had been successively rejected. by all the republican shades, from the Barbès shade to the Bastide shade, to be massacred afterwards under the Lacrosse and Senard shade. Socialism could say, like the God of the Jews: I am who I am! I am the young and strong party, the party that grows, that runs and spreads like fire, and that will devour you, you worn-out party, party of the old and dying, if you block its way.

Thus, the movement always growing, the dissolution of that power going at the same pace, it was easy to see that the direction of affairs was going, a little sooner, a little later, to fall to the left. The time had come for the Mountain to put itself in a position to respond to the call that would soon be made to it. It held the government by the throat: before striking the last blow, it had to make its program known.

What effect would Ledru-Rollin have produced if, on the very day of the Legislative meeting, speaking in the name of socialist democracy, he had come, he, the leader of a party that had voted against the presidency, and to some degree against the Constitution,

to protest, in forceful terms, the respect of his party for this Constitution! Elected from five departments, Ledru-Rollin instantly became the man of all France.

I will not repeat here what was said in *Le Peuple*, after the elections of May 13, about the necessity for the socialist democracy to present itself in the country as a party of order and of the Constitution: events have spoken in this respect, and in a painful manner. Instead of seeing this tactic as a takeover, the Jacobins saw it as a retreat. For having indicated that the consequence of the indictment of Louis Bonaparte and his ministers was to bring Ledru-Rollin, candidate of December 10 and now leader of the opposition, to the presidency, *Le Peuple* was suspected by some of laying a trap for the mountain orator, accused by others of courting him slavishly. There was so much blindness in people's minds! We were too right to be listened to: the Revolution was going its own way.

But what has not been said, what is more important than ever to make known today, is the social economy motives that guided us. The conservative party is not so firmly established that it cannot fall from power from one day to the next, and leave the government of the Republic to its adversaries. What did I say? If it is true, as we have seen so many examples since February, that ideas rule the world, by virtue of the principle that *extremes meet*, it would still be necessary to regard as probable, as imminent, the arrival of the Mountain in government. What then would be the policy of the Democrats? The country has the right to ask it. Since the situation could therefore be back in six months to what it was six months ago, we are going to resume the discussion as we would have developed it after May 13, if pressure from events and the unfortunate day of June 13 had not come to interrupt our work.

Let us ask the question clearly.

Should socialism, the negation of capital and authority, after the May elections, proceed with regard to the government and the country as extra-parliamentary opinion, take part in the work of the Assembly only in order to precipitate the fall of a reactionary power and an imperfect Constitution; or, as a party of order and progress, relying on the Constitution, taking its defense in hand, declaring that its intention, for the present and for the future, was it to procure the triumph of the Revolution EXCLUSIVELY BY LEGAL MEANS?

In short, socialism, in the event of its advent to the ministry, should it arise in legality and in the Constitution, or in the Dictatorship?

The question was certainly one of the most serious. It deserved to be examined, deepened, treated with so much more prudence, as it gave rise, from the political point of view as well as from the economic point of view, to considerations of the highest interest.

If the organs of the socialist democracy had only understood what it was all about, if they had grasped the brilliant and original side of the thesis that they maintained, with more or less equivocation, against *Le Peuple*, they could have told us, without imprecation and without insult:

Take care! You speak of legality and the Constitution, as if, in revolutionary times, in the face of a reaction that marches on with its head raised, legality was not suicide; as if a changing society did not have to subdue opposing elements by force before organizing them by right. Are we not therefore today in the same conditions as our fathers in 1792, when they in turn overthrew the monarchy that appealed to the Constitution, and the Gironde that appealed to legality, and that by trampling on the Constitution and legality, they saved the Revolution?... So also let legality perish, the Constitution be dishonored, reaction become trapped, and the revolutionaries do their work!...

In truth, if the newspapers of which I speak, and whose passion has ended by prevailing, had seriously undertaken to justify, by revolutionary necessity, their systematic *unconstitutionality*, the public would then have known what it was all about; the Revolution discussing its means in broad daylight, the people would have decided knowingly. Then, supported or condemned by the people, democracy would have won on June 13, or the demonstration would not have taken place.

But the popular party, led by an unfortunate influence, was not enlightened as to the route which it was being made to take. Through either ignorance of the question, or lack of frankness, the democratic press, united for a moment against *Le People*, stood in a deplorable vagueness. To this question, posed squarely, if, in the event that the democratic and social party would be called to business, we should respect or repeal the Constitution, the *Démocratie Pacifique* answered with a subterfuge stretched out in ten columns: it referred, it said, to the omnipotence of the people. For some, hatreds to be satisfied, socialism to be eliminated, dictatorship to be established; — they admitted it! they printed it! — for others, utopias to experiment with, public fortune to manipulate, the nation to lead, *in flagello et virgâ*, like a herd: this is what our unfortunate adversaries barely concealed, under the most shameful reluctance.

Certainly, *Le People* knew what they were doing, and where they wanted to go, when, after the unexpected success of the elections, they expressed the need for socialism to pose as a constitutional and legal party. We had read, like everyone else, our history of the Revolution; we would have admitted, perhaps, if we were pressed, that the formalism of the Girondins, in itself irreproachable, was untimely and dangerous; that legality having been swept away by the hurricane of 92, it was rather inconsistent to take advantage of it in 93.

But from this fact that, under the name of Socialist Democrats, we were the continuators of 93, did it follow that we had to make a REPETITION of it in 1849? *Le People* absolutely denied it. It maintained that the Revolution, at the point it is at today, can no longer advance unless supported by legality and the Constitution; it therefore regarded as equally enemies of social democracy, both the conservatives who resisted and persecuted it, and the unintelligent radicals who, under the pretext of assuring its triumph, urged it to absolutism. Let us now add that the best way to set back the idea of February, if not to kill

it, would be the creation of this dictatorial power demanded by Louis Blanc, and uselessly solicited in March, April and May 1848 by the democrats.

The question was therefore reduced to these terms:

Did the revolution in 1849 involve the same means of action as in 1793?

For my part, I answer without hesitation: No, it does not include them. And the reason is that the Revolution in 1793 was above all *political*, and that in 1849 it was above all SOCIAL.

The revolution, in 1793, was the end of the movement begun several centuries ago by the communes: elevation of the third estate to the level of higher orders, abolition of ecclesiastical and noble privileges, equality before the LAW. In 93, therefore, public order again drew up its constitution, but only from a political point of view, outside the data of the social economy. For To say everything in a single word, the revolution of 93 was addressed only to caste prerogatives; in 1849, it touches on the prerogative of the individual himself, on what constitutes in modern society the man and the citizen, property.

I sincerely regret, for the semi-socialists, having to constantly remind them of this consideration, which makes them murmur. But they must make up their minds about it. There is no possible social reform, no guarantee of labor, no public assistance, no free education, free movement, emancipation of the proletariat, no extirpation of misery, without a radical transformation, in whatever way this transformation must take place, of property.

What, after all, was the revolution of '89? — A general insurance of the properties of the third estate, against the affronts of feudal privilege.

What was the 1848 revolution? — A general insurance of labor against abuse of property.

May so-called republicans curse me, may the plagiarists of the old Jacobinism denounce me to the revolutionary tribunal; they will not prevent me from repeating what I know and what will not be refuted, which it is my duty to say out loud, so that the people will be on their guard and disavow me if I am wrong or support me if I am in the truth: it is that social revolution, right to work, credit gratuitous, progressive tax, tax on capital as well as on income, and perpetuity of property — in its present form — are all terms that imply contradiction. The question, for those who have studied the matter, is no longer how one can reconcile property, such as it is, with the extinction of the proletariat; but how is it possible to abolish the proletariat, and thus transform property, without doing wrong to the proprietors, without disorganizing society.

Now, what had property to fear, in 93, from the dictatorship of the Convention? Nothing, absolutely nothing. That there were nobles expropriated, ruined, I want it: it was for political reasons, not for economic reasons. They were struck as nobles, as aristocrats, as emigrants, etc., never as proprietors. Requisitions were established, following the principle of progressive taxation, I also know it: but these requisitions were announced by

those who established them as temporary and exceptional; there was nothing systematic about them. They were not organic laws, like the project of M. Passy and that of M. Goudchaux, but laws of public safety. Considered in their result, they were the insurance premium paid, once and for all, to the Revolution by property.

The dictatorship was therefore made, in 93, not against property, but for property. It was so much property that the Convention and the Jacobins intended to defend, that the socialists of the time, who were called the *enragés*, were delivered to the guillotine, and that the terror of social questions was greater from 92 to 94, than that of the counter-revolution. What fell under the blow of this dictatorship was not society, then living in the third estate; it was the caste which, by the progress of time, had placed itself outside society. And it was still thus that the Romans had conceived of the dictatorship: among them it appeared from time to time, not to reform institutions, but to repel the enemy.

Here I cannot avoid for myself a painful rapprochement.

A social question, under the name of *agrarian law*, had been posed by the Gracchi. Now, during the twenty years that the opposition of the two brothers lasted, they were constantly seen to proceed by legal means: they never claimed the benefit of a dictatorship. However, it was not a question, as today, of modifying Roman property: it was only a question of distributing among the old plebeian soldiers the lands conquered from the enemies; even this distribution was not to have retroactive effect. The *agrarian law* proposed by the Gracchi was sound policy: it alone, by conferring on the plebs, at the expense of the foreigner, property, could strengthen the tottering Republic, and drive back the usurpation of the Caesars. But because this law seemed a restriction on the right to buy and possess, which the patricians used and abused with regard to conquered territories, as do the hoarders with regard to grain and other foodstuffs, and consequently affected the right of property, so absolute, so inviolable among the Romans, the reform attempted by the Gracchi could not be carried out as they intended: the two tribunes succumbed one after the other, victims of their love of the people and their respect for the law. As for the agrarian law, we will see what happened to it.

From the economic institution that it had been at first, the agrarian law soon became a political matter; it served both as a pretext and as an instrument for the ambitious without principles, Marius, Catiline, Julius Caesar, leaders of the socialist democracy of the time. With the last, the plebs end up prevailing over the patriciate. But they did not enjoy their victory: they received from it, instead of liberty and wealth, only a perpetual dictatorship, the autocracy of the emperors. So the social question was buried with the Republic. The patricians kept their possessions: all they needed to do was pay court to Caesar. They even increased them, the gold that they would withdraw from their usury giving them the means of acquiring ceaselessly and enslaving more and more the plebs. As for the latter, they received distributions of wheat as compensation, they had free spectacles, and that was done with the Senate and the Roman People.

Socialism is for us what the agrarian law was for the Gracchi; it can only be achieved through legality, respect for acquired rights and the Constitution. If it allows itself to be driven by politics, if it ceases to be something of an institution to become something of government, if it claims to establish itself by dictatorial authority, it will only succeed in disturbing society and arousing endless reactions. After countless disturbances, it will end up succumbing under the blows of the power it will have wanted to take: it is thus that the socialism of 93, after having formed a coalition, for the power, with the Jacobins, perishes under the blows Jacobins.

But these considerations, which touch on the essence of property, are nothing compared to those raised in modern societies by the concern for circulation, on which the life of peoples today depends.

Shortly after the days of February, the *Représentant du Peuple* had brought to light this capital fact, that today the French nation no longer subsists, as in 89, on property, but on circulation; that the separation of industries, while increasing wealth, has destroyed the independence of fortunes; so that the same country that had been able, thanks to the sale of several billions of national goods, and especially thanks to the difference of the economic mode, to endure, from the opening of the estates-general until 18 brumaire, twelve years of revolutionary storm without being shaken by it, could no longer, after February, bear without perishing two years of unemployment.²²

It is therefore necessary, in order to fulfill the conditions of the economic problem, that the Revolution, taking society as it is, changing relations without affecting immediate or material interests, reforms the system by continuing it; for, let us not forget, socialism must have everyone as author and accomplice, on pain of creating a Babelian confusion, a tyranny, a terrible misery.

