

A NEW PROUDHON LIBRARY



THE
SOCIAL
REVOLUTION

DEMONSTRATED
BY THE COUP D'ETAT
OF DECEMBER 2

BY

PIERRE-JOSEPH PROUDHON.



WORKING TRANSLATION BY
SHAWN P. WILBUR

FROM THE 1852 FIRST EDITION,



CORVUS EDITIONS, 2024

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

The WORKING TRANSLATIONS presented here are part of an attempt to establish an edition of the major works of PIERRE-JOSEPH PROUDHON. The goal is not simply to provide individual translations, but to provide a collection of translations that work well together to ease the task of the student of Proudhon's thought. A later stage will involve considerable annotation, including some attempts to connect the various works, but the connections have to be discovered before they can be noted, so it has been necessary simply to prepare as great a volume of relatively clean draft translations as possible as quickly as possible. At present, the raw materials for the NEW PROUDHON LIBRARY project amount to well over a million words of new translation, together with the drafts that I have accumulated since starting to translate Proudhon's works in 2006.

The present volume, THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION DEMONSTRATED BY THE COUP D'ETAT OF DECEMBER 2, has obtained a rather strange reputation. One suspects that some critics have never made it past the title, which is certainly provocative — but perhaps not particularly provocative for Proudhon, who reveled in that sort of thing. In any event, there is a persistent treatment of the work as if it is a work in favor of Napoleon III, which is, I think, a hard interpretation to maintain when actually reading the work.

I will admit that, despite my understanding that the work continued Proudhon's critique of Louis-Napoleon, of governmentalism, etc., and my fondness for the concluding section of "Anarchy or Caesarism," it is not a work that I have dedicated much attention to in recent years. After working my way through the translation, I can only regret that neglect. There is a lot to like here and a lot to learn about Proudhon's project. There are also some anticipations of the concerns he would return to in the following years, as he wrote Justice in the Revolution and in the Church.

Except where noted, the translation here is based on the 1852 first edition, but, as is the case with a number of the translations in this "bulk translation" phase, the text has not been checked closely against the original. Use with care.

— Shawn P. Wilbur

July 19 2, 2024.

PUBLISHER'S NOTICE

[inserted in later editions]

We publish, at the head of the present edition of this book, the letter written by the author to the Prince-President of the Republic, on the occasion of the ban which, initially, had been placed on his work. M. Proudhon released this letter to the public in order to respond to certain malicious and slanderous insinuations that attacked his reputation as a publicist. By attaching this piece to the book itself, we therefore believe we are doing something useful and pleasant to our readers, and satisfying the fair sensibilities of the writer.

TO MONSIEUR THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

Paris, July 29, 1852.

Monsieur President,

In 1848, I fought your candidacy for the presidency of the Republic, because I judged it threatening to democracy, hostile to the republicans. Lovers of pamphlets will have kept the memory of my polemic from that time.

After the election of December 10, I suffered a serious illness that forced me to be absent from the National Assembly, of which I was a member, for a month. The cause of this illness, M. President, I do not need to tell you: while the people raised you to the shield, it pierced my heart.

Barely recovered from my sorrows and my fatigue, at the end of January 1849, I attacked your new power with all the irritation of convalescence. This attack earned me three years in prison, which ended on June 4, 1852.

During the first year of my captivity, I restarted the fight as many times as I could. For this obstinacy, I suffered two solitary confinements, two transfers and two trials, one of which was abandoned for formal defects, and the other of which ended in an acquittal. I only resigned myself to silence when it was notified to me by the police prefect that prison meant for me, a journalist, along with the sequestration of my person, the silence of my speech. The penal law says nothing about it, and, under the last king, this was not seen; but time and circumstances give the laws their interpretation.

After the *coup d'état* of December 2 and the defeat of the insurrection, I was condemned to death for five days. I had nothing to fear for myself; but the blow dealt to the Republic drove me to despair. Ah! M. President, you have never had, you will never meet, a more energetic and at the same time more disinterested adversary than me. I have not been your rival, as others who, in my opinion, were worthy of it, were. I do not aspire to your succession, as others, who are

perhaps less worthy, think about it. I don't want your dignity any more than I want your person, and I am not conspiring. I saw in you the enemy of the Republic that I had embraced: do not look for any other cause for my opposition.

Since your second advent, I have sought to console myself, I would have died without this consolation, demonstrating to myself that you were the product of fatal circumstances, and that of this revolution, which my friends and I had undoubtedly not been found worthy of making, you were, willingly or unwillingly, the representative.

Louis-Napoleon, I said to myself, is the representative of the revolution, on pain of forfeiture!...

Immediately I make a book of my thoughts: I print this book; but the police prohibited its sale, threatening both the printer and the bookseller. For what? This is what I have come to ask of you, M. President. Forgive this question to a Republican.

You are the revolution in the nineteenth century, because you cannot be anything else. Apart from that, December 2 would only be a historical accident, without principle, without significance. That is my first point. Now, do you know it, M. President? Do you want it? Do you dare to say it? Scabrous questions, which I dare not resolve: this is my second point. This is my whole book: consolation for myself, hope for my co-religionists, challenge to the counter-revolution! To this book, I gave my manner, my style, my ideas, my opinions, my fears; moreover, and despite my extreme frankness, not the slightest attack, either on the President or on the government.

I did not hide from myself that this book, by giving the reason for the existence of December 2, created a sort of legitimacy for it in things; that, thus receiving its meaning from history, the government would receive new strength, and that with this word falling from my pen: "Louis-Napoléon is the agent of the revolution," the popularity of the man, once so fatal to the Republicans, would still rise by its seven million votes.

Man of party, I said these things to myself; man of revolution, I went beyond; let me tell you, M. President, for what reason and with what hope.

I considered that you could not obtain, as a representative of the revolution, the slightest success in which the revolution did not play a large part.

I therefore hoped, in the interest of this revolution, that France, enlightened about its true situation, reassured by you, against all surprises, would finally dare to face the question that was asked of it in February: I hoped that then our country, which has always lived at the head of the intellectual movement, in the era of the troubadours, during the renaissance, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, could follow without danger the philosophical and social revolution, which began in the nineteenth, and in which you yourself, M. President, took part; — I hoped, finally, that deep in exile, in prisons, the democracy would receive some benefit from my words, and that perhaps it would be permitted to those who share my resignation in the present, and my confidence for the future,

to see again, honorable and harmless, their friends and their homes.

Compensation made, I did not believe it necessary to subordinate the general interests of the revolution to my party resentments, and to give any longer the joy of our misfortune to these old parties whose long betrayal decided the success of the *coup d'état*, and all of whom, without excepting the clergy, showed themselves without mercy...

Now the police are stopping the sale of my work. The name of the author, the title of the book, the forms of language: these are its grievances!...

I would consider myself a hypocrite and a coward if, after putting myself in the position of requesting your intervention, M. President, I made the slightest excuse to the power. So what do I need to explain? I wanted my publication to be an act of high morality; it is up to you, M. President, to make it an act of high politics. For this, my book must appear, as I did, with its bitterness, its boldness, its mistrust, its paradoxes. I only pass sentence on what will be declared a crime or misdemeanor by the courts; in this case, I ask that the condemnation fall exclusively on my head.

I said to myself, four days ago: Let there be a man of head and heart, just one, in the government of December 2, and my work will pass. Should I go to you, M. President, to meet this man?

I am, etc...

P.-J. Proudhon.

P. S. The terror exercised by the police is such that it was impossible for the author to obtain a single copy of his book for M. the President of the Republic.

THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION DEMONSTRATED BY THE COUP D'ETAT OF DECEMBER 2.

I don't know how it will be, but it will be, because IT IS WRITTEN.
(*General idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century, p. 195.*)

I.

WHY I ENGAGE IN POLITICS.

I do not write against those who can proscribe, said Camille Desmoulins at the end of 93, when the all-powerful Robespierre was in the process of saving society, and the Republic already no longer existed!...

I take this maxim for myself. I renounce, since it was wanted, to exercise of the *veto* with which the February revolution had armed the press against the power, and I begin by declaring that I have nothing to say against the *coup d'état* of December 2, nothing against the authors, cooperators and beneficiaries of this *coup d'état*; nothing against the vote that absolved it by 7, 600, 000 votes; nothing against the Constitution of January 15 and the powers that it organizes; nothing even against the tradition that it seems to want to revive, the vestiges of which it adores, which has remained in the heart of the people as the last of their religions.

I do not recriminate, I do not protest, and I accuse no one. I accept the *fait accompli*, ... as the astronomer who fell into a cistern accepted his accident.

Does it follow, Republicans, that through all these changes in the political scene, the end of which is perhaps not yet near, we do not have to exercise any precautionary act; and because our convictions are crushed, our hopes disappointed, our faith bruised, that we have to wallow in this moral prostration, worse than crime? Does it follow that we have only to curse the victor, while awaiting the late hour of reparation, and thus to deserve, by a stupid and culpable inertia, our bad luck?

God forbid! We have too many vested interests in the power, no matter what hands it falls into; we are too uncertain both of the present and of the future for us to be permitted, for a single instant, to annul ourselves in a so-called virtuous abstention, which would only be cowardly. Should I be accused by the energetic of having lacked republican pride, because once again I will have, while writing, bent under the necessity of the day, I will say what I think of the business; I will affirm anew, in its fullness, against all monarchy and theocracy, the

revolutionary principle; while the dynasties prepare their return, I will prognosticate its triumph; I will try, as much as it is in me, and without failing in the conditions that the current power imposes on me, to make the nation aware of its state, to raise it in its own esteem and in the eyes of the foreigner; to take guarantees, in this time of sudden catastrophes, against a possibly counter-revolutionary substitution; finally to restore perspective to ideas, direction to interests, motivation to courage, intelligence and calm to the outcasts.

And since today the privilege of controversy has passed from the press to the power, since thought has lost the right to produce itself in the energy of its opposition, since it is no longer tolerated except in the colorless form of probable opinion, not to say respectful notice, I will make all my efforts, while respecting the sensitivities from above, to save, through the interest of the subject, the dignity of the writer, and to conceal under the patriotism of feelings the odious embarrassment of speech.

After that, let the power, such as it is, which I may have served by revealing it to itself and to others, take advantage of my information; I do not fear it for my religion. I will be happy, if need be, for the progress. I who, in history, only recognize *de facto* governments, who theoretically repudiate them all, who wanted none for my contemporaries, I ask nothing better than to see the one I pay change and walk according to my principles. And who does not already see how much the government of December 2, strong and wise as it imagines itself to be, needs its most mistreated adversaries to show it the way? Who does not see, I say, that if republican reason, discouraged by so many outrages, abandons to its perfidious suggestions this government still without roots, as surprised as the nation by its existence, the public spirit sinking more and more in addition, the Revolution retreats ten degrees?

Sad condition of human societies, which should give democrats particular food for thought, that a people cannot, in any case, abstract itself from its rulers, and that unless it crushes them in its revolt, which it cannot always do, it is doomed to constantly correct them, even when it hates them the most!...

But, what am I saying? What we are tempted to take for a fatal and regrettable support, what is it but the eternal absorption of power in liberty? And in this intimate solidarity of the citizen and the state, in this narrow and indissoluble obligation of our interests with the government, can we fail to recognize, at the point where we are, the symptom of a coming revolution?

Isn't it, in fact, the triumph of the revolutionary idea, established on the very nature of things, that the political faculty is henceforth so linked to the exercise of every professional faculty, science, literature, commerce, manufactures, trades, that the political mechanism, of a million sovereigns, becomes impossible; that whoever deals with a branch of production or general consumption, participates, by that very fact, in the management of power, has a deliberative and disruptive voice in the state; that thus the government cannot free themselves from the competition of the producers, that the producers disregard

government policy in their undertakings, industrial initiative is constantly transformed into political initiative, and inevitably converts authority into *anarchy*?

It had been believed that to repress the democratic terror it was necessary, by an extreme concentration of power, to deprive the country of its sovereignty, to sequester the masses from politics, to prohibit any writer who did not fall under the authority the ministry from dealing with political matters. The suspension of the political faculty, everywhere and always: such was the watchword of the counter-revolution. What government would be possible, in fact, they said, with the constitutional right to discuss government? What religion could subsist with free inquiry?... The 2nd of December only applies, as far as it can, this powerful theory, apparently ignoring that in any society the sovereign only legislates and the prince only executes abundance of opinion, and imagining that the best way to make the brain think is to practice ligation of the nerves and block the senses!

Now, admire the result. The more one tries to chain speech, the more protestant thought reacts and overflows, taking as organs those very people who had applauded, with the most fury, the repression of speech and thought.

What are the gentlemen academicians most willing to talk about in their solemn speeches? Politics. Without politics, they wouldn't know what to say most of the time. And our lords the bishops, so quick to accuse the spirit of revolt that characterizes the century, what do they treat with the most predilection in their pastoral letters? Politics. It is true that it is for the good of the thing, and the intention justifies everything; but it is up to the flock to reflect in turn on the instructions of their pastors! And our grave magistrates, how do they compensate themselves, in their harangues, for the long and tedious troubles of the judicature? By discussing politics. They too believe themselves obliged to contribute to the system the contingent of their observations! There is not a lesson given to the people, with the assent of authority, that is not the development of a political thesis. Bourgeois, who made the government so cheap, provided it gave you material order, the security of the street, do you know why confidence does not return to you? It is because all of you, and for an infinity of reasons, each more decisive than the other, you cannot prevent yourself from talking politics. Politics, in fact, in this ambiguity in which you have lived since 1830, is the *alpha* and *omega* of all your speculations, of all your interests, of all your ideas. It is not Robespierre or Rousseau who tells you that: it is the necessity of things, the inescapable economy of society. You are, whether you like it or not, politicians; what is worse, you are of the opposition. Man of letters, do you propose to write history? Take care, it will be a treatise on politics. Economist, do you examine the sources of taxation, the composition of the budget, the cost price of a soldier, the fragmentation of property, the influence of protection on circulation, etc.? You will dance on the tightrope of distinctions and juggle words in vain; your political economy will still be politics, always politics. Philosopher, are you looking for the principles of right, the conditions of society and morality?

Politics. Manufacturer, trader, farmer, the nature of your businesses puts you in permanent contact with domain, management, administration, customs, excuse? All of that is politics. You cannot raise a claim, address a complaint, propose a reform, without stirring the foundations of the state, touching the secrets of the police and diplomacy. At the end of a question of transit, there is the European equilibrium. Are you a purchaser, dealer, state annuitant? Who more than you has the obligation, hence the right, to worry about politics? As much as the government is worth, so much is the value of your inscription: this is the *abc* of the Bourse. Let workmen associate for the common exploitation of their industry: the contract that they form among themselves seems to you to raise only civil and commercial codes; the police, not without reason, will discover a political tendency in it. Let a private individual open a counter for the discounts of these workmen: *Banque du Peuple!* Immediately there is the home visit, search of papers, affixing of seals. The so-called counter is a political center.

From the top of society to the bottom, everything that is produced, moved and consumed is linked to political action and can be considered a function of government. Each individual who works, who sells and who buys, is, in a certain way, a representative of the state; he participates in government, which can do nothing without his free cooperation and support. It would be strange if in a country where, by the progress of the centuries, the government is no longer, in reality, anything but the relation of interests, one should claim to exclude the interests of the government, and to govern the nation in the same manner as the autocrat of Russia or the sultans of Babylon. How hampered, how mortified must they find themselves, these so-called statesmen who, on the faith of the Jesuits, accepted as a curative means and taken as dogma, under the name of authority, the political prohibition, to see each other at each hour, in all their actions, subject to the inevitable control of the interests, forced to recoil before them, and that on pain of *non-confidence!* And how they must regret that golden age of authority, where work was little or not specialized, trade and industry without engrenage, science was useless, philosophy reputed to be demonic, each poor family lodged in its small house and living solely on the produce of its little field, the wood for *affouage* and the communal grass, the government, I mean the Church, having for its whole policy only the tithe to be collected and the surplus population to be sent to the Holy Land, hovered over obedient groups like a cloud over the desert!...

A truce then, please, to vain delicacies and false scruples. Politics, already predominant, subordinated by the economy, but obstinately maintaining a distinct, superior, impossible position: this is the secret of our situation, and what obliges me, a socialist, after four years of political negation, to deal with politics. Here the form carries away the content, and when the house burns, it is not the time to seek if one is on good or bad terms with the doorman. For three years a foolish reaction preached the restoration of authority, the absorption of individual liberties into the state. Louis-Napoleon is only the first term of this counter-

revolutionary series — I was going to say its first dupe. Others will put the author of the coup on trial, will tell the *Mysteries of December 2*, will speak the *merciless orders*, the multitude of suspects, the names of the victims. For me, to whom exile, and I thank the prison that protected me with its walls, does not grant such liberties, I obey other duties. I will not allow, without first expressing my reservations, the mystical and handwritten testament of December 2 to open a surreptitious restoration to be prepared abroad, or even a second attempt at constitutional corruption to be organized in the shadows. Solidarity, whether I like it or not, as a citizen, as a writer, as a worker and head of the family, with the acts of a power that I did not want; convinced, moreover, that in the event of December 2 there is still something other than a plot; having no guarantee, far from it, either that the democracy, a real democracy, will return to business in time, or that another palace revolution should make us enjoy a more complete regime of liberty; not relying on any notability, either princely or popular, for the care of general interests and public liberties: I resume the course of my publications. I use, by conforming to the laws, what initiative remains to me; I address to my fellow citizens, and by them to the President of the Republic, my thoughts on the causes that led to the latest events, and on the results that, in my opinion, they should produce; and I implore without shame Louis-Napoleon to decide as soon as possible, because, in truth, for himself and for us, I dare to say that there is urgency!

For him, first of all. It is said that, like the Emperor, he has faith in his star. If such is his superstition, far from making fun of it, I congratulate him on it. You don't need glasses to discover this star, nor a table of logarithms to calculate its course. You can see it with the naked eye, and everyone can tell where it's going.

On February 24, 1848, a revolution overthrew the constitutional monarchy, and replaced it with a democracy; — on December 2, 1851, another revolution replaced this democracy with a ten-year presidency; — in six months, perhaps, a third revolution will drive out this presidency, and restore the legitimate monarchy on its ruins.

What is the secret of this adventure? The same propositions, reproduced in other terms, will reveal it to us.

What Louis-Philippe failed to foresee and prepare doomed Louis-Philippe and brought about the Republic; — what the republicans did not dare to undertake ruined the republicans, and decided the success of Louis-Napoleon; — what Louis-Napoleon will not be able to carry out will doom him in his turn, and it will be the same for his successors, as many as will present themselves, assuming that the country agrees to pay indefinitely the expenses of these unfaithful vocations.

So since 1848, — and I could go back well before, — a *fate* is cast on the political leaders of France: this *fate* is the problem of the proletariat, the end of politics, the social idea. This is why Louis-Napoleon's mission is none other than

that of Louis-Philippe and the Republicans, and those who come after him will have no other mission in their turn. In politics, we are not the heir of a man, we are the carrier of an idea. He who realizes it best is he who is the legitimate heir.

What does it matter then that the social idea no longer arouses irritating debates in the press, that it has ceased to fascinate the multitude, that the capitalist believes himself delivered from the nightmare, that Louis-Napoleon's commissioners congratulate him in their reports for having overthrown the monster, as these medals, struck with the effigy of I don't know which Caesar, glorified him for having abolished the Christian name, *nomine christianorum deleto*; what does all this matter, I say, if, in believing that we have struck socialism, we have only passed on its venom; if the thought that wandered on the surface has already won over the noble parties; if the power that was to crush it expresses, as a result, by the fact of its institution, by its needs, in spite of its official protests and its unofficial proscriptions, only socialism, the absorption of politics in the economy; if Louis-Napoleon, in the most important of his decrees, manifests the irresistible tendency, which impels him to social revolution?

No, socialism is not defeated, since it is not resolved; since it has so far only met with insults and bayonets; since the government of December 2, after having proscribed it, had to pose as its interpreter; since it borrows its popularity from it, since it draws its inspiration from its solutions, since it seems restrained only by the desire to reconcile existing interests with those it would like to create; since in a word, according to certain reports to which it is permissible to add some credence, Louis-Napoleon would be *the worst*, let us read, if you like, the first *of the socialists*, the last of the statesmen! Is it then Louis-Napoleon who will abolish politics and bring about the social revolution? is it the grandson of Charles X, that of Louis-Philippe, or any other that you please? for in truth we can no longer say in the evening by whom we shall have the honor of being governed in the morning. What do we care, once again, about the name of the character? The same star rules them all, and our right with regard to them remains the same. Onlookers, who asked in 48 when it would end, who delivered everything, Constitution, Liberty, Honor, Fatherland, so that it would end, here you are again launched on another adventure! You thought you were reaching the landing stage, but you were only at the station. Do you hear the locomotive whistle? Believe in a man that your favorite newspaper, *the Constitutional*, patented a prophet: let the train go, arrange yourself in your corner, drink, eat, sleep and do not breathe a word! Because, I warn you, if you continue to scream and rage, the least that can happen to you will be to be thrown under the cars.

But if such is the condition of power in France, that, if it does not know, cannot or does not want to serve the revolution, to undo itself, it is balanced by it, what better thing do we have to do, socialists and non-socialists, radicals and moderates, than to study the immense problem tirelessly, to seek the reconciliation of our ideas, and, without waiting for more beloved leaders to come to us, to exert from now on the power, whatever it is, the legitimate,

incessant pressure of science and right? Let Louis-Napoleon, since he is in line, become, if he wishes, by the revolutionary mandate he gave himself on December 2, greater than the Emperor was; let him accomplish the work of the nineteenth century; above all let him have the pride of leaving nothing to do to his successor, and after him let the nation, restored to itself, strongly constituted in its economy, no longer have to fear, on the part of a party, of a sect, or of a prince, either usurpation, or restoration, or dictatorship; let it be able to say goodbye to politics: and I will not, as for me, be a detractor of Louis-Napoleon. I will deduct his wrongs to democracy as he serves; I will forgive him for his *coup d'état*, and will thank him for having given certainty and reality to socialism.

But why do I always talk about *socialism*? I wish that this nickname, of counter-revolutionary origin, which the people accepted in 1948 as they had accepted in 93 that of *sans-culotte*, and which renders the idea of the century just as badly, had had its day. The period of agitation it expressed is over, and the question raised by it is so clearly posed that no agenda will rule it out any longer. Without the persecution for which it is the pretext, I would perhaps abandon this password of the economic revolution, loved for the need of their calumnies by the writers of the reaction, great publicists, who in the midst of the revolutionary march deny the reality of the movement. While the scratchers occupy the fair, soldiers of the avant-garde, indefatigable pioneers, let us not let weaken the study, and fast from opinion. The history of mankind is the history of armies, said the Emperor's nephew:

Forward the thirty-second,
The thirty-second forward!

II.

SITUATION OF FRANCE ON FEBRUARY 24, 1848.

There are people who, apropos of December 2, commenting on the *Decadence of the Romans*, tell you in all seriousness: The French nation is corrupt, degenerate, cowardly. It has betrayed its providential mission, denied its glory. There is nothing more to expect from it: let another take its place, and receive its crown!

Many French people repeat this nonsense, so quick are they to gossip about themselves!

Others, affecting a hippocratic air, blame socialism. It is socialism, they claim, that has ruined the democracy. The people, by themselves, were full of good sense, pure, virtuous, devoted. But their soul has been materialized by the preachers of socialism, their heart disinterested in public affairs, diverted from action. It is through the influence of these lethiferous ideas that they could be mistaken about the meaning of the *coup d'état*, and clap their hands at the violation of the Assembly, at the arrest of generals. They had been taught to despise their representatives: they failed in their appeal, and in the ambush of December 2, they saw only the restoration of their right, universal suffrage.

Citizen Mazzini, the archangel of democracy, has made himself the publisher of this opinion.

Here are still other variants on the same event:

It was the left that ensured the success of the *coup d'état*, by voting on November 17 against the quaestors' proposal.

It was the Elysée press that frightened the bourgeoisie with its stories, and restrained its indignation.

It is the army, ferocious and venal, whose attitude has despaired the patriotism of the citizens.

It is this, it is that!...

Always great events explained by small causes! So the foreigner, taking note of these miserable defeats, not understanding that a mass of 36 million men lets itself, in the same day, be mystified and muzzled, hisses at our nation, and in its turn proclaims it fallen. Those who do not know us, who do not know what revolution France is in the process of, or who, having vaguely heard of this revolution, consider it as absurd as our conservatives, hurl sarcasm at this race, chosen among all, and cover it with shame. The Englishman, badly disguising his joy, devouring our territory in advance, blushes at our adventure; the American, with his freedman's insolence, spits on our name; the metaphysical German, the feudal Hungarian, the bigoted Italian, one after the other, nail us to the pillory. While the Holy Father makes us kiss his mules, here is the prophet

Mazzini presenting to us the sponge of gall, and pronouncing on us the *Consummatum est!* What a triumph, throughout Europe, for envy! And what a lesson to posterity! The France of 1848, the daughter of 92 and 1830, well! this emancipatory France, in an adulterous moment, gives birth to socialism; and immediately it betrays the nationalities, it assassinates the republics, kneels before the corpse of the papacy, embraces the phantom of tyranny, and dies!...

Oh! If I had only to reply to ignorant pedants! If it were only up to me to flagellate once more these mystagogues, sycophants of the revolutions which they did not foresee and which exceed them!... — But a more serious duty commands me. It is necessary to justify my nation before history, to remove from it this weight of infamy, with which its rivals hope to crush it. A single day of remorse for France! It is a hundred thousand times more than the passion of the Man-God... So let us all forget, if possible, our grievances; let us reason in cold blood, let us go over the facts and the causes. May history, showing us in our mistakes the causes of our defeats, finally teach us how to repair them. May parties and sects disappear among us in the heat of adversity; may intolerance be withered, may nothing be esteemed but liberty!

On February 24, 1848, a handful of Republicans, crossing the limits of bourgeois protest, overthrew the throne and said to the people: *Be free!*

It was bold, and it would have been sublime, if, with less moderation and honesty, I would show it presently, with less regard for the prejudices of the country, with less democratic religion, the authors of this *coup de main*, taking more account of their position than of their principle, had wanted to take advantage of their success to initiate the Revolution. Let them all know, however, that in recalling their shyness here, I do not reproach them for it, and may they themselves feel no more regret than I do! Instead of presuming, like others, the national will, they preferred to wait for it; their first act was to put into practice the theory that they had just made triumph, at the risk of losing soon, by the incapacity of the multitude, all the fruit: no blame can strike them. And if in the presence of the facts that followed, we find ourselves regretting, at times, that the popular leaders had pushed the political faith so far, these same facts, necessary moreover for the education of the nation, only further highlight their virtue.

But what did this immense phase mean, in the mouths of the men of February and addressed to the people: *Be free?* What were the chains that we had to break, the yoke that it was necessary to smash, the oppression of which we had to disperse the springs? What was this effusion of liberty that was announced, finally, about?

For every revolution is, in essence, negative: we will even see that it can and should never be anything but that. That of 89, in what was decisive, real and acquired, was nothing else. Was there therefore something for us to deny in February? Was there anything left to abolish, or did we just have to improve? In the first case, why this abstention from the Provisional Government? In the

second, why did we drive out Louis-Philippe, and what did the Republic mean? Either the leaders of the Democracy betrayed, by keeping the *status quo*, their mandate; or else they had acted without a warrant, and they should only be seen as usurpers: it is impossible, it seems, to escape this dilemma.

It is here that the martyrdom of the founders of the Republic begins: because, how are we to suppose that they were unaware of the goal of their enterprise? But they didn't dare, they couldn't dare!... Hence the appeal to the people, and its sad results.

There existed in France, on February 24:

1. An organized *clergy*, comprising about 50, 000 priests and as many individuals of both sexes distributed among the religious houses; disposing of 300 millions in properties, without counting the churches, curial goods, the perquisites, the proceeds of dispensations, indulgences, collections, etc.; an organ, presumed indispensable, of public and private morality, exercising as such over the whole country an occult influence, all the more formidable for this reason, and in many cases irresistible.

2. An *army* of 400, 000 men, disciplined, out of place, without relations with the National Guards, whom they were taught to despise, and entirely devoted to the power, the only one deemed capable of guarding the country and defending it.

3. An *administrative centralization*, mistress of the police, of public instruction, of public works, taxation, customs, domains; occupying more than 500, 000 civil servants, municipal and state employees; holding in its direct or indirect dependence, any property, any industry, any mechanical or liberal art; everywhere having the upper hand over people and things; governing everything, and leaving to the taxpayers only the trouble of producing and paying the tax.

4. A strongly hierarchical *judiciary*, extending in turn, over social relations and private interests, its inevitable arbitration: Court of Cassation, Court of Appeal, Courts of First Instance and Commerce, Justices of the Peace, Labor Courts, etc: all in perfect harmony with the church, the administration, the police and the army.

5. This immense organism, serving both as a driving force and an instrument for collective action, constantly attracting to itself the strength and wealth of the country, three great PARTIES disputed its direction, and, jealous of procuring the happiness of the fatherland, disturbed, tore its bosom with their ardent competition. They were: the *legitimist* party, representing the elder branch of Bourbon, and up to a certain point the old regime; the *Orleanist* party, representing constitutional ideas; the *Republican* Party. These three parties were in turn subdivided into several shades: outside, the *Bonapartist* party, which was to reappear, finally the *socialist party*, which was to bring upon itself the curse of all others.

6. As for the NATION, perfectly homogeneous from the legal point of view,

it was divided, under the relationship of interests, into three main categories, which we will try to define as follows:

The *Bourgeoisie*. I place in this class all that lives from the income from capital, from the rent of property, from the privilege of offices, from the dignity of employments and sinecures, rather than from the actual products of labor. The modern bourgeoisie, thus understood, forms a kind of capitalist and landed aristocracy, analogous, in numerical strength and the nature of its patronage, to the old nobility; having almost sovereign control of banking, railways, mines, insurance, transport, large industry, high trade, and having as its base of operations a public, mortgage, unsecured and limited debt, from 20 to 25 billion.

The *Middle Class*. It is made up of entrepreneurs, bosses, shopkeepers, manufacturers, farmers, scholars, artists, etc., living, like the proletarians, and unlike the bourgeois, much more from their personal product than from that of their capital, privileges and properties, but distinguishing themselves from the proletariat, in that they work, as it is vulgarly said, on their own account, that they are responsible for the losses of their state as the exclusive enjoyment of the profits, while the proletarian works for hire and for salary.

Finally, the *working class* or *proletariat*. It is that class that, living like the preceding more from its labor and its services than from its capital, possesses no industrial initiative, and deserves in all respects the qualification of *mercenary*, or *wage earner*. Some individuals of this class, by their talent and their capacity, raise themselves to a condition of ease that entrepreneurs and licensed contractors often fail to achieve; just as among the latter, some obtain benefits that far exceed the average income of the bourgeois. But these inequalities, entirely individual, which one could almost consider as anomalies, do not affect the masses; and as the middle class, generally composed of the most skillful and energetic producers, remains far below, in security and guarantees, the bourgeois class; likewise the proletariat is composed of a poor, if not miserable, multitude; having all its life only the dream of well-being; hardly knowing, in many places, the use of corn, meat, and wine; shod in clogs, clad in all seasons of cotton or canvas, and many of whom cannot read. The economists have painted in moving strokes the misery of the proletariat; they have proven, to the point of obviousness, that in this misery was the cause of the weakening of public morality, and of the degradation of the race. France is the European country where there is the greatest gap between civilization and barbarism, where the average education is the lowest. While Paris, the center of luxury and enlightenment, is rightly considered the capital of the globe, there are a host of localities in the departments where the people, barely freed from the soil and already corrupted by wage labor, seem to have regressed to the Middle Ages.

The country counts more than 36 million inhabitants. Its annual product is about 9 billion, a quarter of which serves to pay the expenses of state, church and other functions called unproductive or parasitic; another quarter belongs as interest, rent, dividend, agio, commission, profit, etc., to proprietors, capitalists

and contractors; which leaves for the working class, including those of the middle class who do not make a profit, — and that is the great number, — an income or salary that can be evaluated at 41 centimes per head per day, and which in extreme cases is below 15.

Such was, in brief, on February 24, the balance sheet of the French nation.

It follows that the strength of this nation, apart from the territory and the number of inhabitants, which constitutes its importance as an organ and function in humanity, comes to it solely from its governmental and bourgeois feudalism. The people, the servile mass, exploited but not organized, is without political value. Its role is, more or less, that of slavery among the ancients. Suppose for a moment the hierarchy, which contains and implements it, destroyed; the power annihilated, in its personnel and its jobs; the bourgeoisie exterminated, its wealth shared; imagine this multitude, destitute and illiterate, barbarous if you will but not *vile*, become mistress by a wave of the revolutionary wand, passing the level of the Church and the state, and realizing in its own way the parable of Saint-Simon, as it could very well have given itself the pleasure of doing after February 24: immediately, and until a new organization, France, stripped, like Samson by Delilah, of its hair, is no more than an inert mass, in a chaotic state; there is indeed a social material, there is no longer any society.

Thus, the French people, in its profound masses, with the centralization that surrounds it, the clergy that preaches to it, the army that watches over it, the judicial order that threatens it, the parties that torment it, the capitalist and mercantile feudalism that owns it, looks like a criminal thrown into prison, kept in custody night and day, with coat of mail, straitjacket, chain, collar, a bundle of straw for a bed, black bread and water for all food. Where and when do we see a better bound, squeezed, embarrassed population, put on a stricter diet? The Americans, who have neither clergy, nor police, nor centralization, nor army; who have no government, in the sense that the old world attaches to this term; who don't know what to do with their cattle, their flour and their land, speak of us with great ease! We have worn, for centuries, a weight that in less than a generation would have crushed any other race; and such is our misery, that if this weight is taken away from us, we immediately cease to live; if it is kept for us, we cannot exist!

Certainly, never was a finer opportunity offered to revolutionaries. Everyone, the bourgeoisie itself, felt it. It is repugnant that society is nothing other than the systematic immolation of the greatest number by the smallest, when this great number is composed of individuals of the same blood, endowed with identical aptitudes, finally capable of becoming in their turn, through education and work, as learned, as artistic, as powerful inventors, as great captains, as profound statesmen, as their cousins of the governing and bourgeois class.

I have no desire to rekindle extinct discords. I know that I am not writing an article for the *Représentant du Peuple*, that there is no longer a multitude that reads me, and that I would stir in vain this hearth that is only ashes. The most

numerous and poorest class, this great army of universal suffrage, which we have tried to enfranchise through its own initiative, has twice given, on December 10, 1848 and on December 20, 1851, an answer such as the state of its soul, the poetry of its memories and the naivety of its feelings entailed. The French people, for some time yet, intend to be governed, — it costs me nothing to admit it, — and they are looking for a strong man! They devolved their sovereignty to the name that represented strength to them: what an idea to have wanted to make a sovereign of this child! What a lamentable fiction in the already so long series of our fictions!... I will not call for this *plebiscite*, which puts me at ease, and I in no way intend to invalidate the vote of 20 December. The people, if not by reason, at least by instinct, know what they are doing; only what they know is not up to what we middle-class and bourgeois people know. It is not the acts of the people, perfectly authentic, whatever one may say, and too easy to foresee, that I am discussing. I wonder: How, on February 24, did the leaders of the democracy resign their powers into the hands of such a people; and how did the latter, in their turn, deceive the hopes of the democrats?

This question, which contains the secret of subsequent events, and which, after all that has been said and written for four years, is still quite new, I will be forgiven for treating it with a certain diligence.

III

DESIDERATA OF THE REVOLUTION TO FEBRUARY 24.

The education of peoples, says Lessing, is like that of individuals. Each progress obtained in this education leads to the suppression of an educational organ, and resolves itself for the subject into an increase in independence, a cessation of discipline.

The economic and anti-governmental revolution, in view of which the constitutional monarchy had been overthrown, called ten million Frenchmen to the exercise of political rights, created the most immense anarchy of which history furnishes the example; this revolution, already so heavy with preparations, could therefore only consist, on the one hand, in the abrogation, partial or total, in any case progressive, of the great organizations that at the origin of the societies served to tame the rebellious nature of the peoples; secondly, in the extinction of debts, the propagation of well-being, the transformation of property, the annihilation of parties, finally, and to put it all in one word, the social and egalitarian education of the masses.

Thus religion, symbolic of society, has always been the first intellectual manifestation of the people; the priesthood, its first master.

Without the revolution showing the slightest hatred for worship, there was reason to ask, in 1848, if, according to the principle of religious liberty and the progress of public reason, we should maintain any longer, at the expense of the nation, a body as formidable as the clergy; if the time had not come for French society to begin to renounce worship, considered as a principle of morality and an instrument of order; if it were not appropriate at this time, in the interest of mores themselves, and without dogmatizing in any way, to transfer religious authority to the father of the family, as we had just transferred political authority to the citizen; to teach the masses that prayer is only a supplement to reflection, for the use of children and the simple; the sacraments and mysteries, an allegory of social laws; worship, an emblem of universal solidarity; to tell them, finally, that the man who has private virtue, fidelity to commitments, devotion to his country, only through fear of God and fear of the executioner, far from being a saint, is quite simply a scoundrel?

For, if we continued to think, with some, that the people cannot do without worship; that if they no longer go to mass, they will devastate the countryside, burn the barns, loot the shops; that even admitting, as a notorious fact, the decadence of Catholicism, the only consequence to be drawn from this fact would be to replace official religion by another more in harmony with needs and ideas, in no way to abandon such a serious interest to the arbiter of consciences; that in the meantime it was good policy to call the priests to the blessing of the flags of

liberty and to the funerals of its martyrs; if, I say, such must be the judgment of the democracy on the importance of worship, then it was wrong to drive out the dynasty of Orleans; it was necessary to stick to the reform demanded by M. Duvergier de Haurane, simply to support M. Odilon Barrot and M. Thiers. The democratic theory of liberty is incompatible with the theological doctrine of grace: one must choose between Augustine and Pelagius, two mutually exclusive masters. No revolution in the Church, no republic in the state.

For my part, I had such faith in the morality of the people, despite the deleterious influence of pauperism, that I would not have hesitated to support the most complete freedom, and while respecting individual beliefs, to put religion definitively outside the state, that is to say, first of all, outside the budget. And certainly, the opinion of the leaders of the democracy on the subsequent importance of religious ideas can no longer be a doubt for anyone: their principle forbade them to have such a degrading opinion of the people.

But they dared not take responsibility for such a serious decision; they thought they should refer to the nation. We are not the sovereign, they thought; religion is one of its properties; it is not for us to prejudge the dispositions of the national conscience, even less to draw upon the democracy the reprobation that has always attached itself to atheists!... The people, the National Assembly, will decide.

It was thus that the bloody and obscene memories of Hébertism stopped the Republican party on the slope of liberty. The past of the Revolution crushed the present: now, the question returned to popular judgment, the Church was sure of triumph.

The same was to happen for the government.

What is government in society? The shirt, if I may say so, of a people in the cradle; after the cult, the principal organ of the education of the masses; in times of antagonism, the armed expression of the collective force.

Already the problem of the reduction to operate in the central power had been posed in 89. Half-solved by the spontaneous formation of the national guards and the federations of provinces, it had made possible the days of July 14, October 5 and 6, and August 10. It is under the influence of this principle that the whole of France was revolutionized during the years 89, 90, 91, 92, and until May 31, 93; that the battalions of volunteers were formed, and that the people rose *en masse* in terror. Affirmed, albeit obscurely, by the party of the Gironde, opposed at the same time by the royalists of the assembly and by the Mountain, it succumbed in the civil war ignited by the day of May 31. It may be said that from this period France was struck off again from the list of free nations; in changing government, it has only changed tyranny. Disorganized, disarmed, muzzled, without a rallying point, without cohesion of interests, elsewhere than in the state; recognizing no authority except that of the center; accustomed to following it as the soldier follows his leader, it has lost even the notion of its independence and rights. For sixty years it has witnessed the tragedies of its

government, reduced, for any initiative, to pursuing its masters alternately with its wishes and its maledictions. All proper action is taken from it; any attempt to seize it again, which is not supported by at least one of the constituted powers, is instantly and pitilessly repressed.

This can be judged from the picture of our revolutions during the last sixty-four years.

ANNALS OF LIBERTY IN FRANCE,

from January 24, 1789 to February 24, 1848.

1789. — *January 24–May 4.* — Convocation of the Estates-General, drafting of the cahiers. The nation called to political life, for the first time makes an act of will, expresses its intentions, and names its representatives.

June 20. — Oath of the Jeu de Paume: the Assembly of Representatives declares itself sovereign, and superior to the royal prerogative.

July 14. — The people support their representatives; royalty is subordinated; the National Guards *federalize*.

1790. — *July 14.* — Great *federation*; the king takes an oath to the nation; the nation swears by the Revolution.

1791. — *July 14.* — New *federation*. The nation forgives the king; it commands, he executes.

1792. — *August 10.* — Royalty, unable to bear its inferior condition, conspires against national sovereignty. It is defeated: the nation forms a *Convention* to found a republic.

1793. — *May 31–June 2.* — Reaction of the idea of authority against the idea of liberty. Reason of State, under the name of Republic *one and indivisible*, triumphs over reason of the country, accused of *federalism*. The people support *unity*: the nation is put back under the yoke by the Jacobins. Beginning of the terror.

Here ends the period of freedom, inaugurated by the convocation of the Estates-General.

1794. — *February 24–April 5.* — Elimination of Hébertists and Dantonists by Robespierre's faction. Power is becoming more and more concentrated.

July 27–28 (9 Thermidor). — Power inclines to the dictatorship of a single person. Palace revolution, where Robespierre is defeated by his colleagues from the Committee of Public Safety. First, the population dared not trust it, and the triumph of the Convention seemed doubtful, so much had the triumvir been able to extinguish the political faculty in the masses. Little by little the Parisians are speaking out; Robespierre is guillotined, and the country, escaped from this tyranny, falls back under that of the Thermidorians.

1795. — *1 April–20 May (12 Germinal–1 Prairial).* — Insurrection of the people of Paris against the reactors of Thermidor, put down by conventional authority.