Certainly, nothing could be easier, on paper, than to redeem, by means of State rents, the canals, railways and mines, large properties and large factories; to substitute labor corporations for limited companies; to make current proprietors and entrepreneurs salaried managers by the state, etc., etc. We have seen with what confidence Louis Blanc, in agreement with the notabilities of the Luxembourg, proposed to operate by decree the transport of the personnel, the material, the properties and all the industry of the country.

Well! When the rights and duties of the partners, workers, directors, inspectors, apprentices, etc., under this new regime, had to be defined — and they were not;

When the attributions of each industry, of each society, of each individual, had to be fixed — and they were not;

²² What is happening now is the most dire confirmation of the predictions of the *Représentant du Peuple*. Property, annihilated by the lack of circulation, no longer returning anything to the owners, devoured by the tax authorities and by the mortgage, has ceased, especially in Paris, to be a guarantee, to become the most intolerable of servitudes. (*Note from 1st edition.*)

When the salaries of all this personnel, the price of all the products, had to be determined — and they were not, it was impossible that they were;

When, by means of imaginary profits, the secret would have been found of making the workers' associations repay the movable and immovable capital that the State would have bought back for them — and the simplest notion of social economy demonstrates that the idea of redemption Universal Properties excludes the possibility of reimbursement;

When all wills should have been in accord — and the deepest discord reigned within socialism itself;

When all these things, impossible to solve by discussion, inaccessible to theory, should have been decided upon — and the simplest problem had not been solved:

I say again that the least thing that had to be done before getting to work was an inventory, and I declare that I would have preferred death a thousand times over to a dictatorship, rather than taking on a such displacement of fortunes, of functions, of persons, of material and of interests.

Do we seriously dream of accomplishing a social revolution, with the absolutism of a convention, a committee or a dictator? Can we conceive what would have been the census, the estimation, the transfer of all the movable and immovable wealth of the country, with the displacement of all the individuals, workers, entrepreneurs, capitalists and proprietors: which would suppose the immediate opening of two or three hundred million different accounts, on the books of the State and of the new associations? For, once embarked on this path, it would have been necessary to follow it to the end: the departments, towns and villages would have liked to follow the example of Paris; trades would have been affected like factories; the small property would have followed the fate of the large. Everything that would have remained outside the movement becoming an obstacle to the movement, it would have been necessary to generalize the system more every day. The more the redemption, — read the expropriation without indemnity, — of certain portions of the national fortune would have raised obstacles, the more the revolutionary impatience would have thought to deliver itself from it by new expropriations. Let it be said, the social revolution, attempted by way of redemption and substitution, as Luxembourg had imagined, could only lead to an immense cataclysm, the immediate effect of which would have been to paralyze labor and to sterilize the earth, to stop circulation, to enclose society in a straitjacket; and, if it were possible for such a state of things to last only a few weeks, to destroy, by an unforeseen famine, three or four million men.

But let us admit, as a possibility, that the social revolution, according to the ideas of the Luxembourg, could have taken place without haste or disorder, without loss of time, expense or damage. You will at least grant me that all this could not be done without a police force, some kind of public order, if only on a *provisional* basis. The dictatorship itself, any dictatorship that it had been, would have needed for political affairs a ministry or provisional government, for industry and agriculture provisional contractors, provisional farmers; in short, of laws, codes, provisional courts, a legal state finally,

doubtless imperfect, but indispensable such as it is, which for this reason would have been declared, like the Constitution of 1848, essentially reformable and subject to revision.

Why then not declare immediately that the established regime would be observed until revoked, and the reform proclaimed only after experiment? Was it necessary, while waiting for another constitution to be drawn up, — which would not have failed to be progressive, consequently capable of always being revised, and consequently provisional, — to discuss and vote first on a provisional constitution? What good is this waste of time? Why not get to work immediately, relying on a ready-made Constitution? Why did the radicals, who had become masters, need to violate it?... It does not guarantee, it is said, labor! But it does not prevent the organization of it either, if indeed the *organization of labor*, in the sense that so many people give it, is not an empty phrase. Did they want to intervene in favor of Hungary and Rome? The Constitution did not prevent it, provided however that the intervention had no other aim than to ensure the free manifestation of the peoples in the choice of their government, that is to say to protect them against the foreign. How would the presidency of the Republic, for which Ledru-Rollin was a candidate in December, not have sufficed for the demands of the party, and what need was there to convert it into a dictatorship?...

Such questions cannot be discussed: to ask them is to solve them. *Le Peuple*, by insisting on the constitutionality of the democratic and social party, in anticipation of a political reversal, served the interests of the Mountain better than it had done itself for a year. The refusal to accept, without ulterior motive, the Constitution, when on this acceptance of the Montagnards depended the addition to the party of the greater part of the bourgeois, was as devoid of reason as of policy. It was a betrayal of socialism and the proletariat, a crime against the Revolution.

Will it be said that I deliberately exaggerate the consequences of a dictatorial authority, to give myself the pleasure of subsequently demonstrating its absurdity; that there was never any question, in the Jacobin party, of repealing all the laws outright, of dispossessing the citizens, of displacing fortunes, of transposing and inverting, along with ideas, men and things?

Oh! I know perfectly well that neo-Jacobinism is very little socialist, so little that it is not socialist at all! I know that, the victory won, it was proposed to throw the social question over the edge, as Robespierre did formerly, and to create such distractions for the people, that, except for the ministry of progress, requested by Louis Blanc, except the several million credits thrown at Considerant and the workers' societies, there would not have been time to think about the organization of labor. The reaction was ready, both against the moderates and against the socialists, as in March, April, May and June 1848.

But I also know that these political ends counted, as they say, without their host, that terrible host who is called *logic*, and which is as inexorable among the people as fatality. I know, moreover, that after having united the banks to the State, the canals to the State, the railways to the State, the mines to the State, insurance to the State, transport to the

state, a host of other things to the state, according to the principles of domestic, governmental and communal economy; after having established progressive taxation, abolished heredity, made education, including apprenticeship, common, *free* and compulsory, organized competition, that is to say the monopoly of workers' societies against free industry, created tariffs, fixed a minimum for wages, a maximum for products and profits, established paper money, etc., etc.; I know, I say, that it would have been impossible to stop on such a beautiful path, and that, willy-nilly, we would have arrived at a general transfer of industry, commerce, property, of all that exists finally, in men and things, on 28,000 square leagues of territory.

I therefore sum up, and I say that the maintenance of the legal state existing on May 13 was for the democracy of the most absolute necessity for the realization of its hopes;

That it was the same with the Constitution, given that to remake another provisionally was useless, and that to throw oneself into arbitrariness was impossible;

That thus, to place oneself vis-à-vis the country and the power outside the legality and the Constitution, when one could not have the country for oneself, which one could only conquer by the Constitution, was to act in folly and in bad faith.

Arrested on June 5, I lacked time to develop these ideas in *Le Peuple*, which might have caused the demonstration of June 13 to be postponed. A demonstration! Good Lord! At the time when the terrible children of the party had just compromised their cause, by hesitating, by an excess of revolutionary puritanism, to place themselves resolutely on the ground of the Constitution, and speaking of dictatorship! A demonstration that seemed to say to the country: Louis Bonaparte does not want the Constitution, and we do not want it either! Louis Bonaparte, intervening in favor of the Pope against Mazzini, violated the Constitution; and we, by intervening in favor of Mazzini against the pope, we will not violate the Constitution! As if to intervene in the internal affairs of a republic, in any way whatsoever, was not always to infringe on its liberty and consequently to constitute an exception to the Constitution!...

Spirits had risen, reason was becoming intrusive. *Le Peuple* was accused, as the *Voix du Peuple* already is, of negotiating its reconciliation with power, of seeking to make itself possible, and, what is worse, of secretly reacting to social ideas. The policy of demonstrations prevailed.

I am far from saying that the demonstration of June 13 was illegal. The people, summoned by a considerable fraction of the Legislative Assembly, had the right to manifest their opinion in so grave a circumstance, and to decide in the last resort, between the minority of the representatives declaring that the Constitution was violated, and the majority affirming that it was not. Nor do I accuse, far from it, the citizens who took part in the demonstration of having wanted something other than the maintenance of the established Constitution: the democratic press itself, on the observations that had come to it on all sides, had lately sided with the policy of *Le Peuple*. What I reproach in the demonstration of June 13, it is to have been inopportune, impolitic, badly conducted. The

country, the entire democracy, have judged it thus. Does it follow that the power has the right to punish us for our clumsiness?...

Free, I would not have separated myself from my political co-religionists. I would have been, with Ledru-Rollin and his colleagues, all of whom, it is said, were reluctant to depart from parliamentary ways, with Pilhes and Langlois, my two friends and collaborators, the innocent victim of this fatal imprudence. My star and M. Carlier decided otherwise. Now, what would be true of me today is, perhaps even more so, of all the defendants at Versailles, appearing and absent. There is not one, whatever has been said, whatever boast that has been made, that the Government can accuse of having taken part in an insurrection. The Constitution was violated. The public conscience protested, through the mouths of the Montagnards: it was necessary, for the honor of the country, that they protest. Behind them, a multitude of citizens expressed their opinion. But, in the general ignorance of republican right; unsure of what, in a demonstration of this nature, could appear legal or extralegal; neglecting the precautions, let us say better, the most indispensable formalities; after having allowed doubt to spread, encountering only hesitation, these same citizens, who had risen up in defense of right, were no more than the accomplices of the police; they can boast of having served the Republic and protected the Constitution as if they had been informers!... Doctrinaires and Jacobins have always been lost, one after the other, in pursuit of the government. The spirit of life has withdrawn from them: they are no longer parties, they are men.

The 13th of June nonetheless created mortal embarrassments in the power.

Vanquisher this time again of the socialist democracy, it is now up to it to bring about the economic reform promised by the February Revolution. The victory of June 13 was for the party of *order* a formal notice. If the government does nothing, it falls; if it does something, it abdicates, because he can do nothing except against capital and against himself, in a word against the principle of authority. The downfall of capital and the end of power, this is the supreme conclusion of the dilemma posed by the election of December 10, developed with frightening energy by the ministers of Louis Bonaparte, and put into action by the demonstration of June 13.

Forced to uphold the legitimacy of its success, the regime brought the *Demonstrators* of June 13 to criminal trial. Who did it think to convince by this obstinacy of self-love? The trial of Versailles is one more fact to add to this long conspiracy of the government against itself, in which we have seen it in turn, on January 29, attack the dignity of the legislative power; on March 21, attack institutions; on April 16, declare war on ideas. After June 13, it makes war on men. Do you think it will last long? Whatever the prosecution did to establish its accusation of conspiracy, the conscience of the public sided with the accused: unassailable on the *substance*, they only had to triumph on the *form*: they did not want it!...

It seemed, some time ago, that the government, despite its ostentation of legality, wanted to retreat. The President of the Republic had spoken out forcefully against *coups*

d'etat; he had written a letter on the affairs of Rome, the only honorable document of the government in the whole file of Versailles, by which he testified to his firm desire to assure the Romans of liberal institutions. Later, on the advice of a minister, the general councils had rejected, almost unanimously, the project of immediately modifying the Constitution. Finally, on October 31, an energetic message from Louis Bonaparte, falling like a stone in the middle of the National Assembly, was taken for a moment for the program of the Revolution!...

These good dispositions quickly disappeared. In a moment the cause of the accused at Versailles had become, thanks to the letter of August 10 and the message of October 31, that of the President of the Republic himself: the spirit of reaction prevailed. To the policy of the Élysée, the Assembly preferred that of the Vatican; the happy medium has immolated itself in absolutism; the President has fallen back into his lethargy: the counter-revolution, having reached its apogee, has nothing to do but maintain itself there, if it can. However, she turns: *E pur si muove!*

XXI.
JULY 8.

CONCLUSION .

And now, reader, of whatever opinion you were, if the facts that I have reported are true, and you cannot doubt them; — if the meaning that I assign to them is faithful, and it suffices, to assure you of this, to relate them to their causes and to compare them with each other; — if, finally, their evolution is providential and fatal, two terms that, applied to humanity, have exactly the same meaning; and you only need, to see the necessity of this evolution, to take it at its starting point, which is the very Reason of man: if, I say, you are allowed to believe your eyes, your memory, your judgment, consider where the February Revolution has led us in twenty months.

The July Monarchy, after having effected the dissolution of all the old principles, had left behind it a double work to accomplish. It was, on the one hand, the dissolution of parties, a consequence of the dissolution of ideas; on the other, the destitution of power, reduced by the successive elimination of all its principles to the *caput mortuum* of authority, to brute force.

On June 13, 1849, Jacobinism, resurrected in 1830 with the appearance of a monarchy that was itself only restoring the revolutionary idea of 1789, fell first, never to rise again. Last expression of the governmental democracy, agitator without goal, figure of ambition without intelligence, violence without heroism, not having four men and having no system, it perished, like doctrinairism, its precursor and its antagonist, of consumption and inanity.

At the same time, mystical, theogonic and transcendental socialism vanished like a ghost, giving way to social, traditional, practical and positive philosophy. The day when Louis Blanc asked for his ministry of progress, and proposed to transfer and move the whole country; when Considerant solicited the advance of four million and a square league of land to build his model commune, when Cabet, leaving France like a cursed land, abandoning his school and his memory to his slanderers, went, if I dare say to use such an expression, to *faire pieds-neufs* in the United States; when Pierre Leroux, finally, since he insists on what I call him, formulating his Trinitarian constitution, wanted to bring ancient superstitions into modern Reason: on that day the governmental, phalansterian utopia, Icarian and Saint-Simonian utopia judged itself. It abdicated.

With this socialism, absolutism is also on the eve of disappearing. Forced to its last entrenchments by its indefatigable opponent, absolutism betrayed itself: it revealed to the world all the hatred it contained for liberty. By dint of retrograding into tradition, like socialism by dint of rushing into utopia, it has banished itself from the present, it has cut itself off from historical and social truth.

There are no more parties endowed with life force in French society; and, until new principles emerge from the inexhaustible fund of human practice; until other interests, other mores, a new philosophy, transforming the old world without breaking with it, and regenerating it, have opened up new outlets to Opinion, revealed other hypotheses, there will not exist parties among us. The first idea lacking, the diversity of opinions, flowing from this idea, is impossible.

For the same reason, there is no more government, there never will be. As there is no fact in the world that does not have a cause, so there is no principle or idea that remains without expression. The government, no longer having either an opinion or a party that it represents, expressing nothing, is nothing.

The men whom we see at this moment still carrying the banner of the parties, soliciting and galvanizing the power, pulling the Revolution right and left, are not the living: they are dead. They neither govern nor oppose the government: they celebrate, with a dance of gestures, their own funerals.

The Socialists, who, not daring to seize power when power was at its most audacious, wasted three months in club intrigues, in the gossip of cliques and sects, in wild demonstrations; who later tried to give themselves an official consecration, by having the right to work written into the Constitution, without indicating the means of guaranteeing it; who, not knowing what to do, still stir people's minds with ridiculous projects without good faith: would these socialists claim to govern the world? They are dead; they have, as the peasant says, swallowed their tongues. Let them sleep their sleep, and wait, in order to reappear, for a science, which is not theirs, to call them.

And the Jacobins, democrat-governmentalists, who, after spending eighteen years in conspiracies without studying a single problem of social economy, exercised dictatorship for four months and reaped no other fruit than a series of reactionary agitations, followed by a terrible civil war; who, at the last moment, always talking about liberty, always dreaming of dictatorship: would it be doing them an injury to say of them that they also are dead, and that the seal is on their tomb? When the people have remade a philosophy and a faith; when society knows where it comes from and where it is going, what it can do and what it wants, then only then can the demagogues return, not to govern the people, but to excite them again.

The Doctrinaires are also dead; the men of the insipid middle ground, the partisans of the so-called constitutional regime breathed their last at the session of October 20, after having, in that of April 16, had a republican assembly decree the experiment of a doctrinaire papacy. They still govern us! Their proofs are made. In politics, as in philosophy, there are not two ways of practicing eclecticism: the Charter of 1830 and the acts of Louis Bonaparte's government have exhausted the fecundity of the happy medium.

The absolutist party, finally, the first in logic and in history, will soon expire following the others, in the convulsions of its bloody and liberticidal agony. After the victories of Radetzki, Oudinot, and Haynau, the principle of authority, spiritual as well as temporal, is

destroyed. It is no longer government that absolutism makes; it is assassination. What weighs on Europe at this moment is only the shadow of tyranny: soon there will rise, to set only with the last man, the Sun of Liberty. Like Christ, eighteen centuries ago, Liberty triumphs, she reigns, she governs. Her name is in every mouth, her faith in every heart. For absolutism to ever rise again, it is no longer enough for it to reduce men, it must also, as Montalembert wants, wage war on ideas. To lose souls with bodies, that is the meaning of the expedition of Rome, that is the spirit of the ecclesiastical government, to which the secular arm has come, but too late for their common salvation.

It is this confusion of parties, this death of power, that Louis Bonaparte has revealed to us. And, just like the high priest among the Jews, Louis Bonaparte was a prophet: *France elected me*, he said, *because I don't belong to any party!* Yes, France elected him, because she no longer wants to be governed. To make a man you need a body and a soul; likewise, to form a government, a party and a principle are necessary. Now, there are no longer either parties or principles: it is the end of the government.

This is what the people of February themselves denounced, when, uniting two denominations into one, they ordered, with their sovereign authority, the fusion of the two parties that expressed in a more specific way the movement and the revolutionary tendency, which they named the *democratic and social* Republic.

Now if, according to the wishes of the people, democracy of every shade and socialism of every school should disappear and become one, absolutism and constitutionalism should equally disappear and become one. This is what the organs of socialist democracy expressed when they said that there were only two parties left in France, the party of *Labor* and the party of *Capital*, a definition that was accepted immediately by the two reactionary parties, and served for all France as a watchword for the elections of May 13th.

The London refugees have acted on the same thought, when they made known their intention not to appear before the High Court. On June 13, one of the great revolutionary steps had been taken. The power had fallen with the last party that still had some vigor: what was the use of coming to give an account, before the new France, of the demonstrations of another time? The London declaration is the resignation of the Jacobin party. Shadows fighting against shadows for a shadow of authority! There you have, Ledru-Rollin and his friends have understood perfectly, all that the Versailles trial would have been through their presence. Let us beware, republicans, while making retrospective agitation, to still make counter-revolution!

And since I must give an account here of my least words, it is still the same idea, the same need for political and social transformation, that motivated my conduct during the last elections (July 1849).

I declined the candidacy that was offered to me, because the list on which my name appeared was no longer relevant to the situation; because the spirit that had dictated this list tended to perpetuate the old classifications, whereas it was necessary to protest against

them; because the democratic routine, the old Jacobinism, of which the people have been the dupe and the victim for sixty years, having consummated its long suicide on June 13, I did not want to resuscitate it.

In agreement with my companions in captivity, I proposed a list, which, discarding the considerations of persons, taking no account of the nuances of opinions, faithful to the policy of fusion proclaimed by the people, even the day after February, better expressed, in my opinion, the thought of republican France and the need of the moment. Published on Tuesday, this list could, if desired, have rallied the whole democracy. It was reproached for arriving too late. The demagogic tail was still writhing; my advice was out of season. Summoned to withdraw *my* list, — I say mine, because it was attributed to me, although I was only its editor — in order, it was said, not to divide the votes of the *party*, I refused. I no longer recognized the *party*; I did not want it to live longer. My conduct towards the *party* was, on this occasion, the same as on December 10th. I protested against the general error, so that the downfall would not be general, so that the Socialist Democracy, opening its ranks, might become, without inconsistency, the party of LIBERTY .

No, I did not want to promote the success of those who, from February 25, 1848 to June 13, 1849, never ceased to sacrifice the Revolution to their exclusive passions; who have constantly misunderstood its character; who were the first to react against it; who, by occupying themselves with the government for themselves, had ended, like those of 93, by forgetting both liberty and the people.

I didn't want to make the power last any longer through the parties, or the parties through the power. In this respect, the result of the demonstration of June 13, however outrageous it seemed to me to the Constitution and to liberty, served the Revolution too well for me to want to destroy it on July 8.

I refused to contribute to a monarchical restoration, preserving for the monarchy a *raison d'être* in Jacobinism. My readers must now be sufficiently enlightened on the workings of societies to know that one idea never works alone, and that one opposite always calls for another.

I have not consented to make myself the instrument of a coterie that, having been able on May 13, June 13, July 8, with a little conciliation, to rally to the socialist democracy all the republican nuances and become the expression of the country, preferred to remain a faction; which, taking its candidates for machines, its allies for dupes, its selfishness as its only rule, when the tribune assured the victory to its representatives, forced them again, out of impatience with the legality and mistrust of their patriotism, to take to the streets and commit suicide.

I admit, moreover, so that people know me and spare me useless calumnies in the future, that I do not have a character flexible enough, a spirit and a heart easy enough, to ever obey the orders of an occult power, to labor for the profit of my opponents, to devote myself to those who hate me, to bow before the dogmatism of a dozen fanatics, to become,

I whom labor has endowed with some reason, the blind instrument of a thought that I distrust, and that only makes itself known through the revelations of the police.

I am of the party of Labor against the party of Capital; and I have labored all my life. Now, let it be well known: of all the parasites I know, the worst species is still the parasite that calls itself revolutionary.

I don't want to be either RULER or *Ruled!* Let those who, in connection with the July 8 elections, have accused me of *ambition, pride, indiscipline, venality, treason*, search their own hearts, and let them tell me if, when I attacked with such ardor the governmental reaction, when I solicited the initiative of the people, when I proposed the refusal of the tax, when I wanted to establish the socialist democracy in legality and constitutionality, it was not by chance their ambition, their pride, their spirit of government, their economic utopias, against which I was waging war?...

Now, enough pain, enough ruin. We have wiped the slate clean of everything, parties and government. The legend is coming to an end: let the People open their eyes, they are free.

No power, divine or human, can stop the Revolution. What we have to do now is to no longer affirm it before the old world, and to inflame hearts for its holy cause. The people suffice for its propaganda. Our task, as publicists, is to preserve the Revolution from the perils with which its path is strewn, to direct it according to its eternal principle.

The perils that the Revolution runs, we know them now.

Perils on the side of the power. — The power, materialized by the very people who accused the new spirit of materialism, is no more than a word. Take away its bayonets, and you will know what I mean. Let us beware of bringing a soul into this corpse stirred by an infernal spirit. Let us not approach the vampire; he still thirsts for our blood. Let the exorcism of organized universal suffrage return it to its grave forever.

Perils on the side of the parties. — All the perils have remained behind the revolutionary idea; all have betrayed the people by affecting dictatorship; all have shown themselves to be resistant to liberty and progress. Let us not resuscitate them by rekindling their quarrels. Let us not let the people believe that it would be possible to assure them labor, well-being and liberty, if the government passed from the hand of this one to the hand of that one; if the right, after having oppressed the left, was in turn oppressed by it. As power is the instrument and the citadel of tyranny, the parties are its life and thought.