October 5 (13 Vendémiaire). — Disaffection is at its peak. If the elections remain free,

the royalists will be named in the majority, and it will be done for the Republic. A law, known as 13 Fructidor, therefore orders that two-thirds of the representatives will be chosen from among the members of the Convention. Revolt of the sections, crushed by Bonaparte.

1797. — *September 4* (18 *Fructidor*). — New elections bring a royalist majority. Directoire coup d'état, supported by the army and the Jacobins. The constitution is violated, the representation mutilated, and the Republic immolated for the second time by its defenders.

1799. — *November 9* (18 *Brumaire*). — Palace revolution, to the profit of Bonaparte. The nation, which has not been consulted, is silent or applauds.

1814. — *April*. — Palace revolution, for the benefit of the Bourbons, who had returned from abroad. The nation salutes its princes, whom it no longer knew.

1815. — *March*. — Military Conspiracy and Palace Revolution. Part of the nation claps at the return of the Emperor.

July. — Second restoration of the Bourbons, by favor of the foreigner. The other part of the nation, which had kept silence during the hundred days, takes its revenge with applause, and the proscriptions begin.

1830. — *July* — A conflict arises between the great powers of the state; the people of Paris support the 221; Marshal Marmont withdraws the troops. Palace revolution, in favor of Louis-Philippe.

1832–1836. — Republican and Carlist riots, vanquished by the government.

1839. — Parliamentary coalition: a secret society tries to take advantage of the circumstance to call the people to arms. The crown yields: ministerial revolution.

1848. — *February 22-24*. — Conflict between the Ministry and the Opposition, supported by the National Guard. Louis-Philippe flees, giving way to the Republicans.

No, those surprised by the attitude of France on December 2, 1851 do not know its history. They have retained only the major parliamentary and military dates, taking, three-quarters of the time, the action of power and the parties for that of the nation.

France, let it be known once, for sixty-four years, has not had five years of national existence. She lived, with her own life, from January 24, 1789, date of the convocation of the Estates-General, until May 31, 1793, date of the expulsion of the Girondins. During this short evolution, we see the country subordinating the power to itself, dividing it, reducing it; local and individual liberties are formed; and, if the situation is still far from being happy, the spirit and the will arise everywhere in the social body. After May 31, the relationship is reversed: the power, as under the kings, subordinates the country to itself; the nation is no more than an integral part of the state; the container is included in the content. One recognizes, in the centralization advocated by the Jacobins, the influence of popular instinct, more easily grasped by the simple notion of power than by the complicated idea of the social contract. The political faculty becoming more and more absorbed in the superior agents of authority, the citizens lose one by one all

their liberties, and do not even preserve the security of their correspondence. Society has disappeared: it is an estate, with its stewards, its employees, and its farmers.

Certainly, one cannot deny that the various governments, which succeeded one another in France after the death of Louis XVI, sometimes drew great things from it; that, either by their initiative or by their reaction, they caused bright sparks to spring from it. But all of this, again, is state history; it is not the history of the people. Now, if the word democracy means anything, if it was through it and for it that the February revolution had taken place, it was the case, in 1848, of putting an end to a monstrous anomaly, and, if we dared not go so far *as anarchy*, which like every principle indicates an ideal rather than a reality, we could not at least refuse a general simplification of the political institute.

Was the people then declared out of tutelage, *et sui juris*? Centralization, that vast field of pride, was to be immediately attacked, and the citizens sent into possession of themselves. The management of their affairs, the care of their police, the disposal of their funds and of their troops, were restored to the departments and communes, save for the transitions to be arranged. By what right would individuals, appointed by their peers, have claimed to know better in Paris what suits the provinces than the voters themselves?... To make the French people, the first condition was to make citizens, that is i.e., in our language, people *of their country*, which can only be achieved through decentralization. The army was founded in the urban guards; the choice of arbitrators, the form of the procedures, the authority of the solutions were left to the interests in dispute.

Was it thought, on the contrary, that in this democracy without a dictator, without a senate, without factotums and without informers, order would not last a week; that the people needed, in the style of Rousseau, a prince, as they needed a god; that beyond that, individuals would fight among themselves, that the weak would be delivered up to the mercy of the strong, the rich exposed to the envy of the wretched; that a force was necessary in the republic, to contain bad passions, to punish crimes, and to give honest people security?

Then again, since the system had to be preserved, it was hypocrisy to speak of revolution, and one had been guilty of an outrage in overthrowing the dynasty. By proclaiming the people sovereign, they was doubly betrayed; first, because they were to enjoy only a fictitious sovereignty; then, because of the assumption that they were unworthy to exercise it. Just the granting of the right to vote to this reputedly ignorant people, capable of the most scandalous aberrations and the most irreparable cowardice, even if this vote were to be given only every five years, was a crime against progress and against the human race.

I need not say what was the opinion of the Provisional Government on this point, as on the other. No one professed a higher esteem for the people; and if the thing had depended on their feelings, no doubt they would have immediately cut the selvages. But, for the second time, *they did not dare!* restrained as they were by general prejudice, and by that fear of the unknown that disturbs the greatest

geniuses. Far from advising the demolition of authority, some advised seizing the dictatorship: why do this, if we wanted neither the suppression of worship nor the reduction of the State, and, as for the industrial improvements, that they did not agree?... The impossibility of recognizing the dictator, and above all the respect of the democratic principle, considerations all of principle, affixed the *veto* on the inclinations of execution. The political question devolved, like the ecclesiastical question, to the National Assembly; we could therefore predict that it would be buried there. There it was understood that the people being minors, they could not be left to their own counsels; governmentalism was maintained with increased energy; we got off with giving the new constitution the qualification of democratic, which, judging from the wording published on November 4, 1848, was perhaps less true than it had been of the Charter of 1830...

I will not dwell on the economic question, the most serious of all. Put in its true terms, it does not seem to me to be any more susceptible to contradiction than the two previous ones.

The nation being divided, as has been said, into three natural categories, one of which has the formula: *Opulence and unproductive consumption*; the other, *Industry and Free Commerce, but without guarantees*; the third, *Absolute subjection and progressive misery*: the problem for the Revolution was to resolve the first and the third class in the second, the extremes in the middle; and thereby to ensure that all, without exception, had in equal proportion, capital, labor, outlet, liberty, and ease. In this consists the great operation of the century, and the object, still so little understood, of socialism. History and the analogy of principles show that this solution is the true one.

What socialism has called *exploitation of man by man*, namely, the rent of the owner, the interest of the capitalist, the tithe of the priest, the tribute of the State, the agio of the entrepreneur and of the trader, all these forms of prelibation of authority over labor, brought back to their origins, in the earliest times of human production, are a correlative of government and worship, one of the forms of primitive initiation. Just as man originally disciplined himself only through religious terror and the fear of power, so he only gave himself up to forced and coerced labor. To obtain daily labor from him, he had to be subjected to daily restraint: basically, income and interest are only the instruments of this energetic education.

Currently, the people of our cities and our countryside, whose average salary is 41 centimes per day per head, was this people capable of supporting, without falling into vulgarity and insolence, a greater share of wealth? Was it to be feared that by increasing their well-being, instead of doubling their activity and making them rise in virtue, we would precipitate them into laziness and vice? Was it necessary, more and more, to bridle them by hard work, a meager salary, and as Christ, the apostles, the monks of the Middle Ages had practiced on themselves, leave no hope to the proletarian other than in another life?

To ask these questions was to solve them. The difficulty, for the Provisional Government, was not in the goal; it was in the means. How to guarantee labor, open up outlets, balance production and consumption, increase wages, attack rent and interest, without making credit disappear and stopping the formation of capital?... The emancipation of the proletariat presented itself to some minds like the dispossession of the bourgeoisie; the projects varied *ad infinitum*, an inexhaustible source of calumny for the republican party. In short, they did not dare, they could not dare! When fortune and public liberty are at stake, no one in particular has the right to undertake reform. Huber agreed with me, at Doullens, that in pronouncing the dissolution of the Assembly on May 15, he had committed an act of usurpation. The Provisional Government would have found itself in the same situation, by deciding on its own authority on the necessity of worship and government, and on the organization of labor. Opinion not having been formed, it was not up to it to anticipate it. After all, the misery of the people is still a lesser evil than arbitrariness in power. The right to work, decreed *in principle* by the Provisional Government, was sent back for the organization to the Constituent Assembly, where the opponents could not fail to be in the majority. Believe then that the representatives of the interests threatened would go, under such conditions, to devote themselves to the emancipation of the proletariat!...

Thus the democracy, whatever its will and its faith, found itself faced with questions without bottom or edge. On all sides, the tradition of 89 led to the unknown. We couldn't go back; we didn't dare go forward. It seemed to everyone that public morality had risen, wealth increased, the principles of order and well-being multiplied in every direction; that it was right, consequently, reasonable, useful, to develop public liberties, to give more impetus to individual liberty, to emancipate consciences, to make for the people a greater portion of social felicity. The revolution of 89 had left us to fill in these gaps; it was for having recoiled before this work that the July Monarchy, hypocritical and corrupting, had been overthrown. Then, when we wanted to put our hands to the work, this whole mirage of liberty, equality, republican institutions, vanished. Instead of a land of promise, dotted with groves, vineyards, harvests, running waters, green valleys, we discovered only an arid, silent, limitless plain!...

History is only the result of situations. The situation of France, such as it existed in 1848, any nation, by the progress of its ideas, the play of its institutions and its interests, will arrive there. This is why the history of France is the history of all peoples, and why its revolutions are the revolutions of humanity.

Let the people learn from our history! What prevented the democracy of 1848 from taking a revolutionary initiative? At first glance, respect for its principle and horror of dictatorship; — after a more thorough examination, the embarrassment of solutions, — in the final analysis, and as we will try to show, a PREJUDICE.

IV.

UNIVERSAL PREJUDICE AGAINST REVOLUTION, FEBRUARY 24. — WITHDRAWAL OF THE REPUBLICANS.

Going back from cause to cause in the course of social manifestations, it seems to me to recognize that what for four centuries has been abusing nations, what puts obstacles in the way of the human mind, what produced all the evils of the first revolution and made the movement of 1848 miscarry is the generally widespread prejudice concerning the nature and the effects of *progress*. Things happen in society in a certain way; we conceive them in another, to which we strive to reduce them: hence a constant contradiction between the practical reason of society and our theoretical reason, hence all the troubles and revolutionary uproars.

Please follow me for a few moments in this discussion, which I will try to make as short and clear as possible.

We draw our conception of *progress* from science and industry. There we observe that a discovery is constantly added to a discovery, a machine to a machine, a theory to a theory; that a hypothesis, first admitted as true, and later proved false, is immediately, necessarily, replaced by another; so that there is never any vacuum or lacuna in knowledge, but accumulation and continuous development.

We apply this conception of *progress* to society, I mean to the great organisms that until now have served as its forms. Thus we want every political constitution to be an improvement of the previous constitution; that every religion presents a richer, more complete, more harmonious doctrine than that which it replaces; with all the more reason that every economic organization realizes a larger, more comprehensive, more integral idea than that of the preceding system. We would not conceive that while society advances on one point, it retrogresses on another. And the first question we address to the innovators who speak of reforming society, of abolishing this or that of its institutions, is to say to them: *What are you putting in their place?*

The men who occupy themselves with government, the minds prejudiced by religious ideas, those who are passionate about metaphysical constructions and social utopias, and the vulgar in their wake, can only imagine that reason, conscience, for the all more reason society, have not had their ontology, their essential constitution, the affirmation of which, ever more explicitly, is the perpetual *profession of faith* of mankind. One system destroyed, they seek another; they need to sense their mind in universals and categories, their liberty in prohibitions and licenses. Surprisingly, most revolutionaries think, like the conservatives they fight, of building prisons; they resemble the journeyman, who

goes from inn to inn, from workshop to workshop, amassing a few crowns, perfecting himself in his profession, until finally, when he returns to his country, he falls... into the household!

Nothing is more false than this conception of social progress.

The first task of any society is to make a set of rules, essentially subjective, the work of speculative minds, accepted by the vulgar without discussion, justified by the necessity of the moment, honored from time to time by the skill of some just prince; but which, having no foundation in the life of the species, sooner or later degenerates into oppression. Immediately there begins against the power a work of negation which does not stop any more. Liberty, taken as control, tends to occupy all the space: while the politician strives to reform the state and seeks the perfection of the system, the philosopher realizes that this so-called system is nothing; that true authority is liberty; that instead of a *constitution of powers created*, what society seeks is the balance of its natural forces.

It is thus, moreover, with all things that proceed from pure reason. At first these constructions seem necessary, endowed with the highest degree of positivism, and the only question seems to be to grasp them in their absoluteness. But soon analysis, taking possession of these pure products of the understanding, demonstrates their emptiness, and leaves in their place only the faculty that caused them all to be rejected, criticism.

So, when Bacon, Ramus, and all the free thinkers had overthrown the authority of Aristotle, and introduced, with the principle *of observation*, democracy into the school, what was the consequence of this fact?

The creation of another philosophy?

Many believed it; some still believe it. Descartes, Leibnitz, Spinoza, Malebranche, Wolf, aided by new insights, began, on this clean slate, to reconstruct systems. These great minds, who all claimed Bacon, and smiled at the Peripatetic, did not understand, however, that the principle, or to put it better, Bacon's practice, *the observation*, direct and immediate, belonging to everyone, the field in which it is exercised being infinite, the aspects of things innumerable, there was no more room in philosophy for a system than for an authority. Where facts alone are authoritative, there is no longer any authority; where the classification of phenomena is the whole of science, the number of phenomena being infinite, there is only a chain of facts and laws, more and more complicated and generalized, never of first nor last philosophy. Instead of a constitution of nature and society, the new reform left nothing to be sought but the perfection of the criticism, of which it was the expression, that is to say, with the imprescriptible and inalienable control of ideas and phenomena, the faculty of building systems *ad infinitum*, which is equivalent to the nullity of the system. Reason, instrument of all study, falling under this criticism, was democratized, hence amorphous, acephalous. Everything it produced from its fund, apart from direct observation, was demonstrated *a priori* empty and vain; what it once

affirmed, and what it could not deduce from experience, was ranked among the number of idols and prejudices. Itself no longer existing except through science, confusing its laws with those of the universe, it was to be deemed inorganic: it was, in essence, a clean slate; reason was a being of reason. Complete, eternal anarchy, where philosophers and theologians had affirmed a principle, an author, a hierarchy, a constitution, first principles and secondary causes: such was to be the philosophy after Bacon, such more or less was the criticism of Kant. After the *Novum Organum* and the *Critique of Pure Reason*, there is not, there cannot be, a system of philosophy: if there is a truth that must be taken for granted, after the recent efforts of the Fichtes, the Schellings, the Hegels, the eclectics, the neo-Christians, etc., that is it. True philosophy is knowing how and why we philosophize; in how many ways and on what matters we can philosophize; what all philosophical speculation ends up in. There is nothing of a system in it, there cannot be one, and it is a proof of philosophical mediocrity to seek a philosophy today.

Let us cultivate, let us develop our sciences; let us look for the relations; let us apply our faculties to it; work incessantly to perfect its instrument, which is our mind: that is all we have to do, philosophers, after Bacon and Kant. But systems! The search for the absolute! It would be pure madness, if not charlatanism, and the renewal of ignorance.

Let us move on to another object.

When Luther had denied the authority of the Roman Church and with it the Catholic constitution, and laid down the principle, in matters of faith, that every Christian has the right to read the Bible and to interpret it, according to the light that God put in him; when he had thus secularized theology, what was the conclusion to be drawn from this resounding claim?

That the Roman Church, hitherto the mistress and tutor of Christians, having erred in doctrine, it was necessary to assemble a council of true believers who would seek out the Gospel tradition, restore the purity and integrity of dogma, the first need of the reformed church, and would constitute a new pulpit to teach it?

This was in fact the opinion of Luther himself, of Melancthon, of Calvin, of Bèze, of all the men of faith and science who embraced the Reformation. The sequel showed what their illusion was. The sovereignty of the people, under the name of *free inquiry*, introduced into faith as it had been into philosophy, there could no more be a religious confession than a philosophical system. It was vain to try, by the most unanimous and solemn declarations, to give substance to protestant ideas: one could not, in the name of criticism, engage in criticism: the negation had to go on *ad infinitum*, and everything one would do to stop it was condemned in advance as a departure from the principle, a usurpation of the rights of posterity, a retrograde act. So the more the years passed, the more the theologians were divided, and the more the churches multiplied. And in this precisely consisted the force and the truth of the Reformation; therein lay its

legitimacy, its power for the future. The Reformation was the ferment of dissolution which was to cause the peoples to pass imperceptibly from the morality of fear to the morality of liberty: Bossuet, who reproached the Protestant churches for their variations, and the ministers who blushed at it, all proved by this how much they misunderstood the spirit and scope of this great revolution. Doubtless they were right, from the point of view of priestly authority, of the uniformity of the symbol, of the passive belief of the people, of the absolutism of the faith, of all that the critical movement, determined by Bacon, was going to demonstrate as unsustainable and vain. But papism, by denying the right to thought and the autonomy of conscience; Protestantism, in wanting to escape the consequences of this autonomy and this right, also misunderstood the nature of the human spirit. The first was frankly counter-revolutionary; the other, with its perpetual compromises, was doctrinaire. Both, although to a different degree, were guilty of the same offense: to secure belief they destroyed reason; what theology!...

Will we finally understand it? Since the day when Luther publicly burned the papal bull at Wittenberg, there is no longer any confession of faith, no longer any catechism possible. The Christian legend is no more than the vision of Humanity, as has been explained in turn, after Kant and Lessing, Hegel, Strauss, and lastly Feuerbach. This is the glory of the Reformation; it is by this that it has merited well from Humanity, and that its work, by taking up again that of Christ, already betrayed by the constituents of Nicaea, surpasses that of its author.

Just as all philosophy since Bacon is reduced to this rule, *Observe with exactitude, analyze with precision, generalize with rigor*; similarly all religion since Luther is reduced to this precept, formulated by Kant, *Act in such a way that each of your actions can be taken as a general rule*. Instead of dogmas, instead of a ritual, what we now want, for reason and for conscience, is a rule of conduct. Let us therefore abandon this mania for substitutions: neither the Church of Augsburg, nor that of Geneva, nor any brotherhood of Quakers, Moravians, Mômiers, Freemasons, etc., will ever replace the Roman Church. Anything undertaken in this respect would be contradictory and retrograde; there is no new religious edifice at the bottom of human thought: negation is eternal.

From religion we come to politics.

When Jurieu, applying to the temporal the principle that Luther had invoked for the spiritual, opposed the sovereignty of the people to government by divine right, and transported the democracy of the Church into the state, what conclusion were the publicists who undertook to spread it to draw from this novelty?

That for the forms of monarchical government it was necessary to substitute the forms of another government, which was supposed in everything to be the opposite of the first, and which was called, in anticipation, republican government?

Such was, in fact, the idea of Rousseau, of the Convention, and of all those who, after the death of Louis XVI, by conviction or by necessity, attached themselves to the Republic. After having demolished, it was necessary to build, it was thought. What society could survive without government? And if the government is indispensable, how can we do without a constitution?

Well! Here again history proves, and logic agrees with history, that these political reformers were mistaken. There are not two kinds of government, there is only one: it is the hereditary monarchical government, more or less hierarchical, concentrated, balanced, according to the law of property on the one hand, and of the division of labor of the other. What is called here aristocracy, there democracy or republic, is only a monarchy without a monarch; just as the church of Augsburg, the church of Geneva, the Anglican church, etc., are papacies without popes, just as the philosophy of Mr. Cousin is an absolutism without an absolute. Now, the form of royal government once initiated by democratic control, whether the dynasty is retained as in England or suppressed as in the United States, it matters little, it is necessary that from degradation to degradation this form entirely perish, without the void it leaves after it ever being able to be filled. In fact of government, after royalty, there is nothing.

Assuredly, the passage cannot be effected in a day; the human spirit does not leap from *something* to NOTHING; and public reason is still so weak! But what matters is where we are going, and what principle is leading us. Let the Feuillants, the Constitutionnels, the Jacobins, the Girondins, let the Plain and the Mountain be reconciled; let the *National* and the *Reforme* join hands. They are all equally anarchists: the sovereignty of the people means only that. In a democracy, there is, in the final analysis, neither a constitution nor a government. Politics, about which so many volumes have been written, and which is the specialty of so many profound geniuses, politics is reduced to a simple contract of mutual guarantee, from citizen to citizen, from commune to commune, from province to province, from people to people, variable in its articles according to the matter, and revocable *ad libitum*, *ad infinitum*...

A philosophy, or *a priori* theory of the Universe, of Man and of God, after Bacon; a theology, after Luther; a government, after the sovereignty of the people has been laid down in principle: a triple contradiction. Doubtless, once again, it was not in the nature of the philosophical genius to recognize and proclaim, immediately after the publication of the *Novum Organum*, its own downfall; and that is why, after Bacon and up to the present day, there have appeared systems of philosophy. Doubtless it was still repugnant to the religious conscience, moved by the accents of Luther, the most religious man of his century, to confess to being anti-Christian and atheist, and that is why after Luther, and even under the republic of February, there was so much religious effervescence. No doubt, finally, the governmental spirit, even in the minds of those who cried out loudest against despotism, could not immediately accept its resignation; and that is why since 89 we have had our eighth constitution. Humanity does not deduce its ideas

with such promptitude, and does not make such great leaps: it costs me nothing to recognize it.

But what is also certain is that this philosophical, political, religious movement, which has been going on for four centuries, obviously in the opposite direction, is a symptom, not of creation, but of dissolution. Philosophy, by relying more and more on the positive sciences, loses its *a priori* character, and retains originality only by making its own criticism; philosophy, in the nineteenth century, is the *history of philosophy*. On the other hand, religion, stripping itself of its dogmatism, merges with aesthetics and morality: if in our day the study of religious ideas has acquired such a powerful interest, it is only as a natural history of the formation and of the first developments of the human mind, and we cannot too strongly blame the authors of the *Encyclopédie nouvelle* for their tendency towards a reconstitution of religious ideas. Religion, for us, is the archeology of reason. As for politics, the work of negation that devours it is no less visible; I only want as proof of this the Constitution of 1848, which itself puts, at the head of its articles, its own *perfectibility*, and determines at the end the conditions of its revision!...

Thus progress, with regard to the most ancient institutions of humanity, — philosophy, religion, the state, — is a continuous negation, I do not say without compensation, but without possible reconstitution. Permit me to cite a final example of this movement which, so little understood, is the most important of our time.

When on the night of August 4, after having abolished feudal rights, the Constituent Assembly pronounced the rights of masterships, jurandes, corporations, and laid down the principle of *free labor*, of *free exchange*, what conclusion was there still to be deduced from this democratization of industry, agriculture and commerce, for the economy of society?

That the previous institutions being destroyed, they had to be replaced by others; that the old organization of labor had to be replaced by a new organization?

Many thought so, and this opinion is still today the most followed. Malouet, constituent, who was the first to speak of the right to work; at the Convention, Saint-Just and Robespierre; Babeuf, after Thermidor; M. Royer-Collard, under the Restoration; all socialism since 1830; in 1948 the Provisional Government adopted this idea. Thrown into the masses, it was to obtain there an immense vogue; it received in the national workshops the beginning of realization, and determined the revolt of June.

As for me, I did not hesitate to say it: the organization of the workers, conceived in the direction and as a perfection of the institutions of Saint Louis [Blanc], is incompatible with the liberty of labor and of exchange. On this point, as in the question of the cult and the state, the negation is perpetual; progress is not the constitution of the group, which remains eternally spontaneous and free; it is the exaltation of the individual.

How many times have I heard this wish expressed in popular meetings: Ah! If the heads of the schools could get along! If they could, once, agree among themselves on a plan, a program, as simple as possible; with a certain number of organic articles, which would become the *Credo* of the workers!... No more divisions, then, no more rivalries: the democracy would be united, and the Revolution saved!

The Revolution would have been lost, if the Socialists had come to an understanding.

There is no agricultural-mercantile-industrial system in the economic order, and there never will be; any more than there is, for free thought, a philosophical system; for the conscience, a system of theology; for liberty, a system of government. It is wasted time, ignorance, madness, to seek it; it is counter-revolution. Economic perfection is in the absolute independence of the workers, just as political perfection is in the absolute independence of the citizen. This high perfection cannot be achieved in its ideal; society approaches it more and more by a continual movement of emancipation. Reduce indefinitely the charges that burden production, the deductions made from wages, the deductions imposed on circulation and consumption; reduce the fatigue of labor, the difficulties of the workforce, the obstacles to credit and outlets, the slowness of learning, the upheavals of competition, the inequalities of education, the hazards of nature, etc.; by a contract of guarantee and mutual aid: here, in the order of wealth, is the whole Revolution; here is progress. The social economy is not a constitution, like feudalism or the Indian castes, a system like the utopias of Fourier and the Saint-Simonians. It is a science that aims to solve, by a method of specific equation, the various problems that arise from the notions of *labor, capital, credit, exchange, property, tax, value*, etc., etc. There is nothing to substitute for the old corporations of arts and crafts: it is liberty that teaches us; it is the Revolution, progress, economic science that attest to this.

Thus, contrary to what reformers and revolutionaries generally suppose, Humanity, as far as its primitive forms and its preparatory organization are concerned, does not go to reconstructions; it tends towards a disrobing, if I dare use this term, towards a complete casualness. No more ontology, no more pantheism, idealism, mysticism: the mind purged by the Baconian method does not admit of *a priori* conception, neither small nor big, about God, the world and humanity. No more dogmatic religions, governmental constitutions, industrial organizations; no more utopias, neither on earth nor in heaven. Conscience, liberty and labor, like reason, suffer neither authority nor protocol. It implies that if reason prejudges itself in an *a priori*, even if this *a priori* were its work: it would no longer be reason; — if consciousness receives its criterion from a foreign source: it would no longer be consciousness; — that liberty is subordinated to a pre-established order: it would no longer be liberty, but would be servitude; — that labor allows itself to be harnessed into a supposedly superior organism: it would no longer be labor; it would be a machine.

Neither consciousness, nor reason, nor liberty, nor labor, pure forces, primary and creative faculties, can, without perishing, be mechanized, form an integral or constituent part of any subject or object whatsoever: they are, by nature, without system and out of series. It is in themselves that their reason for being is found, it is in their works that they must find their reason for acting. In this consists the human person, a sacred person, who appears in their fullness and radiates all their glory at the moment when, throwing away all feeling of fear, all prejudice, all subordination, all participation, they can say with Descartes, *Cogito ergo sum*; I think, I am sovereign, I am God!...¹

If the men of the Provisional Government had been convinced of the truth of these ideas, how light the Revolution would have been to them! With what calm, what security, they would have approached their task! And with what disdain they would have welcomed this clamor that was beginning to rise up against the democracy, and which, remaining unanswered, raising only embarrassed, shameful protests, was soon to engulf it: "What! Always deny! Always destroy! Always ruins! Always nothingness! This is what is called progress and liberty!..."

God forbid that I here indict men who all, acting within the measure of their enlightenment, obeyed their conscience, and did not believe they could assume responsibility for such great things. I was able to fight the opinions of almost everyone: I never doubted the probity, the devotion of anyone. They left power, hands pure of rapine and blood. The only one whose virtue then seemed suspect, Armand Marrast, had just died poor, leaving nothing to pay for his funeral. Their whole ambition, after having exercised for two months a power to which nothing, except their conscience, set limits, was to hand over to the new legal country the care of its destinies, and to render accounts, faithful, righteous clerks. Pursued by the memories of 93, which calumny had already evoked against them, and full of the idea that the Republic had more to found than to destroy; not wishing either to pass for wreckers, or to usurp national sovereignty, they confined themselves to maintaining order and reassuring interests. They have spoke to the people only of fraternity, tolerance, sacrifice. They would have thought to forfeit their mandate, by departing from the legal channels, and throwing, with their precarious authority, the people into the Revolution.

Everyone cried around them that religion was threatened. They called the blessing of the Church on the Republic, introduced the clergy into the National Assembly.

It was rumored that the Revolution was going to disorganize the State, that democracy was anarchy. They repudiated the tradition of Hébert, and took as their motto the sacramental words: *Unity, indivisibility of the Republic, separation of powers, constitution.*

¹ We will find this theory of progress developed at greater length in a booklet that will appear shortly.

Socialism was accused of preaching pillage, agrarian law. They saved the Bank by forcing its notes into circulation, consolidated the floating debt, with enormous profit for the holders of Treasury bonds and the depositors of the Caisse d'Epargne. Rather than resorting to summary, extra-legal means against the rich, they preferred, in the urgent need of the Republic, to ask the people for their last penny, and to trim their own salaries. Everywhere they put honesty in the place of politics, turning away with disgust from princely hypocrisies and the violence of demagoguery.

And yet, what pretexts, what examples, could they not invoke!

The multitude have always believed that morality did not oblige the depositaries of its power, and that what they did was good, provided it was profitable to them. The Roman senate obeyed that sentiment of the plebs, when it placed Caesar *above the law*, and declared him possessor of all women. The Roman Church and the Reformed Church alternately expressed the same license, the first by canonizing the polygamous Charlemagne, the second by exempting the Landgrave of Hesse from fidelity to his wife. The much decried morality of the Jesuits is nothing other than the systematization of this principle, which, under certain conditions, elevates force above the law, genius above the rules! The power, in the eyes of the people, dispenses with virtue: this is precisely the theory of the quietists, which Bossuet fought in Fénelon.

The men of the Provisional Government made the *republic* synonymous with MORALITY. They were pious, modest, full of honor and scruples, prompt in devotion, slaves of legality, incorruptible guardians of democratic modesty, above all truthful. They carried republican heroism high. Of all the things they could do in the direction of the Revolution, their religion dared to afford only one, and it happened that this thing, commanded by principle, was, from the point of view of the cause, too advanced, and supremely impolitic: universal suffrage!...

Now, the Revolution having been announced, and not carried out; the Provisional Government, out of a kind of horror of a vacuum, having abstained: what could come out of the situation?

It is easy to understand it.

The essence of any revolution is to displace the mass of interests, to offend a few, to create a lot more. For this very reason, every revolution has as its natural adversaries the interests it disturbs, just as it has as its partisans those it cares for.

According to this law, based on historical experience and common sense, the Republic, entrusted with the destinies of the Revolution, would therefore have as enemies all the representatives of the interests it threatened, enemies all the more implacable in that they would have seen the danger closer, and as the Revolution, deceived in its expectation, would struggle with more rage against the abstention that was made a law for it. *Qui tient tient, badin qui demande!* The Revolution having taken nothing, nothing would be granted to it. A coalition was formed, against democracy, of all who, rightly or wrongly, had been afraid:

owners, manufacturers, commerce, the Bank, the clergy, the peasant, the constituted bodies, the staffs, the two-thirds of the country, finally. On May 15, June 24, the revolutionary democracy tries to regain control: it is opposed to its own law, universal suffrage; it is knocked down. Then the duel shifts to the terrain of the new constitution: but this constitution, alas! whatever it was, it was the guarantee of the retreat of the democrats.

For me, I don't hide it. I pushed with all my might for political disorganization, not out of revolutionary impatience, not out of love of a vain celebrity, not out of ambition, envy or hatred; but through the foresight of an inevitable reaction, and, in any case, by the certainty that I had that, assuming government, as it persisted in doing, the democracy could do no good. As for the masses, however poor their intelligence, however weak I knew their virtue, I feared them less in the midst of anarchy than at the polls. Among the people, as among children, crimes and misdemeanors are due more to the mobility of impressions than to the perversity of the soul; and I found it easier, for a republican elite, to complete the education of the people in a political chaos, than to make them exercise their sovereignty, with some chance of success, by electoral means.

New facts have rendered useless this desperate tactic, for which I have long braved public animadversion; and I unite without reserve with honest men of all parties, who, understanding that *democracy is demopedia*, education of the people; accepting this education as their task, and placing LIBERTY above all, sincerely desire, with the glory of their country, the well-being of the workers, the independence of nations, and the progress of the human spirit.

V.

DECEMBER 2.

Once the situation is established, the events will be deduced.

While the wealthy class swear hatred to the republic; while the republican party, fallen into constitutionalism, gives its withdrawal, Louis Bonaparte, supported by five million and half of votes, becomes the organ of the revolution. Such is the logic of things, which the competition of parties, the crossover of intrigues, the animation of personalities, do not allow us to understand.

Whoever was elected on December 10, in fact, the product of a revolutionary situation, he was forced to become, on pain of a prompt decline, the organ of the revolution. The coalition of reactors, by supporting Louis Bonaparte, acts as if, by securing the man, it could ward off the thing; — the democracy, for its part, by persisting after the election in an opposition too well justified, also too often forgot that its cause could not depend on the good pleasure of him whom the revolution had just given itself as its leader. Contradiction on both sides, which was to lead to a crowd of others.

I insist on this principle, which I have already had occasion to recall: the head of state, even if hereditary, does not represent a party, does not inherit any property; he represents a situation, he inherits a necessity. The kings of France of the third race, who, with very different temperaments, all pursued, and from hand to hand, the same work, the abolition of feudalism; today Robert Peel, who, as the leader of the Tories, never ceased to fight the policy of the Tories, are fine examples of this.

Louis-Bonaparte, independently of the popular sympathies that had raised him to power, was therefore, after the 10th of December, the representative of the revolution; by his alliance with the leaders of the old parties, on the contrary, and by the opposition of the republicans, he was the leader of the counter-revolution. This reversal of roles, which put everyone in a false situation, almost cost the new president dearly. He would have been ruined without resources, if at the end of 1849 he had not repudiated, in a more or less direct and formal manner, the policy of the majority; if above all this majority had not spared him, in the law of May 31, 1850, a branch of salvation...

Let us pass over the years 1849, 50, 51, and come immediately to December 2.

The appearance of democracy in business had in reality only produced one result, which was to popularize, at least for a time, universal suffrage, presenting it to the people as the infallible instrument of social revolution. However, the law of May 31 having reduced by a third, and distorted by the system of exclusions, universal suffrage; the democracy, for its part, making the maintenance of this

law a *casus belli* for 1852, the occasion was decisive for Louis Bonaparte. His re-election depending on his popularity, and his popularity depending on how he was going to conduct himself regarding the restoration of universal suffrage, the whole question for him was to know whether, by supporting the law that his ministers had voted in, he would be playing the Monk of a new restoration; or whether, by joining the republicans, he would become a second time the visible leader of the revolution. With the royalist majority, Louis Bonaparte descended from the chair, like Cincinnatus, Monck, Washington, whoever you like, not even carrying a retirement pension; joined with the democrats, that is to say with the democratic principle, he was at the head of a superior force, and without possible rival. The constitution gave him leave, no doubt; but the people would call him back! ... That Louis Bonaparte, by virtue of his initiative, therefore proposed the repeal of the law of May 31, and thus put the cause of universal suffrage under his protection: all his popularity returned to him instantly; he became, *ipso facto*, and despite everything, master of the position.

And first of all, he gained two immense advantages from this conduct: the first, to make the whole Left vote with him, for him, however reluctant they might be, and thereby to show himself in the eyes of the people as the chief of the revolution, since he agreed with the revolutionaries; — the second, to place the majority in the sad alternative, either to be entirely subordinated, discredited, if it followed the President, or to itself give the signal for civil war, if it persisted. To him the beautiful role, to them the odious character. This last party was the worst, since the majority pronouncing for the maintenance of the law, sacrificing to a question of dignity all the chances of its cause, and the President refusing to lend a hand to his decrees, in this conflict between the monarchy and democracy Louis Bonaparte appeared both to the people as the defender of their rights and to the bourgeoisie as the protector of their interests.

Yet it was this party that the majority chose. History will stigmatize those decrepit intelligences, those impure consciences, who preferred the risk of liberties to a reconciliation with the left, and who, in such a clear-cut situation, being able in a word to nullify Bonaparte's fortune, worked with all their might, with all their trickery, for the triumph of the man they hated.

From November 4 to 30, 1851, the action marches on with military speed. The Élysée proposes, in its message, the reminder of the law of May 31: the Mountain supports it. The Élysée abstains from voting on the municipal law: the Mountain imitates it. The Élysée, seizing the system of abstention, recommends to the voters not to present themselves at the Paris elections: the democracy, committed by its precedents, also abstains. The Élysée, finally, rejects the proposal of the quaestors: the Mountain votes as it does. The Mountain and the Élysée are one, the merger seems complete.

This last vote of the Montagnards has been criticized: in my opinion, the critique is without justice. They were already dominated, absorbed: an about-face on the side of the majority would have only served to make the situation more

complicated, more perilous, without depriving the President of any of his advantages.

By the proposition for recall, let us not forget, Bonaparte had become the armed defender of universal suffrage; the favor of the people for him, at this moment, was at the level of December 10, 1848. To take away the command of the army from him, and to hand over this command to General Changarnier, to the counter-revolution, was for the Mountain an inconsistency. no doubt explained by the hatred of man, but inexcusable in the face of logic. Now, it is logic that conducts business; sentiment is only a cause of disappointment. It has been said that, had the President been overthrown, the Mountain would have had the best of an unpopular majority. Perhaps: December 2 showed how the army observes discipline, and Changarnier, armed with a decree from the Assembly, would have done no less work than Saint-Arnaud. But who does not see that if the Mountain had turned against the President, the President, resolved not to yield, would have risen in the name of universal suffrage against the Assembly, that the people would have joined the one who carried the flag of their rights; that the Mountain would not have been able to follow the consequences of its vote to the end, and would have ended by rallying to Bonaparte; that then, its inconsistency would have been exposed in broad daylight; and that, victorious or defeated in the company of the Élysée, it lost, with its dignity, the fruit of its tactics?

For my part, I fully share the opinion expressed by Michel (de Bourges) and Victor Hugo. They could not, as they said, arm the law of May 31, the counter-revolution; they could not, without abandoning the politics of principles for that of personalities, put their conduct in such opposition to their words. The rejection of the recall of the law of May 31 and the proposal of the quaestors were two united acts, which common sense forbade to split. As much as, by the proposal of the Élysée, we returned to the Constitution, so much, by that of the quaestors, a real slander, we left it. To vote today for universal suffrage was to make a commitment to vote tomorrow against the erecting of a dictatorship in opposition to the presidency: all the misfortune of the Mountain, on this occasion, was to not resolutely embrace the situation which made it accept, as it is, its alliance of the moment with the Élysée, and to pursue the consequences to the end.

But passions that were too heated, resentments too bitter, left no room for reflection. From November 17, the roles are completely reversed, to the detriment of the majority, and without benefit for the Mountain. Instead of subordinating the first, the Élysée drags the second in tow, and since it is the ally of neither, it dominates them both. The left was perfectly aware of the unfortunate part of his attitude: its orators and his newspapers spared nothing to establish their independence, separate themselves from presidential politics, etc. These recriminatory apologies were, under the circumstances, very useless, consequently they were one more fault. The democrats, as usual, through excess

of scruples, lost their way. In politics, especially when we operate on the limited intelligence of the masses, when the multiple and complex questions tend to be summed up in a simple formula, it is only the facts that count, the merit of individuals is zero. The Mountain fell into the trap in which the majority had been caught. Instead of making an entirely personal opposition to Louis Bonaparte, it had only to be silent and be ready to share with him the fruit of victory. Was it not better, I am reasoning here, like Themistocles or Machiavelli, from the point of view of the useful, *the invisible sovereign*? I know well that the people, sarcastic and mocking, were beginning to treat the Montagnards as *senators*, and that they could not, without contradicting themselves, tolerate such insulting suppositions. Their sensitivity will be one more feature of the bonhomie of our time. Caesar cared little for the jokes of his soldiers. Stay home, virtuous souls; give your wives and children the daily example of modesty and perfect love; but don't get involved in politics. One requires, ask those of 93, a broad conscience, which does not frighten on occasion an adulterous alliance, violated public faith, the laws of humanity trampled under foot, the Constitution covered with a veil, to do the work of revolutions...

If the thought of February 24 was without comparison more grandiose, more generous, higher than the fatality of December 2, it was far from carrying with it such a profound lesson. Let a government crumble under public disgust; that a democracy shows itself at its beginning to be peaceful, conciliatory, pure of violence, lies and corruption; that she pushes the delicacy to the minutia; respect for persons, opinions and interests, to the point of self-sacrifice: all this, the product of an already advanced civilization, material for poetry and eloquence, as Horace says, *Ut pueris placeas et declamatio fias*, very good to report in *Morale en action*, has nothing serious for the mind, nothing philosophical.

But that a man, in the state of disrepair in which Louis-Napoleon had fallen before December 2, departing president, having since his election, absorbed as he was or covered by his ministers, done nothing that cast a favorable light on his person, thwarted, contradicted, abandoned by his followers; watched by all parties, having no recommendation but that of an uncle who died in the islands, thirty-two years ago! — that this man, I say, alone and against all, with known means, and the help of two or three proxies hitherto deeply obscure, attempts a *coup d'état* and succeeds: that is what, better than any event, shows the strength of the situations and the logic of history. This is what we, Republicans, must think deeply about, and what must warn moving forward against any subjective and arbitrary policy.

Let it be repeated as often as you like that December 2 was an ambush, the act of a brigand, where the army showed itself ferocious, the people cowardly, the power villainous: all this only confuses the riddle. Admittedly, you had to be a bit like the man of Strasbourg and Boulogne to accomplish December 2; but granting to the event all the character given to it, it still remains to explain this: How the one who failed so miserably at Boulogne and Strasbourg, in circumstances

which, according to our insurrectionary mores, could only win him a certain esteem, succeeded in Paris under odious conditions; how at the right time, the soldier, so sympathetic to the workman, under the pretext of discipline, showed himself pitiless; how the people were cowardly, more cowardly than the government overthrown by them in 1848; how, one morning, he developed hatred for liberty, contempt for the constitution, and adoration for force!

It is certain, whatever may have been said of the courage of the army on December 2, that this courage was singularly excited by the complete defection, or rather, by the formal adhesion of the people. It is certain that for a moment, on the 3rd and 4th, a handful of insurgents sufficed to render the success of the *coup d'état* doubtful, and that if, at that hour, the people, filling the streets, had magnetized the soldier, luck would have turned against Louis Bonaparte.

The masses, it must be admitted, because that is even more honorable than keeping silent about it, the masses, above and below, have been complicit, here by their inaction, there by their applause, elsewhere by effective cooperation in the *coup d'état* of December 2. I saw it, and a thousand others, just as little suspected of Bonapartism, saw it too: it was not the armed force, it was the people, indifferent or rather sympathetic, who decided the movement in favor of Bonaparte.

The battle was won before it was fought. For three years the misunderstood, outraged, jeopardized revolution called for a leader; I mean by that, no longer a writer, a tribune, as it had none left, but a man in a position to defend it. Bonaparte only had to answer these few words: Here I am! Well! These words, he said them, and as in politics intentions are nothing, actions everything; as for a month Bonaparte had been making a revolutionary act, the revolution took him at his word. It gave him the win, except later to reckon with him.

How, you will say, did the people, instead of shouting: *Long live the King* or *Long live the League*, not cry: *Long live myself*? How, while supporting universal suffrage with Bonaparte with one hand, did they not defend, with the other, against Bonaparte, the constitution? — How! You know little of the multitude; history has not initiated you into its psychology.

Nothing is less democratic, at bottom, than the people. Its ideas always bring it back to the authority of a single person; and if antiquity and the Middle Ages have transmitted to us the memory of some democracies, we find, on looking closely, that these democracies resulted much more from the difficulty of posing the prince, than from a real understanding of liberty.

At Athens and throughout Greece, the annals of democracy hardly present more than a series of usurpations, which, never succeeding in legitimizing themselves, in founding kingships, *basileias*, as in the East, were called *tyrannies*, dominations.

In Rome, when the ancient institution of patronages and clientele had been annihilated, and when the plebs, under the leadership of the tribunes, had triumphed over the patriciate, no one took care to understand that what remained

to be done, in order to ensure the liberty, was, after an agrarian law and another on usury, an institution of guarantee against the accumulation and centralization of powers. Such an idea was premature for the time; humanity was reserved for other destinies. Julius Caesar, heir to the Gracchi, was therefore made perpetual dictator; and the same dignity continued, under the name of *pricipiat*, to Octavian and his successors. The constitution of the republic was replaced by the imperial constitution. The people had bread and games; but it was done with liberty...

Eighteen centuries had elapsed since that revolution, when the French people, having abolished their feudal institutions, found themselves in the same situation as that of Rome. So what do popular leaders do? Still full of the same prejudice, they decreed, under the name of *Republic one and indivisible*, a government more skillfully concentrated than the old one, and which said to the emigrants: "Royalty still exists in France; only the king is lacking." So royalty was not long in coming: after a few years of agitation, the power fell, to the cheers of the crowd, into the hands of Napoleon...

In 1848, the centralization created by the republic, the empire, and the constitutional monarchy tended to dissolve, when suddenly the democracy again found itself mistress of things. So, as if the analogy of situations were to perpetually bring back the same antinomies, the influence returned to the people had again the result, not of fulfilling the wish of the middle classes, by pushing for decentralization, but of awakening the thought of a dictatorship. The days of March 17, April 16, May 15, had no other purpose; finally, in the days of June, the dictatorship was instituted in the person of General Cavaignac, the man who had the least ambition for it, against those who wanted it the most. The example, covered with the pretext of public safety, was not lost: in 1849, a new attempt at dictatorship, and always against the democracy,

On the date of December 2, the weary masses, as incapable of deliberation as of initiative; the restless bourgeoisie, loving to rely on a complacent leader to guard its interests; all parties were prepared for this grand measure, from which they hoped for decisive results. On the side of the Republicans, what distinguished *the men of action* from the *endormeurs*, is that the former wanted to proceed by an energetic dictatorship, while the latter claimed that we should confine ourselves, come what may, to the constitution.

Let us add that the monarchical ideas, reproduced every day with insulting publicity, singularly aided the march of dictatorial opinion. The principle of authority accepted by the royalists as necessary, by the democracy as transitory, the thought at that moment was one: they only differed on words. On both sides, personal power, the authority of one alone, appeared as a logical organ and an indispensable means of solution. Moreover, towards the end of 1831, there was no longer any question of reforms, creations, improvements of any kind. It was, above all, a question of fighting. All parties armed, manufactured gunpowder, captured the favor of the military. For some the future dictator was Changarnier,

for others Ledru-Rollin or whoever. The situation, which everyone had made, but on which no one had counted, wanted it to be Bonaparte.

On the morning of December 2, a proclamation posted in the night informs the barely wakened Parisians, "that the National Assembly is dissolved, universal suffrage re-established, the people convene in their assemblies to declare, by *yes* or by *no*, if they adhere to the *coup d'état*, and if they authorize Louis-Napoleon to draw up a Constitution on the bases of that of the year 8, and according to the principles of 89." The whole, supported by a number of guns and a respectable armed force.

Such is the substance of the proclamation. The surplus can be considered as verbiage, court holy water, phrases of circumstance, sometimes even unconsidered. The reminder of the constitution of year 8, for example, betrayed a personal concern, and blemished the picture. But are there no spots in the sun? And then, what did the people care about the constitution of the year 8, rather than that of the year 2, rather than that of the year 3? Does society write its constitutions? asked M. de Maistre. People don't read them either.

But see how it all fits:

Bonaparte dissolves the Assembly by force: here is *the man of action*, the *dictator!*

Bonaparte appeals to the people: here is UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE!

Bonaparte refers to the ideas of 89: here is the REVOLUTION!

The people are logical, not like philosophers who distinguish and argue; they are logical like the ball which leaves the barrel, like the hammer of the clock, like the automaton of Vaucanson. Could they have opposed the enterprise of Louis Bonaparte? They would have had to, like Sganareille, distinguish between fagots and fagots, accept universal suffrage with one hand, reject with the other the year 8; heartily applauding the discomfiture of the reactionary majority, and supporting with the vote the principle of national representation: subtle operations of which the mass is incapable.

That is not all. The President had formerly made himself known through socialist writings: his conservative friends had almost asked the country for forgiveness for him. The people, who judge men according to themselves, knows that they can betray and sell themselves, but that they do not change. They say, and the word is historic: *Barbès asked the rich for a billion for us; Bonaparte will give it to us!* Largeness! As in the days of kings. It is all of the socialism of the people.

Soon we learn that Generals Changarnier, the terror of the suburbs; Cavaignac, so odious since the days of June; Bedeau, Lamoricière, Colonel Charras, were removed from their homes, locked up in Mazas, to be sent from there to Ham. The people enjoy the satisfaction given to their hatreds; they remind the representatives of Changarnier's words: *Deliberate in peace!* and laugh.

A meeting of representatives, headed by MM. Berner, O. Barrot, Creton,

Vitet, etc., formed in the 10th arrondissement. It is rounded up by troops and taken between two rows of soldiers to the Quai d'Orsay. The citizens, on the passage of this fallen power, discover themselves: the people, cruel as children, without generosity, insult their disaster: *They wanted it!* In vain do they invoke the Constitution! The Constitution, say the people, you were the first and knowingly violated it. It is a rag in a sack.

But the Mountain! Its most popular members, Greppo, Nadaud, Miot, are also arrested. It was the commentary on certain passages of the proclamation where the President, addressing selfishness of another order, offered himself as the savior of society against the threats of the Reds, at the same time as he presented himself to the multitude as the prosecutor of the Revolution. The people, ungrateful, unfaithful to friendship, finds in this news only ignoble raillery on the loss of the 25 francs. The montagnards were depopularized, and do you know why? Because they were indemnified. The people, who welcome without flinching a civil list of 12 million, expecting, they say, that this will boost trade, regard the indemnity of their representatives as a robbery from their purse. 25 francs per day! Democrats! The democracy is envy.

Even the boldness of the *coup de main* amused the people. They found it charming to have taken to bed these men who the day before were talking of putting Bonaparte at Vincennes, and of putting an end to the republic. *Bravo! Well played,* said the suburbanites. No victory of the Emperor impressed them more deeply.

However, the act of December 2 remained nonetheless an attack in the first place against the constitution and against the assembly, hence against the republic itself. The appeal to the people could not cover it: the appeal of an individual to the people cannot prevail against the written right of the people. For the appeal to the people to be taken into consideration, it would have been necessary, beforehand, to put things *in status quo*. From the point of view of legality, Bonaparte was therefore guilty, liable to Article 68 of the Constitution. It was true that this Constitution had been repeatedly violated by those who now spoke of defending it. But after all it was the law, the monument of the revolution and of liberty; far from having to tear up the pact, the democracy had no support except there.

The people didn't want to hear anything of the sort. The people are always for whoever calls them; and by the fact alone that Bonaparte submitted to their decision, he was sure of being absolved.

The future will tell, in view of the acts of Louis-Napoleon, if the *coup d'état* of December 2 was, I will not say legitimate, as there is no legitimacy against the law, but, from the point of view of public utility, excusable. All I have to do is to research its elements, its meaning, its fatality; it is, by doing justice to those who armed themselves to fight it, to save the national honor.

The Mountain has done its duty nobly. It sealed with its blood a just but hopeless cause. This blood, that of several thousand citizens, the mass

proscription of the democratic party, washed the homeland and regenerated the revolution. The Emperor at St. Helena said, speaking of the Spaniards: "My policy demanded that Spain enter into my system: the change of her dynasty was necessary. The Spanish people rose up; it was a matter of honor for them: I have nothing to say." Allow me at this moment to take hold of the Emperor's words. The safety of the country, I want to believe, and the policy of Louis-Napoleon, a policy of progress, no doubt, demanded that he obtain, at all costs, a prorogation and an extension of authority. The republicans could not, without cowardice and without perjury, allow this usurpation. They sacrificed themselves: honor to them! That we reject their principle, that we condemn their theories, that we proscribe their people, well and good! That the sycophants of the tribune, the press and the pulpit receive the price of their calumnies: it is right. Posterity will do pious justice to the vanquished, and France will cite their names with pride.

After the heroic Baudin, after Miot, who alone among his colleagues retained the privilege of deportation, we cite, among the most energetic protestants, Victor Hugo, the great poet; Michel (of Bourges), the profound orator; Jules Favre, the Republican Cicero; Charamaule, Madier-Montjau, Victor Schœlcher, Marc Dufraisse, Colonel Forestier, the editorial staff of the *National*. The newspaper that represented most specifically the Constitution of 1848 was not to survive it: why have the hatreds it once aroused not remained with it under the barricade?...

Let the foreigner, better informed on the state of our country, the question posed in February, the degree of intelligence of the masses, the interplay of situations, the march of parties, condemns us now, if he dares! The French nation, which has already accomplished such great things, has not reached its majority. Perennial prejudices, a superficial education, given by civilized corruption rather than civilization; romantic legends, by way of historical instruction; fashions rather than customs; vanity rather than pride; a proverbial nonsense, which already served, nineteen centuries ago, Caesar's fortune as much as the courage of his legions; a lightness that betrays childishness; the taste for parades and the spirit of demonstrations taking the place of public spirit; the admiration for force and the cult of audacity replacing respect for justice: such is, in short, the portrait of the French people. Of all the civilized nations, it is still the youngest: what will this child do when it becomes a man!... We have always followed our masters, and our schoolboy quarrels dividing us into a multitude of bands, we have always succumbed in our protests against authority, when we have not had as an auxiliary a fraction of authority itself.

On December 2, after a 30-month campaign by the Legislative Assembly against the institutions it was charged with defending, the executive power, master of the army, supported by the clergy, the bourgeoisie, a considerable part of the middle class, frightened by the eventualities of 52, attempted a *coup d'état*. Like Charles X on July 25, 1830, the government divides national representation and the upper classes: the people remain. But while Charles X, by violating the

Charter, attacked the Revolution; Bonaparte claims to be of the Revolution, and tears the pact, he says so at least, only to arrive at the royalist party: from this moment the multitude, if it is not for him entirely, becomes neutral. The smocks of Saint-Antoine flatly refused to march: the Mountain found them playing billiards, and could not even obtain an asylum for deliberation. On the boulevard, near the town hall of the 5th arrondissement, a post having been taken by insurgents, they were attacked by a band of workers, and forced to use their weapons against these strange allies of power. In the Saint-Marceau district and the rue Mouffetard, we would have drawn a bad party, by tearing up only one paving stone. Elsewhere, the people fraternized with the troops against the riot and provided them with food: they looked like accomplices of the *coup d'état*. Bourgeois, upstart ragpickers, shot by drunken soldiers even in their homes, nonetheless applauded the repression of the *brigands*, about whom the *Constitutionnel* and the *Patrie* told them of sinister exploits. In some departments, if official reports are to be believed, the movement was more serious: this was due to the regimentation formed over a long period of time by the secret societies. The peasants, in a few places, had descended on the town, with their wives and sacks: wouldn't one say the men of Brennus? But hardly had the news spread that in Paris the *Reds* had the the worst of things, the peasants withdrew and came out in favor of Bonaparte. *The real Amphitryon is the Amphitryon who feeds us!* There are no people more at ease, in critical moments, than our Gallic lookalikes.

Be surprised, after that, at the 7,600,000 votes given on December 20 to Louis-Napoleon. Oh! Louis-Napoleon is really the chosen one of the people. The people, you say, were not free! The people have been deceived! The people were afraid! Vain excuses. Do men have fear? Are they wrong in such a case? Do they lack liberty? It is we, republicans, who have repeated it on the strength of our most suspect traditions: *The voice of the people is the voice of God*. Well! The voice of God named Louis-Napoleon. As an expression of the popular will, he is the most legitimate of sovereigns. And for whom did you want the people to vote? We have maintained it, this people, from 89, from 92, from 93: it still only knows the imperial legend. The empire has erased the republic from its memory. Do they remember the Comte de Mirabeau, M. de Robespierre, his friend Marat, the *Père Duchesne*? The people know only two things, the Good God and the Emperor, as they once knew the Good God and Charlemagne. If the mores of the people have incontestably softened since 89, their reason has remained at about the same level. In vain we have explained to this beardless monarch the *rights of man and of the citizen*; in vain we made him swear by this adage, *the Republic is above Universal Suffrage*. He always takes his shoes for his legs, and he thinks the best fighter is the one who is most right.

Will we understand, finally, that the republic cannot have the same principle as royalty, and that to take universal suffrage as the basis of public right is to implicitly affirm the perpetuity of monarchy? We are refuted by our own

principle; we have been defeated because, following Rousseau and the most detestable rhetoricians of '93, we did not want to recognize that the monarchy was the direct and almost infallible product of popular spontaneity; because, after having abolished the government *by the grace of God*, we claimed, with the aid of another fiction, to constitute the government *by the grace of the People*; because, instead of being the educators of the multitude, we have made ourselves its slaves. Like it, we still need visible manifestations, palpable symbols, mirlitons. The king dethroned, we put the plebs on the throne, without wanting to hear that they were the root from which sooner or later a royal stem would arise, the bulb from which the lily would spring. Barely delivered from an idol, we only aspire to make another. We resemble the soldiers of Titus, who, after the taking of the Temple, could not recover from their surprise, on finding in the sanctuary of the Jews neither statue, nor ox, nor donkey, nor phallus, nor courtesans. They did not conceive of this invisible Jehovah: this is how we do not conceive of Liberty without procurers!

Forgive these bitter reflections to a writer who so often played the role of Cassandra! I am not putting democracy on trial any more than I am invalidating the vote that renewed the mandate of Louis-Napoleon. But it is time for this school of false revolutionaries to disappear, who, speculating on agitation more than on intelligence, on surprises more than on ideas, believe themselves all the more vigorous and logical because they pride themselves on better representing the lower strata of the plebs. And do you believe that it is to please this barbarism, this misery, and not to fight and cure it, that we are republicans, socialists and democrats? Courtiers of the multitude, it is you who are the carriers of the revolution, secret agents of the monarchies that liberty sweeps away,

Who then appointed the Constituent Assembly, full of legitimists, dynastics, nobles, generals and prelates? — Universal suffrage.

Who made December 10, 1848? — Universal suffrage.

Who produced the Legislative? — Universal suffrage.

Who gave the blank check on December 20? — Universal suffrage.

Who chose the Legislative Body of 52? — Universal suffrage.

Can we not also say that it was universal suffrage that began the reaction on April 16; that slipped away behind Barbès' back on May 15; that remained deaf to the appeal of June 13; that watched the May 31 law pass; that crossed its arms on December 2?...

And I repeat it, when I thus accuse universal suffrage, I in no way intend to attack the established Constitution, and the principle of the present power. I myself have defended universal suffrage, as a constitutional right and law of the State; and since it exists, I am not asking that it be suppressed, but that it be clarified, that it be organized and that it live. But it must be allowed to the philosopher, the republican, to note, for the understanding of history and the experience of the future, that universal suffrage, among a people whose education has been as neglected as ours, with its materialistic and heliocentric form, far

from being the organ of progress, is the stumbling block of liberty.

Poor and inconsistent democrats! We have made philippics against tyrants; we have preached respect for nationalities, the free exercise of the sovereignty of peoples; we wanted to take up arms to support, against all odds, these beautiful, these incontestable doctrines. And by what right, if universal suffrage were our rule, did we suppose that the Russian nation was in the least embarrassed by the Tsar; that the Polish, Hungarian, Lombard, and Tuscan peasants sighed after their deliverance; that the lazzaroni were filled with hatred for King Bomba, and the transteverines with horror for Monsignor Antonelli; that the Spaniards and the Portuguese blush for their queens Dona Maria and Isabella, when our people, despite the call of their representatives, despite the duty written in the Constitution, despite the bloodshed and the pitiless proscription, out of fear, out of stupidity, by constraint or by love, I leave the choice to you, give 7,600,000 votes to the man whom the democratic party hated the most, whom it flattered itself with having used up, ruined, demolished, by three years of criticism, excitement, insults; when they make this man a dictator, an emperor?...

VI.

LOUIS-NAPOLEON.

I have nothing to do with the formation of the current power: I would like all its adversaries, royalists and democrats, to be able to say the same. I have never ceased to combat, in the republic and outside the republic, the various elements that were bound to bring it about; I can, like Pilate, wash my fingers of this spontaneous creation: God knows what I dared to smother its germ! There was no President of the Republic, when I already foresaw that the sovereignty of the people would be like the Jerusalem of Ezekiel, which swooned with love for the Assyrian and the Egyptian, and that I thundered against the madness of the modern Ooliba. As always, the prophet's voice was lost in the desert, and the fornication was accomplished. Since it is useless to speak either *against* or *for*, let it at least be allowed to me to reason on!... To the powerful the powerful truths. It is their right and it is our duty, provided that neither perfidy nor offense is mixed in with it, *Absque dolo et injuriâ!*

I want to tell Louis-Napoleon his fortune. I make only one reservation to my predictions; it is that he remains perfectly in control, at his own risk and peril, of making me lie, and of deceiving irrevocable destiny. The decree is inflexible: but man has the liberty to disobey, on the loss of his soul! For, said the law of the XII Tables, interpreter of eternal Providence, "Whoever breaks the law will be sacred," that is to say, in the ancient language, later imitated by the Church, devoted to the infernal gods, anathema. *Qui secus faxit, sacer esto!*

How many, for 60 years, have been so sacred, for their ignorance as well as for their rebellion! Louis XVI, *Sacer esto!* Napoleon, *Sacer esto!* Charles X, *Sacer esto!* Louis-Philippe, *Sacer esto!* And among the Republicans, the Gironde, Danton, Robespierre, Ledru-Rollin, Cavaignac, each with his own. Nothing could save them, neither their eloquence, nor their energy, nor their virtue. Whether they didn't want to, or whether they didn't understand, the decision was the same: *Sacri sunt!*

Louis-Napoleon also has his mandate, which is all the more imperative because he won it by force. Does he know it? In the opening speech of the Legislative Body, he implied that if the parties were not wise he could make himself emperor, otherwise he would be content with the title of President. Oh what! Prince, you're not sure what you represent, the Empire or the Republic! As soon as you enter the maze, you have lost your thread! How then do you hope to defeat the Minotaur? Take care that the blood of the martyrs of December 2 does not rise against you: *Sacer esto!*

It would be possible, and I must again warn him of this, that while following his star, Louis-Napoleon would succumb before having completed his work. It is

the ordinary destiny of initiators to seal their initiation with their blood. They too are expiatory victims: the vengeance of old interests and old ideas pursues them to death. The people they serve do not rise to save them: the more well-being they gain, the less gratitude they retain. In this tough job of the revolutionary apostolate, one has to work for *free*, often even giving his blood with his fortune. But which is better, for a head of state, to perish by the sword of Ravailac, or by that of Guillotin? To die the death of martyrs, or that of reactors? Sacred to glory or sacred to shame, Bonaparte, that's what I read in your star: *Sacer esto!*

To draw the horoscope of a man, two conditions are necessary: to know his historical and functional significance, to be sure of his inclinations. The destiny of this man will be the result of these two elements.

A man, in all the circumstances of his life, is never more than the expression of an idea. It is by it that he strengthens himself or loses himself, according as he procures its manifestation, or whether he walks in the opposite direction of its influence. The man in power above all, because of the general interests he represents, can have no will, no individuality, except his very idea. He ceases to belong to himself, he loses his free will, to become a serf of destiny. If he claimed, in personal views, to deviate from the line that his idea traces for him, or if by mistake he deviates from it, he would no longer be the man of power; he would be a usurper, a tyrant...

First of all, then, who is Louis-Napoleon, from the point of view of his historical significance? This is the first question we have to answer. I have already said it: Louis-Napoleon is, like his uncle, a revolutionary dictator, but with this difference, that the First Consul came to close the first phase of the revolution, while the President opens the second.

The historical series has already demonstrated this to us.

Do those who declaim against revolutionary ideas reflect that the role of the kings of France, during the third race, is revolution; that the Estates-General, under Saint Louis, Philippe le Bel, Charles V, Louis XI, Louis XII, Charles IX, Henri III, Henri IV, Louis XIII, is the revolution; that the wise Turgot, the philanthropist Necker, the virtuous Malesherbes, is revolution?

Let us pass over the estates-general of Louis XVI, by which, after a despotism of 175 years, the nation resumed, in order to reform and develop it, its traditional constitution; let us pass over the Constituent Assembly, the Legislative Assembly, the Convention, the Directory, which after all did nothing but renew this chain of the times, broken by the kings. But the Emperor, who recalled the nobles and the priests, and yet took care not to restore their property to them; who reopens the churches, by sanctioning the constitution of the clergy and the secularization of the worship, it is the revolution; but the Charter of 1814, which gave birth to those of 1830 and 1848, is the revolutionary pact.

And the one who, for the first time, by virtue of this pact, was elected

President of the Republic; who, availing himself of this same pact, although he tore up the last note, and arguing monarchical plots, has just had himself re-elected for ten years as head of this same Republic; that one, I say, denying his principle, his right, if I may say so, his own legitimacy, would be a man of counter-revolution! — I defy him to do it.

Now, not only does Louis-Napoleon bear within him, on his forehead and on his shoulder, the revolutionary stigma; he is the agent of a new period, he expresses a higher formula of the Revolution. For history does not stand still or repeat itself, any more than life in plants and movement in the Universe. What then is this formula whose turn seems to have come, and what does Louis-Napoleon represent, at the pain of non-sense?

Is it this Republic, honest and moderate, wisely progressive, reasonably democratic, which prevailed after February 24? — But Louis-Napoleon overthrew the monument; he pursues its defenders everywhere. If he only wanted this Republic, why did he need to have General Cavaignac arrested at his home on December 2? He was to say to him: General, you handed over to me, three years ago, the helm of the Republic. I place it in my turn in your civic hands, after having chased away the royalists. Summon the High Court, I will render an account of my conduct before it.

The constitutional and bourgeois monarchy? — Retire, in that case, I would say to Louis-Napoleon. It is not up to you to dispense this civil list, it is to the Count of Paris. Since you only breached the contract to put things back to the *status quo*, walk away. The bourgeoisie intends to manage its affairs; it wants the power for itself; it only recognizes the authority of the head of state as that which it has itself measured for him. Its maxim is known: *The King reigns and does not govern*. Certainly, you will not lack recruits like the honorable M. Devinck, monarchical opposition candidate before December 2, today a member of the Elysée, who will find that all is well in your system. These people, by swearing for you, misunderstand the spirit of their caste. The bourgeoisie shuns you; it separates itself more and more from you: it would be absurd for you to be its representative.

The so-called legitimate monarchy? — Then make way for the Comte de Chambord! You are not the King; you are the *usurper*. Henry V makes you understand this well enough when he engages his faithful servants and subjects to lend you their assistance in all that you do against the revolution, and at the same time he recommends them to refuse you the oath.

The empire? We say it, the government seems to believe it. It might incline to that idea! — But, I repeat, take care. You confuse your domestic tradition with your political mandate, your baptismal record with your IDEA. A tradition, however popular it may be, when it relates only to the dynasty and does not blend in with the trends of an era, far from being a living force, is a danger. It can be used to escalate power: it is useless to exercise it. It is for this reason that in history tradition appears constantly vanquished: faith of our fathers, royalism of

our fathers, manners, customs, prejudices, virtues and vices of our fathers, you are finished forever! And you, sublime Emperor, also stay on your column: you would lose your height if you took it into your head to descend from it.

Caligula may well be the son of the great Germanicus and the virtuous Agrippina, but Chéréas stabs this empty tradition without respect. In vain Commodus recommends himself to the Antonins, Heliogabalus of Mammee and of Severus: these sons of families, who affirm of themselves only their heredity, arouse the impatient world. Talent and virtue, no less than debauchery and crime, are powerless to support an idea that has passed into the state of tradition. Julien, a sort of pagan Chateaubriand turned Caesar, who in the midst of the Christian revolution wrote of the genius of polytheism, a great man of war and a great statesman, a stoic soul; Julien undertakes to resuscitate the idolatrous tradition, the true imperial tradition. He is defeated by the Galilean! How did the Stuarts, legitimate kings of Scotland and England, die? From their fidelity to tradition. Why will Henri not return to France? He is and always wants to be only the monument of a tradition; it is because he has lost the thread of ideas, because he has no historical function, no mandate. This descendant of Hubert le Fort knows of his ancestors only the coat of arms: he does not know that they were the leaders of the Revolution for nine centuries; he does not know that his ancestor Hugues Capet, starting point of the National Constitution and the decadence of feudalism, was a truly legitimate king, whatever may have been said; while Louis XIV and Louis XV, by whom the constitutional movement was interrupted, and Charles X, who tried to oppose it, lost their legitimacy. Henry V! He is French royalty in its final impenitence.

And then, with what to make and support an empire? We say, with the army. Now, save for the respect due to the soldier, the modern mind rejects this influence. Napoleon, who was only emperor through the army, who maneuvered so many legions and with so much success, experienced it himself. *They want nothing more!* he said about the end of his career. It is because, in fact, with the best will in the world, we could do no more... Now the causes of the weakening of the warrior spirit, which in the most bellicose nation and in the most favorable circumstances got the better of the Emperor, redoubled their intensity; and without sharing the illusions of the Peace Congress, one can doubt that Napoleon himself, if he lived in our time, was anything other than a Lamoriciere or a Changarnier. France, as much and perhaps more than the rest of Europe, with its myriads of separate industries, its fragmented property, its needy population, living from day to day, seeking work, unable for a single moment, even for the defense of public liberties, to distract itself from its labors, France has become refractory to the profession of arms. The country counts what it costs it, and is only waiting for an opportunity to call these children back to their homes, armed for the defense of order and the maintenance of its dignity. Who would prove the uselessness of this soldierly protection would have defeated the empire, so little do the dispositions of the country leave a chance for this hypothesis of

government!

Empire, constitutional and legitimate monarchy, republic of moderation and virtue: none of this provides a reason for the existence of the government of December 2, explains the role of Louis-Napoleon. We must therefore conclude, as we have seen from the situation in France on February 24, the gaps left by the first revolution, the questions raised by socialism, the ousting of the democrats, the proclamation of the 2 December, from the adhesion of the people to the promises contained in this proclamation, that December 2 is the signal for a march forward in the revolutionary way, and that Louis-Napoleon is its general. Does he want it? Does he know? Can he bear this burden? This is what the sequel will teach us. As for the present, it is for us, I repeat, not a question of the subject's inclinations and capacity, but of its significance. Now, this significance of December 2, as history demonstrates, is the *Democratic and social revolution* ...

But, perhaps this demonstration, all of chronology, sins by the basis; perhaps a higher science, by revealing to us at the same time the principle of societies, the destiny of governments, the cause of revolutions, would make us perceive the vice of the historical datum, and prove that the aim of December 2, and the providential role of Louis-Napoleon, is, quite the opposite, to stop in a motionless sea the revolutionary torrent, itself escaping from a higher ocean through the cracks of disturbed ground.

Undoubtedly, we will be told, that all government rests on an idea of which it is the agent, and which at the same time constitutes its force. They are given one by the other; they produce each other: their action is reciprocal and their existence common. Thus the religious idea is both the principle and the product of an authority: it is this which made the power of the Numa, the Constantines, the Charlemagnes, the Caliphs and the Popes. Thus again political centralization, what has been mystically called *divine right*, because of its spontaneity, is product and principle of authority: it is it which determined the formation of the old monarchies, which in democratic Greece ensured the preponderance of the kings of Macedonia, which in France illustrated the third race of kings; which, after January 21, made use of the regicides themselves to recompose the monarchy.

But how do you know that the governmental or social idea, as you like, must be modified indefinitely, until it leaves humanity, raised to the highest degree of civilization, without political forms? How do you know that any power that replaces another is for that very reason a power of revolution, condemned to serve a new revolution, which would inevitably end in carrying it off? What tells you, finally, that a government cannot, from a higher view, shirk what you like to call its *historical reason*, and without tracing the course of centuries, to return to the source of all government, which is found at the bottom of all traditions, and which constitutes the general destiny?...

To this objection, the ultramontane doctrine was recognized. Basically, it is

the negation of progress, and the calumny of the human race. It is also the whole science of the Jesuits, sworn enemies of reason, falsifiers of history, promoters of bad morals, by principle of religion. According to them, there would be nothing legitimate in the annals of humanity except the period between the year 1073, date of the accession of Gregory VII, and the year 1309, date of the translation of the Holy See in Avignon. Still, this period, full of revolts, on the part of the princes and on the part of peoples, against the authority of the Popes, is far from being entirely irreproachable in the eyes of the Jesuits. With all the more reason all the rest, before and after, must be considered, according to the words of M. Donoso-Cortès, as reprobated. The Church, deprived until Charlemagne of temporal power, reprobated. The feudatory Church of the emperors, reprobated. The Church, separated from the state, reprobated, The Church, finally, employee of the state, threatened to lose again, with the property, the wages, reprobated, abomination of desolation. What the Jesuits want is the Church dominating the State, the Church ferulating kings and peoples, dispensing rights and duties, work and reward, pleasure and love. In this, according to them, truth, justice and peace consist for the nations. Only on this condition will society return to order, will enjoy an unalterable stability. And it is to achieve this goal that the Jesuits advise the kings of Europe, in particular Louis-Napoleon, to again place definitively, each in his states, the throne under the shelter of the altar, and to lie down with their armies throughout history, in which, they say, and not without reason, there is salvation only for revolutionaries.

So that, according to the Jesuits, it would be necessary to reject as apocryphal, and being able to induce only to an illegitimate science, the ninety-nine hundredths of history; to take ecclesiastical government, as it manifested itself from Gregory VII to Boniface VIII, as the sole formula of order in humanity. And as true authority is found where the true formula is, the Pope would again become, as in the Middle Ages, the supreme head of the princes, the spiritual and temporal arbiter of all governments. The restoration of the Church then, here, here, they say, is the true revolution; theocracy, that is true socialism. Like that preacher in the open air, who saw himself abandoned by his audience for an open show, seated in front of his pulpit, they shout to us, waving their bronze crucifixes: *Ecco, ecco il vero pulcinello!*

So much has been done for the clergy, for all the clergy for four years, that each of the cults that the state subsidizes has been able to conceive the hope of a resurrection. The very weakening of morals that history signals in epochs of transition, and the confusion of ideas, come to the aid of theocratic utopia. In the indecision of beliefs, everyone asks the Church again for a remedy for corruption, for a preservative against social revolution. The bourgeoisie, — what a happy symptom! — after a century of indifference, suddenly takes on religious fervor. It is advised that religion can be useful to its interests: it immediately asks for religion, a lot of religion. A sponsorship was organized within it, for the

restoration of religious ideas. Christ was called to the help of the bourgeois gods, Mammon, Plutus, Porus and Foenus. Christ did not answer, but the Church, Orthodox and Reformed, hastened to come. After the famous little books of the rue de Poitiers, we had the councils of Paris, Lyons, Bordeaux, the letters of bishops, the sermons of priests, the sermons of ministers. One day they sang for the Republic; fortune turning, they came down, in perfect security of conscience, against the revolution.

So the old society is based on theocracy. The fatal dilemma always comes up, *Catholicity* or *Liberty*. The Jesuits know this, and this is what makes them alone strong in the Church, as the Socialists alone are strong in the Revolution. In vain the Jesuits are repudiated by the bishops: do not rely on these Gallicans, doctrinaires of the ecclesiastical state, more Jesuit in this than the Jesuits. The papal theocracy, I tell you, is the last resource of the counter-revolution.

Could the Church, called by the state, therefore provide it with the mother idea, irreformable, the *aliquid inconcussum* that all powers pursue, and whose moving image, similar to those nocturnal fires which lead the traveler astray, draws them one after another to the bottom of the abyss?

I deny it. I maintain, on the contrary, that the principle of all government is identical and adequate to its historical element, and my reason is peremptory: it is that, outside the very law of movement, everything is mobile in nature and in humanity, religion, consequently the Church, like everything else. What is called rest, station, immobility, is a purely relative state: in reality, everything weighs, everything moves, everything is in perpetual change.

In order to remain on my subject, and to edify my readers on this fundamental question of the mutability of religious ideas, I will record here the words of an old priest, as learned as he is Orthodox, to whom I asked his opinion on the movement of society and the alleged immobility of the Church. If, I pointed out to him, civilization, like all organisms, experiences an incessant metamorphosis, how can the immobility of faith be reconciled with it? And if faith is carried along in the same movement, how can we believe in its celestial origin? where is its truth, its authenticity, its certainty? Changing beings, what have we to do with a supposedly immutable institution? Servants of a law that is transitory like us, on the contrary, what authority do we need to follow it? My transition is my revelation; and all that I affirm, within the circle of this movement, is sufficiently juridical and divine. There is a contradiction between the destiny of man and what you claim to be his rule; in two words, between the revolution and religion. From which I conclude that humanity can only subsist in perpetual motion, and religion, supposedly eternal and immutable, is not made for it: if this religion is true, humanity does not exist; and, reciprocally, if humanity is not a chimera, religion is impossible.

Such was my very immediate question, and here was the answer of my interlocutor. He did not, of course, admit, in his quality of priest, that Christian revelation was subject, like the thoughts of men, to the law of progress: for him

religion existed from all eternity, like God. But this faculty of evolution, which he rejected in Christianity, he admitted into society, and it was by the movement, very real, he admitted, of the latter that he accounted for the *apparent* movement of the former. Mankind was thus only passing through the revelation and immersing itself, by the way, in the blood of Jesus Christ. As for reconciling the perpetuity and unwavering nature of the Church with her transitory reign, he did so by means of the theory of grace applied to the plurality of worlds, understanding thus, of the entire Universe, what, in Scripture and the Fathers, seems said only of the earthly habitation, *πασῆς οἰκουμένης*.

“Christianity,” he said, “is eternal and immutable, like its author. But humanity is evolving and changing, like all living beings. This is why it was only able to receive Christian revelation at a comparatively advanced age; why it then expressed it little by little; that by struggling under this teaching, it seemed to produce it itself, and why today, by an incomprehensible decree of supernatural Providence, the sense of faith closing in in, like hearing in the old man, it seems on the eve of detaching from it. Christianity, after having ascended, like the sun, on the horizon of societies for a certain number of centuries, appeared to us for a moment at the zenith; then it entered its decadence, and humanity aging, becoming corrupted or always changing, I do not examine it, it began to die out under various horizons. At this hour, for the majority of France, it has ceased to exist. This revolution of society, under the light of Christianity, it is easy to demonstrate, the splendors of the Church at hand.

“Thus,” continued this priest, “with regard to the hierarchy, we know, by tradition and scripture, that the Church has passed through four different states: inorganic fraternity, or pure democracy; the government of priests or elders; the episcopal federation, and the papal monarchy. This is not all: the Church, after having established herself exclusively in the sphere of the spiritual, ended up encompassing the temporal: as much as the apostles forbade themselves from encroaching on the right of Caesar, so much the popes of the great time claimed to submit the peoples to their authority. Since the 13th century, a movement in the opposite direction has taken place. The temporal has become distracted from the spiritual; the state has split from the Church; the princes wanted to make themselves independent of the pontiffs, to hold their rights directly and solely from God. Around the same time, the councils placed themselves above the popes, and, in fact, the episcopal federation was again recognized. The bishops, appointed by the princes who had become the representatives of the peoples in their place, were now only approved by the pope. The primacy of the Holy See is therefore no longer, at this moment, as regards the hierarchy, anything but a symbol, and as regards faith, only a sort of ecclesiastical Court of Cassation. The movement did not stop there, and although it was constantly concealed, repressed and denied by the ecclesiastical power, its reality only comes out with more brilliance. The principle of free inquiry, recognized by the states as they left the bosom of the Church, impossible to deny in itself, has turned against the

Church; the faculty of examining has become the faculty of deciding, and this is what brings Christianity invincibly back to its point of departure, to democracy, to dissolution.

“Why this movement of ascent and decline, which according to your way of speaking, you attribute to Christianity, but which in reality belongs only to human nature? The Holy Scriptures give us the only reason for this that we can conceive: *Propter duritiam cordis eorum*; and again, *Non potestis portare*. Just as Jesus only gradually revealed to his disciples the depths of his doctrine, because of the infirmity of their souls; likewise, it is to a pathological state of our nature that we must attribute this weakening of faith, in which the philosophers believe they find the proof of the natural origin and the corruptibility of religion. A diminished capacity for the things of faith in the hearts of men is no more difficult to admit at the time in which we live than an increase in this capacity, from the time when Our Lord appeared to that when the Church manifested her power by the crusades. The divine concert, which Pythagoras already thought he heard, has not ceased; the eternal *Hosanna* has not weakened: it is we who, after having been cured of our deafness for a moment, lose our spiritual hearing. Everything therefore passes, in other words, humanity is constantly changing: God's order is immutable.

“On the side of doctrine, the same evolution of the human mind, and, for the destiny of religion, the same result.

“The Christian dogma, obscure, indecisive, even contradictory in the writings of the apostles, gradually emerges from the clouds piled up by the sects of the East and the converted philosophers. At Nicaea, it obtained its first constitution. For more than a thousand years still, it develops, it purifies itself, that is to say that the Christian Universe conceives it better and better in the fullness of its essence, through continual heresies, schisms, and Muhammad's anti-Christianity. The philosophy of Aristotle, so much in vogue in the Middle Ages, was one of the instruments used by Providence to produce in us this glorious intuition. Finally, at the Council of Trent, truth shone with all its rays: then, in spite of Luther's protest, we can say that faith, in respect to knowledge, was complete.

“Dating also from this memorable assembly, the attitude of the Church becomes completely negative. It had nothing more to give, in terms of dogma, to its children: after having taught them everything, it could only fight the eternal contradictor, the one who, according to the Bible, always says no, the Satan of incredulity. The word of God, entering the world by hearing, *fides ex auditu*, may well occur in parts: he implies that it is reformed, it is susceptible neither of increase nor of decrease. The character of the Church is therefore to keep the *status quo*. But the reason of man is indefatigable in its investigations; and the more its points of view multiply, the more it becomes uneasy, insubordinate, on the object of religion. Therein lies the scandalous stone of our faith. We would like to accommodate it to our philosophy, to enlighten it with our new lights,

whereas it can have nothing in common with them. *Quid mihi and tibi est, mulier?* says Christ to Mary, symbol of our humanity. So, it is with profound inconsistency that certain minds, more zealous than prudent, have tried to develop, as they say, the now completed monument of *Christian genius*. As if the Christian genius were anything other than the immutable idea of God! But the Church, with marvelous inspiration, did not follow them. Bossuet, Fénelon, disciples of Descartes, tried in vain to philosophize on faith: the example of Malebranche and the Jansenists soon demonstrated to them the impossibility of submitting matters of faith to the measures of reason. Just as, a century later, the clergy was seen to rebel against its so-called civil constitution, so the dogma it defends shows itself to rebel against philosophy. Could the tongue taste the flame, and the file bite the diamond?... Nowadays, some empiricists have wanted to give back to this dogma what they call its *vitality*; they have gone so far as to say that Christianity is the religion of progress. Such a proposition was the most absurd one can imagine in theology. The Church has given no approval to this school: the thought of M. de Maistre has decidedly prevailed. Let humanity turn, turn, carried away in its endless civilization! Christianity asserts itself as infinite, eternal, immutable, absolute; it can have no other reason than its absolutism, no other life than its eternity. What Christianity demands, if it is permitted to suppose that man withdrawing from God seeks him, is that the ecclesiastical hierarchy be re-established, spiritually and temporally, on the plan of Gregory VII; what it demands is that all philosophy, on pain of anathema, be confined within the limits of the Tridentine prescriptions; what it proposes is not to follow humanity in its joyful adventures, but to fix it, in ashes and hair shirt, at the foot of its monument.

“That humanity, a lost comet, should one day return to its sun, and fix itself on it in a regular orbit, is what we must all desire, but what nothing guarantees us the certainty of. Quite the contrary, humanity seems, by virtue of its own nature, to move away more and more, and Christianity to die progressively from its sight; and while the priest, eyes opened by theology, contemplates it in its splendor and immensity, it from now on only appears to the vulgar, through the telescope of history, like an extinct star, without apparent diameter and without parallax...”