Perils on the side of the reactions. — In my life, I fought against a host of ideas: it was my right. I never did, I will never react against any. Philosophy and history prove that it is a thousand times easier, more human, more just, to convert ideas than to repress them. I will remain, whatever happens, faithful to these teachings. The Jesuits, the Janissaries of Catholicism, today the oppressors of the world, can fall when it pleases God: I will make no reaction to Catholicism. After the Jesuits, governmental and community democracy can give the world, if the world allows it, a last representation of authority: I will help it

emerge from the chaos that it will have created for itself, I will labor to repair its ruins; I will make no reaction to communism.

The principle of the Revolution, we still know it, is Liberty.

LIBERTY! that is to say: — 1. political emancipation, by the organization of universal suffrage, by the independent centralization of social functions, by the perpetual, incessant revision of the Constitution; — 2. industrial liberation, by the mutual guarantee of credit and outlet.

In other words:

No more government of man by man, by means of the accumulation of powers;

No more exploitation of man by man, through the accumulation of capital.

Liberty! This is the first and the last word of social philosophy. Is it strange that after so many oscillations and retreats along the rocky and complicated road of revolutions, we end up discovering that the remedy for so many miseries, the solution to so many problems, consists in giving freer rein to liberty, by lowering the barriers raised in front of it by public and proprietary AUTHORITY?

But what! It is in this way that humanity arrives at intelligence and at the realization of all its ideas.

Socialism appears: it evokes the fables of antiquity, the legends of barbarian peoples, all the daydreams of philosophers and revelators. It becomes Trinitarian, pantheistic, metamorphic, epicurean; it speaks of the body of God, of planetary generations, of unisexual loves, of phanerogamy, of omnigamy, of the community of children, gastrosophical diet, industrial harmonies, animal and plant analogies. It astonishes, it terrifies the world! So what does it want? What's is there? Nothing: it is the *product* that wants to make itself MONEY, the *Government* that tends to become ADMINISTRATION! This is the whole of reform.

What our generation lacks is neither a Mirabeau, nor a Robespierre, nor a Bonaparte: it is a Voltaire. We do not know how to appreciate anything with the gaze of an independent and mocking reason. Slaves to our opinions as well as our interests, by taking ourselves seriously, we become stupid. Science, the most precious fruit of which is to constantly add to freedom of thought, turns with us into pedantry; instead of emancipating intelligence, it dulls it. Entirely devoted to our loves and our hatreds, we do not laugh at others any more than at ourselves: by losing our spirit, we have lost our liberty.

Liberty produces everything in the world, everything, I say, even what it comes to destroy today, religions, governments, nobility, property.

Just as Reason, its sister, has no sooner constructed a system than it labors to extend and remake it; thus Liberty continually tends to convert its previous creations, to free itself from the organs it has given itself and to procure new ones, from which it will detach itself as the first, and which it will take in pity and aversion, until it has replaced them with others.

Liberty, like Reason, only exists and manifests itself through the incessant disdain of its own works; it perishes as soon as it worships itself. This is why irony has always been the characteristic of philosophical and liberal genius, the seal of the human spirit, the irresistible instrument of progress. Stationary peoples are all serious peoples: the man of the people who laughs is a thousand times closer to reason and to liberty, than the anchorite who prays or the philosopher who argues.

Irony, real liberty! It is you who deliver me from the ambition of power, from the servitude of parties, from the respect for routine, from the pedantry of science, from the admiration of great personages, from the mystifications of politics, from the fanaticism of reformers, from the superstition of this great universe and from the adoration of myself. You revealed yourself long ago to the Sage on the throne, when he cried out at the sight of this world where he appeared as a demigod: *Vanity of vanities!* You were the familiar demon of the Philosopher when he unmasked at the same time both the dogmatist and the sophist, the hypocrite and the atheist, and the epicurean and the cynic. You consoled the Just man, dying, when he prayed on the cross for his executioners: *Forgive them, O my Father, for they do not know what they are doing!*

Sweet irony! You alone are pure, chaste and discreet. You give grace to beauty and seasoning to love; you inspire charity through tolerance; you dissipate the homicidal prejudice; you teach modesty to the woman, audacity to the warrior, prudence to the statesman. You appease, with your smile, dissensions and civil wars; you make peace between brethren, you procure healing for the fanatic and the sectarian. You are mistress of Truth, you serve as a providence to Genius, and Virtue, O goddess, is still you.

Come, sovereign goddess: pour on my fellow citizens a ray of your light; kindle in their soul a spark of your spirit, so that my confession reconciles them, and so that this inevitable revolution is accomplished in serenity and in joy.

Sainte-Pélagie, October 1849.

POSTSCRIPT.

APOTHEOSIS OF THE MIDDLE CLASS.

Two years ago I wrote the preceding pages: for the first time, at the request of the publisher, I have just reread them.

Apart from the stylistic corrections and clarifications that the observation of new facts must have suggested to me, but which in no way alter my first thought, I declare that I have nothing to retract, nothing to modify in the old text. All the assessments that I had made of men and things, events have confirmed them more and more: I only needed, in maintaining my conclusions, to point out here and there the reasons for them, and to reinforce the terms.

For two years the old parties, right and left, have been constantly discrediting each other,

The government to dissolve,

The Revolution to expand every day, as a direct result of the persecution.

Under its triple formula, Religion, State, Capital, the old society burns and is visibly consumed.

And what is strange in this universal dissolution is that the movement is accomplished, so to speak, by an occult pressure, outside of any human council, in spite of the energetic recall of the parties, and the protests from those who, until that moment, had prided themselves the most on the title of revolutionaries!...

A marvelous thing, the revolution is on the index of all opinions. Nobody admits it in its fullness. The democratic and socialist factions do not accept without reserve the rigorous proposals, any more than the absolutist and doctrinaire coteries. As soon as it arises in the truth and integrality of its nature, antithetical to all church, to all authority, to all capitalism, to every legal fiction, fear seizes intelligences: those who were once called radical and fanatical veil their faces, and one does not know who are the most hostile to it, the Jesuits or the Jacobins.

In fact, the revolution in the nineteenth century did not originate in the bosom of any sect; it is not the development of any speculative principle, the consecration of any corporate or class interest. The revolution is the inevitable synthesis of all previous movements, in religion, philosophy, politics, social economy, etc. It exists, like the elements it combines, by itself; it comes, to tell the truth, neither from *above* nor from *below*; it results from the exhaustion of principles, from the opposition of ideas, from the conflict of interests, from the contradictions of politics, from the antagonism of prejudices, from everything that, in a word, seems most capable of giving the idea of moral and intellectual chaos. True spontaneous generation, a product of the dejection of the centuries, which everyone feels coming, but which no one affirms; which, by the very fact that that presents itself as a conciliation of opposites, a balance of forces, a union of

interests, sees itself rejected by all, and already orphaned from birth, can apply the words of the Psalmist: *My father and my mother have forsaken me: but the Eternal has taken me under his protection!*

Yes, a God protects the new revolution. But which God? The heroism of the people? The devotion of the bourgeoisie? French fury? A sudden illumination of power? No. The power that presides over our destinies uses simpler means: you will see neither conversions nor miracles. The disappointment of politics, and the vanity of human wisdom! What ensures the triumph of the revolutionary cause is precisely what could be regarded as most capable of destroying it: the moderation proper to the French nation, the spirit of the happy medium that distinguishes it, the need for stability that is in it, the horror of agitation that it has always shown!...

This will doubtless appear, according to the disposition of the readers, paradoxical, contrary to the facts, flattering or derogatory to French self-esteem. Allow me therefore to give my thought some development. After having made my revolutionary confession, I may have acquired the right to make that of my country. I will not abuse the permission: *Turpitudinem patris tui et matris tuæ non revelabis!*

I.

Historians have remarked on this, and this fact is one of the most interesting in the annals of humanity: for eighteen centuries, the Gallo-Frankish nation has almost constantly exercised a kind of moral dictatorship over the destinies of peoples and the march of civilization.

It was we who, first among the vanquished nations, caused the Roman domination to bend by wresting concession after concession from the Caesars, and forcing them to associate the Gallic nationality with the empire. After the fall of the empire and the seizure of the barbarians, it was in northern Gaul, on the Meuse and the Rhine, that the political center of the West was fixed. From Clovis to Louis-le-Débonnaire, the kingdom-empire of the Franks, always brought back to unity by the influence of the municipalities and the bishops, embraces the best part of Europe. It was in France that feudalism was born, a preparatory regime; then, that she was attacked, and definitively vanquished. It was France that, through its kings Pepin and Charlemagne, brought about the Catholic centralization, necessary for the discipline of kings and peoples; who then, at the right time, pronounced through the mouth of Philippe-le-Bel the separation of Church and State, the condition of all progress, of all subsequent labor. It was France that gave the signal for the Crusades, and which, long after, under François I, preluded the regeneration of the Orient, by bringing the Turk into the European system. It was France, finally, that by its great revolution defeated absolute power, banished royalty from the peoples, and made civil liberty and equality before the law irrevocable. It is France today that assumes the responsibility and the initiative for a general overhaul of institutions, mores, ideas,

fortunes, and which, in this painful elaboration of an unknown future, holds suspended the destinies of the human race.

Our part in the education of humanity is undoubtedly a fine one. We have given more than we have received: no people can claim over us the glory of having rendered more numerous and more signal services to progress.

Is it true, for that, as our mythologists and our flatterers say, that France received the high direction of humanity? That we are the chosen race, the evangelizing people par excellence, herald and monitor of revolutions?

Let's get rid of this *nationalism*, renewed by the Romans, Greeks, Arabs, Jews, Egyptians, Assyrians, Persians, Indians, Chinese, Mongols, of all peoples, civilized and barbarians, who played a role in history; nationalism whose ridicule we still share today with the Americans, the English, the Germans, the Slavs, the Magyars, and — what do I know? — the cossacks of the Don and the Black Sea. No, historically or providentially speaking, there is no precedence among peoples; and the proof is that there is no nation, however small, that in ancient ages or in modern times, had the right, at a given time, to regard itself as the focus of the movement and the pinnacle of society. If this messianic role, which so many races have in turn fulfilled, seems to fall to certain countries more often than to others, it is due solely to the necessities of circumstance and position, in which the national will and virtue cannot enter absolutely for nothing. I even dare to say that the involuntary and almost always unconscious determination of the initiating people is the surest guarantee of its infallibility, and the decisive reason for the assent of others. If the Romans, for example, subjugated the known world for a time, it was much less, as Montesquieu believed, by the power of their arms and the skill of their policy, than by the revolutionary law which demanded, for further progress, that vast centralization...

This is the case with the preponderance that the French nation has obtained on various occasions. This preponderance has always been the effect of a forced situation, in no way of a mysterious vocation or of a special genius. Far from it, we can say that if, from the point of view that concerns us, we distinguish ourselves from other peoples, it is rather, as I was saying earlier, by our instinct for self-preservation, our deference to custom, our love of modest conditions, our antipathy to all that is exaggeration and affectation. In no country, as much as in France, does there reign respect for opinion, authority, custom, reason for habit. And I don't mean to make this a blame any more than a praise. No one can do violence to his inclination,

As in the events that are preparing, this love of average situations, peculiar to our country, is precisely what must, in the final analysis, be the force and ensure the success of the Revolution, we are going to study more closely that side of our character, which seems to me to have escaped observers up to now.

The French nation, although rebellious and restless, curious about novelties, incapable of exact discipline, rich in inventive minds and enterprising characters, is nonetheless, at bottom, and taken as a whole, the representative, in all things, of the middle ground and of

stability. All qualities having their faults, this one also has its own, which I will not hide: in short, it attests to the loftiness and firmness of our judgment. It is the extreme liberty of our reason, not the inertia of our intelligence, that constantly brings us back to indifferentism, and deadens in us the passion that alone is capable of sustaining the will off the beaten track. Is this temperament, both restless and sheepish, this mood sarcastic and mobile, but soon returned, this sagacious, but skeptical and simple intelligence, not entirely revealed in the placidity, the regularity, the familiarity of our language?... To each idea that comes to us, to each proposal that is made to us, we end up, — all things considered, examined, criticized, — by responding: What's the point? What does it matter to us? Will we be better off? Will we be richer for it?... and a hundred other phrases that could be considered as rubrics of routine. Fatuity or reason, we find ourselves well: therefore, why torment ourselves and change? Let's stay at home! *Revenons à nos moutons!* Let's get back to business! It is our perpetual refrain.

All our faults, all our ridicule, as well as our defeats and our successes, come from this.

How often, as a result of this innate distrust of speculation and the unknown, have we failed in progress! In religion, we stubbornly rejected the Reformation: having already a Catholic, Apostolic, Roman, Gallican Church, what did it matter to us to add still more to these titles, *and reformed?* Would we be more advanced when we read the Bible in the vernacular? You might as well believe it as go and see it! And thereupon, without conviction or fervor, we keep our primogeniture in Catholicity.

In philosophy, we have abandoned Descartes, handed over to Germany the scepter of metaphysics. To the theory of ideas, we prefer, like M. Jourdain, common sense. If later Mr. Cousin and his school obtain a moment of success, it is because they take care to call themselves *eclectics!*

..... A bit of everything:
Wine, love and play!

Such is our temperament; this is also our philosophy.

In politics, we have made a great revolution, it is true, but without foreseeing the consequences at all. What else are we doing, indeed, for 60 years, with our hermaphroditic systems of constitutional and parliamentary monarchy, than protesting against the irrevocable divorce of 89! Soon weary of the Greeks and the Romans, we did not even take the trouble to make ourselves a national constitution: we borrowed that of the English. After all, as much this one as any other. Does not the most profound study of political systems teach us today that all Constitutions, equally bad, are equally good?...

In the social economy, after having produced the so original, so innovative school of the physiocrats, we have fallen back, — *proh pudor!* — to Malthus. *Everyone at home, everyone for themselves! So much the worse for the clumsy ones who bear too many children to their wives!* Here, until further notice, is the summary of our morality and our science. Since Colbert, our trade, for a moment uplifted, fell in a continuous movement;

and if, by the quantities exchanged, we still hold one of the first places, by the development of business and the consideration of peoples we are below our competitors. Ah! If the economic movement is really the character of the century, if it is through trade and industry that humanitarian unity must be constituted, it must be admitted that at this hour it is no longer France, it is England that is the great initiator of nations. Once, a great work is proposed to us, the French Company of the Mississippi, rival of the English Company of the Indies. It is a continent, the whole of North America, which offers itself to our industry and our language. But make French people take a colonial enterprise seriously! Let them live and die elsewhere than in the pentagon comprised between the Channel, the Ocean, the Pyrenees, the Mediterranean, the Alps and the Rhine! In Law's project, nobles and bourgeois have seen only an opportunity for speculation: a quarter of the habitable earth escapes our influence forever. After having wanted to seize everything, in Asia and America, we have, by dint of incapacity, lost everything. For twenty years, we have spent, in Algeria, two billion and two hundred thousand men, without having been able to take root. Our masterpieces shine in the crystal palace, but we don't know how to trade them; our mechanics and our engineers, despised by us, go abroad; our greatest enterprise, since the beginning of the century, is still the fortified belt of Paris; and when the head of the city of London comes to visit our burgomasters, the only entertainment they know how to offer him is military maneuvers!...

Certainly superior intelligences are not lacking in our race, and Paris, the meeting place of exceptional individualities, is still the brain of the globe. But it is a question here of the people, of the French collectivity, and of its unitary action; and it is of this collectivity that one can say, without doing it any wrong, that despite the acts of universal interest that honor it, there is nowhere that innovation is more unwelcome, more refractory to progress.

Even in our boldness, we show ourselves mean and cowardly. How did the encyclopedic movement of the eighteenth century help us? The voluptuous incredulity of our philosophers amuses us, but does not prevent us, braggarts of impiety, from taking our passports at the last moment. Always confess, we don't know what can happen! This is our last word at the bed of the dying. Cowards before God, impertinent before men. In no country will you see so many strong minds boasting of priests and devotees, and keeping in the bottom of their hearts a serious fear of hell. It is here that we have told the best stories about the Eternal Father, so amusingly nicknamed *Monsieur de l'Etre* by Diderot, and that we have served him best. We produced *Pantagruel*, *Tartufe*, *Candide*, and the *Dieu des bonnes gens*; but the *A Kempis* is still for us the most beautiful book to come from the hand of men. We shouted with Voltaire, *Crush the infamous!* It was the sublime of impiety, and we seek emotions. But, by a shameful capitulation, which will no more save us from the eternal flames than from the jeers, we cling to the banal deism of Rousseau. An irresponsible God, who reigns and does not govern; about whom we said no harm, on condition that we could vilify his ministers and his cult with impunity; a good God for our

catechisms, our novels and our harangues; a nanny, a servant to do everything: such is our conception of divinity; such is our faith. Our academics, playing on words like the sons of Escobar, believe, with this kitchen theology, to show proof of genius and audacity, and claim to be more religious, more Christian than the Pope. For the rest, it is out of tolerance, they say, (what greatness of soul!) and in order not to scandalize the weak, (what respect for consciences!) that they go to mass and frequent the sacraments. Ah! How well the Jesuits know us, and how right they are, while fortune authorizes them to do so, to give us the stirrup leathers!...

Where was the criticism of authority ever more lively, more malicious, than in this country of leagues, revolts, parliaments, cabals! But, like our unbelief, our opposition does not pass through consciousness; it stops at the surface of the mind. We alone could give the revolt this ferocious expression, of which there is no leader of brigands who dared to claim the idea:

And with the guts of the last priest
Let's squeeze the neck of the last king.

Don't be scared though. These drinkers of monarchical blood, these eaters of sacerdotal guts are less wicked than artists, like schoolboys who sing obscene couplets and harden themselves against modesty, ready at forty to make the most stupid husbands in the world. What pleases them is the image: the execution would horrify them. What pain they had in condemning Louis XVI, a traitor to the country as king and as a man, and how much they wept for him! Constituted authority is the basis of their republicanism. It can be seen today that the democratic party, in prison, in exile, on the platform, retains only one concern, to protest, as in 93, in favor of order and government. As for liberty, which we put in all our programs, and which has no legend with us yet, we don't like it, as the little girls say, neither little, nor much, nor passionately, nor at all; we love it with esteem, moderately. Moderation, in matters of liberty, is our passion. License suits us better. Liberty, for us, is the chaste Virginia, whom we admire in the novel, in the theater! But the license is Lisette, who delights and intoxicates us in the garret.

Yes, we have, under Philippe-le-Bel, slapped the Papacy and decided its irrevocable fall. But this insolence, on our part without resentment, against the Holy See, had no other result than to make us Gallicans and Jansenists, the most silly of oppositions, the most inconsistent of middle ground!

Yes, we fought feudalism with Louis-le-Gros, Philippe-Auguste, Saint Louis, the Valois, Richelieu, and gave the signal for the emancipation of the communes. But this movement, imposed by the necessity of things, did not end with us, as in the United Provinces, in the Republic: it was equality in feudalism that our Third Estate demanded, not the abolition of feudalism itself.

Yes, in 89 we defeated the monarchy by divine right, and, pushed by circumstances, we regained for a moment the lead of civilization. But we stopped very quickly in

constitutionalism; instead of putting an end to the Revolution through the organization of the industrial forces, we have put it aside by a vain patching-up of the political powers; the best of republics, after the Charter of 1814, was that of 1830; and the more the impulse acquired seemed to lead us to liberty, the more we regressed towards Government. On February 22 we rose en masse against royalty; on the 24th we began to wear mourning; we resemble the tyrant Periander, who after having killed his wife, suddenly changing his passion, satisfied his desires on the corpse.

This cowardice of character and of ideas, with which all our revolutionary boasting ends, was formulated in 1793 in Jacobinism, which became after 1814 doctrinairism: ambiguously situated between authority and freedom, between monarchy and democracy, superficial philosophy and sentimental religiosity, which could be used *ad libitum* to motivate an insurrection and a *coup d'état*, a certificate of good citizenship and a title of proscription. This is why M. Royer-Collard, such a high intelligence, M. Cousin, M. Jouffroy, were only quasi-philosophers; M. Decaze, M. Guizot, M. Thiers, quasi-statesmen; MM. Considerant and Enfantin, quasi-reformers, like Petion and Robespierre had been only quasi-republicans.

Such is also the cause of the reverses that the Democracy has experienced for four years.

Why was the Democratic and Social Revolution unable to enter society and the power after the February Days, if it is not because the democratic party, then reigning, blocked the way to it; because the entire nation, led astray by this party, has begun to disavow the Revolution with all its consequences, near and far?

Why did the German emancipation, begun in the Parliament of Frankfurt, not come to fruition, if not because Germany believed in the French initiative; because it thought, on the strength of our examples, that the liberty of a great people could not be better guaranteed than by political centralization and a Constitution? The old Germanic despotism swept away this so-called unitary imbroglio; it did well. It is no longer in the nineteenth century that progress can be expressed by any constitutionality whatsoever, the so-called government of the middle classes, which until now has only been the government of mediocrities. Society is like poetry: mediocrity is fatal to it. The *continuous debasement*, so much reproached of Louis-Philippe, had no other cause than this phantasmagoria of government of the middle classes, serving to disguise the *prepotence* of undecided minds and mediocre men.

II.

Will someone now ask me the cause of this innate love of the middle ground, of this cult of the happy medium and immobility, which manifests itself everywhere in our national tendencies, and makes us a conservative nation by temperament and by taste, revolutionary only by necessity and by exception?

I think I discover this cause in the organic and climatic conditions of our society, directed from time immemorial towards a kind of middle state, which betrays itself everywhere in our institutions and our habits. Let us indicate only:

1. The extreme division of properties and the multitude of small industries and small businesses, which, creating for each father of a family, farmer, shopkeeper, manufacturer, an absorbing sphere of activity, makes us lose sight of the general action, and consequently the high initiative;

2. The municipal and departmental regime, the chambers of commerce, agricultural associations, etc., which, to the millions of domestic centers, add 50,000 centers of local and corporate interests, divide the action of the State *ad infinitum*, and, while living a life of their own, regulate their action by its own;

3. The 600,000 employees of the power and the municipalities, directly interested in the *status quo*, and compressing under their weight the explosive force of the country;

4. The ease, at least apparent, of realizing by labor and trade a small asset, which, in a temperate climate, in a fertile country, with habits taken from mediocre ease, suffices for the ambition of the great number;

5. The vinicultural production, which, by disposing the mind to gaiety, diverts it from dogmatism, chases away the seriousness of speculations, brings the carelessness of the masses, by making them, cheaply, satisfied with their lot.