— What! I exclaimed almost terrified, you, priest of Christ, this is how you interpret the promises! Humanity would irretrievably lose its religion, and live separated from its God! You do not even admit the possibility of a conversion! But what do you think of this recrudescence of religious ideas, which has manifested itself so loudly since the installation of the Republic, of this violent reprobation that is breaking out all over Europe against atheists?

He answered me, with a feeling of deep faith mixed with irony:

“Christ said to us: *Do you think that when the Son of Man comes he will still find faith on earth?*... I believe that the Word illuminates in turn, in each sphere of the heavens, all humanity; I thus believe that religion, in the infinity of

worlds, never dies. It is there that we must seek the perpetuity and universality of the Church; as it possessed our earth, or possesses, in their time, all the globes of the heavens, in accordance with what is said of the eternity of the Word, and of its universal illumination. But I also believe that the capacity or faculty of receiving faith in any living soul is limited; that if grace is gratuitous, it nevertheless has its measure; and that in every sphere, as there is an hour for revelation, there is also one for apostasy and judgment...”

What shall I say to you now? What makes one believe in a reappearance of Christianity in souls and in the approaching triumph of the Church is the quivering of this religious faculty of which I am speaking to you; an entirely human faculty, which is not religion, which is the psychic condition of religion, as the eye is the physical condition, that is to say the organ of sight, as the nose is the organ of smell. This faculty, which the criticism of Voltaire had not entirely atrophied, which Rousseau and the romantics then irritated, made itself felt again in 1848, on the occasion of socialism, more or less as, under certain atmospheric influences, the mutilated individual feels a sensation at the extremity of the limb he has lost. A religious policy, which does not believe in itself, takes advantage of this hiccup of mysticism to evoke the ancient faith, and to make itself an auxiliary of the Church, when the Church has already fallen for our people under the horizon. Some priests, whom the abjection of the sanctuary humiliates, whom the humiliation of faith disconcerts, lend themselves to this sacrilegious policy, affect a high patronage over the state, interfere in the affairs of the communes, flatter themselves to resuscitate by education a Christianity that died a natural death. This macabre exhibition cannot deceive anyone, true Christians even less than the indifferent. The dignity of the Church, the honor and security of the priesthood, can only be compromised. Here, it is no longer a question of faith, it is only a question of psychology.

The propaganda of the encyclopedists had dried up the sources of faith. A revolution occurs, which strips the Church, for a long time feudatory of the state, of its properties, suppresses the convents, remakes the map of the episcopate. A part of the lower clergy, who believe themselves to have returned to the times of the primitive Church, and some prelates, adhere to this reform, imposed on the priesthood by philosophical hands. The fine minds of the time, the Christians *à la* Jean-Jacques, imagined that the priest, thus freed from worldly interests, removed from the temptations of luxury and avarice, would put himself in tune with the times, and walk with him. We can be religious and skeptical at the same time, dine with our priest and make fun of communion! What a time for a restoration, isn't it? And how faith, in harmony with reason, will bloom again under the sun of liberty!... As if it were not the height of impiety to restore the work of God! As if the priest could bend his character to these accommodations! No, the Church, as a Church, could not consent to its dispossession, any more than Boniface VIII could not obey the summons of Philippe le Bel; and if, later, in the concordat of 1801, Pius VII recognized the conquest of the Revolution, we

must see in this forced act a new elongation of Christianity. Let us weep over the schism which from 89 to 1801 devastated the Gallican Church: this schism was inevitable. The revolution could not abstain, no doubt; but neither could the Church yield: it was necessary, for the maintenance of canon right, that the sworn priests should be excommunicated by their refractory colleagues. From this moment the discord, kindled by us, runs through the cities and the countryside, separates the husband from the wife; the conscience of the people is disturbed, torn between heresy and counter-revolution. The dilemma is posed to liberty by the priest: Either respect for ecclesiastical property, or atheism. And liberty throws death at the priest, and becomes an atheist. What do you say of this first attempt at religious restoration?...

Finally the revolution is consummated. Triumphant by politics and by arms, it imposes itself on the Church as a last resort. The *fait accompli* covers the will of God. The nation and the priesthood forget their mutual insults: the priest is also a man! And peace, like misery, reconciles everything. Then, after the feasts of Reason, after the cult of the Supreme Being and the agapes of the theophilanthropists, the poorly antidoted religiosity of the masses turns back towards the old cult. Christianity appears in the more grandiose penumbra; people are passionate about its relics; one would swear an apparition of the old faith. Such is the attraction of the soul towards divine things; and then,

A single day does not make a Catholic mortal
An implacable atheist, an anarchic firebrand.

The First Consul satisfied this return to youth by signing the concordat. It was, in general opinion, a signal service rendered to the holy cause, and of quite a different import, considering the circumstances, than the reinstatement of Saint Genevieve in the Pantheon. But does God accept the services of men? Does he care about their politics and their apologies? *My name is on their lips; but their heart is far from me!* Neither the concordat nor the publications of MM. of Chateaubriand, of Bonald, of de Maistre, etc., could not restore to the Church an influence henceforth acquired by other ideas. The priesthood condemned to remain in its discipline and in its faith, its return seemed to the revolutionized generation only what it really was, an entirely human transaction, a matter of sacristy and reliquary. Piety weakens soon, and rapidly: fifteen, sixteen years had hardly passed since the reopening of the churches, when the Abbé de Lamennais uttered his famous cry of alarm, *Indifference!*

Indifference! this is where the country was at the return of the Bourbons. The Emperor had thought to re-establish worship; he had only replaced intolerance by indifference, enveloping Christianity and all religion in the same sentiment. This aptitude of the heart, the first gift of grace, which had brought about the conversion of the gentile and the barbarian; which had sighed for a moment in the deistic works of Rousseau and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre and had motivated the Concordat, now it was completely extinguished. There was no

longer any place in souls for faith, and while in 1993, under the Terror, the pages of *Indifference* might have frightened people, in 1820 they no longer seemed anything but ridiculous.

At this voice, however, which revealed the depth of unbelief, there was a thrill in the Church. An apostolic crusade was organized, under the auspices of the new power, against philosophy and revolution. The year 1825 was the great period of the missions, followed, in 1826, by the jubilee. Well! What produced this over-excitement of consciences! A few debauched, without ideas and without shame, a few decrepit Jacobins, for whom nothing had worked since Robespierre, bogged down by the words of our young missionaries: these were the dazzling conversions that enriched the splendors of the faith at that time. Moreover, the same phenomena that had broken out in 1801 among the bourgeoisie reappeared in 1825 among the people. It was the turn of the people to bid the religion of their fathers their last farewells. I witnessed, in my bigoted city, this fit of intermittent devotion, I was able to observe all the symptoms. I have seen men, women, young people, young girls, meet, confess, spread at the foot of the altars the superabundance of their tenderness. Because they were in love, they believed themselves faithful. But it was just a flash in the pan, serving as a warmer to sensuality, as appeared to the intrigues of pretty singers with worldly vicars. The missionaries, by a pious seduction, had had the idea of composing their hymns to the tunes of the Revolution. Strange way to make her forget! In 1829, the revolutionary spirit was blowing everywhere; *licentiousness* had regained its rights; the people and the middle class, shaken by the mission, had learned to know each other: this was seen in the elections of 1830, when the clergy exhausted their influence and which decided the catastrophe of July. With the throne, religion collapsed. The cross-bearers of the missionaries, having become national guards, began everywhere to destroy, to the song of the *Marseillaise*, the monument of their piety: trust now to the conversion of a revolutionary race!

What else? Progress is the belief of the century. Humanity is running at a frantic pace, and you want me to believe in the resurrection of Christianity!... Would Christ have two passions to endure for the salvation of men?...

Under Louis-Philippe, thanks to the protection of the Sicilian Marie-Amélie, who in the circle of her devout gossip believed to be doing as much good to religion as her *roué* husband did harm to public morals, the clergy worked silently to remake itself: it resumes its position, if not favor. Its faith has become more acrid: it is revenge it needs, and the more it mingles with the agitations of the century, the more it testifies that the century is winning over it. It knows what to expect from the movement of the *Idea*, and will not commit to it a second time. But, by what powerful works, by what strong studies, by what founding word, will it capture the attention of the multitude, redeem its past nullity, rejuvenate the faculty of believing, fight the madness of progress? What counterweight will it oppose to this fatal attraction, which snatches civilization

from the Church, humanity from its God? O adorable Providence! The priest seeks religion, he encounters superstition; he flees novelty, he gives into senility. Devotion to Saint Philomena and to the heart of Mary, the miraculous healings of M. de Hohenlohe, *God and the purest love*, books of piety in the fashionable style, passionate, voluptuous or nauseating: these are the creations of this Word, which formerly produced the Origenes, the Tertullians, the Augustines, the Hildebrands, the Bernards, the Thomases! The great work of the modern church is that of Abbé Desgenettes, parish priest of Notre-Dame des Victoires, founder of a society in honor of the Virgin, of whom he claims to have had a revelation while saying his mass. For a penny a week, each brother and sister participates in the votes of the society; and this penny, we are assured, produces millions for M. Desgenettes. Why don't we do it, Minister of Finance! Now, *ab uno disce omnes*. Measure, according to the exercises of M. Desgenettes, the power of inspiration of Christianity in our clergy. Calculate his influence on a century ten times more learned than that of Constantine, and ten times more proud of its science; and then count on the loftiness of doctrine, on the authority of the prophetic gift, to restore to the Church the government of modern societies. The priesthood is collapsing, I tell you, and soaring religion is returning to heaven whence it came.

A revolution breaks out: all the writers have announced it; the priest alone said nothing. A republic is proclaimed: before getting to know it, he offers it his prayers. Sectaries propose their theories: he does not know whether to applaud or condemn. There are socialist priests, there are anti-socialists. Finally, the bourgeois, the rich, those whom Brydayne called *the oppressors of suffering humanity*, reveal to it that socialism, which does not believe in Malthus, does not believe in the Church any more; and to save the church, the priesthood becomes Malthusian. It stigmatizes, as an atheist, socialism, on the denunciation of those misers who never knew God, and who take the shimmer of their crowns for the sun of religion!

No, there is no more priesthood, there is no more faith. Christianity only depends on that phosphorescent instinct, whose continuous extinction I have pointed out to you since Voltaire, which a sensualist literature maintains, under the pretext of art; whom your nymphomaniac Héloïses adore, and whom Robespierre, the man whose intelligence never conceived, whose heart never loved anything, defined as the *Supreme Being*.

Do you know anything more silly than this Supreme Being, who resembles a god as the *order* of your doctrinaires resembles a policy, as the *confidence* of speculators resembles an economy? Speak to me of Allah, of Jehovah, of Baal, of Brahma, of Pan, of Osiris, of Venus, of Thor, of Zeus, of this Spirit that in all theogonies fertilizes Virgins, and which the Greeks personified in Priapus; take, if you like, the animals and vegetables of the Egyptians: here are living and significant gods, more or less gross symbols, preparatory revelations of the Christian God. But the Supreme Being, *Bone Deus!* of what religion was he ever,

the Supreme Being?

Yet it is this phantom whose vogue, revived by the impure flame of politics and interests, preserves Christianity's last breath. Take away the Supreme Being, take away this dialectical absolute, *theomorphized* by the Jacobins, the romantics, and some communitarians; and the idea of God will have disappeared from society, there will be no more religion.

And you ask me if I believe in a second mission of the Christian Church? If I believe that this Church, thus restored, can furnish to the state, which denies it, a principle of duration and force? If it is to this mannequin, surrounded by Catholic banners, that new France will say, as the Roman bride said to the young Roman her fiancé, *Be my Caius, and I will be your Caia*; give me your hand, and I will give you my heart?...

Sons of crusaders, children of Loyola, posterity of that illustrious gentlemanship, whose orders, armed for the extermination of idolatry and heresy, laid down the law to princes and embraced the faithful world with their network; whoever you are, Christians of the last and most unfortunate of epochs, do not try to deceive the Revolution: that would be lying to the Holy Spirit. All flesh is revolted, and hates us. We are hated with an endemic, inveterate, constitutional hatred; with a hatred that is reasoned, and increases each day with the intelligence of its principle and our opposition. After the death of Cambyses, the Magi, successors of Zoroaster and representatives of the ancient Arian religion, hoping both to restore their worship in its purity and their own institute in its power, entered into the conspiracy of a certain Smerdis, who called himself the son or nephew of the great Cyrus, and in this capacity reigned for some time over the Persians. But soon the reaction of the Magi stirred against it the nobles and the people, Smerdis was dethroned; all the Magi, all, massacred; and a feast, the greatest feast of the Persians, instituted in perpetual rejoicing of this massacre, the *Magophonia*. All religion is founded by blood; all religion disappears in blood. Let us adore the designs of Providence, and may the events happen! Very poor would be our faith if we made it depend on the number of the elect; very weak our hope, if it needed temporal guarantees; How petty is our charity if it needs the approval of men to sustain it! Christ has come, Christ withdraws: may he be glorified forever by those who, not having seen him, have received his love, and who attest to his word!...

Let religion thus be distinguished from humanity, as this priest intended; let it be the latter which changes, while the former remains immutable; or else let, both confounding their existence, religion, like the state, being only one of the forms of society, the same movement involve them both; the result for us is absolutely the same. Louis-Napoleon cannot separate himself from the society of which he is the head: therefore Louis-Napoleon represents revolutionary impiety, an impiety which is not only that of an era, but which dates back six centuries. What is this impiety? Class leveling; the emancipation of the proletariat, free labor, free thought, free consciousness; in a word, the end of all authority. Louis-

Napoleon, leader of socialism, is the ANTICHRIST! ...

Now, in politics, as well as in economics, *we only live by what we are and what we create*: this aphorism is surer than all those of Machiavelli. Let Louis-Napoleon boldly assume his fatal title; let him wear, in place of the cross, the Masonic emblem, the level, the square and the plumb: it is the sign of the modern Constantine to whom victory is promised, *in hoc signo vinces!* Let December 2, coming out of the false position that party tactics have made it, produce, develop, organize, and without delay, this principle that must make it live, anti-Christianity, that is to say, anti-theocracy, anti-capitalism, anti-feudalism; let it tear away from the Church, from the inferior life, and let it create in men these proletarians, great army of universal suffrage, baptized children of God and of the Church, who lack at the same time science, labor and bread. Such is its mandate; such is its strength.

Make citizens with the serfs of the soil and the machine; change bewildered believers into wise men; to produce a whole people, with the finest of races; then, with this transformed generation, to revolutionize Europe and the world: either I myself am as alienated from civilization as the Christian god, or there is enough to satisfy the ambition of ten Bonapartes.

VII

SEVEN MONTHS OF GOVERNMENT.

I have said what December 2 was by the *necessity of things*: it remains to be seen what it claims to be by its *will*.

I call *will*, in a government, not the intention, which is understood exclusively by persons, and can always be presumed good; but the tendency, impersonal and collective, that its acts show. However despotic a government may appear, its acts are always determined by the opinions and interests that group around it, that hold it in their dependence much more than it holds in its own, and the opposition of which, if it tried to defy them, would infallibly bring about its downfall. Basically, the sovereignty of a single person does not exist anywhere.

But if the will, in power, is impersonal, it nevertheless does not exist without motives; it rests on considerations, true or false, which, adopted by the government, and introduced in history, become there in their turn, by the entailment of consequences, a second necessity. Whence it follows that for any government, in which the will is not identical and adequate to the *raison d'être*, there are two kinds of necessitating causes, one objective, which results from the historical datum; the others subjective, and which are based on the more or less interested considerations that govern it.

An impartial historian, freed from all party resentment, I have noted, to the advantage of December 2, the historical, objective, and fatal reason for its existence. I am going in the same way, without malignity or indiscretion, always keeping myself in pure philosophy, to descend into the soul of this power, to seek the secret of its decisions, a secret that it itself, I would almost dare to affirm, does not do not know. Polemics and satire are forbidden to me: I have no regrets about them. May my readers in turn confess that I have lost nothing!

What then is the tendency of the new power, since it is this alone, after the chain of events, that matters to history, and that matters in politics? What is the secret, spontaneous reason that, unwittingly perhaps, directs the Elysée? While its historical significance assigns it the goal of revolution, where is it pushed, by a common effort, by its attractions and its influences? Where, finally, is it going?

To THE EMPIRE! such is the uniform answer. And satisfied with a solution that touches only the surface of things, public opinion stands still, awaiting, with more concern than sympathy, this imperial manifestation.

The empire, there is no point in denying it, can be seen in the house style, in the style and etiquette of the Elysée. It appears in the restoration of emblems, the imitation of form, the commemoration of ideas, the imitation of means, the more or less disguised ambition of the title. But all of this points more to a memory

than a principle, a wish than a spontaneity. We seek, we are shown the symbol. The empire would be proclaimed tomorrow, and I would still ask how and by virtue of what the empire exists, especially since restoring a name is not remaking a thing. Let Louis-Napoleon be crowned on December 2, by the hands of the Pope, in the Church of Notre-Dame: he will no more be the emperor than Charlemagne, acclaimed in 800 by the Roman people, was Caesar. Between Emperor Napoleon, and Louis-Napoleon President of the Republic, too much has happened for the latter to become the pure and simple continuation of the former. Just as there was nothing in common between the first and the second Roman empires, there would also be nothing in common between the first and the second French empires, nothing, I say, if it is not perhaps despotism: now, it is precisely of this despotism that we would ask to see, in the conditions of the time, the origin, the reason.

The impulses that December 2 obeys, that constitute what I will call its own reason or will, as opposed to its historical reason, all have their starting point in the way in which it understands delegation.

For it, as for the vulgar masses, the chosen one of the people is not, like the Roman dictator, the organ of the necessity of the moment, enclosed in a circle of historical, economic, strategic conditions, etc., which traces his mandate to it. The elected representative of the people, in the mind of the Elysée, is freed from all circumstantial considerations; he acts in absolute independence of his inspirations. He does not receive the law of facts from without, he produces it from the depths of his prudence. Instead of seeking, as we have done, by an indefatigable analysis, the necessity of each day, in order to convert it into law, and to procure its execution; he creates for himself an ideal, which each of his acts has the object of realizing afterwards, and which he applies, by authority, to the nation. This is how the Catholic Church, by virtue of the mission that it attributes to itself from above, tends incessantly to bring society back to its type, without taking any account of the data of economics, philosophy and history. Such is humanity according to faith, it says; nothing below, nothing above. December 2 follows exactly the same line. It moves in a sphere of its own ideas; it governs according to a certain spontaneity of reason that makes it accept or reject the teaching of the facts, according as it judges them in conformity or contrary to its own design. December 2, in a word, behaves with the country as if the country had spoken this language to it: "I was not very satisfied with the system of the Restoration, with that of Louis-Philippe, and I took little advantage of that of the Republicans. I charge you now to apply yours. Command, I obey. My confidence is your right; my liberty will be in my submission."

This is what I call *subjectivism* in power, as opposed to the OBJECTIVE law revealed by the generation of facts and the necessity of things. Subjectivism is common to all parties, to democrats as well as to dynastics; its action is more intense in our country than among any other people. It is from it that this mania for strong governments comes to us, and these claims in favor of an authority

which, the more it seeks itself in such a way, succeeds the less in attaining itself.

The first fruit of subjective politics, in fact, is to arouse as much resistance as there are ideas and interests, consequently to isolate the power, to give it a constant need for restrictions, defenses, censorship, prohibitions; finally, to precipitate it, through discontents and hatreds, into the ways of despotism, which are good pleasure, violence and contradiction.

In this regard, I cannot prevent myself from making, between the subjectivity of December 2 and that of the Provisional Government, a rapprochement that already bears its lesson.

While the Provisional Government, out of democratic religion, abstained, endeavored to rally parties and interests, succeeded only in stirring them all up, and wore itself out in insignificance; we are going to see the Elysée, aspiring to dominate them, strike them one after the other, cut right and left with decrees, deploy an irritating energy, dare, but by daring, compromise by the personality, too apparent, of its policy. The Provisional Government, with its bulletins, had declared nullity; December 2, with its terror, makes the bascule. All things compensated, one hardly advances more than the other; the same difficulties, accompanied by the same oppositions, subsist. The Provisional Government, ignoring the revolution, let it down; December 2 wants to do its part, submits it to its views, and in fact evades it. The Provisional Government is gone; December 2 can only be sustained by force. But the force that only knows how to constrain instead of creating breeds hatred, and hatred is the saltpeter that destroys governments. May Louis-Napoleon not experience it, at his expense and to our cost!...

1. Opinion of December 2 on its own situation.

The proclamation of Louis Bonaparte referred, as we have seen, to the principles of 89. It accused the old parties, declared itself against royalty, demanded the improvements so promised, appealed, finally, to revolutionary sentiments.

Was this language supported? Yes and no, in turn, depending on whether the politics of the moment saw fit to advance or retreat.

First, the dissolution of an assembly that was three-quarters royalist, and the arrest of the principal leaders of the dynastic parties, seemed to bear witness to a perfect accord between the views of the Elysée and the revolutionary element. But eight days had not elapsed before the newspapers of the power, cooperators in the coup, spoke in another style. It was to save religion, to re-establish the principle of authority, to defend property and the family, that Louis Napoleon had put an end to a too tense situation; it was, finally, to muzzle the revolution. The *Univers religieux* dared to write, and was not contradicted, that these reminders of the revolution and the principles of 89 were *phrases of circumstance*, by which no one could be fooled; that in fact the *coup d'état* was directed against the principles, the spirit and the tendencies of the revolution. And the decrees

concerning the jury, the national guard, the suppression of the motto *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*, the substitution of the name of Louis-Napoleon for that of the republic in public prayers, came to support the insolent interpretation of the *Univers*.

The constitution of January 15 reproduced the thought of December 2. — “It recognizes,” says the first article, “confirms and guarantees the great principles proclaimed in 1789, which are the basis of French public right.” — How did it apply these principles? This is what we will examine below. But, two days after the promulgation, the *Univers*, returning to the charge, wrote again:

“We are not alarmed by the declaration made in honor of the principles of 89, although this formula by itself always has something disturbing; there are several principles of 89: those of the notebooks, of the king's declaration, those of the Constituent Assembly. What the notebooks wanted, what the king accepted, everyone wants it or accepts it: it was the foundation of the French monarchy. There is no theory, however firm, which does not bow down in this respect to accomplished facts. The 89 of the Constituent Assembly, *the true revolutionary 89*, is antipathetic to the national character. It is the dogma of philosophers, parliamentarians, levelers; it is the abuse of liberty. *Far from enshrining these so-called principles, the new constitution is their negation.*”

Is it *the Univers* that lied, or the constitution of January 15?

If we followed the acts of power step by step, they would answer us, questioned one after the other: It is the *Univers*; — It is the constitution; — It is *the Univers*; — It is the constitution; — It is the *Univers*..., without our being able to arrive at a positive answer. Where does this uncertainty come from? From a very simple fact, which partly restores to the constitution of January 15 its good faith, and takes away from the Jesuits of *the Univers* the honor of one more lie. It is that Louis-Napoleon, according to the manner in which he interprets the delegation made to him by the people, evidently accepts the revolution only under the benefit of the inventory, and in the measure of his own thoughts; it is that instead of subordinating himself to it, he tends, by an exaggerated opinion of its powers, to subordinate it to himself; it is finally that having against him all the parties, and being unable, not knowing how, or not daring to pronounce for any, nor to create a new one of his own, he finds himself in the necessity of dividing his opponents, and to maintain itself, to invoke in turn the revolution and the counter-revolution. This, in a certain world, will perhaps pass for prudence, skill; but it is what I call utopia, misunderstanding of the mandate, betrayal of fortune, infidelity to one's star. The head of state in place of reason of state, the man taking the place of the nature of things, there is no longer in the government either unity of views, or sincerity, or force. He thinks he is sure, and he gropes; he things he is intelligent, and he doesn't know what he's doing or where he's going. His name is Bonaparte or Napoleon, and he cannot say what his nature and his title are. Left to himself, he gets lost in the maze of his conceptions. Let him pursue this path, without glory and without issue, and I dare to predict to

Louis-Napoleon that he will not even reach the height of M. Guizot, the doctor of governmental subjectivity, the theorist of the *bascule*; of M. Guizot, who made corruption through *grand politics*, intrigue through naivety, violence through virtue; of M. Guizot, the last of the statesmen, if he was not the most *austere*...

2. Acts of December 2 relative to the clergy.

On December 7, while at some points in the departments the battle still lasted, a decree of the President of the Republic returned the Pantheon to the cult. It was natural... from the point of view of subjectivity!

Since 1848, the clergy, while following their own designs, had only rendered good offices to Louis-Napoleon, of whom they nevertheless repudiated the origin, tradition and reason. The election of December 10 had been for the clergy the occasion of a campaign against the infidels; the expedition to Rome, made for its benefit, had not found him it ardent; and in the *coup d'état* that crushed socialism it saw a manifestation of Providence. With this system of providential interpretation, the Church serves whoever it wills, as much as it suits it; it is never embarrassed in its panegyrics and anathemas. It sings for all the powers, depending on whether they contribute to its designs, swears by all the principles, today affirming the sovereignty of the people, *Vox Populi*, tomorrow divine right, *Vox Dei*. It alone has the privilege of taking an oath without engaging its conscience, like giving, to whomever she sees fit, *the good Lord without confession*. Its subjectivity elevates it above any law. The President of the Republic, whose faith no doubt does not exceed that of the coalman, did not look at the intention: he showed himself grateful. After the Pantheon, he handed over the colleges to the clergy, declared the cardinals members with full rights of the Senate, reinstated the chaplains in the regiments, abolished, to the satisfaction of the Jesuits, the chairs of philosophy, the normal school, nurseries of ideologues; assigned to the old vicars a retirement pension out of the property of Orleans, etc. Could he do less for his faithful allies?... Let us therefore be fair, and although philosophy is forbidden, let us consider things philosophically.

Certainly Louis-Napoleon, by giving the clergy such dazzling tokens of his gratitude, wanted nothing more than to preserve for himself, in the face of hostiles political parties, an auxiliary that penetrates and crosses them all. He flattered, moreover, the fervor so suddenly awakened after February. It is not who wants to be the inventor of a religion. — We need a religion for the people, proclaimed the reaction! — Louis-Napoleon finds Catholicism at his fingertips; he seizes Catholicism. If it is not of transcendent genius, it is at least of easy practice; and, for my part, I unreservedly praise Louis-Napoleon for not having dogmatized in matters of faith.

But, in committing himself with regard to the clergy, Louis-Napoleon made an act of purely individual policy, and however skillful this policy may be, it nevertheless compromises the true principle, which is revolution. The priestly

party, since Charles X, no longer existed. The decrees of the President have resuscitated it. Louis-Napoleon himself understood this; and as his intention is apparently not, by making the clergy an instrument of power, to grant them more than the Emperor had done, he imposed in advance a limit to the encroachments of the Church, in this regulation of studies that rids the teaching of the sciences of literary conditions, and reserves to the state, over the ecclesiastical schools, a right of high inspection. A portion to religion and a portion to science; a portion to faith and a portion to free thought; a portion to the Church and a portion to the State: since is the principle of equilibrium, glory of the ancient *doctrine*, which Louis-Napoleon followed, after having, half by gratitude, half by need, raised up the priestly party.

It is already a serious thing that in a republic the proprieties of the leader can thus be substituted for those of the nation. But, as the saying goes, one evil never comes alone, and here is what is much more worrying for us. With the Church, there is no balance: December 2 will be pushed further than it wanted. It is not in the character of the Church to allow limits to its apostolate; it accepts no sharing; it wants it all, ask the *Univers*. The right of inspection, among other things, hurts it deeply. By this right, in fact, it is constituted in dependence on the state; the divine authority, of which it avails itself, revelation, the scriptures, the councils, all that is denied. Hardly raised by the secular arm, the Church thus aspires to dominate it; the antagonism of the two powers, spiritual and temporal, begins again: we can foresee what will come of it.

Let us suppose for the current establishment a certain duration. One of two things must occur: either it will come closer to the democracy, and will join the revolutionary movement, the first act of which will be to erase Catholicism from the institutions of the country; or it will persist in its system of initiative, and in this case, having only the Church, with the army, to oppose to the hostile action of the parties, it will be led from concession to concession to sacrifice to its ally all that remains of the liberties maintained by the constitution.

Then will resound again against the Church the cry of Voltaire, *Crush the infamous!*... Then also the clergy will respond to free thinkers with reprisals of intolerance; the consideration, of simple convenience, that the law recommends in favor of worship, will change into an obligation of ostensible practice, and any profession of incredulity, manifest or tacit, will be prosecuted as an outrage to religion and a scandal for mores. It would be strange if the thoughtlessness of a Labarre were punished with torture, while there would only be rewards for the writings of a Dupuis and a Volney! The inquisition that already hovers, invisible, over the bookshop, will stop all philosophy in its flight. By virtue of the principle that the child belongs to the Church before being to the family, it will interfere in the household, will seat itself in the domestic hearth, will surprise the secret of the unbelieving father, whom it will then denounce, as a traitor to its God, to its country, to its children, and will deliver to the secular arm. These days of triumph for the Church are not so far away, perhaps. Doesn't it possess public

education, with which it proposes to remake the generation? Wasn't it a question of making Sunday sanctification obligatory? And who would assure me that in the immense raid that followed December 2, the crime of lack of devotion was not for many citizens the primary cause of transportation and banishment?...

Well! Let the power, let the Church receive here my profession of faith.

I hold to the *principles of 1789*, guaranteed by the constitution of January 15. I have broken, since the war in Rome, for myself and for my family, with the Church; and I loudly proclaim my free will. Let the priest lavish his services on these unfortunate beings, still neighbors of the brute, vicious by the excess of their animal nature, who in order to practice justice need an infernal sanction: I praise this charity, which no institution has yet been able to replace; and if, by assisting the weakness of my brothers, the priest respects my conscience, I thank him in the name of humanity. But I believe I have no need for these mystical formulas; I reject them as insulting my dignity and my mores. The day when I would be forced, by law, to recognize the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman religion, as the religion of the state; to appear at church and in the confessional, to send my children to baptism and to the holy table, that day would have sounded my last hour. Defenders of the family, I will show you what a family man is! I fear nothing for my person: neither prison nor the galleys would extort an act of latria from me. But I forbid the priest to touch my children; otherwise, I would kill the priest...

3. Acts of December 2 towards the Republicans.

I understand what is called, by an assimilation of the good pleasure of man to the law of things, the reason of state. I know that politics is no more charity than morality, and I admit that a party leader who undertakes to bring peace to his country and to reform its institutions by seizing power through a *coup de main* then ensures the inaction of his adversaries, by arresting their persons. *Who wants the end wants the means*: once outside of legality, this principle knows no more limits. And that is why I am opposed to dictatorship, and to any kind of *coup d'état*.

But, even when placing myself on this immoral ground of force, I still say that there are, for the dictator, considerations that regulate the exercise of his power and dominate his subjectivity. Arbitrariness, in a word, is not true, even in the service of arbitrariness: how could one make of it, for one day, a principle of government?

Louis-Napoleon had proposed to extinguish the parties: we have been able to judge what difference he made between them, and with what unequal measures he treated the dynastics and the republicans. Let us first establish the facts.

As early as 1848, Louis-Napoleon, through the support of the conservative parties and the opposition of republican shades, which brought against him to the presidency MM. Cavaignac, Ledru-Rollin, Raspail, found themselves in fact the

ally, the leader of the reaction. This position, obviously false, which, I admit for my part, gave hope to the Republicans until December 2, should not have lasted beyond the electoral period. Other councils directed the Elysée: as, as a pledge of good agreement, it had adopted the policy of the reactors, it asked them for its ministers. The day of June 13, the elections of March and April 1850, the law of May 31, etc., by tightening more each day the bonds which united the President to the counter-revolution, dug the abyss that separated him from the republic.

In 1851, began the split that was to free it from the majority and lead to the *coup d'état*. Louis-Napoleon thus returning to the truth of his role, one would logically expect that, while he was under attack from the majority, he would be supported by the Republican left. But the evolution that had just taken place in the Assembly was far from sweeping the country along. While majority and minority were becoming more and more hostile to Bonaparte, the conservative masses, as dissatisfied with the majority as the Republican party was with La Montagne, and especially terrified of 1852, continued to group themselves around the President. It was in these dispositions that the *coup d'état* found the country. On December 2, when the Republicans rose in defense of the constitution, the Conservatives rose against the Republicans. The *coup d'état* was thus diverted, like the election of 1848, to the benefit of those whom it threatened:

Since we were in a dictatorship, it was up to the dictator, while taking his security against men, to decide once and for all on things. What did he not say, now that nothing could embarrass him, and in such a way as to be heard: *I am the revolution, and democracy, and socialism!* How, barely escaped from the trap of the quaestors, did he let himself go a second time to the fatal drag of reaction? Of course, one cannot relate to Louis-Napoleon these funeral tables, laid out by the military commissions, and which survived the state of siege. Does he know one in a thousand of the proscribed individuals? Does he know the names of all these citizens, workers, laborers, winegrowers, industrialists, lawyers, scholars, proprietors, that the Decembrist terror struck? No. So he let it happen. Why? What does this contredanse signify in which the revolution is invoked as a principle and a means, and the revolutionary personnel proscribed; where the dynastic principle is denied, and the partisans of dynasties taken as advisers and auxiliaries?...

God forbid that I come to sow new seeds of hatred in my country. But how will we succeed in restoring harmony, without which there will never be freedom for us, if we don't learn to know the fatal mechanism that arms us against each other and pushes us to exterminate ourselves? It was the terrorized people of 52 who suddenly became, in 51, terrorists; it was Bourbon, it was Orleans, who, while Louis-Napoleon threw them into Paris through the windows, lent a hand in the departments to his soldiers. They are the men of the old monarchies, who already before December 10, 1848 filling the administrations, the courts, the staffs, owners, capitalists, great entrepreneurs,

frightened by the threats of a few madmen, trembling for their fortunes and for their lives, have directed the arrests, the searches, the executions, and decided, through the outburst of their selfishness, the victory of the *coup d'état* against their own leaders.

Now what is the situation?

Louis-Napoleon flatters himself with having destroyed the dynastic parties by taking their place and ruining their princes: these parties on their side consider it a success to have obtained from the Elysée, for a portion of the booty, the proscription of the Democrats. Who won, who lost, in this campaign of counter-revolution? it is easy to count them.

Now that the Republic seems crushed, that the population is purified, that the country is placed under such a strong power, that the old monarchies can already represent themselves, in perspective, with a veneer of liberalism (see the speeches of MM. de Kerdel and Montalembert in the Legislative Body), the partisans of the dynasties separated from Louis-Napoleon. Two acts were enough for them to bring about this movement, and put the Elysée back in a critical position: one is the letter from the Comte de Chambord, which forbids the royalists from taking the oath; the other, the opposition formed by the princes of Orleans to the decrees of January 22, 1852. *Liberty, Property*, such was the motto of the royalists, no longer against the democracy, but against Louis-Napoleon. As for the *coup d'état*, although they accept the fruits of it, they declare themselves innocent of it. They did not advise him, far from it: they fought him. Did not MM. Berryer, Vitet, Vatimesnil, etc. sign the declaration of forfeiture of Louis-Bonaparte and his outlawing? MM. Thiers, Duvergier de Haurane, Baze, Changarnier, were they not proscribed? Doubtless, they say, by crushing the democracy and socialism, Louis-Napoleon rendered society an immense service; but by usurping a power that was to be bestowed freely, by imposing on his own a constitution which has neither been discussed nor accepted, which is null and void, the application of which is a daily outrage to the liberties and traditions of the country, has not Louis Napoleon put himself outside the law? Are not Duvergier de Haurane, Baze, Changarnier proscribed? Doubtless, they say, by crushing democracy and socialism, Louis-Napoleon rendered society an immense service; but by usurping a power which was to be bestowed freely, by imposing on its own a constitution which has neither been discussed nor accepted, which is null and void, the application of which is a daily outrage to the liberties and traditions of the country, Louis Napoleon played with public faith, and declared himself an enemy of the French.

The Emperor, too, had had the weakness of these perfidious alliances. His domestic policy was only a series of concessions to emigrants and priests to patriots. When the royalists threw an infernal machine at him, he sent a hundred republicans to Madagascar. How, on the battlefields of Leipzig and Waterloo, betrayed by the Saxon army and by Bourmont, abandoned, like Roland at Roncevaux, by Grouchy, he must have regretted these 35,000 old soldiers of the

Republic, whom his mistrust sent to perish uselessly in Santo Domingo! Ah! cried the *brigands of the Loire*, back in their hearths, if he had not recalled the nobles! If he had not restored the priests! If he had not dismissed Josephine! (For the soldiers of the Empire, this Josephine was the goddess of the revolution.) If he had not married the Austrian! Ah! ah! oh!... *Sacer esto*.

4. Acts of December 2 concerning economy reform.

To resolve the bourgeoisie and the proletariat into the middle class; the class that lives on its income and the one that lives on its salary in the class that, strictly speaking, has neither income nor salary, but that invents, that undertakes, that promotes, that produces, that exchanges, that alone constitutes the economy of society and truly represents the country: such is, as we have said, the real question of February.

Here, as in several other circumstances, I like to recognize that December 2 did not fail by intention. It is even in the acts relating to the resolution of the classes that Louis-Napoleon best showed how much he understood his mandate. But here again purely subjective considerations diverted December 2 from the real goal, and neutralized his good will. Where the President of the Republic should have recruited thousands of adherents every day, his foundations went almost unnoticed by the middle class and the people, raising distrust and discontent on the part of the bourgeoisie. Others will praise this policy of so-called moderation and imperceptible progress, which alienates the influential classes and leaves the masses indifferent: I complain of it in the name of public safety and the revolution.

Nothing is easier, when one wants it, than to accomplish, without the slightest jolt, the social revolution, the expectation of which paralyzes France and Europe.

We understand first of all that for what concerns *the most numerous and poorest class*, the Revolution consisting in the guarantee of work, increase in well-being, development of knowledge and morality, no opposition to revolutionary measures can arise from that side. The proletariat, having everything to receive, will never stand in the way of a revolution that aims to give it everything.

As for the middle class, it must be considered both as an active part, a contributing party and stakeholder: in total, its account of revolution, if I dare say so, must swing in its favor by an increase in business, profits, power, popularity, security. It is the monitor of the people, in this mutual teaching of the revolution, and the linchpin of progress: it is only a question for the government of bringing it to heel, by giving it an example, and then letting it go. On this side there is still no resistance to be feared, no difficulty.

All the embarrassment comes from the bourgeoisie, whose existence it is a question of transforming, and which must be brought, by the conviction of the

necessity and the care for its interests, to voluntarily change the use of its capital, if it does not like better to run the risk of consuming it in unproductiveness, and consequently of quickly arriving at total ruin.

How has this conversion of the bourgeoisie, undoubtedly more difficult to operate than that of 5 percent, been attacked? All that was needed was justice: there was invective and softness.

Since, according to the newspapers of the Elysée, which have not yet finished exploiting this miserable theme, the *coup d'état* had been directed solely against the *reds*, the *socialists*, the *partitions*, the *brigands*, the *jacques*; that thus the beneficiaries of December 2 were the capitalists, rentiers, landlords, people with privileges, monopolists, co-curators, all that is bourgeois, finally, the consequence was, it seems, that they were left with the illusion of it for as long as possible. The policy, at least that of the court, prescribed to spare this resentful class, to make it more and more an accomplice of the government, to engage it, first by its vanities, its prejudices, its terrors, then by the authority of its first steps, in the new reforms.

The policy adopted was that of Louis XIV and Mazarin. We wanted to repress the new feudalism, but without destroying it, and only insofar as it could thwart the power: to serve the people, but without raising them above their condition... At least that is what results, for me, from the acts of December 2.

As the need for popularity made itself felt, all the more keenly as the bourgeoisie brought more zeal to the reaction, they lacked moderation, and the dismissal was outrageously signified to them. By reminding him of the service rendered by the coup d'état, he was almost reproached for having made it necessary by his governmental incapacity and his revolutionary spirit. *L'Univers*, *la Patrie*, *le Constitutionnel*, marching at the tail of the *Gazette*, told him harshly. The bourgeoisie, according to these sheets, was anarchy. It was the middle class, they said, who put Louis XVI to death, who sacrificed the Girondins, Danton, Robespierre, who conspired against the Directory. It was that class who, after the disasters of Moscow and Leipzig, dared to call the Emperor to account, and twice plunged him into the abyss. It was it who dethroned Charles X, abandoned Louis-Philippe, compromised General Cavaignac, for his competitor whom tomorrow it will betray. The bourgeoisie! It is Voltaire and Rousseau, Lafayette and Mirabeau! it's the liberalism of the 15 years, the opposition of the 18! And it would pretend to reign!...

Thus, to bourgeois subjectivity, December 2 opposed its own!... Opinion thus prepared, actions followed. In order not to expand too much, we will mention, with regard to the bourgeoisie, the decrees of January 22 concerning the Orleans family, the institution of land credit, the reduction of the discount rate, the conversion of rent, supplemented later by reduction of interest on treasury bills; — as regards the proletariat, a certain development given to works of public utility, notably in Paris, the creation of mutual aid funds, the circulars of the ministers of the interior and of the police in favor of the working classes, the

withdrawal of bills on dogs, horses, paper, etc.

Such is more or less the set of measures taken by December 2 with regard to the two extreme classes, and with a goal, shall I say, of revolutionary transformation? A bit, but mostly of general subordination.

What must be considered in the decrees of January 22 is, in my opinion, much less the dynasty, which is thereby diminished, than the principles on which these decrees are based, and which interest the Revolution to the highest degree.