France is the country of the *aurea mediocritas*, sung by utopians of all centuries. Ease of morals, security of life, equality and independence of fortunes, such is the dream of the French people. Also, despite all that has been written of their vanity and ambition, this conquering humor for which they are reproached is limited to remaining behind no other: with them the capital vice is not pride, it is envy. Is it astonishing that this people, enemy of all kinds of pomp, which always sees and believes itself so close to its ideal, shows itself indifferent to the ideas and inventions with which the innovative spirit overwhelms it, intractable to the reforms that it is offered; that it denigrates and thwarts everything that goes beyond acquired habits and established ideas; that it rises only for the defense of its small well-being, and that its constant tendency is to arrive, by the way, not the shortest, but the most united, at this balance of conditions that has been promised to it by middle-ground theorists, which is happiness for them?

All the times that the French nation has shown itself violent, either in reaction or in revolution, it has been solely because its well-being, as it is given to it to conceive and understand it, seemed to it compromised, sometimes by the policy of princes, sometimes by the fanaticism of parties and sects; it was because it felt the middle term, in interests, rights, ideas, slipping away from it. What, for example, made us repel the Huguenots so relentlessly and curse the League? Above all, the lack of warmth in matters of spirituality that makes all kinds of religionists odious to us, and which the vulgar translates as *the faith of the collier*. Then, if mistrust was great for the Huguenots, supported by the lords and suspected of feudal tendencies, it was no less for the leaguers, decried agents of

ultramontane influence.... Who hurt us, exhausted in Louis XIV and Napoleon, disgusted in Louis XVI, and later in Charles X and Louis-Philippe? Among the former, the exaggeration of authority, the abuse of dynastic and ultra-national wars; in others, the obstinate predilection for the aristocracy, mercantile or noble. Revolution has always arisen in France from the crumpled middle ground; and if for some years the popular masses are still agitated, if in the depths of our temperate society the revolutionary volcano rumbles and threatens a new eruption, it is because it is beginning to become manifest to all eyes that the middle class, which was to bring everything back to itself and become the common condition, is itself in danger; it is because with the ancient element of the Church, Capital and the State, the guarantee of labor and subsistence, liberty of conscience, the independence of industries, the modesty of fortunes, without which we cannot live, are decidedly unstable, impossible.

Thus, it is in order to save the material middle ground, the constant object of our efforts, that we are going to be forced to abandon the theoretical middle ground; it is to conquer and consolidate this gilded mediocrity, pledge of our political and religious indifference, that we must today take a decisive resolution against this carelessness of mind and conscience, which, under the name of eclecticism, *juste-milieu*, third party, etc., has hitherto obtained the privilege of our esteem. Bend your head, mocking Gaul; make yourself *extreme* in order to stay *average*! Remember that without the exactitude of principles, without the inflexibility of logic and the absolutism of doctrines, there is for a nation neither moderation, nor tolerance, nor equality, nor security.

Socialism, like all great ideas which, embracing the whole social order, can be considered from a multitude of different points of view, socialism is not only the extinction of misery, the abolition of capitalism and wage labor, the transformation of property, the decentralization of government, the organization of universal suffrage, the effective and direct sovereignty of the workers, the balance of economic forces, the substitution of the contractual regime for the legal regime, etc., etc. It is, in all the rigor of the terms, the constitution of mediocre fortunes, the universalization of the middle class. It is the application, in all its consequences, of the ancient axiom, *Suum quique*, to each his own, or as interpreted by the first socialist school, to each according to his capacity, to each capacity according to his works, which indicates a golden mean, natural and providential, in labors and rewards.

Who does not see that this need, which has become so poignant, for a balancing of economic forces and a more equitable distribution of the goods of nature and the products of industry is the result of the movement accomplished during the last 60 years?

The Constituent Assembly, by decreeing the sale of national property and the liberty of industry, by introducing into public right the principle of equality before the law, had created, at least for a time, a certain equality in the fortunes. Under the Empire, the imperfection of the revolutionary work was barely perceptible: the distractions of glory left no time to reflect on the vices of public economy. But when the Restoration came to

give impetus to the industrial faculties of the country, the capitalistic and agglomerative tendency was not long in revealing itself. It was then that the class of wage-earners, the proletariat, began to swell, at the same time as, on the basis of mercantile feudalism, landed feudalism, large property was being reformed. For anyone who has pondered the combined action of the banks, mortgages, industrial companies, to which must be added political centralization, which serves them as a coercive and penal sanction, it is obvious that the French nation is left defenseless, by law, to the exploitation of an oligarchy not foreseen by the revolutionaries of 89, which arose spontaneously from the misdirected interplay of economic forces. Let this regime, truly random, last another fifty years, and small industry, like small property, will be abolished little by little: there will only be an enormous mass of mercenaries, in the service of landlords, barons of the vine, rail, coal, iron, cotton, etc. Society will find itself divided into two castes, one of exploiters, the other of exploited: the entire middle class will have disappeared...

Will the nation accept, will it submit, contrary to its character and its tendencies, to the abnormal condition that the lack of foresight of its leaders prepares for it? Will it consent, for fear of communism, to return to the old feudal state? No, no. France does not want serfdom any more than it does communism: what she wants is a system of equilibrium in which each family is assured of obtaining, in return for work, a legitimate well-being. For everything else, complete liberty of opinion and ease of accommodation.

Already, some milestones have been laid on this line.

Thus, after rejecting the definition of property by Robespierre, which made it a concession of the State, we rejected in 1848 that of Roman right, which awarded it to the first occupant. For us, property comes neither from conquest nor from the State: it is the product of labor. In this respect, the Constitution of 1848 is diametrically opposed to the Civil Code: according to the latter, property deriving from quiritary right is the absolute right to use and abuse; according to this, property is no more than an attribution of the citizen, under the guarantee of labor and the ever-changing economic forces. Between these two definitions of property, there is infinity.

It is in the same spirit that the laws on the rate of interest, mine and railway concessions, patents of invention, literary property, child labor in factories, etc., etc. have been rendered. Laws of trial and error, no doubt, but laws that nonetheless testify to a remarkable spirit of temperance, and a firm will to snatch the social economy from the feudalism that invades it and from the anarchy that dishonors it.

Such, then, is the problem that the progress of the centuries commands us to solve, no longer by vain formulas of government and insufficient transactions, but by an exact discipline of industrial forces: To preserve, to regularize, to make more and more fruitful and comfortable the equality of fortunes, by creating, through an effort of genius, what the history of humanity offers no example of and what science alone can provide: economic equilibrium. Is it not, as far as well-being is concerned, the organization of the happy medium that must satisfy all legitimate ambition and kill envy; is this not the apotheosis

of the middle class? A decisive problem, which marks the virility of nations, and could only arise once in the course of centuries, because the solution, embracing all possible progress, can only be absolute and eternal.

But, before this extraordinary situation is understood, before the question penetrates people's minds, and before the theoretical and practical solution is accepted, how many more contradictions and heartbreaks! What uncertainty and pain! France, obliged to preserve its domestic mores to fight against its national routine, to abjure its old policy and its official ideas, France can say with the poet:

My God! what a cruel war!
I find two men in me....

Yes, there are two Frances in present-day France. There is the France of the past, which knows itself and, royalist or democratic, religious or philosophical, lives in its traditions, clings to them with despair, protests against an unparalleled revolution; and the France of the future, which does not yet know itself, which is looking for itself, which already, in all its aspirations and views, feels itself in opposition to the old. The conflict is there. As long as we live, devotees and skeptics, royalists and republicans, as long as we reason according to received ideas and established interests, we are conservatives; insofar as we obey our secret instincts, the occult forces that urge us, the desires for general improvement that circumstances suggest to us, we are revolutionary. Moreover, and as to the final goal, these two Frances are only one: the double current that draws us, some to the left, some to the right, resolves into a single movement, namely the search for equality and stability, in short, for economic ponderation, by the renunciation of philosophical eclecticism and the doctrinaire happy medium.

A last glance at the state of our traditions and at the progress made over the past fifty years in this new metamorphosis will complete the demonstration that such is the inevitable outcome to which the destiny of humanity and our own inclinations push us.

III.

Religious tradition.

In 1789, the condition of the clergy was manifestly incompatible with the welfare and security of the nation. The clergy possessed, in full ownership and free of taxes, a third of the land; the minister of the Gospel lived on his income; the peasant, established on the *latifundia* of the Church, to whom the priest said, "Dear brother!" was only a serf.

This state of things could not last: so, the first thought in 89, the universal thought, was the dispossession of the Church.

But this dispossession was not accomplished without compromise: it is not in our genius, except in the case of absolute necessity, to take an extreme position in anything.

The pear, as they say, was cut in half. In taking over the property of the clergy, everyone agreed to assign it, as a form of compensation, a public and legal salary: as for the faith, no one thought of touching it. They contented themselves with declaring opinions free, which did not preclude having the Revolution consecrated by the Church, and calling the Catholic religion the religion of the State.

Those who made the civil constitution of the clergy, and those who signed it, were of equal good faith. The spiritual was believed to be duly safeguarded; they were far from thinking that a day would come, and soon, when it would no longer suffice for the liberty of the country, the security of consciences, the equality of fortunes, to have deprived the clergy of their landed privileges; that it would be necessary to deprive it of its salary again, — what am I saying? — to forbid it any interference in education, to subject it to election, to forbid it any communication with Rome, any traffic in indulgences, any acquisition of property; to destroy it, finally, by marriage, by schism, by disrepute and poverty.

This was demonstrated over time, on the one hand, by the series of consequences that the expropriation of the clergy entailed after it; on the other hand, by the implacable hostility of the clergy to the new institutions.

Indeed, the first result of the recovery of church property and the establishment of a budget for worship, was what has been called *the Civil Constitution of the Clergy*.

Since, by a measure of public necessity, the clergy ceased to be proprietors, in order to become salaried, how was its service not regularize? How were its constituencies not, as much as possible, equalized?... It was not, whatever one has said, the spirit of usurpation that dictated this reform; it was the needs of administration, the demands of accounting.

The Civil Constitution of the Clergy was therefore indispensable: this constitution established by vote, the ecclesiastical oath in turn became necessary. Much has been disputed about the political propriety of this oath: we know that Robespierre, inclined to the priesthood and friend of the priests, fought it with all his might. An absurd tactic. By the constitution that governed him, and by his status as a wage-earner, the priest had become a public functionary; it was an integral part of the new state; he was, in a way, in solidarity with the Revolution. When all civil servants, from the King to the policeman, when all citizens, as National Guardsmen, took the civic oath, was it possible, just, logical, to except the priests?....

Moreover, the question was settled, in 1802, by an authority that the clergy must regard as sovereign: the pope, signing the Concordat, recognized the Constitution of the clergy. By this recognition, now irrevocable, a singular thing happened: it is that the constitutional priests and bishops, regarded until then as schismatics, suddenly found themselves older in truth and more orthodox than the refractories!

Things remained thus until the Restoration: the Church serving the State, more than the State served the Church, and, thanks to this compromise, tolerance, that is to say philosophical indifference, so dear to our hearts, always gaining.

But on the return of the king, the clergy tried to change their position, by combating the consequences of their revolutionary establishment, and by conjuring up the new spirit. The Abbé de Lamennais was the leader of this crusade against the secularization of the clergy and indifference in matters of religion. As a theologian, and even as a philosopher, M. de Lamennais was a hundred times right: one had to be one or the other, Christian or atheist. But M. de Lamennais had to deal with too strong a party: his dialectic converted no one. The kingdom, while remaining *very Christian*, wanted the authority of the pope no more than the tithe; and the people, half libertine, half believer, intended to live as they pleased. The zeal, quite medieval, of the preacher made people laugh; indifference increased; he himself was affected by it!... If there is a man who, questioned about his religion, is embarrassed to answer today, it is the Abbé de Lamennais.

From 1820 to 1825, it was the heyday of the missions, worthily crowned, in 1826, by a jubilee. There was a time when the people ran to the confessional, to the communion table in droves, as later, in 1848, we saw them rush to the polls. What was the result of this fervor? After having extracted, by this factitious excitement, the little that remained of religious feeling in souls, the clergy finally obtained, in 1828, as the price of their pains, what? the definitive expulsion of the Jesuits! An old sin, against the Church and against the Holy See, which the very Christian State came to aggravate, under the countersignature of a prelate! In 1829, I remember it like yesterday, those whom I had seen doing their mission, carrying the cross, displaying their zeal, no longer even went to mass; the pretty choristers, married or promised, deserted the vespers for the spectacle.

1830 arrives, which brings a new attack on the consideration of the cult. No more state religion; Catholicism disappears from the army, through the suppression of chaplains; in the colleges, religious instruction is only an outward practice, boring, supererogatory, preserved out of respect for the grandparents, and despised by the youth. From this time, the symptoms of decadence multiply; sects abound: we are not yet completely at the negation of the religious principle, but it is obvious that the old formula is no longer sufficient; from which the lovers of religions conclude on the necessity, some of a new effusion of the Holy Spirit, others of an exegesis that disguised Catholic dogma from top to bottom. After the Chateaubriands, the Bonalds, the Lamennais, appear the Bautains, the Buchezs, the Lacordaires. Christianity, in the hands of these clever manipulators, is by turns theocratic, royalist, progressive, philosophical, Jacobin. We can apply the epigram to it:

Chrysologue is everything and is nothing.

Is it therefore the elaboration of a new faith that takes place, or the dissolution of the old that is accomplished? The people do not worry about it; the middle class pays no heed to it; the high bourgeoisie, pursuing the course of its speculations, laughs and remains epicurean; the philosophers themselves do not seem to suspect that they are witnessing the death throes of a religion.

On the accession of Pius IX, who seemed for a moment disposed to lead the papacy into modern ideas, there was an immense concert of acclamations. The old liberals imagined that Catholicism was going to be reconciled with liberty, that it was itself, well interpreted, only a formula of liberty. M. Thiers spoke for all of France when he exclaimed from the tribune: Courage, Holy Father! We are Christians, if you are a revolutionary.

The illusion was short-lived. No sooner had the events of February posed the social question than the pope and clergy, who had already declared themselves in favor of the *Sunderbund*, turned against the revolution. Socialism, for its part, declared itself adversary of the Church: it placed in its program, in the first line, the abolition of the ecclesiastical budget and the abolition of the spiritual and temporal government of the popes, declaring all positive religion not only false, but hostile to science, liberty, progress and morals.

The split is therefore clearly marked. After 62 years of transactions, considerations, tolerances, legal fictions, France has come, out of self-respect and love of humanity, to gradually deny its faith and its God. What new accommodation, indeed, what bias would still be possible?

To break with Rome and take refuge in Gallicanism, as M. Dupin wants?

It is impractical. First, the Gallican Church only exists in name. As we pursue the course of our revolutions, Gallicans and Ultramontanes have come together, they are united. The vast majority of the French clergy belong to Rome and to the Jesuits. The worst of our priests are perhaps still those who affect a spirit of conciliation and an appearance of philosophy. The clergy is only occupied with one thing, to annihilate little by little the effects of the Civil Constitution and of the Concordat, by reestablishing the convents, seizing the schools, collecting inheritances, accumulating donations, legacies, offerings, subscriptions, etc., and thus returning, by pious commerce and voluntary donations, to its properties. The property reacquired by the clergy is estimated at more than 300 million. However, it is certainly not to exploit these goods that it wants them, nor to establish workers' companies there; it is to make rents out of them. Rents and tithes: it is the same thing! The clergy now know that the temporal and the spiritual are inseparable, that sooner or later one of the two must prevail over the other. It is no longer enough for it to direct consciences; it wants to reign over interests. Gallican or ultramontane, the Church aspires, and it says it loudly, to tame the revolution. Middle-class men, generation of 89 and 1830, are you ready to make this sacrifice to it?

Through ourselves into Protestantism? But a religious protest is an act of faith, I would almost say that it is a revelation. The nations that in the sixteenth century followed Luther were more religious than those that remained united to the pope: otherwise they would not have embraced the Reformation. Now, I ask you: what is it that the people of today believe about Catholicism, to make them think of reforming the rest?... It has been said a long time ago: *We we no longer have enough religion to make us Protestants.*

And who does not see that at the point we have reached, protest would be a contradiction on our part? What? There is no longer any state religion; and there would be, in matters of faith, a protest from the State! The State, which is atheistic since it admits all religions, the State would define a new spiritual power, to oppose it to the spiritual power of the pope! It would choose between Athanase Coquerel, Michel Vintras, Enfantin, Pierre Leroux, in hatred of Father Roothau and Jean Mastai! No, no: our tradition is made, our line drawn.

In the name of the liberty of thought, which is the liberty to believe, there is no church, no worship, no clerical properties, no ecclesiastical budget. Separation, absolute opposition between scientific education and religious instruction, as is practiced among our neighbors the Dutch; and in less than a generation, the People, raised to the height of the century, will have pronounced its *Abrenuntio*. They will have understood that indifference in matters of religious faith is a betrayal of social faith; and, by pronouncing against Catholicism, they will repudiate any kind of religion, because after Catholicism there is no longer any religion possible.

IV .

Governmental tradition.

Tolerant religion, temperate government: a double illusion, which the quickest examination suffices to dissipate.

In 89, the nation declared itself sovereign and took precedence over royalty. Divine right was abolished, the *veto* removed from the prince, for whom a precise Constitution outlines his rights and duties.

What does this all mean? It obviously means that the nation intends to govern itself, that it admits as authority only that of its own majority, which implies, as Bossuet and Rousseau have proven, and as history demonstrates, that by affirming the sovereignty of the People, it denies the very principle of sovereignty.

Thus, the incompatibility of the economic middle ground with the governmental principle was at the bottom of the declaration of 89. However, by this spirit of transaction to which we will always find it faithful, the legislative Nation does not at first sight suppress the authority. Starting from the generally accepted hypothesis of the necessity of a government to maintain order in society, it tries to reconcile the old monarchical form with the regime inaugurated by the revolution, royal pride with popular dignity .

But we soon realize that the so-called Constitution provides only an unstable balance: on August 10, the deal is torn up. However, the prejudice could not be immediately overcome: the Convention, instead of abandoning the constitutional chimera, accuses the monarch of the errors of the contract, and sends him to the scaffold. Then it gives birth to the first attempt at direct government, the Constitution of 93. But direct government, in the vulgar sense of the word, is impracticable: we have advanced too much or too little;

and as we have not discovered a way out, we throw ourselves back into the middle terms. The directory lasts five years, after which it dissolves into the consulate.

Bonaparte, then, perfectly edified on the value of representative government, after having avenged the injuries of the Revolution and re-established order, brings us back to despotism, the extreme abolished in 89. National feeling rises; he was forced to abdicate under enemy fire: the Imperial Power, which had become refractory to the revolution, suspected by the middle classes, was treated in 1814 as the feudal power had been 21 years earlier.

A charter is thus negotiated between Louis XVIII and the Nation, on the bases of the treaty of 91. Soon, in spite of the hard lesson of 1815, the restored royalty shows itself more intolerant, illiberal than ever; the reaction is increasing, but the revolution precedes it. To the challenge of the prince, the People respond with the victory of July. A plebeian posits this adage, which must henceforth prevent any ambiguity: *The King reigns and does not govern*. Louis-Philippe accepts the condition; soon he tries to elude it. In turn, he succumbs: his flight is for the People a formal notice to govern themselves directly, since they do not want a king to govern them. In response to this summons, we made the Constitution of 1848, and appointed Louis Bonaparte as President: this is what is called a moderate and constitutional republic, yet another compromise, a happy medium, a middle term.

Now where are we? What is the state of affairs after four years? Did universal suffrage express national consent as hoped? Is power easy for citizens? Has the middle class obtained its guarantees and its balance?

Universal and direct suffrage, consulted on three consecutive occasions, gave the most counter-revolutionaries, the most anti-republicans. The democracy has been able to convince itself, through the saddest of experiences, that the further down the social strata one descends, the more retrograde ideas one finds, and that, as the France of the nineteenth century is incontestably more advanced than that of Charlemagne, in the same way it was easy to foresee that the proletarians of 1848 would not be worth, very nearly, as voters, the censitaires of Louis-Philippe. Now the Republic, handed over by the incompetence of the masses to the royalists and the Jesuits, makes war on its allies, unites with the despots; the Government resulting from a democratic Constitution disarms the citizens, decimates the electors, destroys the municipalities, puts the sovereign in a state of siege, and works to raise, on the ruins of universal suffrage, an irresponsible and hereditary power. The irruption of the masses, suddenly summoned, has made society an incomprehensible monster, a thing without a name. The Church, still modest before February, the Church that exists only through the tolerance of the State, regained its preponderance over the temporal, and immediately showed itself to be anti-liberal and persecutory. The State, abhorring its principle and its mandate, seems to have sworn the extermination of the democracy, and arbitrarily surpasses all that we have seen. Property depreciated, crushed under mortgages, industry ruined by capital and unemployment,

labor squeezed by taxes and without a future, all prices debased: the condition of the People is further than ever from the golden mean and from security.

So what are we to do? What are we to resolve, and above all what are we to hope for? Such a state of affairs, emerging from socialist terror and the conflict of factions, is not tenable; it weighs on the very people who have assumed responsibility for it, and one of the most curious arguments of the royalist party against the republican regime is the need to get out of this revolutionary situation as soon as possible, and to reenter the peaceful current of the traditional monarchy. Will we return to the monarchy?

I want to take no account of the inextricable embarrassments that can result from the multiplicity of candidacies and the competition of dynasties. I dismiss this question, which is entirely one of personalities. In my eyes the once real opposition between empire and legitimacy, between legitimate royalty and citizen royalty, has disappeared under revolutionary pressure, and no longer constitutes a difference of system. It is obvious that the legitimate king would be very happy and at ease to return to the throne, on the condition of recognizing the principles of 89 and taking an oath to a Constitution, as Louis XVI, Louis XVIII, and Louis-Philippe did; that thus the elder branch would not be distinguished in absolutely anything, as for the conditions of its re-establishment, from the younger branch; and as for the emperor, it does not seem less clear to me that he cannot grant or accept, as one wishes, less than the *Additional Act*, that is to say, yet another Constitution. Basically, these three hypotheses, which until February we may have believed to be disparate, are completely identical; and if it were as easy to reconcile people as systems, the merger would soon be complete. That is not the difficulty for me.

I ask what good is a monarchy, an inevitable expression of not only the political, but the social middle ground, if it does not bring with it the means and the guarantee of this happy medium? For it is not a question today of beginning any one of the three fallen dynasties again, going back either to the year 1830, or to 1814, or to 1804; it is a question, for the restored royalty, whatever it is, on the day of its accession, first, of giving satisfaction for all the grievances of the Country against the Orleans, against the Bourbons, against the Emperor; second, of arresting the development of mercantile feudalism and of the proletariat, through the balancing of the economic forces and the definitive constitution of the middle class.

It is a question, short, of the monarchy, if it is returned to us in 1852, taking the lead of the Revolution, instead of fighting it, as it does, to excess; and of executing on the country and on itself what its partisans protest against with all their force, the transmutation of the political and governmental regime into an economic and contractual regime.

Is such a conversion possible? I cannot believe it; and if I am not mistaken, the royalists, to whatever dynasty they refer, are all of my opinion. Monarchical power, they say, can only be re-established on the condition of becoming counter-revolutionary, that is, of throwing itself again into an extreme four times condemned: that is enough to arouse against it the invincible antipathy of the middle classes.

We are therefore compelled to stick to the Republic. But which Republic? Will it only be an *honest, moderate*, philanthropic, representative, constitutional Republic?