If Louis-Napoleon had simply proposed to ruin a race of princes, to decapitate, by putting a dynasty to alms, the most redoubtable of the old parties, he had nothing to do with this apparatus of prosecutor on which he based on the recitals of his decrees, and which aroused almost general disapproval. It was enough for him, for example, to say that the d'Orleans were in permanent conspiracy against the republic; from these causes and under the right of self-defense, to declare them deprived of their properties. Were the police troubled to give the accusation a reality? Did they not work daily more surprising prodigies in relation to the republicans? Haven't the princes of Orleans, by their vows, by the memories they have left, by the intrigues of their partisans, been conspiring for four years? For 18 years did not Louis-Philippe, by the concert with the Holy Alliance, the *embastillement* of Paris, the laws of September, the constitutional corruption, etc., etc., etc., conspire?... To these summary reasons, no one would have objected. The princes would have protested their innocence: *Any bad case is deniable!* The public would have believed what they wanted; bourgeois egoism would have remained in its tranquillity; and the democracy, which had many other accounts to ask of the Orleans, could, without injuring its principles, have applauded the decree.

Who is the jurist who imagined, motivating the decrees of January 22 on a principle of feudal law that the revolution of 89 had abolished, that it was the duty of Louis-Napoleon, amending and correcting by virtue of his dictatorial authority the acts of previous governments, to strike out definitively? As M. Dupin had proven in the session of the Chamber of Deputies of January 7, 1832, the principle of devolution is a corollary of the feudal organization. The abrogated fief, the constituted property as established by the Code, the royalty assimilated by the establishment of the civil list to a public function, the return to the domain of the property of the prince who receives the crown can no more be claimed than that of the patrimonial properties of a prefect or a justice of the peace... It was also too naive to invoke, as a precedent, a law of 1815, rendered in favor of the *Jean-sans-Terre* of the Restoration. It is understandable that community must have had charms for the Bourbons, expatriates precisely for having rejected the division, and who, returning naked in 1814, had only one thought, that of restoring the entire nation to their property, according to the policy of Louis XIV and feudal law. But that in 1832 an inconsistent Opposition tried to revive this ancient law, and that twenty years later Louis-Napoleon in

turn invoked it: this is what must, to all those who follow the tradition of 89, appear illogical, above all counter-revolutionary.

Moreover, we must believe that Louis-Napoleon, in issuing the decrees of January 22, had no other view than to repair *the fraudulent subtraction committed on August 7, by Louis-Philippe, to the detriment of the state*, this act of high justice appearing to him in all respects preferable to the somewhat Machiavellian procedure that I indicated a moment ago. It is from this point of view that many Republicans have taken the matter, and have not hesitated to express their satisfaction. In my eyes, Louis-Napoleon, without thinking about it, criticized the principles of 89; and of all the acts emanating from his free will, there is none that contains, in its letter, more redoubtable consequences.

If it is admitted that the assets of the head of state, patrimonial as well as bestowed, possessed before his accession or subsequently acquired, are united by right to the domain of the crown, it will follow, in time;

That the law that orders the *reunion* of appanages presupposes by that very fact the faculty of *creating* them;

That consequently the head of state, administrator and usufructuary of the domains of the state, being able with the help of the budget, of his civil list, of his credit, of his high influence, by mutual agreement transactions, to increase, amplify, extend them, in a continuous progression, may also concede them in the form of appanages, fiefs, majorats, etc., under such conditions of return, royalty, obedience, homage, service, mortmain, etc., as it will suit him to fix;

That thus, by the extension of the principle and the acquisitions and incorporations of the prince, there will be reformed, from the domains of the state and those of individuals who, willingly or by force, with or without indemnity, will recognize the suzerainty thereof, a new feudal organization, of which the great officials will be the first and principal members:

That as a result, the mass of properties, drawn into the same movement, will be little by little, by virtue of free transactions or by way of assimilation, deemed to be dismembered from the public domain and granted by the state, in accordance with feudal law and to the definition of Robespierre;

That the same principle being applied to matters of commerce and industry, feudalism will become universal;

That the prince, by virtue of his suzerain authority, shall have the right to limit the possession of his vassals, to revoke it, to change the conditions of tenure, to declare the sufficiency of revenues;

That finally to each military, civil or ecclesiastical employment, could be attached, by way of salary, the enjoyment of some land or privilege: the prince declaring in addition the incompatibility of free property with the exercise of public functions, and ordering devolution accordingly.

In this manner the old regime would be rebuilt from top to bottom: the bourgeoisie would again become nobility, the middle class third estate, the proletarian serf of soil, coal, iron, cotton, etc.; all to the applause of the Church,

which would see itself returning to the golden days of its power, and of the ultra-communists, enemies of the family and of free labor, who would recognize in this retrograde march a progress towards their ideas.

Is the execution of this plan a chimera? Political centralization, which for sixty years has continued to worsen; the law of 1810, which organized, almost on the same principles, mineral ownership; abuse of the patents of invention and model factory deposits; the concessions made for six months to the clergy and the industrial companies; the way, easy and broad, in which labor contracts are issued; the creation of dignitaries with increased salaries; the civil list and the acquisitions of buildings of the President of the Republic; the communist and feudal tendencies of the multitude, so many other facts, which it would take too long to collect, opened the way. In ten years, it would be possible to carry this revolution so far, to make it so profound, to create so many and such powerful interests for it, that it could defy all democratic and bourgeois rages. The people are so poor at the moment, the middle class in such a precarious situation, the hierarchical prejudice so powerful, that this system, skillfully supported, could be considered, relatively, as a blessing. Would it be long lasting? The question is different. But were it to last even less than the Empire, the Restoration, or the July Monarchy, that would still be enough for the honor of the enterprise, always too much for that of the nation.

Certainly, in deducing these consequences from the decree of January 22, I am not slandering Louis-Napoleon. He surely neither intended nor anticipated them, and I am convinced that he would vigorously reject them. But man's life is fragile, while principles, once introduced into history by facts and logic, are inexorable. Such is the misfortune of personal government, that in following even its most virtuous inspirations, it hardly ever produces the good it seeks, and often does the evil it does not want...

Do financial decrees offer wiser provisions?

I would lie to my whole life, to my most intimate and dearly held convictions, if I blamed either the principle, or the aim, or the expediency of these decrees. I prefer to associate myself with them and claim my share of initiative, as much as is allowed to a citizen whose ideas, long controversial, end up obtaining, more or less, the sanction of the public and the government.

I will not disrupt things further on the quota of the reductions. — Why, one will ask, did you not immediately reduce the discount rate to 2 or 1 percent? Is not the cash of 600 million represented by such a sum of circulating notes national property? Does the nation need to pay, for its own funds, interest to the shareholders of the Bank?... And the conversion of the rent: why, instead of making it at 4 1/2, have we not done it at 4, or even at 3?...

These criticisms, however well-founded they may be, would be misplaced here. One can regret the moderation of the legislator, who did not respond to the impatience of the revolution, and incompletely serves the general interests. But he can answer that he prefers slow progress to radical measures, and the thing

thus reduced to a question of measurement, on which the government has the right to follow its opinion, there is nothing to reply.

What I hold against the decrees concerning the discount, the rent and the real estate credit, it is their incoherence, it is the lack of coordination that is felt there, and still betrays, in December 2, preoccupations that are all subjective.

Since the government had the intention, certainly a very laudable one, of reducing the discount, converting the rent and organizing the land credit, the first thing it had to do, before fixing the figure of the reductions, was to seek the ratio of the different values between them, in order to then operate in a manner to achieve a desired result. For example, did we want to make capital, which is flowing into the stock market, flow back towards commerce and industry? It was necessary to weigh more heavily on rent, so as to offer the capitalists the lure of a stronger income on sponsorship than on debt. The opposite happened. Do I have the right here to ask why?

The real estate credit companies have been authorized, the bases of their constitution established. But it is one thing to authorize credit, another thing to give it. The decree of February 28 opened the lock, no doubt, but the canal is dry. How has it not been seen that in order to bring capital to the mortgage credit companies, it was necessary to expel them from the stock exchange, better than that, to decree the reduction of interest on all mortgage debts, and at the same time to extend for 2 to 5 years all repayments?

It will perhaps be said that it was an attack on the faith of contracts and on property. We don't understand each other anymore. Was not Louis-Napoleon, after December 2, vested with the dictatorship, with all the legislative and executive authority, as M. Granier de Cassagnac has demonstrated? Being able to repeal or resurrect the law, could he not also make it? Did he not use this power to seize the property of Orleans, declare a state of siege, suspend individual liberty, reform the constitution, chain the press, etc., etc. ? If he could reduce the discount from 4 to 3, he could, he had to generalize the measure; for in legislation, as in logic, any idea that is not generalized is false, is unjust. He was to, following in the footsteps of the Emperor, declare that the interest on capital, usurious above 5 percent according to the law of 1807, would henceforth become above 4, 3, 2, 1, *ad libitum*, and this for all kinds of capital and without distinction of loans. He was therefore to confirm, in addition, the existing contracts, and order that all interest stipulated according to the old rules should be proportionally reduced according to the new law. In short, what should occupy the religion of the power was that the reduction, made general and affecting all kinds of values, could not be accused of inequality by anyone; and that even those who would have to suffer, as capitalists, from the reduction of their income, find, as consumers, a compensation for this deficit, in the reduction of their expenses.

The power in France will not do anything solid, the budget will not cover its deficits, Louis-Napoleon in particular will not triumph over the bourgeois opposition and will not bring the people real relief, the middle class any real

guarantee; the nation, finally, will succeed in overcoming competition from abroad and in reducing its tariffs, only when the power, by its laws on interest, will have compelled capital to demand from the general partnership the profits offered to it by the debt. public and the mortgage. Louis-Napoleon has the authority: let him use it by accepting in turn that of necessity; and he will have nothing to fear from the judgments of history, any more than from conspiracies. When the reason of state is no more than the reason of things, the state, whatever its constitution, is as sovereign as it is free, and the citizens are like it.

Were these principles, of real politics, completely ignored by the Elysée, ignored in a spirit of tyranny? No, out of a spirit of compagnonnage. At the same time that it reduced the rate of the discount, it extended the privilege of the Bank and allowed the obligation of the three signatures to subsist; at the same time that it reduced the rent, by a fraction that it would have been permissible to regard simply as a tax, it offered reimbursement, taking measures underhand so that the will to be reimbursed would not occur to anyone; at the same time that it organized the credit societies, it left them, by this same respect for the privilege, under conditions such that serious borrowers will have even less desire to seek funds there than lenders to bring their capital. Indeed, beyond an interest of 2 1/2 to 5 percent and a commission of 1/4, reimbursement by annuities is more expensive than interest at 5 with the possibility of being released at will: the institution is impracticable.

As a result, the financial reforms of December 2, conceived according to entirely personal considerations, corporate conveniences, arbitrary transactions, have not produced what was hoped for. The treasury earns 18 million on the rent, but that does not prevent the deficit forecast from January 1, 1853 from being 720 millions; — the merchants admitted to the Bank earn 1 percent on their discounts, but the portfolio becomes thinner day by day; for it is not enough to circulate, one must first produce, and credit, easy for discounting, is inaccessible to production; — the principle of annuity was laid down in contradiction to interest, but without the possibility of serious application. All this is good pleasure, more or less judicious, estimable: it is not legislation; it is not government.

I will only say a word about the considerable development given to public works. From the point of view of the circumstances, and as a satisfaction given to the workers, the works of the railways, of the embellishment of the capital, etc., cannot give rise to blame. Didn't the Provisional Government not act in the same way! Committing finances in such cases is not only good policy, it is necessity. However, I could not prevent myself from observing that state works, for the most part works of luxury and progress, and, what is less worthy, instruments of popularity, must come as a complement, never as an initiation to general labor. It is only a Mehemet Ali who can command his subjects to labor: in France, labor, like the assessment of the acts of the power, is free. So, in spite of the provocations of the Élysée, and thanks to the disjointedness of the decrees

of finance, the example of the government is poorly followed; while it throws itself into business, the producers, who see neither plan nor way out, work exclusively on orders, and the nation lives from day to day!...

5. Acts of December 2 concerning political institutions: Press, Oath.

The mandate of Louis-Napoleon has as its object to bring about revolution or counter-revolution: I do not believe that the alternative is disputed. In either case, his power, obtained and organized with a view to this mandate, is dictatorial: it is not the control, as such, of the council of state or of the legislative body, which could invalidate that second proposal.

I call dictatorship the power conferred by the people on a single man for the execution, not of the particular projects of this man, but of what necessity commands in the name of public safety. Thus dictatorial power, unlimited as to means, is essentially special as to its object: all that is outside of this object is thereby withdrawn from the authority of the dictator, whose powers cease as soon as he has fulfilled his assignment.

I have already said how repugnant dictatorship was to me, the dictatorship so familiar to the Romans, the abuse of which engendered, in the end, the Caesarean autocracy. I consider it a theocratic and barbaric institution, threatening, in any case, to liberty; with all the more reason I reject it, when the delegation that it presupposes is indefinite in its object and unlimited in its duration. Dictatorship then is for me no more than tyranny: I do not discuss it, I hate it, and if the opportunity presents itself, I assassinate it...

Louis-Napoleon, I agree, in assuming the dictatorship, did not want tyranny. He settled the conditions and set the limits of its power, by a constitution. As if he had said to the country: "France has a revolution to carry out, a revolution which, in the state of division of minds, cannot come out regularly from an assembly, and which requires, for a whole generation perhaps, the command of one. I assume the burden of this revolution, with the approval of the people, and here are what will be my attributions."

In fact and in law, the constitution of January 15 is nothing other than this pact.

So just as I understand the reason of state, which however I would like to keep muzzled, I also understand dictatorship, which I do not like, despite the examples provided by history. And since universal suffrage so wanted it in 1851, I have nothing to object to, basically, against the constitution of January 15: my observations are purely formal.

I ask myself why the constitution of January 15, having to organize a dictatorial power, essentially transitory, rules as if this power were final; why its object being exclusively revolutionary, it affects a general understanding; why it defines nothing, either regarding the reforms to be carried out, or the institutions to be introduced, or the country's relations with foreign countries, its limits, its

colonies, its trade, or regarding all the means that the accomplishment of such a mandate demands? When Camille was invested with the dictatorship, it was to drive out the Gauls; when Fabius succeeded in his turn, it was to stop Hannibal; when Caesar himself was appointed dictator for life, the motive, at least the apparent motive, was known; it was the end of the civil wars, the triumph of the plebs over the patriciate, the restoration under another form of the ancient authority of kings. The constitution of January 15, except for a few restrictions of little importance, organizes a quasi-hereditary dictatorship, since the President of the Republic has the right to appoint his successor by secret act. For what purpose is this dictatorship? We do not know. I claim, with history, that it is for the revolution; the *Univers*, proscription tables in hand, maintains that it is for the counter-revolution. How many years, centuries, will this dictatorship last? The constitution of January 15 does not explain further.

I have given too many proofs of my constitutional indifferentism for me to attribute to the act of January 15 more importance than it deserves, and to make of it a text of attacks against the government of December 2. I know, as well as anyone else, that a government does not live by the constitution that defines it any more than a manufacturer subsists by his license: a government lives by its actions, as a manufacturer lives by his products. The value of the acts makes the value of government. However, I have the right to seek whether or not there is agreement between the established power and the idea it serves, since it is this agreement, more or less observed, that testifies to the intelligence that the power has of its reason. I am told that the constitution of January 15 is modeled on that of year VIII! But, with the permission of the author, I answer that the year VIII has nothing to do with it, any more than the year 40: it is a question of the social revolution or the counter-revolution.

At this time when passions are silent, when society is suspended, we must do justice to the thinkers who since 89 have laid the foundations for all our political constitutions. They had a deep feeling for this law of agreement between the power and its idea, when they said that an act of government is not good because it is useful, but because it is in proportion; that in politics, what constitutes legitimacy is not profit, but competence; consequently what must be considered above all in the acts of the power is less the substance than the form; that outside of that, the republic is delivered up to arbitrariness, and liberty lost.

It was according to these principles that they had conceived the theory of representative government.

Being admitted for a society the necessity of a governmental centralization, the law of this centralization is that the power there is divided and balanced in all its parts. Thus the Church will be separated from the state, consequently the ecclesiastical functionaries cannot form part either of the assemblies or of the ministry; — the executive will be distinct from the legislative, consequently the king will not have a *veto*; — if the nation is naturally divided into two classes, as in England, it will be well for each to be represented: hence the theory of the two

chambers. — All the agents of the executive power will be responsible, except the chief, because the latter's responsibility, submitting him to the other power, would bring back indivision. — Progress being the law of all society, and the security of the people prohibiting adventures in power, the ministers, representatives of the conservative principle, will be taken from the majority; progress will be represented by the opposition, which, growing every day, will become, at the appropriate moment, a majority in its turn and a ministry.

Such was the system inaugurated in 1830, and which, by the bad faith of the prince and the scandal of the intriguers who had its direction, ended, long before the time when it was naturally to end, in the catastrophe of February. According to the law that formed its basis, this regime of progressive liberty tended, through the democracy, to the continual reduction of the political organism, and to its absorption into the economic organism. This tendency, inherent, as much as the separation of powers, in any free government, was lost sight of amidst the quarrels of party, the derisions of the tribune, the invasions of the central authority, the shames of the reign. From disgust the spirits turned to utopia, and the novelists helping, they became from that caught up in the passion, some for the feudalism or the universal and direct suffrage, some for the committee of public safety or for the empire, some for Plato, some for Panurge. It was in this state of opinion that the republic appeared, and that in less than four years France was able to enjoy two constitutions.

Now what did December 2 want? To serve the revolution, and to this end organize, under popular control, a dictatorial power? The constitution of January 15 does not say a word about it: it only reveals, under appearances borrowed from representative theory, the exorbitance of the presidential prerogative, without giving the slightest reason for this exorbitance. To establish a regular state, expression of the middle class, having for its object the development of all the faculties of the country, and the peaceful education of the people? In this case, a reform of the constitution of January 15 is essential. To live its normal life, cultivate its soil, exploit its mines, exchange its products, France does not need to be kept on a war footing, led drum beating, in the silence of the tribune and the press, as if it were a departure for Madrid, Wagram or Moscow. The powers of the president are out of proportion to his duties: it is no longer the idea that reigns; it is the man. Why this *senate* beside this *legislative body*, if the government of December 2 expresses the resolution of the parties, the fusion of the classes? Why, contrary to the principles of 89, and by a completely feudal reversal of ideas, does the head of state arrogate to himself the initiative of the law, while the representatives have only the *veto*? How, in Napoleonic democracy, did control, once a guarantee of order, become a danger? How can representatives of the people not question the government, ask it what it has done with its treasures and its children? How can these representatives, deliberating without publicity, although not without witnesses, not render an account to the people of the way in which they fulfilled their mandate?... Everything seems to

be against the grain, for lack of sufficient explanation, in the constitution of January 15. And since public reason is only based on what is expressed, not on what is implied, sooner or later this machine, badly built for the office it must fulfill, will betray the mechanic: he will be balanced, like that king of Babylon who, clothed in all Oriental despotism and not responding by his actions to the greatness of his power, was found too frivolous, *Et inventus est minus habens!* ...

What shall I say of the oath? One more inconsistency.

The partisans of legitimacy, on the advice of the Count of Chambord, refuse to take it: they are right, and in this show proof of loyalty. In royalist ideas, the oath is an act of vassalage, which binds, with a unilateral and personal bond, the one who takes the oath to the one who receives it. But I confess that I cannot admit this delicacy in a republican, and the reasons of MM. Cavaignac and Carnot did not convince me. The oath, for a republican, is only a simple recognition of the sovereignty of the people in the person of the head of state, consequently a synallagmatic contract, which equally and reciprocally binds the parties. The royalist swears on the gospel, the republican on the revolution: which is very different. This is how Louis-Philippe Garnier-Pagès, Lamartine, Ledru-Rollin took the oath. Would Louis-Napoleon understand it otherwise? What is certain is that he would not dare to say so. I therefore consider that the republican representatives, after having, under the regime of December 2, participated in the elections, should also participate in the labors of the legislative body, and condition their oath by their opposition. There was neither perjury nor mental restriction there: it was to agree with oneself, and to affirm the republic. But subjectivity blinds us all: in our opinions, we only see no mental restriction: it was to agree with oneself, and to affirm the republic. But subjectivity blinds us all: in our opinions, we only see men; in our opponents, only men; in the events that urge us, only men, and always men. Louis-Napoleon, Henri V, and the Count of Paris are not the only ones who reign over France: as to the republic, the fatherland, the country, honest terms, under which each party leader disguises his autocracy, each partisan his servility..

It would be tedious to prolong this analysis: the reader can recall, in its details, the policy of December 2, and generalize.

What one cannot refuse to Louis-Napoleon is the merit, decisive at the time of revolutions, of having dared; it is to have in a few weeks touched everything, shaken everything, put everything in question, property, income, interest, security of tenure, office privileges, bourgeoisie, dynasty, constitutionalism, church, army, schools, administration, justice, etc What socialism had attacked only in public opinion, December 2 has proven, by its acts, through the chaos of its ideas, the confusion of its personnel, the contradiction of its decrees, the projects launched, withdrawn, the denials, how fragile was the structure, how poor the principles and how superficial the stability. These old institutions, these sacred traditions, these so-called monuments of national genius, he made them dance like Chinese shadows; thanks to him it is no longer possible to believe in

the necessity, in the duration of any of the things that have been the subject of parliamentary discussion for thirty years, and the defense of which, ill understood, has cost so much blood and of tears to the Republic. Let the democracy, defeated in December, return when it wants: it will find the minds prepared, the road open, the plow in the furrow, the bell around the animal's neck; it could still add, as in 1848, to the merit of radicalism, that of moderation and generosity.

With all this, it is impossible to hide:

That in the acts of December 2 the reason of man, instead of hiding under the reason of things, is essentially distinguished from it, and sometimes obeys it, sometimes subordinates it to itself.

That this subjective tendency has its source in the way in which December 2, like the multitude it represents, legitimists who refuse the oath, and even a fraction of the Republicans, understands delegation;

That the goal to which this tendency leads, the meaning it gives itself, is none other, in the final analysis, than itself, authority for authority's sake, art for art's sake, the pleasure of commanding 36 million men, of making their ideas, their interests, their passions, excited in turn, serve fanciful views, much like those kings of Egypt, who consumed twenty years of reign, all the forces of the nation, to erect a tomb, and believed themselves immortal.

Thus December 2, born in history of the faults of men and the necessity of the times, after having tried some useful reforms, abandons itself, like its predecessors, to the arbitrariness of its conceptions, and falls back, without suspecting it perhaps, without knowing either how or why, from social reality into the individual void.

History demonstrates, however, that societies only work and governments only last so long as there is unity, a perfect harmony of interests and views, between the prince and the nation. Under the first Capetians, Louis le Gros, Philippe Auguste, Louis IX, Philippe le Bel, everyone wanted the commune, the separation of Church and State, the preponderance of the crown. The people and the king get along; the peasant and the bourgeois both shouted: *Down with the Dominican! Down with the Franciscan! Down with the Templar!...*

Under Charles V, Charles VI, Charles VII, there was only one thought, to drive out the English. What would have become of the Valois without the Maid, without this intimate union of the prince with the people?

Louis XIV wants to reign alone. Apart from the additions of Franche-Comté, Alsace and Flanders, ordered by a sound policy, his enterprises have no more reason than the good pleasure of man. He breaks, through the succession of Spain, the European balance; he withdraws the word given to the Protestants by his ancestor Henri IV; he exhausts France, oppresses reason and conscience, and finally arrives at the Treaty of Utrecht, more shameful, more fatal to France than those of 1815. The people, after his death, insult his corpse, and it is from him that dates the traditional hatred for the Bourbons, to which Louis XVI, Louis

XVII, Charles X and Henri V were devoted in turn.

But if there is an example that should strike the current power, it is that of Napoleon...

VIII

THE HOROSCOPE.

We are the day after 18 Brumaire.

We reflect on the causes that, from fall to fall, have brought about this deplorable solution, in which perish public liberties, respect for the nation and for the laws, and which delivers to a soldier a blank check for government. These causes, we have no difficulty in discovering them, first of all, in the political and intellectual habits of the masses, who, delivered from ecclesiastical and noble oppression, incapable moreover of understanding the constitutional theory and the conditions of liberty, were drawn invincibly towards the power of one alone; in the second place, in the series of events, which, after having carried to the highest degree the political concentration and the disrepute of the parliamentary leaders, rendered, at a time of continual wars, the despotism of a military man inevitable.

We then seek to pierce the veil that covers the future of this leader, whose destiny is henceforth inseparable from that of the fatherland. And such are our conjectures about this disturbing future.

“Bonaparte is voluntary, beyond all will. Impatient with the brake, he suffers no sharing of power, no challenge to authority. He revealed himself from his first campaign, by his resistance to the orders of the Directory; in the Egyptian campaign, undertaken under the sole guarantee of his name and his designs; and finally in the manner in which he left his army to come to Paris, a disobedient and fugitive general, to seize the government.

“All vice, said a philosopher, comes from stupidity: all despotism proceeds from weakness of mind. Bonaparte, willful and dominating, a stranger to great studies, had no political genius. Brought up at a military school, accustomed to life in the camps, incomparable in the command of armies, he believes that the people conduct themselves like the soldier. He is, by his ideas, incapable of presiding over the destinies of a state. His intelligence, marvelous for execution, needs an authority to direct him, and he rejects all advice, all authority is repugnant to him. Far from being ahead of his century, he hardly knows his time; he grasps neither its true spirit nor its secret tendencies. Jacobin with Robespierre, moderate under the Directory, he followed with the ardor of his character the ebb and flow of the revolution. Today First Consul, he takes his mandate, like the lowliest practitioners, for a substitution of his views, which are supposed to be immense, for the practical necessities of the situation and time. Because he has no ideas, he hates *ideologues*. Here he caresses the old regime, seeking analogies in the past that serve as his principle: when he thinks he is original, he is only an imitator. As he spoke the revolutionary language, he will

speak the monarchical language. His logic, narrow and stiff, posing to him the dilemma between pure democracy and despotism, he will see nothing outside, nothing above; he will be an autocrat by reason and in good faith! Always superior in execution, he will remain, in politics, mediocre and false, barely covering with the charlatanism of his victories and the swelling of his style, the misery of his conceptions. Like prince, like people. Under the influence of his government, literature and art seem asleep, philosophy collapsed. To the intellectual movement from outside, France, drunk on powder, asphyxiated under its laurels, will answer only with stillborn works. Moreover, he will not succeed, whatever successes he obtains, in any of the enterprises: his past answers here for his future. He is covered with an immortal glory in the Italian campaign, made in the service of the republic, under the inspiration of the fatherland and the revolution to be defended. He failed in the Egyptian campaign, proposed by him, granted at his request, and which could hardly have any other result than to maintain his renown with the vulgar, while waiting for him to seize power.

“Now he is the master, almost absolute master. His role, indicated by history, would be, after having avenged France and ended the revolution, to establish the constitutional order, the regular exercise of public liberties: he does not want it. What he wants is to reign alone, and in his own way. France is neither his counsel nor his authority: it serves him as an instrument. Now, as he can only have value, as a statesman, on the condition of making himself the minister of public destinies, and of acting under cover of the national will loyally represented, it is inevitable that he dooms himself and dooms us with him. His military talents, his powerful faculties, will serve him to prolong a useless struggle against necessity. But the more heroism he deploys in this struggle, the more gigantic his madness will be: so much so that finally, seeing him cornered into absurdity, one will wonder if the life of this man, devoid of conscience, is something other than the somnambulism of Alexander or Caesar. Thus we are left to the imagination of a soldier of fortune, invincible when he is the man of his country, insane when he listens only to his pride.”

And now, let us see the history.

First of all, Bonaparte felt perfectly how much, after his flight from the Egyptian army and his usurpation of power, he needed to be absolved. The aim of the expedition missed by the destruction of the fleet at Aboukir and the lifting of the siege of Jaffa, his duty was traced by his own words: it was to return, *great as the ancients!* By what right did he abandon his soldiers on a distant beach? By what right did his ambition, deceived in his calculations, and having nothing more to do in Egypt, come, solitary, to take charge of the destiny of the republic? If the Directory had done justice, Bonaparte would have been brought before a court martial and shot. The cowardice of the directors and the bewilderment of the nation hand over power to him: well and good. But popular absolution is not enough; there must be reparation, and whoever says reparation, in matters of

penance, says, in the absence of punishment, good works.

Bonaparte knows this better than anyone: this is why he begins by identifying himself with the republic, which he strives to uplift inside and out. Moreover, he is well aware that his services will count for him double, first to obtain amnesty, then to obtain the extension of his power. Nothing is so beautiful as this period of Bonaparte's life. For two years, supported by all the notabilities, military, administrative, financial, etc., who saw in him the man of the country, the government of the First Consul marked each of its days by a success. Let us take a look at this timeline.

CONSULAR EPHEMERIDES.

1800.

January 18. — Generals Brune and Hédouville have defeated the Chouans and pacified the Vendée.

February 11. — Constitution of the Bank of France.

March 8. — Formation of the army, called reserve army, of 60, 000 men.

March 14. — Election of Pius VII, Barnabé Chiaramonte. The heavens seem to applaud the republic governed by Bonaparte. Pius VII, being bishop of Imola, makes himself noticeable by his democratic sympathies: his advent was, for the era, what, 45 years later, was that of Pius IX, Jean Mastai.

March 20. — Victory of Heliopolis, won by Kléber, survival of the recapture of Cairo.

April 6-20. — Masséna, with Soult and Oudinot, supports the Austrian effort in a series of heroic battles and falls back on Genoa.

May 3-11. — Battles of Engen, Mæskirch and Bibérach, won by Moreau. Capture of Memmingen by Lecourbe.

May 46-20. — While Masséna occupied the Austrians, the first consul crossed the Saint-Bernard, renewing Hannibal's enterprise.

May 29. — Occupation of Augsburg by Lecourbe.

June 2. — Bonaparte in Milan: the occupation of this city compensates for the surrender of Genoa, carried out by Masséna after an immortal defense.

June 9. — Battle of Montebello, won by Bonaparte. Lannes has the biggest part in it.

June 14. — Victory of Marengo, won by the first consul. It is due to the arrival of Desaix, who found a glorious death there, and to the charge of young Kellerman.—The 5 percent, which was 41 fr. 30 c. the day before 18 Brumaire, is listed at 35 fr.

June 19. — Victory of Hochstedt, won by Moreau, followed by the occupation of Munich, by Decaen.

July 14. — Capture of Feldkirch, by Lecourbe and Molitor.

September 30. — France and the United States unite by a treaty of commerce and friendship.

October 18. — Departure of Admiral Baudin for a voyage of discovery. Everything goes hand in hand, sciences, arts, politics and war.

December 1. — Macdonald, general in chief of the army of the Graubünden, matching the audacity of the first consul, crossed the Tyrolean Alps, and put himself in communication with Brune, general of the army of Italy.

December 5. — Victory at Hohenlinden, won by Moreau. — Next, on the 9th, Passage de l'Inn; on the 15th, capture of Salzburg, by Lecourbe; 19-20, crossing of the Traun, occupation of Lintz.

December 25-27. — Battle of Pozzolo, won by Brune, and where Suchet, Davoust, Marmont stand out; passage of Mincio.

1801.

January 9. — Peace Treaty of Lunéville, between France and Austria. The coalition is broken, the revolution victorious, England reduced to its own weapons.

March 21. — Treaty between France and Spain.

March 28. — Treaty between France and Naples.

July 5. — Naval battle of Algeciras, fought by Admiral Linois. The advantage remains with the French fleet.

August 4-15. — Nelson attacks the flotilla assembled at Boulogne. He is rejected each time.

September 29. — Treaty between France and Portugal.

October 8. — Treaty with Russia, signed in Paris.

October 9. — Peace with the Ottoman Porte.

1802.

March 25. — Peace is signed at Amiens, between France and England. — The 5 percent is listed at 53 fr.

The Napoleonic legend has preserved from this brilliant period only the memories of Saint-Bernard and Marengo: everything else has remained more or less in the shadows, as if, in this concert of all patriotic forces, there was only one glory, one existence, that of Bonaparte. However, it follows from the facts, and from the conditions of this entire war, that the campaign opened in Italy has

as a necessary counterpart that in Germany; that June 14, when the glory of the first consul suffered an instant eclipse, is only the first half of the task accomplished at Hochstedt and Hohenlinden; that the passage of the Saint-Bernard is the correlative of that of the Tyrolean Alps, carried out in perhaps more difficult conditions; finally, that the treaties of Lunéville and Amiens are the product of a double effort, led, *ex aequo*, by the two most renowned warriors of the time, Moreau and Bonaparte. But such is the privilege of power, that any success obtained by the subordinate benefits exclusively the superior, or is considered as non-existent by legend. Bonaparte is the leader: that is enough. In the midst of a republic, unjust fame subordinates his companions to him, and the people, in their monarchical instinct, become complicit in this partiality, for which they will soon pay dearly.

After the Treaty of Amiens, the Bonaparte dictatorship was over. All he had to do was lay down the fasces after having inaugurated, on new bases, the constitutional regime. He understood it, certainly; also, his measures were taken long-term, and six weeks after the signing of the Treaty of Amiens, he was appointed consul, for ten years! A year later peace was broken with England, and Bonaparte's power no longer encountered any opponents or obstacles.

Let us recall, in a few dates, this much less noticed part of the consulate, when the hero, who undoubtedly had the weakness to believe himself necessary, reveals the work of his ambition and his bascule game.

1799.

November 11 (19 Brumaire). Deportation and internment of 62 republicans, opposed to the *coup d'état*.

December 24. — Proclamation of the constitution of the year VIII, entirely to the advantage of the first consul. — Cambacérès, regicide, second consul; Lebrun, former private secretary of Chancellor Maupeou, third consul: Bonaparte is like Christ between the two thieves!

1800.

January 5. — Deportation of 133 republicans.

January 17. — Law against the press, suppression of newspapers.

February 13. — Law in favor of the emigrants. They deport the patriots; they recall the nobles.

September 26. — Law in favor of the lottery: the passion for gambling maintained at the expense of public spirit.

December 24. — Explosion of the infernal machine. The police prove that the culprits are royalists: the first consul condemns 130 republicans to deportation.

February 7. — Creation of special criminal courts in the departments.

March 21. — By the Treaty of Madrid, Bonaparte, ex-Jacobin, consul of the French Republic, made Louis de Bourbon, ex-prince of Parma, king of Italy.

July 1. — The blacks of Saint-Domingue give themselves a constitution. Their leader, Toussaint Louverture, appointed governor for life, wrote to Bonaparte with this protocol: *The first of the blacks to the first of the whites.* The comparison hurts Bonaparte, and decides his policy towards the colony.

July 15. — Signing of the concordat. Bonaparte relieves the priestly party, which calls him *New David*, and returns to him in blessings what he receives from them in money and influence.

September 7. — Opening of the Swiss diet: the first consul of the French republic, natural protector of the independence of nations, intervenes in the affairs of another republic.

December 14. — Expedition of Santo Domingo. A crowd of former soldiers, especially officers, brought up in the school of the republic, and whose opinions caused umbrage, are removed.

January 26. — Bonaparte is named president of the Italian republic. Unjustifiable accumulation in a Republican head of state, both from the point of view of international right and that of French liberty. Bonaparte wanted a throne: in the absence of France, he took care of Italy.

April 26. — General amnesty in favor of emigrants. The Jacobins will remain in Madagascar.

May 8. — Bonaparte is appointed consul for ten years. "He would have wanted," he said, "*to end his political career in peace.* But the Senate judged that he still owed the people this sacrifice; he will conform to the will of the people!" — It is true that at the peace of Amiens the mission of first consul expired, and that environmental influences, combined with the ambition of the man, alone determined, in his favor, this new alienation of sovereignty.

May 18. — Levy of 120,000 men.—In 1800, when France had the entire coalition on its hands, the levy was only 60,000 men; today, in the midst of peace, recruitment has doubled. It is obvious that war is one of the conditions of the new government.

May 19. — Establishment of the Legion of Honor, strongly opposed by the tribunate. — "Virtue goes to republics; honor goes to monarchies," said Montesquieu.

May 20. — Despite promises made to the population to retain their political

rights, slavery was reestablished throughout the Antilles. The Negro reforms are abolished by the whites!

June 40. — Abduction of Toussaint Louverture, despite the capitulation: he is taken to Fort Joux.

August 2. — Bonaparte is appointed consul for life, by 3,568,885 *yes*, against 8,374 *no*. The spontaneity of the people is in unison with the first consul. He said: "Happy to have been called, by the order of Him from whom everything emanates, to restore order and equality on earth, I will hear the last hour ring without regret, as without concern about the opinion of future generations."

August 4 — Reform of the constitution of year VIII. — It was incompatible, in fact, with the consulate for life, by its forms, which were still too democratic, too liberal. From now on the reign of consular subjectivity is assured: *Whoever desires the end desires the means.*

August 10-September 11. — The island of Elba and Piedmont are united with the territory of the French republic. Infringement of the principle of nationalities, and of the principles of public right on the European equilibrium. Whoever would have said then that this joining was impossible would have attracted the contempt of the prince and the nation. Twelve years will not pass before this impossibility becomes an axiom.

October 9. — Occupation of the States of Parma, by order of the first consul. Bonaparte no longer disguises his plans to invade Italy.

1803.

February 19. — Act of mediation rendered by Bonaparte to put an end to disputes between the Swiss cantons. This act was supported by an army of 30,000 men, who, on the previous October 21, had begun to penetrate Switzerland, under the orders of General Ney.

February 26. — Bonaparte, it is said, secretly proposed to Louis XVIII to cede his rights to the French throne. "I am not confusing M. Bonaparte with those who preceded him," replied Louis XVIII. I estimate his value, his military talents; I am grateful to him for some administrative acts. But he is mistaken if he thinks he is urging me to renounce my rights; far from it, he would establish them himself, if they could be contentious, by the steps he is taking at the moment." Isn't this already Henry V, thanking Louis-Napoleon for what he did against the revolutionaries, and urging his followers to refuse the oath?

March 25. — Raising of 120,000 men, in anticipation of the break with England.

April 30. — Louisiana is sold to the United States for the sum of 81,300,000 francs: anticipated consequence of the cessation of peace.

May 15. — The English ambassador receives his passports: we are preparing

for war.

Was this rupture inevitable? Politicians argued for and against: we do not need so much research. What remains established, by chronological demonstration and by the facts, is that a head of state, in the position of Bonaparte, could, at will, with a few concessions, make peace or war; it is that the pretexts alleged on both sides were more the responsibility of diplomacy than of the armies; that if, for example, England did not want to return (the island of Malta), Bonaparte still wanted to take (the island of Elba, Piedmont, the State of Parma); it is that while the interests of Great Britain were obviously compromised by the prolongation of the peace, on the side of France the war was only useful to Bonaparte; that he had foreseen this war, that he was ready for it, that for a long time he acted as if it had been declared; it is, finally, that as much as France found advantages in exhausting, before fighting, all diplomatic means, transactions, compensations, etc., England, for whom the situation was completely different, was interested in giving rise to conflict, and seeking a solution through arms.

England, in fact, wanted the empire of the Ocean, which then, as today, it was difficult to take from her. To balance this maritime domination, France had only two means: either to close the European continent to England, as it itself closed the Ocean to us, which would result, if Europe refused to enter this system, in the need to conquer it, an impossible thing; or to fight its rival with its own weapons, through industry, commerce, navigation, alliances, etc.: sure means, but slow, hardly compatible with the recent constitution of power, and means that were neither in the genius of the first consul, nor in the nature of his command.

Thus, in the struggle with England, the policy of exclusion, that is to say of conquest, that the men of the Convention, notably Barère, had dreamed of; absurd policy from the point of view of the interests and liberties of the country, but essential to the preservation of the excessive power; politics without purpose, since to claim everything is to claim nothing; this personal politics, which, reduced to its simplest expression, would never have been tolerated, prevailed in the councils of the nation, thanks to the brilliance of recent victories, to the skillfully colored pretexts of diplomacy, and to the excitement of national rivalries. From that moment, it was easy to predict, to exact dates and places, the twists and turns of the struggle, and to foresee the result.

Within, Bonaparte, appointed consul for life, freed from all constitutional obstacles, can only maintain his authority by concentrating it more and more, and by occupying the nation with enterprises that absorb its energy and distract people's minds. This plan is already contradictory: the stronger power is always more attacked; public opinion, as soon as it does not recognize itself in him, turns against him. The fatal day will come when compressed liberty, the crushed national tendency, will react against the despot: then the nation, at least the one

that thinks, the only one that counts, will separate itself from its leader, and this split will infallibly result in the fall of one, or the degradation of the other, perhaps the ruin of both.

Outside, England, mistress of the sea, protected by its insular position, subsidizing the kings, uplifting the people, holding the French nation, by the universality of its trade, so to speak in a state of blockade; England forces Bonaparte, to free himself from this blockade, to turn it against himself, that is to say, to successively seize all the States of Europe, to dethrone one after the other all the kings, to change dynasties, and to abolish nationalities. In short, England pushes Bonaparte, willy-nilly, towards universal monarchy. If he stops for just one day, he loses the fruit of his victories: France demands its constitution, the people their liberty. The conspiracies are also there to tell him: March, march; otherwise, abdicate!

In this enterprise of European autocracy, how many chances did Bonaparte have? Not a single one. How many for England? All. The Treaty of Westphalia, by criticizing nationalities in more than one place, had established the idea of a European federation, and laid the foundations of this equilibrium, the perfection of which is one of the most authentic elements of history and will form the superior work of the revolution. A little earlier, a little later, Bonaparte, in contradiction with universal destiny, must have had before him all of Europe in arms, behind him exhausted France, full of murmurs. If he did not fall from the first shock, which after all was fortunate, it was inevitable that at the supreme hour of the insurrection of the peoples, his fall would become the guarantee of general peace, and the price of England. It would take ten years, perhaps, to determine this great armament; it could cost Europe six million men killed on the battlefields and a debt of 30 billion: even at this price, English policy could not back down. Since 1789, the French revolution had not cost much less: for its maritime preponderance, for the honor of its diplomacy, for the pride of its race, England would not refuse itself an equal sacrifice.

The entire imperial epic is in the playing of this part, the outcome of which appears from afar with the certainty of fatality, but of which Bonaparte, full of his projects, fearing everything to diminish, does not perceive the danger and the Machiavellianism. The great strategist, trapped in his utopia while he pursues the ideologues, is from that moment doomed. He, superstitious and fatalistic, does not see the misfortune attached to the enterprises he conceives and manages alone. Neither the surrender of Malta to the English (September 5, 1800), the bitter fruit of the Egyptian expedition; nor the surrender of Alexandria (August 30, 1801), the last post occupied by our soldiers; nor the revolt of the blacks (September 14, 1802), can draw him out of his illusions. He rushes with insane joy into the path where the enemy calls him, whose predictions he seems to take it upon himself to carry out from point to point.

But this man will be hard to reduce! What punishment, to the providence of nations, to get the better of this Briareus! What prodigies of intelligence, activity,

seduction, audacity, accomplished by this antagonist of destiny, to support an impossible claim! The story of the Emperor Napoleon, a true masterpiece in the history of humanity, simple in its motif like the Iliad and the Aeneid, has rightly become for the people a legend, a myth. Few writers have unraveled the organic reason, if the style of the character can be applied here. Moreover, no one knew the secret of his destiny, the causes of his greatness and his decadence, less than Napoleon. He was ignorant of himself until the end. Seeing, in the meditations of Saint Helena, the wandering of this superb mind, which until the last moment protests against defeat, because it cannot understand it, one would say a star which, pushed far from its orbit, no longer sees its path in the dazzling of its rays, and runs at random to the empyrean.

I thought it necessary, for the understanding of contemporary events, and the confirmation of the principles that we have laid down on the generation of history, to present here the chronological summary of the imperial period. The truth, distorted in the length of dissertations and stories, appears in pure chronology with an evidence that is only found in mathematics. Once we understand the starting point, we will see the inevitable lineage of facts, the increasingly apparent impossibility of Napoleonic policy, the uselessness of the victories; and, by comparing the richness of the means, the power of the faculties, with the absurdity of the goal, we will have the true measure of the man.

IMPERIAL EPHEMERIDES.

1803.

May 20. — Beginning of hostilities against England. Since the breakdown of the Treaty of Amiens, there is only one individual who thinks and acts for the nation, who is Bonaparte. Delegate of the people, equipped with his blank check, he believes himself exempt from taking any advice, and while following no other reason than his own reason, he does not judge himself to be a despot. Those who helped him organize the consular government became the clerks of his will, his comrades in arms, the servants of his empire. France, alienating its sovereignty, is at the service of this citizen, who soon, walking hand in hand with the kings, will make his individual authority an article of faith, and his delirium a manifestation of Providence.

May 22. — The first consul orders the arrest of all Englishmen traveling in France, and declares them prisoners of war. Like Brunswick, in his famous manifesto, it is no longer only against the English government that he is waging war, it is against the nation!

June 3. — Invasion of Hanover by General Mortier.

September 27. — Censorship is established, to ensure, said the judgment, *the*

liberty of the press.

November 30. — Evacuation of Saint-Domingue, first fruit of Bonaparte's policy. The garrison, reduced to 5,000 men, including 800 officers, were prisoners of war. 50,000 French people perished in this expedition: the Egyptian expedition had already cost as much. Thus Bonaparte's second personal enterprise failed.

December 20. — Senatus-consulte that regulates the form of the sessions of the legislative body. On the podium, as in the press, liberty does not pass. Indeed, for the exercise of power, in the terms of the plebiscite of August 2, 1802, and for the career that we have to provide, liberty is too much.

1804.

February 15. — Conspiracy against the first consul. Liberty protests! Moreau is arrested.

February 25. — Establishment of combined rights.

February 28. — Arrest of Pichegru. Bienheureux Kléber, Desaix, Hoche, Marceau, Jaubert! they had time neither to betray the revolution nor to conspire against the tyrant. They died for their homeland: from now on we will only die for the Emperor!

March 9. — Arrest of George Cadoudal. What was this crackpot getting involved in? France had an experience to follow with its emperor: after him, the Bourbons!

March 21. — The Duke of Enghien is shot at Vincennes. Royalist or republican, anything that resists is crushed.

March 24. — Raising of 60,000 conscripts.

April 28. — Proclamation by Dessalines to the Haitians: *War to the death against tyrants! Liberty, Independence!* It sounds like the cry of 92. The revolution, stopped in Europe, is making a turn among the Indians.

May 4. — Bonaparte is named *hereditary Emperor*. The motion was made to the tribunate, adopted by the conservative senate, "in order to assure the French people their dignity, their independence and their territory, and to prevent the return of *despotism, nobility, feudalism, servitude and ignorance, the only gifts that the Bourbons could give to the people, if they ever returned.*"

This senatus-consult is ratified by 3,521,675 *yes*, against 2,579 *no*.

May 19. — Creation of marshals: undoubtedly intended, according to the wish of the tribunate, to combat *feudalism* and the *nobility*.

May 27. — Taking of the oath. — The clergy compare Napoleon to Josaphat, Mathathias, Cyrus, Moses, Caesar, Augustus, Charlemagne. God said to him: "Sit at my right hand, *sede a dextris meis*. The government belongs to him,

submission is due to him: such is the order of Providence!" They would say, these priests, if they dared, that the Eternal having deceived Madame Lætitia, had deceived Napoleon.

June 10. — Trial and banishment of Moreau: Pichegru strangles in prison, George Cadoudal is shot.

July 10. — Establishment of the Ministry of Police.

October 2. — A flotilla is assembled in Boulogne, for the descent to England. The English are trying in vain to destroy it.

October 8. — The negro Dessalines takes the title of Emperor of Haiti. — The irony of Toussaint Louverture passes to his successors. It is written that Saint-Domingue will be Napoleon's nightmare.

December 2. — The Emperor is crowned at Notre-Dame. The coronation expenses, according to the empire's newspapers, only amounted to *six million!*

December 3. — Alliance of England with Sweden. While the conqueror prepares, England works for its part on governments and peoples.

1805.

January 17. — Levy of 60,000 men.

January 29. — Foundation of Napoléonville or Bourbon-Vendée.

March 18. — The Emperor declares to the Senate that he accepts the crown of Italy, in accordance with the wish expressed by the Italian population. As if a secret voice was protesting within him against the fatality that is leading him, he says: "... The genius of evil will look in vain for pretexts to put the continent at war: *no new power will be incorporated into the French State!*"

April 5. — Pius VII, who had hoped, by coming to Paris to crown the Emperor, to recover the ancient domains of the Church, returned empty-handed, to the jeers of Europe.

April 8. — Treaty of alliance between England and Russia.

May 8. — The emperor of Haiti, Dessalines, decrees an imperial constitution.

May 26. — Napoleon is crowned in Milan, Eugène Beauharnais declared viceroy of Italy. *Feudalism*, despite the wishes of the tribunate, therefore begins again with Napoleon's family.

June 4. — Meeting of Genoa with France.

June 23. — The republic of Lucca is transformed into a principality, and given to Élisa, sister of Napoleon.

July 21. — Meeting of Parma with France. This is how England's grievances

are justified; thus continues, despite the interior light that illuminates it, the anti-providential career of the Emperor. Was he lying when he declared, on March 18, *that no power would be incorporated into the French state?* Not at all: the force of things was crushing him. To each alliance that England made, it responded with an enlargement of territory: that is all.

July 22. — Naval combat near Cape Finistère (Spain), between the Franco-Spanish fleet and the English. The advantage remains with the latter.

August 9. — Austria adheres to the treaty of April 8, between Russia, Sweden and England.

September 8. — 3rd coalition against France. If reflection could arise in the heart of Napoleon, he would feel at this moment the anomaly of his position. He would see that this anomaly results from his system of government, which, in turn, has its source in the idea he has, with the vulgar, of a political mandate. He would then tell himself that victories, in the service of a wicked cause, are as much to be feared as defeats, and from now on he would only fight for the *status quo* and for peace. The evil genius wins: forward!

Passage of the Inn by the Austrian general Klénau.

September 9. — Restoration of the Gregorian calendar. As Bonaparte was pursued by the old regime, he returned to the institutions of the old regime. All the acts of his government, perfectly linked together, go against the grain of his mandate.

September 24. — Senateus-consulte that orders the raising of 80,000 conscripts, activates those from 1804 to 1805, orders the reorganization of the national guards. — Mandations of bishops, who order public prayers, and pour out their blessings on the *anointed of the Lord, sent from heaven to visit the earth.*

Where is the truth in France? Where is the reason? Is it not true that amid this avalanche of adulation of which he is the object, the most sincere of all, the most honest, is still Napoleon?

October 8-20. — Battles of Wertingen, Guntburg, Langenau; occupation of Augsburg, Munich; capitulation of Ulm. In 15 days, the enemy lost 50,000 prisoners.

October 21. — Battle of Trafalgar, won by Nelson over the French admiral Villeneuve. What Aboukir had been to the Egyptian expedition, Trafalgar would be for the entire imperial period. Napoleon, without a navy, is irrevocably condemned to seize the continent. This is what we call the *continental blockade* or *system*. At Trafalgar, as at Aboukir, Napoleon is therefore defeated, and without remission, since the position placed upon him is such that, defeated in Germany, he loses everything; victorious, he is more and more compromised. All his victories are struck in advance with sterility, and changed into defeats.

October 25. — The King of Prussia joins the coalition,

November. — On the 2nd, Masséna, commanding the army of Italy, forced Archduke Charles to retire; on the 4th, battle of Amstetten, occupation of Steyer, capture of Vicenza; on the 7th, occupation of Inspruck; on the 9th, battle of Marienzell; on the 11th, battle of Dernstein; on the 13rd, occupation of Vienna; 14-24, occupation of Trento, Pressbourg, Brunn, Dœrnberg, Trieste; on the 28th, junction of the Army of Italy and the Grand Army.

November 4. — Naval combat, within sight of Cape Villano (Galicia). Four French ships, escaped from the Trafalgar disaster, were forced to surrender after a 4-hour action.

December 2. — Victory of Austerlitz, won by the emperor.

December 26. — Peace of Pressburg, with Austria. —Here is one out of action; what will Napoleon do with him? The rule of war is to weaken the defeated enemy: the States of Venice, Dalmatia, Albania, are united with the Kingdom of Italy; the Elector of Bavaria and the Duke of Würtemberg, already in the devotion of the Emperor of the French, are enlarged at the expense of Austria, and take the title of kings. Thus what he cannot or would not yet dare to incorporate into his States, he divides and gives to subordinates, whose auxiliaries he makes against the coalition. As a result of this treaty, Neufchâtel, Berg and Cleves were united with France, and Napoleon was also declared *protector of the Helvetic confederation*.

1806.

January 23.—At the news of the defeat at Austerlitz, Pitt was stricken with apoplexy and died. His rival Fox arrives at the ministry: negotiations begin for peace.

January 28. — The Senate awards Napoleon the title of great: a monument is decreed in his honor. The nation, intoxicated, shares the blindness of its leader, whose ruin it will also share.

February 6. — Naval combat, in the bay of Santo Domingo, between a French squadron and an English squadron: ended to the advantage of the enemy.

February 8-15. — Invasion of the Kingdom of Naples, in retaliation for the neutrality poorly guarded by King Ferdinand. Constantly beaten at sea by the English, Napoleon only had the resource to expel them from the continent: after Italy, he continued via Naples.

March 30. — The Emperor names his brother, Joseph Bonaparte, king of the Two Sicilies.

June 5. — Napoleon reestablished, for the preservation of his conquests, the feudal system. He named Murat, his brother-in-law, Grand Duke of Berg and Cleves; gives Talleyrand the principality of *Benevento*, as an *immediate fiefdom* of the crown; further declares another of his brothers, Louis Bonaparte, king of

Holland. Sensing the danger of conquests, he would like to limit himself to changes of dynasties. But this means is worse than the other: the kings of Napoleon's creation will give him more trouble than the natives would have done.

July 6. — General Régnier is defeated by the English at Sainte-Euphémie in Calabria. The people rise up against the French, assassination is organized against them: a prelude to what will happen, a few years later, in Spain.

July 12. — Confederation of the Rhine, under the *protectorate* of Napoleon. This treaty, which subjugates fourteen German princes to the empire, ensures France, against the coalition, a contingent of 60,000 men. Such princes would have deserved the noose, if the people had the intelligence of their interests: they were released, after the retreat of Moscow, for one more betrayal.

August 20. — In the face of Napoleon's expansions, Russia refuses peace, dragging Prussia into its orbit.

October 6. — 4th coalition. Nothing is conquered as long as there remains something to be conquered, says England. Let us conquer then, replies the emperor.

October 9-10. — Battles of Schleitz and Saalfeld: the Prussians are beaten.

October 14-31. — Victory of Jena: capitulation. of Erfurt, occupation of Leipzig, Halberstadt, Brandenburg, Berlin, Warsaw, etc. Capture of Spandau and Stettin.

November. — Capture of Anklam, Kustrin, Lubeck; occupation of Hesse-Cassel, Hamburg, Bremen; surrender of Magdeburg; capitulation of Hameln; Murat's entry into Warsaw.

November 21. — Imperial decree, dated from Berlin, relating to the *Continental System*. The British Isles are put under blockade; any Englishman seized in the French States is declared a prisoner of war, all merchandise coming from this nation is prohibited. Prussia is provisionally condemned to a war contribution of 150 million. And two. There remains, with England, Russia and Sweden. Thus Napoleon not only waged war on States, he waged it on peoples; not only does he wage war on men, he wages war on things. Will it last long? Let us continue.

1807.

December 15. — Levy of 80,000 men. At the same time, the Emperor ordered the 8th National Guards to prepare for active service.

December 23-26. — Battles of Czarnovo, Mohrungen, Pultusk, Golymin, against the Russians. Everywhere the French obtain the advantage.

January. — Military operations continue: capture of Breslau and Brieg, on the Oder.

February 8-26. — Bloody battle of Eylau; battles of Ostrolenka and Braunsberg, where generals Bernadotte and Ney cut the enemy to pieces.

April 7. — Levy of 80,000 men, class of 1808. The emperor, to maintain his armies, and deal with business, anticipates his cuts of men. Here his weakness is already revealed.

June 5-14. — Battles of Spanden, Deppen, Guttstadt, Heilsberg, where the French are constantly victorious. Finally, the victory of Friedland, followed by the capture of Kænigsberg and the Neisse, and the capitulation of Glatz and Kasel, forced Russia to sue for peace.

July 7-9. — Peace of Tilsitt. The coalition is defeated. It will be so as long as the powers, instead of massing their forces, act separately, and the people do not believe themselves interested in the quarrel.

Prussia loses half of its territory, which passes, partly to France, partly to Saxony. Poland, which had been of such great help to Napoleon, was forgotten, or rather sacrificed by him to the friendship of the Czar. It learns, to its cost, that the antagonism of princes never goes so far as to make them serve the emancipation of peoples.

August 16. — The war on the continent is over: Napoleon returns to Paris triumphant. Enthusiasm is at its peak. But this enthusiasm would soon change into consternation, if anyone at this moment could suspect that all these victories are so many insults to the star of Bonaparte, misdeeds that only exasperate destiny against France and against him. So how can we condemn the hero, how can we not pity him, on the contrary, when we see how low the imbecility of his audience stoops? "*It is beyond history,*" exclaims President Séguier; *above admiration!* It can only be matched by love?" Madness and pity!

August 18. — Formation of the kingdom of Westphalia: Napoleon's youngest brother, Jérôme, aged twenty-seven, will hold it. Universal applause.

August 19. — The tribunate is abolished: there were signs of opposition there! The imperial constitution, revised so many times, is modified again. Isn't that logical, necessary? Gird up your loins for battle, ô warrior! because, the more triumphs you win, the more opposition you create for yourself, and the more work you undertake; the more, therefore, you will need, like the athlete, to gather yourself in your strength!

September 1. — Organization of the Ionian Republic, as an integral part of the French Empire. Napoleon, after having missed England through Egypt, recaptures it through Greece! *The universe will soon no longer contain it!*

September 2. — The King of Prussia adheres to the *continental system*.

September 7. — Capture of the island of Rugen by Marshal Brune: Sweden recalls its troops.

It is at this moment that the English, blinded by greed and hatred, are bombing Copenhagen, the capital of a neutral state. The reason for this odious aggression was the refusal of the King of Denmark to take part in the coalition. We could without crime not understand a policy that the English themselves served so poorly: so this act of vandalism did more harm to England than all of Napoleon's victories. For a moment the powers separated from it, and Napoleon, in hatred of his rivals, almost became the accepted arbiter of Europe.

September 9. — The king of Denmark forbids his people from any communication with the English.

October 14-16. — Napoleon, strongly adopting the ideas of Barère, declared that he would oppose any alliance of the princes of the continent with England. Nothing matches the presumption of this *casus belli*, except its stupidity. But such is the clamor against the English at the moment that the Czar joins Napoleon, and in his turn accedes to the continental system.

Thus a political mistake, a crime against international rights, seems for a moment to bend destiny! This moment was for Great Britain the most critical of its struggle with Napoleon: but the doubt did not last long. The intemperance of the Emperor quickly brought back to the English those whom their barbarity had for a moment detached from them.

November 13. — First expedition of Portugal. The court of Lisbon having been unable, for fear of England, which threatened its possessions in America, to enter the continental system, Napoleon issued a decree stating that the house of Braganza had ceased to reign in Europe, and charged the general Junot with the execution. Thus, it is enough for the English to set foot in a State for that State to become an enemy of the Emperor!

November 30. — Capture of Lisbon by the French. A contribution of 100 million is imposed on Portugal. — What do you say about this retaliation for the bombing of Copenhagen, O wise Alexander?...

December 10. — Joining of the kingdom of Etruria with France: the French army takes possession.

December 17-18. — The Emperor issues decree after decree affecting the *continental system*. The King of England responds with a declaration that Great Britain is *the only boulevard of liberty in Europe*.

1808.

January 1 — State of the English navy: 255 ships of the line, 29 of 50 guns, 261 frigates, 299 sloops, 258 brigs: total, 1,100 warships, not including cutters and other smaller vessels.

Status of the French Navy: zero.

We ask which of the two powers, France or Great Britain, is holding the other in a state of blockade?

January 3. — Spain, at the instigation of Napoleon, frightened by the fate of Portugal, enters the *Continental System*.

January 21. — Joining of Kehl, Cassel, Werel and Flushing on French territory.

Levy of 80,000 men.

February 2. — Rome is occupied by the French: *continental system*.

February 17-29. — Occupation of Pamplona, Barcelona, Figuière, San Sebastian, by continental measure. More than 100,000 French people spread across the Peninsula.

March 19.—Following court intrigues, in which Napoleon's hand is seen, Charles IV, King of Spain, abdicates in favor of his son.

April 2. — Imperial decree which annexes the provinces of Ancona, Urbino, Camerino, Macerata, to the French empire: *continental system*.

May 5. — Treaty of Bayonne, by which Ferdinand VI restores the crown to his father Charles IV, who transports it to Napoleon. On hearing this news, an insurrection broke out in Madrid: the discontented were shot by Murat's soldiers.

All historians blame Napoleon's conduct towards Spain as deceitful, immoral, iniquitous. What it is up to us to note here is that it is the reduction to absurdity of Napoleon's *system*. How strong England must have felt, seeing this head of a great state constantly remaking and unmaking the political map of Europe, depersonalizing peoples and governments, constantly enlarging his territory, as an individual rounds out his property, recognizing finally in the constitution of States only an artificial work, which the sword produces, and which the sword can destroy.

May 27-30. — Napoleon's policy, or better said the policy imposed on Napoleon by England, is bearing fruit. The whole of Spain rises: the war of the peoples begins against the Emperor.

June 6. — Napoleon can no longer retreat. Imperial decree proclaiming Joseph Bonaparte, elder brother of the Emperor, king of Spain.

June 14. — The insurgents of Cadiz seize the remains of the French fleet, the last remains of Trafalgar: 5 ships of the line, 1 frigate, 4,000 sailors.

June 16. — Portuguese insurrection. The fire is lit throughout the Peninsula, fueled by England. Fortune begins to change. Let the peoples of the North follow the example of those of the South, and that will be the end of Napoleon.

June 22.—Capitulation of Baylen: 13,000 French soldiers and officers lay down their arms and are sent to Cadiz on pontoons.

July 29. — King Joseph, frightened by the progress of the insurrection, abandoned Madrid after a residence of eight days.

July 31. — An English army lands in Portugal. War is sure, in a friendly country, against the foreigner who oppresses it.

August 10. — The Spanish general La Romana, occupied in Denmark in the service of the Emperor, escapes with 22,000 men, and returns to Spain to help the insurrection.

August 21. — Battle of Vimeiro, between Junot and Wellington. The French, outnumbered, withdrew in good order.

August 30. — Convention of the Cintra: the French evacuate Portugal and return to France, transported on English ships. Wellington wages war as a merchant: he only risks himself with superior forces, and does not consider the honorability of a capitulation, provided that the French leave! Thus, for three months, the Emperor has experienced a series of failures on the Peninsula, which make the impossibility of his plans more and more evident. While the insurrection proliferated, contraband abounded: Napoleon was defeated by the popular masses, in his strategy and his policies.

September 8. — Convention of Paris, for the settlement of affairs with Prussia. Attracted to Spain by the peril of the *system*, the Emperor hastened to deal with the coalition in the North.

September 10. — Levy of 80,000 conscripts, class of 1810; recall of 80,000 others, from the classes of 1806 to 1809: total 160,000 men, made necessary by the Spanish War. France does not blink!

October 12. — Interview at Erfurt, between Napoleon and Alexander. The two sovereigns send a collective letter to the King of England to commit him to peace! Napoleon, on Saint Helena, called Czar Alexander a Greek of the Late Empire. It is certain that this *Greek* committed, in the circumstances, an act of remarkable stupidity. If, at that moment, instead of complacently serving Napoleon's views, he had supported England, Portugal, Spain, the King of Naples, the Pope, he could hasten the imperial debacle by four years. This mistake will cost the coalition dearly.

November 4. — The Emperor, calm about the intentions of Austria, Prussia, and Russia, enters Spain with 80,000 men, withdrawn from the fortresses of Germany.

November 10-23. — Combat and capture of Burgos; battles of Espinosa and Tudela, won by the French.

December 4. — Surrender of Madrid by the insurgents. The Emperor addresses a threatening proclamation to the Spaniards. "No power," he said, "can exist on the continent influenced by England! I will drive the English from Spain, and their adherents will be enveloped in their ruin."

December 5-16-21. — Taking of Roses in Catalonia; battles on Lobregat, at

San-Felice, and at Molino-del-Rey, fought by Gouvion Saint-Cyr. The Spaniards, constantly beaten in pitched battle, took their revenge as guerrillas. The triumphs of the French army will go down to posterity; its extermination in detail escapes history.

1809.

January. — The impossible work continues. Battles of Priéros, Taraçona, and Corunna; taking of Ferrol. The Spanish are always defeated, but the French are always wearing out!

February 21. — Capture of Zaragoza, new Numantia! by Lannes.

February 24. — Surrender of Martinique to the English, by Villaret-Joyeuse.

March 12-29. — A second expedition is directed against Portugal, under the orders of Marshal Soult. — Battle of Lanhozo, battle and capture of Porto.

April 9. — 5th *coalition.* The example of the people ends up leading the kings. Austria, impatient with the yoke, paid by England, broke the peace. Passage of the Inn and the Salza by Archduke Charles: rational, but insufficient, diversion in favor of Portugal and Spain. Can there be anything more stupid than these so-called coalitions?

April 12. — New maritime disaster, experienced by France, on the island of Aix. Since Trafalgar, our sailors no longer venture out onto the ocean; are kidnapped, burned in their harbors. On the island of Aix, 13 ships and frigates were destroyed.

April 15-16. — Combat of Pordenone and Sacile, on the Tagliamento. The French, commanded by Prince Eugene, were first beaten by the Austrians.

April 19-22. — Battles of Pfaffen-Hoffen and Tann, fought by Oudinot and Davoust; battles of Abensberg and Eckmuhl: the French win everywhere.

April 23. — Levy of 30,000 men, class of 1810; plus 10,000 to be taken from those of 1806 to 1809.

May 4. — Attack on Fort Ebersberg, where 5,000 brave men perished, uselessly sacrificed by the generals. In contrast to labor, war, by becoming a profession, becomes demoralized: *a priori* proof that with civilization it must disappear.

May 10-18. — Marshal Soult, having lost part of his artillery and his equipment, evacuates Portugal. The second expedition against this country failed like the first. What Napoleon obtains in advantages on the one hand, he loses on the other. — *I would have to be everywhere!* he exclaims. Well! Undoubtedly, invincible Emperor, and that is why your *system* is worthless.

May 13. — Occupation of Vienna.

May 17. — Imperial decree that united the Roman States with the French

Empire. Napoleon revokes Charlemagne's donations, and assigns the pope an income of two million. Still the *system*.

May 24-22. — Battle of Essling, very bloody. The Emperor is pushed back on the right bank of the Danube, and establishes himself on the island of Lobau.

May 26. — The army of Italy, after a series of successful actions, joins up with the army of Germany.

June 11. — Pope Pius VII, who had not had any anger against the *continental system*, now stripped of his State, fulminated against Napoleon. The former demagogue of Imola now speaks like Grégoire VII. However ridiculous and self-interested this demonstration of the Holy See may appear, it nevertheless produces its effect on the Christians of the new empire, whose faith had been so inappropriately revived by the Concordat.

July 5-6. — Victory at Wagram. Austria, which still retained a fine army and could prolong the struggle, threw itself at the feet of Napoleon. Emperor Francis will pay, as a preliminary, a war contribution of 238 million. The collapse of the coalition, reported by all the publicists since 92, once again saved the Emperor, as it had saved the revolution.

The same day, Pius VII was kidnapped by order of Murat, transferred to Grenoble, and from there to Savona, where he was kept in custody.

July 28.—Battle of Talavera, on the Tagus, where Marshal Victor is beaten by Wellington.

August 15. — Surrender of Vlissingen to the English, by General Monnet. A dire omen: the loss of Vlissingen was the counterpart of Baylen's capitulation.

October 5. — Levy of 36,000 men, distributed over the classes of 1805 to 1810.

October 14. — Peace of Vienna between France and Austria. The Illyrian provinces are united with France. Significant cessions of territory were made to the Germanic Confederation, the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, and Russia. The *continental system* is still going: the war continues with Portugal, Spain and England.

October 25. — New maritime disaster suffered by the French: three ships and two frigates, commanded by Admiral Baudin, were stranded or burned on the coast of Hérault. There is no tooth or nail against the eagle: cut off its wings! This is the tactic of the English.

November 19-28.—Battle of Ocaña, fought by Mortier; Battle of Alba de Tormès, by Kellermann. The Spanish are routed, and the French are consumed.

December 16. — Napoleon notices a new way to consolidate his empire, which is to give himself an heir. The divorce is pronounced between him and Joséphine.

January 6. — Sweden makes peace with France, and joins the *continental system*. — So, at the beginning of this year, the entire North is silent before Napoleon. But, while the governments give way, the force of things conspires against the Emperor. Smuggling voids treaties; what the sword has bound, commerce looses; even in the imperial palace, England opens up opportunities. The Peninsular War is only the eruption, on one point, of this underground, universal struggle.

February 2. — Seville is occupied by the French: the insurrectional junta takes refuge in Cadiz.

February 6. — Surrender of Guadeloupe to the English. France will soon no longer have a single station on the globe. What then are the laurels of Wagram, of Friedland, of Jena, of Austerlitz, the forced additions of territory, the dynasties enthroned despite the peoples, compared to this maritime isolation, which breaks, so to speak, all relationship of France with the rest of the world?

February 7. — Marriage between Napoleon and Marie-Louise, celebrated in Vienna, by prosecutor. The French nation has always regretted this alliance, impolitic, proud, which made Napoleon the nephew of Louis XVI, the cousin of all despots, the ward of the counter-revolution. But it must be admitted that it is hardly understood better on the side of Austria, which, instead of standing in silent protest, made a pact with the devourer of its States, the future master of Europe!

March 9. — Napoleon realizes the fable of the Sun getting married: the more it generates, the more it burns. Watch out for the frogs! By imperial decree, eight state prisons are established, in favor of those accused of political offenses who it would be appropriate *neither to bring before the courts nor to release!* The system of letters of cachet begins again. Historians only know how to blame despotism: but where is the cause of despotism? The delegation, the delegation, I tell you! Any nation that no longer thinks is devoted to despotism.

March 16. — The 5 percent is 88 fr. 90 cents. This rate is the highest that public funds will reach during the imperial period.

May 6-13. — Captures of Astorga and Lerida by generals Junot and Suchet.

June 8. — Capture of Mequinenza: the French hold the walls, but the population does not surrender. All these captures of towns do nothing to advance the conquest, and only serve to fill the generals' vans with loot.

July 4-9. — Louis Bonaparte, King of Holland, recognizes the impossibility for his States to observe the *continental system*. An honest sovereign, but without power, he resigned. Holland is incorporated into the French empire. Thus the system wears out and breaks: three years of peace, in the event of general

submission, would be enough to do justice. — This fact, little noticed, is one of the most serious symptoms that must have struck Napoleon.

July 1-8. — Capture of Isle of Bourbon by the English.

July 10. — Third Portuguese expedition: Masséna and Wellington. Capture of Ciudad-Rodrigo, by Marshal Ney.

August 5-27. — Decrees relating to the *continental system*. Colonial goods are subject to high tariffs; English goods condemned to fire.

August 21. — Bernadotte is elected king of Sweden. — “Go,” Napoleon said to him, sighing, “and let the destinies be fulfilled.” Here another vice of the continental system is discovered. If countries deprived of their dynasts, like Sweden, take Napoleon's generals as leaders, the empire is immediately dissolved, France reduced to its just limits. The recent conduct of Louis Bonaparte, later that of Murat, proves this. Feudalism is so repugnant to modern nations!

August 27. — Capture of Almeïda, in Portugal, by Masséna. September 27. — Battle of Busaco, where Masséna is repulsed by Wellington.

October 18. — Institution of provost courts for the repression of smugglers and their accomplices! The Emperor seems unaware that the more dangers smuggling offers, the higher the premium, and consequently the more demoralized the protection. The *continental system* turns to folly: neither the Emperor nor France notices it.

December 3. — Capture of the Île de France by the English.

December 13. — Reunion of Hanseatic cities and Valais to the French empire. The Emperor compensates himself, on the States of the continent, for the losses caused to him by the English on the Ocean. We no longer have colonies: but the Italians, the Germans, the Dutch, the Swiss, the Savoyards, the Illyrians, the Greeks, are French! the Mediterranean is a French lake: it is true that we no longer have a single vessel there. Everything is French!...

Levy of 160,000 men, class of 1811, for the continuation of the Spanish War and the continental system. “Continue, sire,” cries the senate, “this SACRED WAR, for the honor of the French name, and the independence of nations!”

1811.

What did Napoleon do during the year 1810? From the top of his Tuileries palace, he stood guard over the *continental system*, cracking down on smugglers, and day by day awaiting the submission of the Peninsula. What will he do during this year 1811? He will continue his guard, for a moment rejoiced by the birth of his son, the king of Rome, and always bringing new troops into this Spain, whose people, crushed in a hundred battles, devour the armies and do not surrender. The spirit of Napoleon watches: neither day nor night does he rest. But this wakefulness is that of the sleepwalker; this life is not history, it is a dream of

Ossian.

January 2-20. — Capture of Tortosa by Suchet: occupation of Olivenza.

February 19. — Battle of Gébora, won by Soult over the Spaniards.

February 28. — Reunion of the Duchy of Oldenburg with France, without any other motive or pretext than the interest of the *continental system*. This incorporation decided the quarrel with Russia.

March 5-12. — Combat of Chiclana, capture of Badajoz; battle of Redinha. Generals Victor, Mortier, Soult, Ney, stood out against the Spanish and the English.

March 20. — Birth of the King of Rome. This child comes too late. It would have been better, following the example of the ancient Caesars, to associate a ready-made man, Prince Eugene.

April 4. — Masséna retreats before Wellington: he is replaced by Marmont.

May 10. — Evacuation of Almeida: the Portuguese expedition fails for the third time.

May 16. — Battle of Alboerra, where the Anglo-Spaniards, despite an immense loss, remained masters of the ground. They invest Badajoz.

June 3. — Henri-Cristophe, known as *Napoleon's Black Monkey*, is anointed with cocoa oil, by a capuchin named Brell, king of Haiti. The constitution given by this new leader is entirely modeled on the Napoleonic constitution. In 93, one would have said that this Mephistophelian figure was paid by the English to taunt the Emperor!

June 11. — Opening of a council in Paris, convened to regularize the institution of the bishops, to whom the pope refuses to send bulls. Poor Emperor! here he fell into theology. He won't wake up!

June 28. — Capture of Tarragona, after two months of siege and five assaults. General Suchet is made marshal.

September 20. — The Pope, prisoner in Savona, approves the decrees of the Council of Paris; the papal court refused to ratify this approval. On all sides the spiritual and the temporal, excommunication and contraband, rise up against Napoleon.

October 25. — Battle of Sagunto, won by Suchet, followed by the surrender of the place.

December 20. — Raised 120,000 conscripts, class of 1812. Another year has passed: the dream never ends! The nation is under the fluid of the Emperor.

January 9-19. — Capture of Valencia by Suchet, and of Ciudad-Rodrigo by Wellington. There is balance!

Imperial decree which allocates 100,000 hectares of land to the cultivation of beets. Napoleon sought ways to replace the colonial products his subjects could not do without with indigenous products. One day his efforts will bear fruit; for the moment, and in the idea that preoccupies him, they only show the absence of his reason.

January 26. — Imperial decree that reunites Catalonia. Why not, since we are on the way, the whole Peninsula? This is because Napoleon, not wanting the originality of his century, can only be an imitator. Catalonia had been part of the States of Charlemagne, it will be part of the States of Napoleon.

February 24. — The hour marked by fatality is approaching. It was inevitable that Napoleon, after the treaties of Tilsitt and Vienna, forced by the *continental system*, the only means of defense he had against England, to continue to expand, ended up once again pushing all the powers to the struggle, and war broke out, ever more general. The incorporation of the Duchy of Oldenburg had been for Russia the subject of discontent which was to lead to a rupture. In anticipation of this event, Napoleon hastened to conclude a treaty with Prussia, which Marshal Oudinot supported with an army corps. Prussia, therefore, renews its commitment to supporting the *continental system*; in the event of war with Russia, it will provide 20,000 men.

March 13. — Senatus-consulte which organizes the national guard. It is divided into three bands, the first of which, initially made up of one hundred cohorts of 971 men each, is placed at the disposal of the Emperor.

March 14. — Treaty between France and Austria, signed in Paris. This will provide a contingent of 30,000 men.

March 24. — 6th *Coalition*. Treaty between Russia and Sweden (Bernadotte!) to which England hastened to adhere.

April 7. — Badajoz is stormed by the English: General Philippon is taken prisoner with 3,000 men.

May 9. — Opening of the Russian campaign: Napoleon leaves Paris, followed by worried looks from the populations.

At this time the French empire, successively increased by impolitic conquests, but made inevitable by the war with England and the *continental system*, is made up of 132 departments, not including Catalonia, together forming a population of 42 million inhabitants. On the other hand, the States subject to the indirect and more or less real domination of Napoleon numbered no less than 44 million. It is therefore 86 million souls, half of Europe, over which the French Emperor commands. With this immense expanse of territory, without a

navy, driven out of the Ocean, he is suffocating!... The army he leads in Russia is 500,000 men, carrying 1,200 cannons. Everything indicates that the decisive moment has come: it is a question of knowing whether the monarchy of Europe, of the globe, will be established, for the glory of Napoleon and the confusion of England. Napoleon knows this: but the illusion of his mind shows him things contrary to the truth. *Fate is leading the Russians*, he says: *may the destinies be fulfilled!...*

June 28. — Entry of the Emperor into Wilna.

July 22. — Battle of the Arapiles, where Marshal Marmont is defeated by Wellington. The empire advances in the north, retrogrades in the south: it is the canvas of Penelope.

August 12-14. — Occupation of Madrid by Wellington: the French garrison capitulates. The Englishman hastens: it is clear that if, while Napoleon invades Russia, the French are forced to evacuate Spain, nothing will be done for Napoleon.

August 17. — Battle of Smolensk won by Napoleon. But the war is nationalized in Russia as in Spain, and the question is no longer whether the armies give in, but whether the people are able to provide the holocaust demanded, to put an end to it, by this army of 500,000 men, commanded by Napoleon.

September 1. — Levy of 120,000 conscripts, class of 1813; plus 17,000 to replace those missing from the National Guard.

September 7. — Battle of the Moskowa. Twenty thousand French people out of action; 30,000 Russians killed, wounded or prisoners. Kutusoff proclaims himself the winner: perhaps he was not lying as much as people said. Because if the French are 500,000 men, and the Russians 1,000,000, and the former lose 500,000 men, killed or wounded, and the latter, 750,000: deduction made on both sides, it is the French who are defeated. The Spanish War and the Russian campaign are entirely part of this calculation.

September 14. — Occupation of Moscow. Residents have been warned to evacuate the city, which fanaticism has left burning. The Emperor is terrified: the tactics of the civilized warrior feel powerless in the face of barbarian fury.

October 11-18. — Napoleon is in Moscow, awaiting the submission of Alexander. During this time, he was attacked in his rear by Russian generals, rushing from all parts of the empire. General Gouvion-Saint-Cyr barely resisted them at Potolsk; Murat is completely defeated at Winskowo, by Kutusoff, the vanquished of Moskowa; Bresc on the Bug is taken from the Austrians by Tschitchagoff, who threatens the Emperor's communications with Warsaw.

October 23. — Conspiracy of General Mallet in Paris: frightening symptom

of the disaffection of the country and the isolation of the Emperor, If Mallet manages to seize the prefecture of police and the minister of the interior, France is taken, by a helping hand, from Napoleon. What a policy that laid such miserable foundations!

The same day, Napoleon ordered the retreat. So he obtained nothing, the campaign is lost; and however honorably he fares from the point of view of military honor, half of his army will have perished. And yet he was always victorious!

November 7. — Arrival at Smolensk, 100 leagues from Moscow, after a retreat marked by daily fighting, where the army, always victorious, is nevertheless always weakened! Glory and greatness of soul of Marshal Ney.

November 14-16. — The French army evacuates Smolensk. Nature comes to the Russians' aid: the thermometer drops to 25 degrees. All the horses perished, from starvation as well as from the cold: those of the Cossacks were able to recover. — Capture of Minsk and French stores by the Russians.

November 28. — Crossing the Berezina (180 leagues west of Moscow), the most dreadful day of the retreat. It was there that Marshal Ney received the name *bravest of the brave*.

December 5. — Napoleon, learning of Mallet's attempt, immediately took the lead and left the army at Smorgony.

December 10-11. — Evacuation of Wilna (218 leagues from Moscow), where the French army had hoped to rebuild itself. General despair, complete rout, massacre of soldiers by the inhabitants.

December 18. — Arrival in Paris of the 29th bulletin of the great army, dated Malodeczno (200 leagues west of Moscow). The consternation is immense. Two days later, the Emperor arrived in Paris: he was congratulated by the senate. "*Common sense*," said the grand master of the university, Fontanes, "*common sense stops with respect before the mystery of power and obedience. It abandons it to religion, which made the princes sacred, by making them the image of God himself.*" — "Ah! sire," exclaims the first president in his turn, "the imperial authority will never have firmer support than the magistrates, who are the dearest guarantors of respect for the rights of sovereignty. We are ready to *sacrifice everything for your sacred person* and the prosperity of your dynasty. Please receive this new oath; we will remain faithful to it until death."

December 30. — Defection of General York, commanding the contingent of 20,000 men provided by Prussia (see above, February 24). This defection is caused by the Tugendbund (Society of Virtue), which already fills all of Germany, and preaches the crusade against Napoleon.

January 11. — Levy of 150,000 men, class of 1814; recall of 100,000 conscripts from the classes of 1809, 1810, 1811 and 1812. The Emperor, said the Senate, only spent the surplus of the population.

January 25. — The Emperor tries to reconcile with the Pope, who mocks him. A concordat is signed at Fontainebleau, and rejected by the court of Rome.

February 1. — Proclamation of Louis XVIII to the French. This one thought. He saw the error of Louis XVI and Napoleon: he proposed reestablishing liberty according to the bases of 89, that is to say, a constitutional charter. Thus Napoleon is attacked on the way in which he interpreted and fulfilled his mandate; his trial is informed by public opinion: is that clear?

February 10-22. — Proclamation of Emperor Alexander. All the roles are reversed: the leaders of the coalition call the people to arms, as the Convention did in 92, and invite them to shake off the yoke of Napoleon. Meanwhile, Napoleon's prefects continue to congratulate him on having triumphed over feudalism and anarchy.

March 1. — 7th coalition. Treaty between Prussia and Russia. Everything comes together to overwhelm the Emperor: Bernadotte writes to him and overwhelms him with reproaches. This other Jacobin who became a legitimate king dares to speak of ambition.

April 3. — Senatus-consulte that places at the disposal of the Emperor, in addition to the levy of January 14: 90,000 men, class of 1814; 80,000, recall from 1806 to 1812; 10,000 mounted honor guards, equipped at their own expense; in all 180,000 men.

April 15. — Departure of Napoleon; opening of the Saxon campaign. The French forces in Germany currently amount to 166,000 men; the allies number 225,000.

May 2-June 4. — Battles of Lutzen, Bautzen, etc. Armistice of Pleswitz. Napoleon, initially victorious, if victory must always be presumed by the number of dead and wounded, seeks to gain time. But time is running out even more for the allies: each day of truce that brings a regiment gives its adversaries an adherent.

June 21. — Battle of Victoria, won over King Joseph by Wellington. It will result in determining the evacuation of Spain by what remains of the French armies. Thus this expedition failed, in which 500,000 soldiers were sacrificed in vain.

July 28-August 10. — Congress of Prague, under the mediation of Austria. The allies reject the proposals of the Emperor, who demands that the incorporation of Holland, the Hanseatic cities and Italy into the French empire

be maintained! They declare that France must remain limited to the Meuse, the Rhine and the Alps.