I do not deny that such is at this moment the desire and the will of the greatest number; I readily admit that this shade, the least dark, of democracy, has a serious chance of reappearing, all the more so since, in despair of their own cause, the monarchical factions cannot fail to support it. But I would add that one would have to be devoid of the most common foresight not to be convinced that this other form of happy medium could not be of long duration.

What is the purpose of the Republic?

It is, article 13 of the Constitution answers for me, to establish Liberty and Progress, on an average, almost constant, and made general, of labor and fortune.

What is the instrument, the mainspring of the Republic, to achieve this end?

Universal and direct suffrage.

Hitherto universal and direct suffrage has given, to represent it, a majority composed of Orleanists, Legitimists, Bonapartists, priests, high bourgeois, and for President, a prince, Louis Bonaparte.

It may well produce, in 1852, a no less considerable majority of honest bankers, talkative lawyers, liberal proprietors, progressive manufacturers, enlightened workers, irreproachable bosses, and for President of the Republic, General Cavaignac, or M. Carnot.

But, by the natural course of things and the reversals of opinion, it is inevitable that in a third, fourth, or fifth batch, universal and direct suffrage gives an equally deep and compact majority, composed of socialists, communists, anarchists, atheists, starving people, and for president, Blanqui, Greppo, Adam *le cambreur*, or any other.

For universal and direct suffrage not to come to this, it would be necessary for its first elect to take on the task of satisfying all the aspirations and needs of the People, which is against the hypothesis.

Thus, universal suffrage, in the present state of minds, and with the reigning political prejudice, must engender in turn, the government of those who do not possess by those who possess, and of those who possess by those who do not own; from the great number by the small, and from the small by the great; needs by institutions, and institutions by needs: in two words, sometimes tyranny, sometimes anarchy. Is this a society? Is this order and progress? Is it not obvious that soon the country, tired of all these movements from bottom to top and from top to bottom, will be disgusted with all kinds of government, and that excessive centralization will sooner or later be succeeded by complete dissolution?...

V.

Jacobin tradition.

I know very well that, the doctrinaires of the Republic overthrown, their rivals and immediate successors, in the order of the parties, the Jacobins, are doing their best to restore stability in the power and in public opinion; to oppose an insurmountable barrier to anarchy, atheism, the division of property, etc., etc. Jacobinism is well looked upon by the people; and what is more governmental, more devout, more opposed to agrarianism, to the democratization of capital, than Jacobinism? On all these points, it has proven itself.

Jacobinism, then, is the last hope of authority. Robespierre's tail, here is the mooring rope that must retain the ship of civilization in the port of Religion, Government and Property!...

Let us therefore see what further vitality the Jacobin tradition can communicate to the political regime; let us see if this party, which succeeded, in 93 and 94, while dying with difficulty, in hindering the revolution and in reviving the constitutional system, is in a position to deceive the masses a second time, and to make them accept, under revolutionary harangues, a policy of resistance.

I have defined Jacobinism, a variety of doctrinairism. It is the doctrine, transferred from the Bourgeoisie to the People; the happy medium for the use of the lower classes; a kind of honest and moderate sans-culottism, substituted for bourgeois honesty and moderation. For the rest, the same governmental spirit, but more marked; the same preponderance of the State, but more energetic; the same respect for representative fictions, but elevated to fetishism. The Jacobin rejects dictatorship less than the Girondin: in this way he is closer to royalty.

The triumph of Jacobinism was conceived in 93. At this time, the principle of authority had not been questioned; only the monarchical expression had caused itself to be proscribed. As for the power itself, those who were called *anarchists* and *enragés* were as faithful to it as the others: they were more violent, that is all. Jacobinism, carried into the government by a succession of irresistible crises, was therefore in agreement, on the political question, with universal consent, but as it represented the class immediately below the middle, it seemed the *ne plus ultra* of the revolutionary movement, the most complete expression of the democracy. That was its strength. To remain below Jacobin society was, for two years, to put oneself below the revolutionary level; to go further was to exaggerate and render oneself suspect.

Jacobinism, thus constituted and served by events, was therefore bound to come to power. But once there, it was to succumb in its turn, either through the exaggeration of its policy and the incapacity of its leaders, or through the effect of time, which wears down all the masks and lays bare the vice of all systems.

Exaggeration and incapacity alone caused the Jacobins to fall in Thermidor. As they were not worn out and refuted by experience, one could believe that the party still had a future; that it would later have, along with the constitutional monarchy, its restoration and reign. This is what motivated the reappearance of Jacobinism after 1830, and what constitutes its full value today.

But this same Jacobinism, which in 1830 might have seemed logical and consequently still had chances, has since completely lost them: socialist propaganda, the progress of public reason, during the last 20 years, have taken away from it, as from the monarchical parties, any reason for existence. Today, in fact, the question is no longer political, but social; and it is so true that the movement accomplished in this direction was made against Jacobinism as much as against absolutism and the doctrine, that already in 1848, the eve of the February Revolution, the *Démocratie Pacifique* and the *Populaire*, the only socialist newspapers that existed then, won by far by the number and quality of their readers over the *Reforme*.

Since then, the Jacobin party or *Mountain* has continued to lose credit and consideration in the eyes of the people. Not an idea of the future has arisen from this exhausted milieu. Does the Provisional Government attempt, under the name of *Circulars*, addresses to the French people? They are hissed. Does it want to send commissioners? They are expelled. The clubs themselves, organized on the model of the old society, only produce noise and parodies. In April, in May, in June, and until October, Jacobinism shows itself to be reactionary; it is only when forced and constrained that it passes to socialism. From that moment it abdicates, and each of its acts is a new protest against its old faith.

To the theory of non-government, developed in the *Voix du Peuple*; of absolute liberty in the *Presse*; of decentralization, in the legitimist journals, was joined by the theory of direct government, in the *Voix du Proscrit*. This progress was forced. When the party of divine right, in agreement with socialism, repudiates a thing as essential to authority as centralization, could the Jacobin party show itself less liberal?

It was in vain that Louis Blanc, in a first brochure, *Plus de Girondins!* then in a second, *La République une et indivisible*, recalls the democracy to the tradition of 93, to the faith of Robespierre. His dissertations have no effect; they are not even read. The accusation of federalism is now outdated and scares no one.

It is in vain that the *Mountain*, as foreign to the movement as the majority, abstains and hides: the new spirit springs up and envelops it on all sides. At the podium, a powerful orator, Michel (de Bourges), raises both the social question and the principle of *arbitration*, the idea of CONTRACT, intended to replace the idea of Authority. In his revolutionary stories, the great historian Michelet completes the unveiling of the doctrinaro-Jacobin mystery, and prophesies the advent of the people.

This is why Ledru-Rollin, who, after having disavowed socialism, ended up rallying to it publicly; who, after having repudiated anarchical theories, declared himself for direct government; that is why, I say, Ledru-Rollin, the tribune who always advances, remains, in spite of his own party, like the living image of progress, and sees his popularity grow every day. The People do not always follow the scout who outruns them; they never abandon the leader who opens the way for them.

Finally, it is to the deep feeling, widespread among the masses, of the economic and social character of the Revolution, that we must attribute this disdain for things governmental, this political indifferentism, so well expressed by the calm of the People, in the presence of the more irritating provocations. The Revolution advances, they think. Why risk a battle? The enemy, surrounded by the invisible battalions of ideas, will sooner or later be forced to lay down their arms. We will win without firing a shot.

Thus, the political middle ground, in its most passionate and popular form, Jacobinism, is powerless to achieve the economic middle ground; it proclaims its incompetence, through the mouths of its most illustrious representatives, itself.

Thus, universal suffrage, in its broadest expression, exercised without fraud, directly, with an imperative mandate, both on officials and on representatives, would be equally incapable of providing a stable regime and establishing the balance of society. For universal suffrage to become a truly organic power, it is necessary that instead of applying itself to *the election of the legislator and the magistrate*, instead of being complicit and supportive of a governmental order that has become impossible, it simply serves as the expression common to the *industrial transactions and guarantees*, which need neither prince nor legislator for their execution.

Thus, and to conclude, this question of average fortunes, — which in the present state of civilization must be considered as the problem of the century, and which contains the future, not only of France, but of humanity, — this question is insoluble by any kind of constitution of authority. To solve it, it is necessary to leave the sphere of ancient ideas, to rise, with the help of a new science, above religious dogmas, constitutional artifices, the usurious practices of capital, the random routines of exchange. We must create the social economy from scratch, deny both civil and ecclesiastical authority, and proprietary prelibation.

Undoubtedly the sacrifice must seem hard to intelligences seized unexpectedly, deceived, for 50 years, by the logomachies of moralists and statesmen. The public conscience murmurs, when for the first time it intends to attack, in the name of Progress, Liberty, Reason and Social Right, the divine Being. Property rumbles at the denial of the police. The democracy offends itself when a disrespectful voice dares to indict its authors and violate the Pantheon of its saints.

Patience! This feeling of painful surprise will be short-lived. Imaginations will calm down quickly, as soon as they have understood that this universal negation is the last term of the previous positions; as soon as they are convinced that there is no security for the people nor well-being in the old milieu, and that it is absolutely necessary either to abandon tradition or to renounce equilibrium.

Moreover, the conversion takes place by itself. The proletariat, gradually de-jacobinized, demands its share, not only of direct suffrage in the affairs of society, but of direct action. Now, what are the means of satisfying this desire, with the old hypotheses of Government and political Constitution? The bourgeoisie, put on notice by the logic of

reaction to choose between the Revolution and absolutism, turns away with horror from the Jesuits, and declares itself, without hesitation, liberal and revolutionary. A little later, it will affirm with us the religion of Hegel, of Lessing, of Anacharsis Clootz, of Diderot, of Molière, of Spinoza, the religion that recognizes neither pontiff, nor emperor, nor producer, the religion of 'humanity.

Richelieu was dead. The dying feudalism believed that it was going to live again: it had only the Mazarin in front of it. What a moment for the old principle, if it retained its virtue! They talk to each other, they agitate, they unite against the child-monarchy: the parliament is carried away, the bourgeoisie seduced, the people fanaticized. We run to the barricades; there is fighting in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine and at Charenton. The court is forced to flee; the master reaction imposes its conditions on royalty.

It is then that jealousies and divisions break out. The agitators no longer know what they want. Their aimless force becomes impotence. The Fronde, since it is victorious, seems ridiculous. The shrewdest hasten to compromise with the court; the phantom vanishes in defection; Louis XIV grows up, Mazarin dies in peace, and the absolute monarchy is founded.

We are in a similar situation.

As Richelieu struck feudalism, so the Revolution in 1848 struck authority.

Authority is the Church, the State, Capital.

Unfortunately, the Revolution, too young to act, gave itself as tutors a council of Mazarins. Immediately authority, already lying on its deathbed, raised its head! It still speaks, it reigns, and for four years now we have fallen back into full Fronde. What an opportunity for the decrepit idea to restore itself, if it still had the slightest living force! But the old parties cannot get along; the solution escapes them, they are powerless. Tomorrow you will see them offering their services. Jacobinism is converted; Caesarism gives way; pretenders to royalty try to make themselves popular; the Church, like an old sinner between life and death, asks for reconciliation. THE GREAT PAN IS DEAD! The gods are gone; the kings depart; privilege is erased; everyone ranks among the workers. While the taste for well-being and elegance tears the multitude away from sans-culottism, the aristocracy, frightened by its small number, seeks its salvation in the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie. France, showing more and more of its true character, sets the world in motion, and the Revolution appears triumphant, embodied in the middle class.

P.-J. PROUDHON.

Ste-Pélagie, October 1851.