We were surprised that Napoleon did not find this compromise sufficient, and that he preferred to risk everything for all. But what would he have come to Paris to do, stripped of his military prestige, beaten up in his *continental system*, diminished, demonetized, obliged to maintain, in an industrious peace, his governmental omnipotence in the presence of a legitimate prince who offered the undermining bid of a constitutional charter, and of a bourgeoisie who murmured? Napoleon felt ruined; from this moment, in fact, he no longer fights for the throne, he fights for his own dignity. The monarch has disappeared, the man remains: such is the meaning of Napoleon's last campaign.

July 31.—Fights at Roncevaux and Cabiry, where Marshal Soult stands out. But courage gives way to fate: the retreat from Spain is the counterpart of that from Russia.

August 12. — Austria notifies the Emperor Napoleon, its son-in-law, of its adherence to the coalition.

August 15. — Proclamation of the King of Sweden, Bernadotte, to the Germans. He urges them to follow the example of the French of 92: the former soldier of the republic knows how to precipitate the people against despots. Defection of General Jomini.

August 18. — Evacuation of the kingdom of Valencia, by Suche.

August 24. — Levy of 30,000 conscripts, recall of the classes of 1812, 1813, 1814, in 24 departments of the South.

August 27. — Battle of Dresden, won by the Emperor. Death of Moreau, returning from the United States, at the call of Bernadotte, to direct the operations of the allies. — This success is balanced by the numerous defeats of generals Qudinot, Macdonald, Vandamme, Ney, la Martinière, both in Germany and in Spain, the evacuation of Schwérin by Pavoust, the capture of Fort Saint-Sébastien by the English.

October 7. — Passage of the Bidassoa by Wellington.

October 9. — Levy of 160,000 men, class of 1815; — recall of 120,000 men from all classes of previous years: total 280,000 men.

October 15. — Defection of the Bavarians.

October 18-19, — Battle of Leipzig, known as the Nations: 475,000 French against 330,000 allies. The Saxons abandon the Emperor's cause on the battlefield: Napoleon is defeated; the will of man is crushed by the will of things.

October 26. — Defection from Württemberg.

October 30. — Battle of Hanau, where the retreating French were *victorious*

over the Bavarians, with a loss of 10,000 men killed or wounded, and as many prisoners. Hanau is the Berezina of 1813.

October 31. — Capitulation of Pamplona: Western Spain is freed.

November 10. — Wellington, still in pursuit of the French army, attacks Marshal Soult and forces him to Saint-Jean de Luz.

November 11. — Surrender of Dresden. The capitulation obtained by Gouvion-Saint-Cyr is violated by Schwarzenberg; 23,000 men and 6,000 sick people were held prisoner by the allies.

November 14-15. — Napoleon is congratulated, in the name of the Senate, by Lacépède. "The senate," said this imbecile, "shuddered at the dangers your Majesty ran. Your Majesty fought for peace. Before the resumption of hostilities, Your Majesty had offered to convene a congress. Your enemies, sire, opposed it; it is on them that the blame for the war must fall!" That said, the Senate decreed a levy of 300,000 men, to be distributed among all previous classes, from 1803 to 1814.

November 24. — Capture of Amsterdam by the Prussians; Holland proclaims its independence.

December 8-15. — Continuation of battles between Soult and Wellington, in the Pyrenees. The French are still retreating.

December 11. — Treaty of Valençay: Napoleon *renders* his States to Ferdinand VII!

December 13. — Murat, hoping to save his royalty of Naples, poses as a representative of the Italian nationality, and separates from the Emperor. The calculation was certainly false, but it was based on a true principle, which stood with the evidence of a monument: nationality. Everything therefore accuses Napoleon, his brothers, brothers-in-law, his ex-Marshal Bernadotte, the nationalized war in Calabria, in Spain, in Russia, and throughout the Germanic Empire.

December 15. — Defection of Denmark, last ally of Napoleon.

December 19. — The legislative body is convened. The Emperor protests "that he always wanted peace; that, monarch and father, he knows what it adds to the security of thrones and families; that it did not depend on him that it was never troubled." These words have been accused of hypocrisy: how, on the contrary, can we not recognize their sincerity? It was not the Emperor who rejected peace, it was the system. And this system was not a fantasy of despotism; it was the result of all of Napoleon's ideas in matters of government.

December 24. — The invasion begins along the entire line of the Rhine: the Swiss take part, giving passage to the allies. Just recognition of the mediation of the first consul (February 19, 1803)!

December 30. — The commission of the Legislative Body presents its report against imperial policy. It is said there that it is not enough for the Emperor to renounce retaining *too extensive a territory*, to exercise a *preponderance incompatible* with the independence of nations; that we need a homeland, *protective laws, liberty, the exercise of political rights*, etc. — The printing is voted by a majority of 225 votes to 32. The police have the proofs carried off!

December 31. — The legislative body is adjourned by imperial decree. The Emperor only saw the inadvisability of an act carried out under the enemy's cannon, at the moment when all the forces of the country had to be deployed to repel the invasion. But whose fault is it, in truth, if at that moment France perhaps feared the allies less than the Emperor?

1814.

January 1. — New Year's Day reception. — The Emperor, at the sight of the deputies of the legislative body, becomes angry, rambles. His improvised, incoherent speech demonstrates this strange fact: that Napoleon, a statesman, did not see in the independence of States, respect for nationalities, the equilibrium of territories, only banal moralities, aimed at princely ambitions; he did not conceive of these things as necessary PRINCIPLES, absolute LAWS of the economy of societies. How, with this superficial idea of the conditions of politics, after ten years of universal adoration, could he learn the lesson from the representatives, dominate a situation of which he only understood the strategic accidents, face a hypocritical diplomacy, which took advantage of his errors in the eyes of the populations, and was itself preparing to violate, for its own benefit, the principles that it opposed to them?

January 8. — France is invaded at every point. The number of allied troops moving against us is one million men; the number of French troops, not including the mobilized national guards, of 360,000 men.

January 25. — Napoleon's departure for the army: French campaign.

January 27-29. — Saint-Dirier is retaken: battle of Brienne, where the French extricate themselves from a bad position. Blucher retreats.

February 1. — Battle of Rothière; without results. — The French retreat towards Troyes.

February 3-March 19. — Congress of Châtillon. The allies demand that France resume its old limits, and provide several places of war as security: Napoleon refuses.

February 7. — The first symptoms of royalism appear in Troyes, in Champagne.

February 10-11. — Battles of Champaubert and Montmirail, where the allied troops are beaten by Napoleon. Proclamation of the Duke of Angoulême.

February 17-24. — Battles of Nangis, Montereau, Méry-sur-Seine: the allies retreat before Napoleon; Troyes is recaptured.

February 24. — Imperial decree, dated from Troyes, against the partisans of the ancient dynasties. They are declared traitors to the country, and punished with death.

February 27. — Battle of Orthez, between Wellington and Soult: decided in favor of the large battalions.

February 27-98. — Combats at Bar and La Ferté-sur-Aube; Marshals Oudinot and Macdonald withdraw with losses.

March 1. — Treaty of Chaumont between the allies. The cause of the Emperor is separated from that of France; liberty, — heartbreaking contradiction! — appears to the nation, under the flags of the Allies and the auspices of the Bourbons!

March 5. — Napoleon decrees a mass uprising, in the towns and countryside, against the allies. Alas! He alone does not know: the people have changed since 92. The old fanaticism of the inviolability of the territory no longer exists. Let the Emperor defend himself, since he is France!

March 12. — The Duke of Angoulême is received in Bordeaux, to the acclamations of the inhabitants.

March 13-14. Recapture of Reims by the Emperor: the allies are still advancing.

March 20-21. — Battles of Arcis-sur-Aube. The Emperor exposes himself as a soldier: the allies enter Lyon.

March 23-26. — Battles of Fère-Champenoise and Saint-Dizier. Marshals Mortier and Marmont are beaten in the first; Napoleon is victorious in the second.

March 29. — The 5 percent went down to 45 francs.

March 30. — Battle of Paris. The defense was abandoned by Clarke, Lacué, Savary, Baron Pasquier, and King Joseph, who refused to arm the people. After the most heroic defense, Marshals Mortier and Marmont evacuate the capital. The next day, 31, Paris capitulated; the 5 percent increases 2 francs.

April 1. — The Senate institutes a provisional government, the municipality publishes a proclamation to the French against the Usurper, and invites them to return to *their legitimate kings*. — The 5 percent is 51 francs.

April 2. — Napoleon is declared by the Senate to have *fallen from the throne; the right of heredity abolished in his family; the people and the army released from their oath*.

The conscripts of the last levy are sent back to their homes.

April 5. — Convention of Chevilly: Marshal Marmont, more citizen than soldier, joins the provisional government, the soldier abandons his general for his country: the ruin of the Emperor is consumed. The 5 percent is 63 fr. 75 c.; a rise in 7 days, 18 fr. 75. The same flood of purse that welcomed the first Consul, conducts the Emperor.

April 6. — The bases of a constitution are decreed by the Senate, to be proposed to Louis XVIII: the nation resumes the white cockade.

April 10. — Battle of Toulouse. Wellington, who knew of the capitulation of Paris, wanted, before laying down his arms, to give himself the honor of a victory and attacked Marshal Soult in his entrenchments. He is rebuffed with shame and tremendous loss.

April 11. — Abdication of the Emperor.

May 3. — Louis XVIII enters Paris, to the cheers of the inhabitants.

There was provided to Napoleon Bonaparte, decennial consul, consul for life and emperor, from May 18, 1802 until November 15, 1813, for the service of his personal policy, a total of 2,473,000 conscripts, not including voluntary enlistments, customs officers, the surplus of the levies on account of deserters and draft dodgers, the national guards of Paris, Strasbourg, Metz, Lille, etc., who did active service in the last campaign, and the levy *en masse* organized at the beginning of 1814, in several departments. Let us add 100,000 men, soldiers and sailors, sent to Egypt and Santo Domingo, and let us remember that this youth, once regimented, was lost for the country or only returned mutilated: it will be a workforce of 2,573,000 men, consumed in enterprises that would lack the inspiration of the country, the knowledge of the times and the intelligence of things.

With this armed force of 2,573,000 men, unlimited and uncontrolled power, with the training of France and the enthusiasm of the soldiers, Napoleon failed in all the undertakings which depended only on his genius. He fails in Egypt, in Santo Domingo, in Portugal, in Spain, in Russia; after the retreat from Moscow, the general defection of his allies, proteges and feudatories, Prussia, Austria, Saxony, Bavaria, Holland, the Hanseatic towns, the confederation of the Rhine, Denmark, Switzerland, Italy, where his brother Murat, carried away by the torrent, proves that at the very moment when he flattered himself that he had succeeded in his projects of European concentration, he had on the contrary completely failed; that the peoples, as much as the kings, impatiently supported both his yoke, and his protection, and his mediation, and his alliance. And the result, after twelve years of struggle, which the singers of Greece and India would have regarded as fabulous, is the expulsion of the man, of his family, of his dynasty, the reduction of France to its limits, as they existed on January 1, 1792: the conquests of the republic are not even preserved by Napoleon.

Now, to explain this deep fall after such a sudden rise, do we have to rehash

the banal reasons of ambition and pride, the burning of Moscow, the cold of 25 degrees, the false maneuvers of the leader, the betrayal of the peoples and kings, accuse France and Europe, or insult the hero?

All of this is absurd.

The principle of failure is not in the accidents of nature and of war, any more than in the crime and cowardice of men; it is entirely in the falseness of political conceptions. Napoleon struggled against the reason of peoples based on the reason of things: he was therefore defeated in advance and infallibly, defeated, I say, not only after Moscow and Leipzig, but as soon as Austerlitz, from the day when this dispute for pre-eminence began with England, in which we see Napoleon leading, without his realizing it, by the reason of state that he had made, to a continuity of despotism and obviously absurd conquests. In war as in politics, as in history, it is general reason, the reason of peoples and the reason of things, that ultimately triumphs: Napoleon does not seem to have suspected that this reason, whose intelligence alone makes statesmen, was of a quality other than his own. Because there was more genius in his profession than most of his contemporaries, especially those whom their birth had made princes, he believed that this genius, a very *special* genius, would suffice to assure him triumph always and everywhere. He only forgot one thing, moreover beyond his reach and which he himself called his *star*, that is to say his mandate, determined in advance, without him, without any consideration of his person, by the necessities of history and the force of the situation.

Thus, from his departure for Egypt, Bonaparte no longer knows where the century is going, and what up to a certain point excuses him in the eyes of posterity, his contemporaries know no more than he does. To fight England, a mercantile and industrial nation, Bonaparte knows only war: he sets out militarily to take his rival from behind, to seek a passage that could only be obtained half a century later, by steam and railways. At the first attempt, the English put to naught this singular strategy, by destroying Bonaparte's means of transport, and locking him up as in a trap. What then do the victories of the Pyramids, Mont-Thabor, etc. mean? ? What does it matter that Bonaparte compensates himself on the Mamluks, the Arabs, the Turks, for the irreparable reverse of Aboukir? He triumphs over barbarism; he is defeated by civilization. All these feats of arms can exert influence only on the mad imaginations of the French and the Orientals: as for the enterprise, nothing.

The *Continental System* is just a variant of the Egyptian expedition. The first idea does not belong to the Emperor: it seems, according to Barère, to have come to the Committee of Public Safety in the fire of 93, and the ignorance in which people were generally then of the laws of the economy. Since Pitt and England could not be reached across the ocean, there was nothing to do, it was thought, but to close Europe to him, and his goods remaining to him for account, England would be ruined. What madness!... But, to keep Europe from the visit of the English, it would have required, on the immense extent of its coasts, a navy ten

times more numerous than to operate a raid on them. In the impossibility of procuring such a fleet, the only resource remaining against the commerce of these islanders was the abstention, voluntary or forced, of the continent. Such is the continental blockade theory. It is almost as if, in order to deprive the government of December 2 of the receipts of indirect taxes, and to push it more quickly to bankruptcy, the citizens suppressed from their consumption wine, beer, spirits, salt, sugar, tobacco, etc.!... However strange the idea may seem today, Bonaparte took it upon himself to execute it. He does not realize for a single moment that by excluding the English from Europe in this way, it is Europe itself that he is going to sequester from the rest of the world, it is the monopoly of the globe that he assures the English, and ultimately the preponderance of Great Britain, the inferiority of the Continent, and his own incapacity that he signs. The Emperor's mind is closed, blocked, on all things: from where would he know, moreover, that the method of mathematicians cannot be applied to things of pure reason, and that an idea designated by A in its elementary expression, pushed to its last consequence becomes Z, that is to say, a contradiction?... For ten years the Continental Blockade, counterpart of the political centralization which it also inherited from the Jacobins, — two contradictory ideas, two antinomies! — so, outside and inside, the whole basis of imperial policy; this is what becomes, in the personality of a man, of the genius of the revolution!

Ten years of struggle had depressed all minds: the political genius of 89 had fallen by turns from the fanaticism of Babeuf to the platitudes of the theophilanthropists. The mother idea of the great epoch, representative government, a machine of social investigation rather than a true institution, this idea, I say, betrayed by the old royalty, discredited by the scenes of the Constituent Assembly, the Legislative Assembly, the the Convention, negated by the *coups d'état* of the Directory, was obscured. In 99, it would have taken no less than the genius of Mirabeau and the arm of Bonaparte to put it afloat in public opinion and restore its brilliance: the man of 18 Brumaire had only half the talents required for this role.

Bonaparte, in fact, treating politics exactly like strategy, governing peoples as he commanded armies, his whole career, so glorious for a bard, is in the eyes of the publicist no more than a perpetual infraction of the elementary laws of history. He compared himself to the famous conquerors, Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne; and certainly, considering only the blows, he could still pass for modest. But he was unaware, or he forgot, that these famous men represented the idea, the underlying necessity of their century; that in them the peoples recognized their own incarnation, their genius; that thus Alexander represented the Hellenic confederation and its preponderance over the East; that Caesar meant the leveling of the Roman classes and the political unity of the nations grouped around the Mediterranean, a unity that would one day imply the cessation of slavery; that Charlemagne, finally, was the education by Christianity

of the races of the North, and their substitution in the humanitarian initiative for the races of the South.

Now, what idea did Napoleon represent in the 19th century? The French Revolution? This was indeed what his Senate told him, and what he also happened to glimpse at times. But it is obvious that in the eyes of the Emperor the revolution was nothing more than a dead letter, a protested and unpaid note, written off in profit and loss, which served him, if necessary, to justify his title, but whose he repudiated the origin.

The aim of the French Revolution was:

1. To complete the monarchical work, followed from Hugues Capet until 1614 with as much intelligence as the state of minds required, diverted after the last convocation of the states-general in favor of despotism, by Richelieu, Mazarin and Louis XIV;

2. To develop the philosophical spirit of which the eighteenth century had given the signal, and which Condorcet had formulated in a single word, *progress*;

3. To introduce into the government of nations the economic idea, called to eliminate little by little that of authority, and to reign alone, like a new religion, over the peoples.

Napoleon was not at that height: neither a statesman, nor a thinker, nor an economist, a soldier and nothing but a soldier, there were three times more to things than he could carry. Everything in him rose up against such facts. He denied historical tradition, looking for it where it was not. Rival of Caesar, Hannibal and Alexandre, in the battles, he copies in the policy Charlemagne. He makes up an empire carved on the same pattern as that of the Frankish chief, extending at the same time over Gaul, Spain, Helvetia, Lombardy, Germany. He does not know that since the Treaty of Westphalia the public right of Europe has for its indestructible basis the equilibrium of states and the independence of nationalities. As for philosophy, economics, representative government, the obligatory transition to industrial democracy, he also rejects them. The *ideologues* are as suspect to him as the *advocates*, and enjoy no consideration under his reign; the *economists* he equates with the ideologues and persecutes them on occasion. We know how he treated the democrats, rendered so odious under the name of Jacobins. Mirabeau was no more; Sieyes, by revealing his venality, had brought the constitutional system into disrepute; J.-B. Say stood aside; Saint-Simon continued, unknown, the course of his observations on humanity, and prophesied to some friends the end of *the military and governmental regime*; Fourier, a simple clerk, dreamed at the back of a store; Chateaubriand continued in his own way the reaction of the old regime, and laid the foundations of the restoration. Napoleon was left alone, having found neither his Aristotle nor his Homer, a character in the antique style, endowed with all the qualities that make a hero, but which with him could only serve to mask the weakness of the statesman.

The most real monument of the imperial period, the one to which Napoleon's

pride seems above all to hold, is the drafting of codes. However, who does not see today, especially since December 2, that this compilation of the jurisprudence of the centuries, which was to fix forever the bases of right, is only one more utopia? Three or four decrees of Louis-Napoleon sufficed to invalidate the legislative work of the Emperor, and to do his glory the most serious blow. The Napoleonic code is as incapable of serving the new society as the Platonic republic: a few more years, and the economic element, substituting everywhere the relative and mobile right of industrial mutuality for the absolute right of property, it will be necessary to reconstruct from top to bottom this cardboard palace!

Admittedly, Napoleon was a great virtuoso of battles and victories: his whole life is an epic, in the taste of the people and the ancients. Incomparable hero, struggling against gods and men, so deep in his calculations that he can defy fortune, and defeated only by inflexible fate: there is in this career enough to compose a poem twenty times as long as the Iliad, a Mahabharata. It is thus, moreover, that the people understand Napoleon, and that they love him. The reason of state of the revolution has rejected the Emperor; popular spontaneity gives it shelter: the election of December 10 is itself only a protest of this poetry of the masses against inexorable history. As a political action, the life of the Emperor does not require a hundred pages, and if for more evidence we want to follow the chronological filiation, it will not take twenty-five. This whole series of battles, which has earned us so many trophies, which has cost us so much treasure and so much blood, is reduced to a military trilogy, the first act of which is called Aboukir, the second Trafalgar, the last Waterloo.

Just a word about this latest feat.

Napoleon, after the farewells at Fontainebleau, did not think it was over. His reason admitted the luck of the battles, the consequences of defeat: it could not get used to the idea of the restoration of the Bourbons. At their legitimacy, their divine right, of course he laughed: but by what talisman had these princes, forgotten for 25 years, disdained by the coalition, odious to the French nation, regained their crown? How, in one day, without an army, without a budget, without prestige, had these emigrants been able to supplant him, the triumphant 20-year-old, elected with 5 million votes? Intrigue alone, even with the Talleyrands and the Fouchés, did not produce these miracles. It was therefore a surprise, shameful, ridiculous, which sooner or later France would like to get the better of, and which he himself, the old Emperor, would be called upon to do justice.

A great noise was made about the Charter. But could he believe, after what he had seen of all this parliament, and under the Constituent Assembly, the Legislative Assembly, the Convention, and under the Directory; could he believe that for this scrap of paper France would have given itself to the Bourbons? The more he thought about it, the more the restoration must have seemed to him miserable, irrational.

It was there, however, in the Charter, that the key to the enigma was to be found. What had determined the fall of the Emperor was the political and social idea of 89, abandoned by him, drowned in the lists of conscription and the constitutions of the empire. What made the fortune of the Bourbons was this same idea of 89, affirmed by them, after 25 years of resistance, under the name of Charter. Nothing was more logical than this expulsion and restoration; nothing more legitimate, on this condition, than *legitimacy*. So goes the revolution.

The ex-emperor had time to convince himself of this during the ten months he spent on the island of Elba. He was able to follow beyond the acts of the Congress of Vienna, taking up the bases of the Treaty of Westphalia; the first debates in the chambers of restoration; observe the rise of industry, literature and French philosophy, under a regime of peace, and liberty, however very modest.

What lesson does Napoleon draw from all these facts?

In the Congress of Vienna, he sees diplomatic intrigues, unjust alterations; in the government of the Bourbons, he seizes ridicule and blunders. In all things his mind stops at the surface, does not judge, appreciates only the bad. And it is on these data that he immediately builds the plan of his return!

Napoleon imagines that a historic role can be repeated; he flatters himself, in a new attempt, to succeed better than the first time. The very example of the Bourbons comes to him as an argument for his error; he simply does not suspect that in this pretended *restoration*, only half a dozen individuals have been restored; that the principle that they formerly defended has been abjured by them, and that their metamorphosis, at least apparent, has been the condition *sine qua non* of their return. In this so despised Charter, he does not see the revolution, which will soon be set in motion by constitutional practice, will force its representatives to follow it or will expel them again. — A throne for a Charter! thought Napoleon. I will also give them a Charter, to which I will take an oath!... As in 1799, a simple soldier, after having seen so many governments and ministries pass by, he had naively believed himself as capable, and more capable than so many others to hold the tiller of the State; he no longer doubted, in 1815, that he was fit, as much and more than the Bourbons, to make a constitutional monarch. From him to others, the comparison was to his advantage: but it was a question of things, and Napoleon never thought of it.

Thus the Emperor is in tow of the King! To the error of the restorations, to the chimera of his own remorse, he adds the disadvantage of constitutional imitation, races to the steeple of popularity, and pushing the copy to the point of silliness, he writes at the head of his new contract: *Additional act to the constitutions of the empire*. That is to say that, as Louis XVIII in signing the Charter counted nineteen years of reign, Napoleon in his Additional Act counted fourteen years of constitutionality!... Droll plagiarism!

After having triumphed at Ligny and Quatre-Bras, the Emperor succumbed to Mont-Saint-Jean: irrevocable fate confirmed his decision. There, no doubt, he

could still have won, as has been repeatedly repeated, without Grouchy's immobility, without Bourmont's treachery, without Blücher's arrival, without Ney's uncertainties, without the covered wa., without the lack of nails to put out of action, after each charge of the cuirassiers, the guns of the English. Then it would have been up to Wellington to say: I would have won, had it not been for the delay of the Prussians, without the arrival of Grouchy, without this, without that!... What would have followed? A second invasion, a second campaign in France, and very probably a second abdication. For who does not see here that the accidents of war, taken in detail, are for everyone; taken together are for logic? Waterloo, a bad day in the annals of France, is legitimate in the march of the revolution and the destiny of the Emperor.

For the rest, Napoleon, superstitious, fatalistic, believing in his star, saying of himself, *I am the child of circumstances*, and only deceiving himself as to the meaning of his role and the articles of his mandate, was even closer to the truth than his contemporaries. He felt pushed, and he worried, not knowing where he was going! Who then could have told him? No one in his time had that understanding of history that assures reason against the momentary successes of a false policy. Until the arrival of the 29th bulletin (December 18, 1812), France was dazzled. Even abroad, it was hard to come back. A moment after the bombardment of Copenhagen, England was abandoned. Alexandre is a friend, François gives his daughter. Already Fox had negotiated for peace. Pitt himself had acted out of hatred, more than out of a fair appreciation of things. The rest went like sheep. Everywhere, the thread of tradition was broken, the historical consciousness vanished under the prestige of events. Only the Spanish people opposed their self to the imperial self. But it was not believed that French armies were devoured by guerrillas, and Wagram had made people despair of Spanish nationality. As we only looked at the surface, we considered indestructible a mined building, of which, with a little more attention, one would have calculated the end with a chronological precision.

Thus among his astonished contemporaries, Napoleon remained superior still, thanks to the mystical feeling he had of his destiny; which amounts to saying that the ignorance of the peoples and their leaders has made up three-quarters of its glory. How much more quickly the great man would have disappeared, if, as in our day, the analytical mind had taken it into his head to calculate the elements of his reign, and to derive the horoscope from it! *Tell me where you come from, and I'll tell you where you're going!*... The history of the establishment of a power, by giving the measure of its mandate, is one more guarantee of the liberty of peoples.

IX.

DON'T LIE TO THE REVOLUTION.

All of history is figurative; all its epochs are fateful and serve each other as announcement and correction. And social destiny is also only a long myth, where the infinite Spirit plays out, prelude to the creation of some new humanity.

I have spoken of the imperial legend: I am going to show the reality of it in contemporary facts. *Hoc is somnium, and hæc is interpretatio ejus.*

As Nebuchadnezzar dreamed of Cyrus, the Emperor prophesied Louis-Napoleon. Apart from the opposition already mentioned, namely that the Emperor came to end a revolution, while Louis-Napoleon opens another, an opposition that in the historical series is one more resemblance, we find between the two figures, between their situations and their epochs, the most constant analogy.

The first Bonaparte was in no way happy with what he undertook on his own initiative: he was only successful under the cover of the nation. Let us leave to the popular Ossians their eternal battles: they are generally well combined, well played, superiorly won or brilliantly lost. It is not a question here of the individual, in his profession of hero; it is a question of the political man. It is as political conceptions that the expeditions to Egypt and Santo Domingo must be judged: they failed, because public inspiration had completely failed in the first, and an enterprise of this importance had to spring exclusively of national reason; because then the revolutionary spirit had failed at the second, and it was absurd, criminal, to put the Haitians back in irons, by virtue of the declaration of the rights of man.

Despite this double failure, in spite of his faults of administration and police, already too apparent, the first Consul succeeds nevertheless; and until the rupture of the treaty of Amiens, his government, reparative and pacifying, strong in general support, was fruitful and prosperous. But the Emperor, freed from the tutelage of public opinion and the limits of the Constitution, fell from fault to fault, and soon from failure to failure. The chronology made us touch the reason: this Olympian head, impatient with the public voice, which wanted to think for itself, ends up thinking nothing at all!...

Reduced to its true terms, the comparison between the two Bonapartes can therefore be followed. Louis-Napoleon, it is true, did not win any battles: who knows if he would not? Bring together two armies, two generals. One of the two will necessarily be victorious, the other vanquished; the first a hero, the second a weakling, said Paul-Louis. And then a victory can be bought, like everything... it is only a question of paying the price. Triumphs and laurels apart, abandoning the field of war *and its hazards* to place ourselves on that of politics, I say,

without flattery or irony, that uncle and nephew are equals; much more, that their destinies follow each other and match, as in a metempsychosis. In Strasbourg and Boulogne, Louis-Napoleon fails, like Bonaparte in Egypt and Saint-Domingue. He succeeded on December 10, with the same elements, when instead of surprising, in an *impromptu* conspiracy, the national sympathies, he presents himself under regular conditions to the suffrages of the people. He is again fortunate on December 2, despite the violation of the pact, as his uncle had been on the 18 Brumaire: I believe I have sufficiently explained how, in this circumstance, the fatality of the situation covered up the anomaly of form.

But if, in the two men, the will, the judgment, the political conception, the alternation of successes and reverses, appear in all alike and from the same causes, the parity of the conjunctures is quite otherwise striking.

The antagonists of the Emperor were, on the one hand, the feudal aristocracy, represented by the emigrants, the priests and the coalition; on the other, the financial and mercantile aristocracy, represented by England. These two aristocracies making common cause and combining their means, it was a combination of analogous means that the Emperor had to fight them. We have seen, in the chronology that we have drawn up of the consulate and the empire, how Bonaparte, instead of organizing the economic forces of the nation against the enemy, then dragging along in the same movement, under the pressure of French liberties, the continent of Europe, became entangled and perished in his saber politics, in the maze of a police resurrected from the Terror, finally, in the need for endless conquests and the absurdity of his *continental system*.

Louis-Napoleon also had as opponents, on the one hand, the old feudal system, represented by the Holy Alliance, the legitimist and ultramontane party; on the other, the capitalist aristocracy, represented by the upper bourgeoisie and by England. As in 1805, these aristocracies agree, concert, merge. To overcome them, he required, without neglecting the military force, a combination of means borrowed from the practice of the interests, from economic science; it is necessary, above all, to embrace strongly, frankly, the revolutionary idea. Already, however, a fatal analogy! Already, by the false measures of December 2 and the declamations of its newspapers, the revolution is abandoned; hostile aristocracies present themselves under the guise of general interests and public liberties; a little longer, and as in 1809 and 1813, the peoples themselves, with the voice of their nobles, their priests, their exploiters and their despots, will anathematize Louis-Napoleon.

I could, prophet of doom, penetrating more deeply into the mystery of the future, mark the phases of this struggle, the symptoms of which spring from the last elections in England; to show the revolution, alternately invoked, repelled, as under the consulate and the empire, finally abandoning December 2, and Louis-Napoleon, betrayed like his uncle by his personality, once again giving the example of the vengeance of the Destiny: *Discite justitiam moniti, and non temnere divos!*

I like better, for the teaching of my country, for the edification of its masters, present and future, and as a guarantee against factions that, without more intelligence and goodwill than the others, already devour in idea the succession of December 2, to demonstrate one last time, and by a new argument, the inviolability of revolutions.

No, I would say to the Elysée, you cannot continue in cold blood this sad parody of the imperial epic. And if, as some philosophers would be led to think, you are a new incarnation of your uncle, you have not returned to fall back into your old aberrations, but to do penance for them. You owe us the expiation of 1814 and 1815, which means, ten years of imperial servitude; the atonement for the legitimacy, which you caused to be restored; the atonement for quasi-legitimacy, which you have made possible. Put yourself in unison with your time and your country, because you cannot do by yourself, any more than Mazzini's Italy, *Italia fara da se!*... Your star does not want it; the people do not want it; the groaning shadow, not yet purified, of Napoleon does not want it; and me, your benevolent astrologer, who aspires, like so many others, only to get it over with, I don't want that either.

First of all, what should your starting point be? I told you, the revolution.

The revolution *democratic* and *social* (both, do you understand) is henceforth for France, for Europe, a forced condition, almost a *fait accompli*, — what am I saying? — the only refuge left to the old world against impending dissolution.

As long as the patient has gangrene, he breeds vermin. Likewise, as long as society is delivered up to an economy of chance, it is inevitable that there will be *exploiters* and *exploited*, a parasitism and pauperism, which gnaw it with a rival tooth; — as long as to support this parasitism and to alleviate its ravages society will give itself a concentric and *strong* power, there will be parties that will dispute this power, with which the victor drinks from the skull of the vanquished, with which one makes and unmakes revolutions; — as long, finally, as there are antagonistic parties and hostile classes, power will be unstable and the existence of the nation precarious.

Such is the genealogy of society, abandoned to speculators, usurers, empirics, policemen and factions! The vice of the economic system produces the inequality of fortunes, and consequently the distinction of classes; the distinction of classes calls for political centralization to defend it; political centralization gives rise to parties, with which power is necessarily unstable and peace impossible. A radical economic reform alone can pull us out of this circle: we push it away. It is the conservatives who keep society in a revolutionary state.

France, a country of logic, seems to have given itself the mission of realizing, point by point, this *a priori* theory of poverty, oppression and civil war.

There exists in France, and as long as the revolution is not made in the economy, there will exist: 1. a *bourgeoisie* that claims to maintain, in perpetuity, the ancient relations of labor and capital, although labor is no longer rejected like a servitude but demanded like a right, and the circulation of products being able

to take place almost without discount, capitalist privilege no longer has any reason for existence; 2. a *middle class*, within which lives and stirs the spirit of liberty, which possesses the reason for the future, and which, repressed from above and below, by capitalist insolence and proletarian envy, nevertheless forms the heart and brain of the nation; 3. a *proletariat*, full of its strength, that socialist preaching has intoxicated, and who, with good reason, on the article of labor and well-being, shows himself intractable.

Each of these classes vying for power, — the first, to repress a revolution that threatens its interests; the second, to moderate it; the third, to launch it at full speed, — the division by classes changes into a division by parties, between which we distinguish: 1. the party of *legitimacy*, representative of Salic law and feudal traditions, the only ones capable, according to them, of stopping the revolution; 2. the party of the *constitutional monarchy*, more bourgeois than noble, which, at this moment, by the voice of M. Creton, recalls the country to the benefits and glories of 1830; 3. the party of the *moderate republic*, which, being very circumspect with regard to economic reforms, no longer wants either royalty, nobility, or presidency; 4. the party of the *red republic*, more governmental than economist, and which took as its program the constitution of 93; 5. the *Bonapartist* party, which tends to satisfy or deceive the appetite of the proletariat through war; 6. the *priest party*, finally, who, perfectly informed about the progress of the century, no longer sees any way out for society, and for itself any salvation, except in the re-establishment of the spiritual and temporal omnipotence of the pope. I do not count the Socialists as a party, although they are more Republican and more radical than the Reds, because in none of their schools are they men of *power*, but men of SCIENCE and solutions.

Three classes and *six* parties, in all NINE great antagonistic divisions: this is France, under the regime of Malthusian economy and political centralization. Here is the product of this *unity* of which we are so proud, which the foreigner *envies us*, and to which we must give as an emblem the head of Medusa and her serpents!

Now, I defy any power that will not be revolutionary, that of Henry V as well as that of December 2, the theocracy as well as the bourgeoisie, to put an end to this division of parties and classes; and for the same reason I defy every power, at the point where things are, to hold against. You can support yourself for some time on the antagonism of parties, like the lantern of the Pantheon on the flying buttresses of the dome: but this balance, which made all the stability of Louis-Philippe, is precarious. Let for a moment, at the first opportunity, the parties cease to oppose each other, the classes to threaten each other, and the power falls. The suppression of liberties, the embarrassment of the press, the state of siege, the state prisons, the ostracism set up as an institution, all these instruments of the old tyranny, will do nothing about it. A government that will have nothing but force and millions of votes on its side will be obliged, like Robespierre, to constantly begin the *purification* of society again, until it is itself *purified*.

The Emperor thought to stop the corrosion of parties by war: a detestable resource, which attests less to the despotism of the man than to the extremity to which he saw himself reduced, and his profound ignorance of revolutionary things. Well! War has pronounced in the last resort against the Emperor. And then, what war would Louis-Napoleon fight? About what? Against whom? With what?... I ask these questions, without pressing them: I would not like to say anything that had the shadow of a challenge or an irony. Let us therefore pass over the war policy, and since it is almost forbidden on December 2, except in the case where he takes up the cause of the revolution, to return this imperial poetry to the people; since he is condemned to make vile economic and social prose, let us tell him that ideas can only be fought by ideas; that consequently, to win out over the parties, there is only one means, which is to form one which swallows them all up. I have explained elsewhere how, in the present situation, this party of absorption was to be composed of the middle class and the proletariat: I refer to my previous indications.

To deny, in the present economy of society, the necessity of parties: impossible.

To govern with them, without them or against them: impossible.

To impose silence on them by means of the police, or to deceive them by war and adventures: impossible.

It remains that any one becomes the instrument of absorption of all: that is what is possible.

Let December 2 therefore, and what I say here for the passing government, I address to all those who come; let December 2 frankly embrace its *raison d'être*; let it affirm, without restriction or equivocation, the social revolution; let it say aloud to France, let it notify abroad the content of its mandate; that it calls upon itself, instead of a body of mute people, a true representation of the middle class and the proletariat; let it prove the sincerity of its tendency by acts of explicit liberalism; let it purge itself of all clerical, monarchical and Malthusian influence; let it transport to the bodies of teachers and doctors, some in misery, others delivered to the hazard of a shameful casualty, the 42 millions thrown to the priests; let it drive out of its society this band of intriguers, without faith or law, bohemians, mostly spies, who cheat it; let it abandon to the slander of public opinion those literary gentlemen, whose venal, pestilential breath swells the sail of all tyranny; let it hand over to the free judges of the purest democracy all those renegades, court dramatists, police pamphleteers, merchants of anonymous consultations, sheep from prisons and cabarets, who after having eaten the dry bread of socialism, lick the fatty dishes from the Elysée...

What? Because the democracy fought the candidacy of Louis Bonaparte on December 10, I was there; because she pushed it back on January 29, I was there; because it rose up against him on June 13, without prison I would have been there; because it defeated him in the elections of 1850, from the depths of the Conciergerie I was still there; because it rose against him on December 2, I can

no longer say that I was there! Louis-Napoleon would believe himself obliged, out of a spirit of competition, to give his policy a personal significance! He would be afraid of appearing eclipsed, if it were said of him that after having overthrown the social republic, he took his ideas from it, and put himself in tow!

The Emperor once yielded to this puerile self-esteem. He wanted to be something other than the republic, to do more than the republic, to think better than the republic. It happened, in the end, that with all his titles, his crowns, his trophies, he was nothing, did nothing, alone never thought anything: he remained Napoleon. Are we going to start this concert again with only one part of the great maestro?

Neither Galba, who replaced Nero, so much missed by the people; nor Vespasian, who tearfully refused from Éponine the pardon of Sabinus; nor Nerva, who had conspired against Donatien; nor Pertinax, who slew Commodus; nor Septimius Severus, who beheaded Didius-Julianus, the last and highest bidder of Caesarism; nor Aurelian, who dragged the immortal Zenobia in his chariot: none of these emperors believed himself obliged to modify the imperial statute, revolutionary statute then, because having taken it from rival hands, sometimes unworthy, he would have thought himself dishonored in the following. Brutus, it is true, after having expelled the Tarquins, abolished the title of king and proclaimed the republic. It is because the Tarquins, affecting the airs of Greek tyrants, failed in their moderating mission, which was to procure, by the patronage of the patricians, the emancipation of the plebs.

So why are you talking about plagiarism and towage, as if it were about individuals, not destiny? Leave men, since defeat and their own dignity do not allow them to be yours. Between Esau and Jacob, the supplanted and the supplanter, there can be peace, never friendship or forgetfulness. For people of heart, there are grievances that cannot be erased. I am willing, paying the tribute of my opinions to my country, to contribute perhaps to enlightening a power that I have had to stop combating; I will not serve it. But precisely because Esau has lost his birthright, Jacob must be chief of the people of God; otherwise Esau, called Edom, *the Red*, will claim the inheritance, and chastise his suborner and unfaithful younger brother.

Do not trick the revolution; don't try to spin it for your particular purposes, opposing your competitors, while you carve an emperor's or king's coat from its scarf. Neither you, nor any of those who aspire to replace you, can conceive a valid idea, carry out the slightest enterprise, outside the elements of the revolution. The revolution has foreseen everything, conceived everything; it prepared the estimate itself. Seek, and when, with an upright mind and a docile heart, you have found, do not interfere, in common with the country, except in the execution.

And what would be the lofty thought, the political and economic ideal, that the depositary of national sovereignty would create for himself, producing it from his genius, and not receiving it, neither by historical transmission from the

parties that have preceded it in business, nor by the analytical way of the study of social facts and their generalization? What could he think of himself, as a man, that he should not receive public opinion as head of state; against what, consequently, would all the citizens not have the right to protest, if it pleased him to impose, by virtue of his title, his new idea?

“Among so many religions that contradict each other,” said Rousseau, “only one is the right one, if indeed there is one.” In the same way, among so many policies that the fancy of parties and the presumption of statesmen give birth to, only one can be true; it is that which, by its constant, harmonious conformity with the nature of things, acquires a character of impersonality and reality, that each of his acts seems a decree of nature itself, and that in the Academy, in the workshop, in the public square, in a council of experts, wherever men meet to treat together, it can be formulated as well as in an assembly of representatives and a council of state. Raised to this degree of authenticity, where it derives everything from things and nothing from man, politics is the pure expression of the general reason, the immanent law of society, its internal order, in a word, its *economy*.

You will not find this politics in Aristotle, nor in Machiavelli, nor in any of the masters who taught princes the essentially subjective art of exploiting their estates. It emerges from social relations, and from the revelations of history. For me, the revolution in the 19th century must be the advent.

It is a principle, in this politics that is at once rational and real, that without labor there is no wealth, and that any fortune which does not come from it is for that very reason suspect; that labor always increases and the price of things decreases; that thus the minimum wage and the maximum working hours are unassignable; that if the hectolitre of wheat is worth 20 francs, no decree of the prince can make it sell for 15 or 25, and that any factitious rise or fall, by state authority, is a theft; that under the system of interest, the proportional tax, equitable in itself, becomes progressive in the direction of misery, without anything in the world being able to prevent it; that another corollary of this interest is customs protection, so that any attempt to abolish one without touching the other is a contradiction; a tax that affects luxury items, instead of being borne by the consumer, will infallibly be borne by the worker, since consumption being optional and the price free, the producer of luxury items has an ever greater need to sell than the consumer to buy....

How many blunders of governments and their arbitrary policy would have been prevented; what vexations, sufferings, setbacks, deficits prevented; how many fatal tendencies stopped at their origin, if for sixty years these propositions, with their corollaries, had had the rank of demonstrated truths and articles of law in the general conscience! With a dozen proposals of this kind, and a free press, I would like to stop short, in all its fugues, the government of December 2. What! Could Louis-Napoleon reign only through the imbecility of the French?...

There exists, on the relations of men in society, on labor, wages, income, property, loans, exchange, taxes, public services, worship, justice, war, a crowd of such truths, of which a simple extract, accompanied by examples, would exempt governments from all other politics, and soon society from governments themselves. This is our true constitution: a constitution that overcomes all difficulties, that leaves nothing to the wisdom of princes, that makes fun of dictators and tribunes; whose theorems, chained together like a mathematics, lead the mind from the known to the unknown in social ways, provide solutions for all circumstances; a constitution against which everything that is done, wherever it comes from, is null and void, and can be deemed tyranny! The power that will teach the citizens this constitution, — and the thing begins to become possible, — will have done more for humanity than all the emperors and the popes: after it the revolutions of the species will be like those of the planet, nothing will trouble them, and no one will feel them anymore.

December 2, in the first fire of the *coup d'état*, repairing the long negligence of our assemblies, was able to decree in quick succession railway concessions, adjudications of works, extensions of privileges, reductions in discounts, seizures of buildings, conversions of annuities, continuations of taxes, etc., etc.; to do a host of things that, if society had learned of its true constitution, would have been done long ago, and done better, or would never have been done. The vulgar, who relate everything to the will of the chief, much as Father Malebranche saw everything in God, admired this decretal fecundity, and parasites applaud this strong and active power! But soon the fever for reforms subsided: more than once December 2 had to retract resolutions in the press, to withdraw projects already before the Council of State; and one can foresee that if it does not learn to read better in the book of eternal politics, it will soon appear as impotent, as incapable, as reckless, as mad as its predecessors, without excepting the Emperor himself.

Be that as it may, and of the decrees issued so far by December 2, in the midst of universal abstention, and of those that it will render subsequently from the bottom of its prerogative, it will not cause the maximization of fortunes to cease to be a contradictory idea; that a sale may be deemed perfect, before the parties have agreed on the thing and the price; that the mandate and the adjudication, in the same individual, are compatible terms; that the quasi-contract does not become quasi-delict, and even crime, while the benefactor of office avails himself of the benefit to enslave the beneficiary

December 2 will not cause the feudal system, vanquished in the political and religious order, to once again become a truth in the industrial order, when the conditions of labor and the laws of accounting are opposed to it; it will not establish, after its decree on the discount, rendered in the name of public property, that the interest on capital is henceforth anything other than an arbitrary and transitory tax; it will not make it, despite its concessions of ninety-nine years, so that if the cost price of transport, by rail and water can drop to 1 centime per ton and kilometer, the country agrees to pay the companies 8, 10 and

14 centimes, for the love of industrial feudalism: nor, when the salary of the worker, in all categories of services, is continuously decreasing, that that of state officials should increase.

The Emperor, with his political concentration, with his continental blockade and his perpetual incorporation of states, created for himself a hundred impossibilities, each of which, in time, could destroy him. Louis-Napoleon, who did not give himself a quarter of the work of his uncle, with his sole constitution renewed from the year VIII, creates a thousand of them: so much, since the fall of the Emperor, the elements refractory to the authority have developed!...

December 2 gave the clergy an almost exclusive teaching certificate. But this patent, which is completely free, contains no more government guarantee than the thousands of patents and diplomas it issues each year, against crowns, to students and industrialists. It will not, this patent, even when it would join to the authority of the state that of the holy writing, make labor, considered by theology as the expiation of an original vice, *In sudore vultus tui vesceris pane tuo*, return to a servile state; make it so that he who by work redeems himself from misery, ignorance and slavery, does not conceive of the thought of redeeming himself also, by the same means, from sin and culpability; so that the religious spirit, maintained by the priests, is not thus balanced by the industrial genius; that poverty should once again be deemed a virtue, and that the progress of well-being and luxury should not have as its correlative the development of reason, the emancipation of conscience, the absolute reign of liberty, in place of humility, detachment and Christian passivity.

December 2, by philanthropy, as much as by interest, is concerned with the improvement of the lot of the poor classes. The circulars of its ministers repeat it; the caresses of the President bear witness to this; several of its acts make it understood; the confidences of its friends and the growing hostility of the parties make the thing quite probable.

But how does it propose to effect this improvement? It cannot reign over modern France as a caliph; to seize production and commerce in the name of the public interest; put 27,000 square leagues of country, 27 million properties, factories, trades, under management; convert 36 million producers of all ages and all sexes, more or less free, and who aspire every day to become more so, into wage earners. You can't swallow something bigger than yourself, and if December 2 thinks it will swallow up the nation, it is the one who will die.

Let us suppose that December 2, pursuing the solution of the economic problem, tries to reconstitute the nation according to the system which we have pointed out as being the consequence of the decree on the property of the Orleans family. Apart from progressive liberty, indicated by history, and the community of equals, adopted basically by all utopians, there is no other system. It is necessary beforehand that December 2 interest a part of the country in its views; that with that it conquers the rest; and as it intends to reserve the initiative to itself, that it cannot consent to any dismemberment of its authority, that it can

only offer its auxiliaries and adherents pecuniary rewards, grants of land, mines, etc., or commercial and industrial privileges;

Now, it is here that the contradiction would soon appear. December 2 would soon learn, through its experience, these truths above all government: that *work* and *commerce* are synonymous with *liberty*; that industrial liberty is bound up with political liberty; that any restriction brought to the latter is an obstacle for the former, consequently an impediment to labor and a prohibition of wealth; that exchange, lending, wages, all acts of the economic order, are free contracts to which any hierarchical condition is repugnant. As for the central power, it would see, and it is already up to it to see it, that the affairs of private individuals prosper only insofar as they have confidence in the government; that the only means of giving them this confidence is to make them themselves active members of the sovereign; that to exclude them from government is as much as to drive them from their industries and properties; and that a working nation, like ours, governed without the perpetual control of the tribune, of the press and the club, is a nation in a state of bankruptcy, already in the hands of the garrisons...

All the commonplaces are exhausted on the democratic nature of the tax, and the nation's right to fix it freely. December 2 knows this like everyone else: the constitution of January 15 was kind enough to recognize it. Why, then, do the same representatives who are called upon to vote for the total of the tax not have the right to discuss it in *detail*, and to make such reductions in it as they deem useful? France and its government, according to the voting system followed for taxation in the legislature, is like a trading house, formed by two individuals supposedly associated in a collective name, one of whom would be responsible for paying out of his products, on presentation of invoices, and without being able to ask for an account, the expenses for which fixation would be the exclusive privilege of the other. From where did December 2 take this mode of society and especially of accounting?....

Everything has been said in the same way about the public functionary. The public functionary, from the *supreme head of State* down to the lowest *valet de ville*, is the agent of the nation, the clerk, the delegate of the people. The January 15 constitution, like its predecessors, recognizes this democratization of state personnel. Why then is it only up to the Head of State to appoint to jobs, to fix their duties and salaries? Why do the 500,000 employees of the state form a separate body, caste, a nation, so to speak, under the exclusive dependence of the head of state? In this respect again, France resembles a domain whose exploitation would have been changed by the intendant into a *personal servitude*, established for his benefit, with the right for him, not only to transact in the name of the owner, but to *compromise*. Where did December 2 get this notion of mandate and property? This is not in the Napoleon code.....

I do not want my observations to degenerate into attacks, and that is why I am expressing them in legal style, confining myself to showing, with the help of

a few comparisons, and in the most concise forms, how much the exercise of the authority, so demanded in our day by lawyers without science, publicists without philosophy, statesmen equally devoid of practice and principles, has become incompatible with the most elementary notions of economics and right. Whichever way you look at it, December 2 — and when I say December 2, do I need to repeat over and over again that I include any other dictatorial or dynastic form? — the government, I say, is cornered between *an-archy* and *good pleasure*, obliged to choose between the natural tendencies of society, and the arbitrariness of man! And this arbitrariness is the perpetual violation of right, the negation of science, the revolt against necessity; it is war on the mind and on labor! Impossible.

I will not finish, after having touched on the impossibilities of the interior, without saying a word of those of the exterior.

If there is one thing that December 2 must have at heart, it is certainly to repair the disasters of 1814 and 1815, to raise the influence of our nation in the concert of Europe, to raise it to the rank of powers of the first order, supporting, if need be, this legitimate claim with arms.

Can December 2 do so, in the equivocal situation in which it has placed itself, between revolution and counter-revolution?

Rumors have circulated, and still find the credulous, of plans to descend into England, to invade Belgium, to incorporate Savoy, etc. These rumors have been denied *by order*: indeed, these are the things that one does not believe without having seen them, and when one has seen them one still does not believe them.

The people, who know nothing of war except the battles, who understand neither the reason nor the politics of it, can feast on these chimeras, wait for the President, having beaten the English, the Prussians, the Austrians, the Russians, and returning laden with treasures, to discharge the rolls of contributions accordingly. Everywhere other than in the cabaret, we know that war is the struggle of principles, and that any war that does not have as its object the triumph of a principle, as were the wars of Louis XIV and the Emperor, is a war doomed, and lost in advance.

Where then is the principle, the great interest, national and humanitarian, that Louis-Napoleon can invoke at this moment to be entitled to declare war on anyone?

The abolition of the treaties of 1815?

Most of those who have been talking about these treaties for twenty years do not know what they are about. The treaties of 1815, the work of the Holy Alliance, are the product of the imperial wars: in this respect, they take their place in history, following the Treaty of Westphalia. Their object is to form, in perpetuity, a crusade between the powers of Europe against any state which, like France from 1804 to 1814, tends to go beyond its natural or prescribed limits, and to incorporate portions of foreign territory. France, whose successive encroachments during ten years have been the occasion of these treaties, finds

herself more ill-treated there than the other powers: it has been driven back on this side of the Rhine, stripped, opened. Such was the law of war and the benefit of victory for the allies. We wanted to expand, we are defeated, we must pay and also provide security! Nothing can invalidate these treaties, nothing, I say, except the consent of the parties, or war, but war based on a new principle.

I therefore reproduce my question: This principle, where is it for December 2?

Louis-Napoleon has so far only served the Holy Alliance by striking down the democracy and the revolution; far from being able to protest against the treaties of 1815, in fact he adheres to them. It would be childish for him to expect from his allies, as a reward, the frontier of the Rhine. The only reward that Louis-Napoleon can obtain from the Holy Alliance is that it tolerates him, supports him, protects him, as guardian and tamer of the revolution, until circumstances, which he has made favorable, allow the allies to restore us a third time to our legitimate princes. It would certainly be illogical, the Holy Alliance, in contradiction with itself, it would lie to its goal and its principles, if, in waging war on the revolution, it recognized in Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte a dynast of essentially revolutionary origin, all the more so if they granted him, for joyful advent, a territory of five to six million inhabitants, with the most formidable strategic line in the world.

Now let Louis-Napoleon, using his prerogative, call to arms; let him, serving the counter-revolution with one hand and swearing with the other by the revolution, engage the country in a war with the Holy Alliance, for the frontier of the Rhine, he is the master. But let him also know that in such a claim public opinion would not follow him: it would see in his policy only a conquering fantasy, a national or domestic point of honor, without moral character, and by its abandonment it would cripple his efforts. So true is it that there is something legal in the treaties of 1815, which can only be released by a superior legality.

The revolution in the 19th century is this legality.

Let us remember what was said above, that Louis-Napoleon, as well as the Emperor, having capitalist feudalism as his main adversary, represented abroad by England, the true way of fighting England is not not to attack it in Egypt, Australia or India, any more than it is to cross the English Channel: it is to strike the enemy, at home first, in the relations of labor and capital.

Even before the revolution of 89, England had begun the conquest of the globe. How? By force of arms? No, it leaves this system to the French; — by the accumulation of its capital, the power of its industry, the extension of its commerce. Success has not failed it: there is no country today where it does not harvest. We ourselves pay tribute to its workers, to its engineers, to its capitalists; and already, by the acquisitions of property made by English subjects in our country, Great Britain is preparing the return of its preponderance on our territory. *Free exchange*, to which its bourgeois invite the peoples, by crushing all competition, is the last blow that it prepares to strike at the liberty of nations.

This is how England proceeds: no armed conquests, no incorporation of territories, no subjugated nations, no deposed dynasties: she allows herself none of this violence. It does not care to govern the peoples, provided it pressures them, witness Portugal: the *balance of commerce*, carried to its maximum power under the name of *free exchange*, such is the artillery of England.

We must therefore respond to a war of capital, above all, internally and externally, with a system of credit that cancels the superiority that England derives from its capitalized masses: then we can talk to the Holy Alliance. Already, by its financial decrees, December 2 marked the goal: let it achieve, let it not wait for more imperious necessities to constrain it to it. Either it thinks of negotiating, or it prepares for war, but it begins by making itself economically strong. Let it dare to accomplish in six months what its newspapers show in a perspective of 50 years; let it, by the combined reduction of rents and interests to the simple expenses of commission, change in their entirety the relations of labor and capital; let it cut, if I dare say so, the nerve to bourgeois feudalism, and then, let it in turn declare to England, no longer the *continental blockade*, avuncular madness, but *free exchange*; finally, let it abolish customs around it.... That done, here is the situation in which France would find itself, with regard to itself and abroad.

Inside, production increases by a quarter.... It is a rule of economics, one of the best demonstrated theorems of science, that the income from capital is produced, like tax, by labor; that in the inventory of the company, this revenue must not be added to the product, but be deducted from the product, like tax; that thus what is taken away from the income, as well as from the tax, benefits labor as much, which, by consuming it, recreates it, given that there is no unproductive consumption except that of the capitalist and the state; so that if, on an annual production of nine billion, four billion is levied for capital and for taxes, this levy being hypothetically abolished, at the same time that the consumption of the producers will double, their production will rise, *ipso facto*, from nine billion to thirteen. May December 2 render this signal service to the working classes, and it will be able to boast, at the national banquet, of not eating the shameful morsel! Its 12 million franc civil list will be counted to it as a commission, on the surplus of business it will have procured, of 1/2 or 1/4 percent...

Outside, Belgium, Savoy, part of Switzerland and Piedmont gravitate, with all the power of their industrial interests, towards France, a free market of 36 million consumers, consuming, according to what has just come from be told, like 45! Credited by French circulation and through their exchanges, these states operate in turn the liquidation of their capitalist and proprietary aristocracy, whose *confidence* cast down everywhere becomes the signal of public prosperity: they fall within the circle of attraction of France. Do not ask them then if, with their economic revolution, in solidarity with ours, with our language, our currencies, our codes, our trade, they want to be French! Do not offer them either

police inspectors or prefects: let them govern themselves as they please, preserve their frankness, enjoy first of all that civil and political independence that it will be necessary, sooner or later, to restore to each of our provinces. Content yourself, with these co-interested parties, with an offensive and defensive alliance that enables you, in the common peril, to count on their soldiers and their fortresses, as on your own. This reserve policy, soon understood, assures you of immense success. When the object of conquest was tribute, as in the time of the Eastern monarchies, the conquest, although brutal, was at least rational. Today pillage has ceased, for states as for individuals, to be a means of making a fortune. The real conquests are those of commerce: the example of England, for a century, proves it. How is it, when the spirit of nations has changed, that the forms of their diplomacy are just on a par with those of the Cambyses and the Ninias!....

After Belgium, Savoy, French Switzerland, Cisalpine Piedmont, neighboring countries, Italy. Rome, focus of eruption, projects its national flames to the north and south of the Peninsula. Tell it, President of the humanitarian republic, that we want it to live by itself and for itself, and it will live. With a word you will have resuscitated this nationality, slaughtered by you within the walls of Rome, after having been betrayed on the battlefield of Novarre!

Poland will have its turn; and the *King of the seas will not escape you*, caught in the democratic and social net...

With revolutionized France, foreign policy is easy to follow. The European center of gravity shifts, the new Carthage yields to the new Rome, and if it is necessary to fight, the war is holy, the victory is certain. But where would Louis-Napoleon, deserting the revolutionary idea, find a pretext to make the slightest demonstration on the continent in the name of France? Benevolent and gratuitous jailer of the democracy, accomplice and dupe of the counter-revolution, he does not even have the right to express a wish. He received the czar's compliments: what would he have to claim for Poland? He made, in concert with the Jesuits, with the soldiers of Austria and Naples, the campaign of Rome: things restored by him to the *status quo*, what remains for him to say in favor of the Italians? Thanks to his powerful diversion, reaction is master everywhere in Europe, on the Po, on the Rhine, on the Danube: what principle would represent, in the eyes of the Neapolitans, the Romans, the Lombards, the Dutch, the Westphalians, the family of the emperor? Does he believe that he is sought for his nobility, and MM. Louis, Jerome, Napoleon, Pierre, Charles, Antoine, Lucien Bonaparte and Murat, do they think they are clay from which sovereigns are kneaded by the grace of God, legitimate princes, absolute kings, and servants?...

Yes, citizens or gentlemen, you bear the greatest of modern names; you belong by flesh and blood to that of all men who best knew how to fanaticize the masses, and bend them under the yoke. Remember, however, that for some years he succeeded in containing them only because he represented in their eyes the armed Revolution; and that for not having been able, on the day marked by

circumstances, to be great through peace and liberty, as he had been by command and by war, for having put his free will in the place of the destiny that his star showed him, he perished, a pitiful thing, under his own unreason, leaving to the Homers of the future, if the future still produces Homers, the richest and most gigantic canvas, and almost nothing to history!...

One does not deceive the Revolution, even if one were the Emperor, alive and victorious; while it is mute, everyone ignores it, nobody speaks up for it, all the prejudices it fights are honored and encounter no contradiction, while the interests it serves are forget themselves or sell themselves.

And one would imagine that in order to defeat the revolution, all that will be needed is this imperial ash brought back from exile, today when the people no longer believe in ghosts, today when the revolution speaks at all hours, when men swear in its name, let the maidens sing it, let the little children repeat it, let the outcasts carry it to all the corners of the globe; today when absolute power makes because of it, night and day, the eve of arms, and when capital writhes under its violent embrace!

Powerlessness, powerlessness, powerlessness!... But could the Elysée tell me how long a government stripped of prestige and reduced to the daily life of powerlessness can last, in the presence of the growing revolution?...

X.

ANARCHY OR CAESARISM. — CONCLUSION.

If there is one fact that attests to the reality and force of the revolution, it is indisputably the events of December 2. Let France listen to them, and let Europe be taught by them: after the days of February and June 1848, those of December 1851 must count as the third eruption of the volcano.

Let us give an account of this shock that, more than any other, has marked a decisive step in the revolution.

France, throughout its whole history, from the Romans and the Franks, through Charlemagne and the Capetians, marches, in a continuous advance, to 89; by way of 89, it reaches 1848.

In 1848, as in 1789, everything, IN THE REALM OF THINGS, called for a revolution. But, unlike in 1789, there was in 1848, *in the realm of ideas*, nothing, or next to nothing, to cause it. The situation was ripe, but opinion lagged behind. From this discord between things and ideas spring all the incidents that have followed...

First, the socialist teaching.

The revolution imposing itself as a necessity, and public opinion resisting it because it did not understand it, the first labor had to be to reveal the social revolution to the country. So while the Provisional Government, the Executive Commission and General Cavaignac occupied themselves with maintaining order, socialism, with all the energy that circumstances demanded, organized its propaganda. It has been reproached for having *caused fear*, and it is still accused today of having, through its extravagances, compromised, doomed the republic! Yes, socialism has been frightening, and it boasts of it! One dies of fear as from any other malady and the old society will not recover from it. Socialism has been frightening! Was it necessary then, because others did nothing, could do nothing, that we silence ourselves! Must we, muting our drums, drop the idea along with the action?... Socialism has been frightening! What powerful minds, frightened by socialism, but who have not trembled before universal suffrage!...

Now, as socialism, frightening at first glance (and every idea is frightening when it first appears), could not pass without giving rise to a violent contradiction; just so, however, it was in the data of history and institutions that, on the one hand, socialism will grow under a general reaction and that, on the other, it will lay bare the foolishness of all its adversaries, from the Montagnards to the dynastics, and by that revelation of their lack of logic, cast them one after the other from the position of

power they have used against it.

There is not a fact that does not attest to the progress of socialism and does not show at the same time the successive, inevitable rout of its adversaries.

Why, from February to December 1848, have the republicans of every shade successively toppled? Because they have held themselves apart from socialism, which is the revolution; because apart from the social revolution the republic makes no sense; because it seems a compromise, a *doctrine*, an arbitrary act.

But why have the republicans, worshipers of 93, held themselves apart from the movement in 1848? Because they realized from the first that the social revolution is the negation of all hierarchy, political and economic; because this void can't bear their organizational prejudices, their habits of government; and because their minds, stopping at the surface of things, not discovering beneath the nakedness of the form the intelligible link of the new social order, recoil at that aspect, as before an abyss.

Thus, even as negation, as *tabula rasa* or rather as void, the revolution already exerts a power over the surrounding milieu; it is an attractive force, a destination, an aim, since by denying it the republicans seem to turn their backs on themselves and lose their way!

On December 10, Louis Bonaparte obtained the preference over General Cavaignac, who had however *been well worthy of the homeland*, whose civic-mindedness, selflessness and modesty will be noted by impartial history. Why that injustice in the election? Because General Cavaignac (destiny!) had to combat, in the name of law and order, the revolution in socialism; because then he was presented, in the name of revolution, as an adversary of the dynastic parties and as frankly republican; because, finally, in the face of that rigidity, at once constitutional and republican, the name of Bonaparte was raised: for the masses, as the hope of the swiftest revolution; for the partisans of the altar and throne, who steered them, as a hope of counter-revolution. Revolution, counter-revolution, the *yes* and the *no*, what does it matter! It is always the same passion that stirs, the same idea that directs.

Against whom was the war of Rome later undertaken? Against Mazzini? Go on then! Those who decreed the war on Rome were all as democratic as Mazzini. Like Mazzini, like Rossi, they had written on their flag: *Separation of the spiritual and the temporal! Government, secular and free!* The Revolution of Rome was waged against the social revolution.

Against what was the law of May 31 passed? — Against the revolution.

How, in 1849 and 1850, did the candidate selected by five and a half million votes manage to lose popularity? Through his alliance with the

reactionaries. How then did he recover his popularity? By affirming universal suffrage, the voice, one supposes, of the revolution. The people, in 1851, have received a remorseful Louis Bonaparte; like the father of the prodigal child, without listening to the observations of the wise son, they pardoned the repentant son.

Here we are, faced with the elections of 1852: on the left, the proposal for a recall of the Elysee, on the right the obstinacy of the law of May 31, and behind us the insurrection. The situation can not be more revolutionary. What will come of it?

Here, we can no longer judge the events from the point of view of legality and morals, of the regular exercise of power, of respect for the constitution, of the religion of the oath. History will pronounce on the morality of the acts: what is left to us it to note their inevitable side. Constitution, oath, laws, all have succumbed in the midst of the fierce competition: the bad conscience of one has absolved that of the other, and when royalty proclaims itself at the tribune, why should not the empire rise in the public square? Constitutional faith trampled underfoot by the majority, all that remains is the gross, *immoral* action of ambitions and parties, a blind instrument of destiny.

Such is then, in November 1851, the situation of the antagonistic forces: the revolution is represented by the republican left, and incidentally by the Élysée, which joins with it for the repeal of the law of May 31; — the counter-revolution has for organ the majority, and incidentally also the Élysée, which unites with it for all the rest, against the republican party.

The Elysée, the ambiguous element, without significance by itself, is at this moment fought by both parties, which tend, with an equal ardor, to eliminate it. It is in fact a question of knowing if France will be for the revolution or the counter-revolution. What is M. Bonaparte, that he has come to say: Neither one nor the other; France will be for me?...

However, at the sight of this enclosed field where its destinies will play out, what does the populace think? The populace is loathe to regress, but it dreads the revolutionaries. It is not only socialism that makes it afraid: it is a Montagnard reaction; it is the reprisals of the democracy!... This disposition of minds, which equally rejects, on the one hand, *the principle of the reaction* and, on the other *the men of the revolution*, assures the fortunes of the Élysée. The same reason that could grind it between the two armies gives it triumph over both: it affirms the revolution, and it protects the conservatives! It is a bilateral, contradictory solution, but still a logical one, given the state of opinion, which circumstances render almost inevitable.

The meaning of December 2, the idea that it represents is thus, quite genuinely, revolution. The remainder is a matter of *persons*, of party

intrigues, deals between coteries, private vengeance, autocratic manifestations, measures of public safety and state policy. This is the allowance left to the good pleasure of the government by the law of revolutions. But that ambiguity cannot last: every principle must produce its consequences, every power work through its idea. We have reached that point. What will Louis-Napoléon do?

I have reported the principal acts of December 2; I have highlighted their inspiration, half real, half personal, and the constant uncertainty. And we have been able to note that up until this moment the new power, arrested by the void of public opinion, abandoned to its own inspirations, directed, in the heart of the universal contradiction, more by the prudence of man than by the reason of things, instead of abandoning the double face that had given it the victory, tended instead, by virtue of its understanding of the delegation and according to its family traditions, to continue its *bascule* play and to transform, probably without knowing it, the existing institutions into a capricious feudalism.

I have shown then, through the example of the Emperor, the vanity of every political conception apart from the social synthesis, from the reason of history, from the indications of economics and from the revolutionary data. And, authorized by the analogy of eras, I have reminded Louis Bonaparte of his true mission, defined by himself, at the time of his first advent, *the end of the parties*: a definition that translates into this other, *the end of Machiavellian or personal politics*, which is to say *the end of authority itself*.

The negation of authority, and thus the disappearance of every governmental organism, could still appear, in 1849, as an obscure idea;¹ after December 2, not the least cloud remains. December 2 has highlighted the contradiction between governmentalism and the economy, between the State and society, in present-day France; what, four year ago, we could only have surmised through the rules of logic, has been made palpable today by the facts, infallible interpreters: the paradox has become a truth.

Let us summarize these facts, and prove by their analysis the truth of that triple proposition, which represents the whole movement of the last 64 years:

Individual or despotic government is impossible;
Representative government is impossible;
Government is impossible.

The principles upon which French society — let us say all free society — has rested since 89, principles prior and superior to the very notion of government, are:

¹ See *Confessions of a Revolutionary*, § xvi, 3rd edition.

1. *Free property*, what was called *quiritary* in Rome, and *allodial* among the barbarian invaders. That is absolute property, at least to the extent that we can find anything absolute among men; property that is directly and exclusively under the control of the owner, who administers, rents, sells, gives or hires it, at his pleasure, without giving any account to anyone.

Property must be transformed, undoubtedly, by the economic revolution, but not in the extent to which it is free: it must, on the contrary, ceaselessly gain in liberty and guarantees. The transformation of property centers on its *equilibrium*: it is something analogous to the principle that was introduced into the right of nations by the treaties of Westphalia and 1815.

2. *Free labor*, with all of its accessory notions — free profession, free trade, free credit, free science, free thought and free religion — which means the absolute right, *a priori*, without restriction or oversight, for every citizen to labor, manufacture, cultivate, extract, produce, transport, exchange, sell, buy, lend, borrow, negotiate, invent, learn, think, discuss, popularize, believe or not believe, etc., within the scope of their means, without any condition other than that of honoring their commitments, and also not disturbing anyone else in the exercise of the same rights.

Labor must also be revolutionized, like property, but with regard to its *guarantees*, not its initiative. To take the corporative organization for labor's guarantee would be to recommence the work of the middle ages, the eradication of slavery by feudalism.

3. The *natural distinction, egalitarian and free*, of industrial, mercantile, scientific, (etc.) specialties, according to the principle of the division of labor and apart from all spirit of caste.

Such are the *principles of 1789*, subject of the celebrated *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen*, recognized by the last constitution; and such, since that time, are the bases of our society.

Now, as the government must be the expression of society, as M. de Bonald puts it, we ask what the government can be in a society established on such bases?

It could not be a territorial feudalism, since property is free; nor an industrial, mercantile or financial feudalism, since labor is free, commerce free and credit free, or at least obviously in the process of becoming free; nor a regime of castes, since the professional specialties, according to their economic principle, are free; nor a theocracy, since conscience is also free. Will it be an absolute monarchy? No. Since the faculties of the man and citizen, labor, exchange, property, etc., converted into *rights*, are free, and their exercise is free, there no longer remains anything that could serve as motive or object of any sort of authority, and because the sovereign,

formerly the visible, personal incarnation of divine right, has become an abstraction, a fiction, namely the people.

So if a government forms in the society thus constituted, this government could only result from a delegation, convention or federation, in short from the free and spontaneous consent of all the individuals who make up the People, each of them stipulating and contributing in order to guarantee their interests. So that the government, if there is a government, instead of BEING THE AUTHORITY, as in the past, will *represent the relation* of all the interests engendered by free property, free labor, free commerce, free credit and free science, and will consequently itself have only a representative value, like the paper money that only has value because of the crowns it represents. At base, the representative government has for a symbol and can be defined as an *assignat*.

Thus the democratic and representative nature of the government flows from the essentially free nature of the interests whose relations it indicates: these interests given, every appeal to any sort of authority becomes nonsense. In order for the government to cease to be democratic, in a society formed in this way, and for authority to reappear, it would be necessary that the faculties that have been declared free cease to be so; that property was no longer property, but fief; commerce no longer commerce, but excise; credit no longer credit, but servitude, corvée, tithe and mortmain — all of which is contrary to the hypothesis.

Need I repeat what everyone knows, that the thought of 89, and that of all the constitutions that have been inspired by it, has been to organize the movement in such a way that it was the representation of the free interests on which society rests, and that this is still the pretension of December 2! The government of December 2, like all the powers that have preceded it since 89, flatters itself that it represents *par excellence* the relation of the interests recognized as free, both by nature and *a priori*. Neither it nor any of its predecessors have ever suspected what role there is for a government — which, incidentally, aims for authority — but to be a *representation*, the representation of a *relation*, of a relation of *interests*, and of interests that are *free!!!*

So the government exists today only because it *represents*. It does not enjoy, as one says in school, *aseity*; it does not establish itself; it is a product of the good pleasure of the liberties, of the inclination of the interests. Is such a government possible? Is there not a contradiction between all these terms: *Government, representation, interests, liberties, relation?*... Instead of giving ourselves up at this point to a discussion of categories, keeping the reader immersed in metaphysics, let us engage in history.

Let us suppose that, in the order of political understanding, as in every other order of knowledge, abstract ideas gradually take the place of

concrete ideas. The government, instead of being considered as the *representation* or personification of the social relations, which is only a materialist and idolatrous conception, should be conceived as being that relation itself, something less poetic perhaps, less favorable to the imagination, but more in conformity with the habits of logic. The government, no longer distinguishing itself from the interests and liberties to the extent that both are put in relation, ceases to exist. For a relation, a law, can be written, as one writes an algebraic formula, but *does not represent*, in the governmental and theatrical sense of the word, does not embody and cannot become a whole army of performers, appointed to act out before the people the *relation of the interests!* A relation is a pure idea, which is recorded in a few figures, characters, symbols or terms, in a book, in an agreement, in a contract, but which has no reality except that of the very objects that are in relation.

Well! The most positive, the only positive result of all the governments that have passed through France since 89 has been to bring to light this simple truth as a definition, obvious as an axiom: *Government is the relation of liberties and interests.*

And that first proposition given, the consequences follow swiftly: that from now on politics and economics are merged; that in order for there to be a relation of interests, the interests themselves must be present, responding, stipulating, committing themselves and acting; that in this way the social reason and its living emblem are one and the same thing; that, in the last analysis, everyone being the government, there is no longer any government. So the negation of government arises from its definition: Whoever says representative government, says relation of interests; whoever says relation of interests, says absence of government.

And indeed, the history of the last sixty years proves that the interests are no more free or in relation with the representative government than with the despotic; that in order for them to maintain themselves in the conditions of their declaration, which are those of their existence, they must negotiate directly among themselves, according to the law of their solidarity and without intermediary. Apart from that, property once again becomes fief, labor servitude, commerce toil; the corporations reform, philosophy is at the discretion of the Church, science, in the hands of the Cuviers and Flourens, says only what pleases theology and the pope: there are no longer either liberties or interests!

The interests, in their famous declaration, had said that conscience would be free. — The representative of those interests declares, in 1814, that the Catholic religion is the religion of the State; in 1830, that it is the religion of the majority, which, in terms of practice and finances, amounts to exactly the same thing. In fact, in 1852, the Catholics, under the pretext that they are the majority, exclude the dissidents from public education,

remove academic chairs, and close the schools to the Protestants and the Jews. So that every citizen, whether or not they have an interest in any belief, pays first for all the religions; and if they have the misfortune to be Jew or Protestant, they are excommunicated by the Catholics, not as Jew or a Protestant, but as part of the religious minority. Where is the liberty and where is the relation?

In the same declaration, the interest express their wish that thought be free. — The representative of the interests, of the relation of interests, maintains, on his side, that he cannot fulfill his mandate in the presence of that liberty; that he needs the interests to say nothing, write nothing and read nothing, since, if they look too closely at things, if they gave an opinion, their security and that of the State would find itself compromised. The Emperor suppresses the newspapers, the Restoration creates the censorship, the July Monarchy makes the September laws, the republic *septemberizes* the papers, December 2 gives them *warnings*. Where is the liberty of the interests? Where is their relation? And what a strange manner of representing the interests, which reduces them to silence!...

In the expectations of the interests, war should be the last argument to which the nation would have recourse in order to preserve the peace. Apart from the case of war, the maintenance of a permanent army seemed to them an anomaly that the institution of the national guards had especially aimed to end. — But the representative of the interests, *leader of the armies of land and sea*, always finds some reason to assert his title; and when he does not make war, he still keeps his armies complete, under the pretext that without them he cannot address domestic order, maintain the peace between the interests! So the interests are not in relation or, to put it better, that relation is not represented, since the representative can only keep the peace by force.

The interests demand government at the lowest price, the moderation of taxes, their equitable division, economy in expenditures, the payment of debts! — To this the representative of the interests responds that in order to be governed well, one must pay well; that a large budget is a mark of wealth and strength, an enormous debt a condition of stability. And the budget, along with the debt, doubles in fifteen years! Isn't this the mystification of the interests?

Vineyards are one of the principal sources of wealth for the country. It would be necessary, in order to encourage cultivation, to insure the wines and brandies the outlets they need, by eliminating at least three quarters of the duties on beverages, which would at the same time give great pleasure to the people, who go without wine. — What does the representative of the interests say regarding this? That the duties on beverages are the most important category of his revenue, the finest jewel

in his crown; that to replace them is impossible; that to eliminate them would be to drive him to bankruptcy. To complete the contradiction, he closes the cabarets! So that, if the wine-growing interest is not repressed, crushed, sacrificed, the other interests cannot be represented! Where is the liberty for the vineyard? Where is its relation with the other cultures, with industry and commerce?...

But, excuse me! It is not the wine-growers alone who complain: agriculture demands salt; the worker demands meat, sugar, tobacco, coal, leather, canvas and wool. The worker is naked and dies of hunger. — The representative of the suffering interests — and these interests are all the interests! — says through his newspapers and his orators that it is not true that that salt is indispensable to agriculture and livestock, as if he would know better than the farmers! As if it was up to him, their representative, to decide the matter!... That, moreover, he would be happy to achieve for the people the wish of Henri IV, *the chicken in the pot*, but that the interest of the French breeders, that of the manufacturers of native sugar, etc., etc., does not allow the introduction into the country, *franc de port*, of the livestock, sugar, coal, etc. that the people need for their consumption. So much so that the interests are sacrificed, by their own representative, to the relation of the interests, and that by virtue of that relation, according to the testimony of the representative, the nation could not become rich without at the same instant being ruined! So what use is the government? Isn't it clear that the representation of the relation only represents one thing, which is that the relation does not exist?

For twenty years the interests have demanded, without the power to obtain them, some institutions of credit. Finally, a decree of December 2 organizes the *crédit foncier*: that is all that it can do. But as it has no funds, the institution is only a coffer that will remain empty until it pleases the interests to fill it. It is clear — despite what has been said by the famous Law, cited by Mr. Thiers — that the State does not give credit, but on the contrary receives it: which means that the representative of the interest finds himself, in the matter of credit, absolutely incapable of action, if he is not himself represented by the interests that he represents!

The relation of the interests demonstrates that the canals must be delivered to the inland shipping trade *gratis*. The representative of the interests establishes a tariff on the canals and leases them. Why? Because that helps out his friends and provides him with an income. So the representative of the interests has other interests than the interests!

The relation of interests demands that the posts, the railways and all the instruments of public utility be operated at the lowest price, and without interest to capital. The representative of the interests makes the people pay for the transport of letters, persons and goods, at the highest price; individuals do not even have the security of their correspondence.

Thus far we have believed that it was up to the principals to testify their confidence in the agent: not at all, it is the agent who says they do not have confidence in their principals!

The interest of families, a universal and absolute interest, which no one can gainsay, demands that instruction be given to the child by men who have the confidence of the father, according to principles that are agreeable to him. The representative of the family interest, the highest expression of paternal power, hands education over to the ignorant and the Jesuits; and that, under the pretense that he not only represents the fathers, but also represents the children!... What do you say, fathers, regarding this conscientious representation? ...

On every point, the representative of the liberties and interests is in contradiction with liberty, in revolt against the interests: the only relation that it expresses is their common servitude!

So what will it be necessary to say to you, race of sheep, to prove to you that a relation, an idea is not *represented*, as you are inclined to understand it; that liberty, even more so, is not represented either; that to represent it is to destroy it; and that from the day when our fathers made, before God and men, the *declaration of their rights*, positing in principle the free exercise of the faculties of the man and citizen — from that day, authority was denied in heaven and on earth, and government, even by means of delegation, became impossible?

Return, if you wish, to feudal customs, to theocratic faith, or to the piety of Caesar; regress ten, twenty or forty centuries, but speak no more of liberties represented, of rights and interests represented, because the liberties and interests, taken collectively and in their relations, are not represented, and because the representative of a nation, just like the representative of a family, of a property or of an industry, can only be its leader and master. The representation of the interests is the reconstitution of authority!

Anarchy or vaesarism then, M. Romieu has told us; the Jesuits say it to you, and for the hundredth time I repeat it. Seek no more red herrings, no more middle ground. For sixty years that has all been exhausted and the experience has made you see that this middle ground is only, like Dante's purgatory, a sphere of transition where souls, in an agony of conscience and thought, are prepared for a higher existence.

Anarchy, I tell you, or caesarism: you will no longer escape from that choice. You didn't want the honest, moderate, conservative, progressive, parliamentary and free republic; you are caught between the *Emperor* and the *Social Revolution!* Decide, now, which you want more: for, in truth, Louis-Napoléon, if he falls, will only fall, like his uncle, by revolution, and for the revolution; and the proletarian, whatever happens, will tire less than you. Is it not for him that the revolution will be made, and until the

revolution, isn't he the friend of Caesar?...

But Caesarism! Has the merry councilor of the Elysee thought about it? Caesarism became possible among the Romans when the conquest of the world was added to the victory of plebes over the patricians, as a guarantee of subsistence. Then Caesar could pay his veterans with land taken from the foreigners, pay his praetorians with foreign tributes and feed his plebes with products from abroad. Sicily and Egypt furnished grains; Greece its artists; Asia its gold, perfumes and courtesans; Africa its monsters; the Barbarians their gladiators. The pillage of nations organized for the consumption of the Roman plebes — the lazy, ferocious, monstrous masses — and for the security of the Emperor: that is Caesarism. That lasted, as best it could, three centuries, until the coalition of the foreign masses, under the name of Christianity, had filled the empire and conquered Caesar.

It is a question today of something very different. We have lost our conquests, those of the Emperor and those of the republic. We do not draw a penny from abroad with which we can pay alms to the last of the Decembrists, and Algeria costs us, in good years or bad, 100 million. In order to triumph over the bourgeoisie, the capitalists and proprietors, and to contain the middle class, [which is] industrious and liberal, and reigning through the plebes, it is no longer a question of maintaining the masses with the remains of the vanquished nations; it is a question of making them live on their own product, of making them work. How will Caesar do it? That is the question. Now, however it is done, he addresses himself to Saint-Simon, Fourier, Owen, Cabet, Louis-Napoléon, etc., we are in full socialism, and the last word of socialism is, along with *non-interest, non-government!*

Do you believe, I am asked at this moment, by an indiscreet, perhaps malicious curiosity, that December 2 accepts the revolutionary role in which you confine it, as in the circle of Popilius? Would you have faith in its liberal inclinations? And based on this inevitability, so well demonstrated by you, of the mandate of Louis-Napoléon, would you rally to his government, as to the best or least worst of transitions? That is what we want to know and what we await from you!...

— I will respond to that question, which is a bit suggestive, with another:

Do I have a right to suppose, when the ideas that I have defended for four years have obtained so little success, that the head of the new government will adopt them straightaway and make them his own! Have they taken on, in the eyes of opinion, that character of impersonality, reality, and universality, which would impose them on the State? And if these ideas, all still young, are still hardly anything but the ideas of one

man, from whence would come the hope that December 2, who is also a man, will prefer them to his own ideas!...

I write so that others will reflect in their turn and, if there is cause, so that they will contradict me. I write so that, truth being manifested and elaborated by opinion, the revolution — of the government, with the government or even against government — can be accomplished. As for men, I readily believe in their good intentions, but even more in the misfortune of their judgment. It is said in the book of Psalms: *Put not your trust in princes, or in the children of Adam*, — that is to say in those whose thought is subjective, — *because salvation is not in them!* So I believe, and unfortunately for us all, that the revolutionary idea, ill-defined in the minds of the masses, poorly served by its popularizers, still leaves to the government the full choice of its politics; I believe that the power is surrounded with impossibilities that it does not see, contradictions that it does not know, traps that the universal ignorance conceals from it. I believe that any government can endure, if it wishes, by affirming its historical reasons and placing itself under the direction of the interests that it is called to serve, but I also believe that men change little and that if Louis XVI, after having launched the revolution, had wanted to withdraw it, if the Emperor, or if Charles X and Louis-Philippe had preferred to doom it than to continue it, it is improbable that those who succeeded them would have straightaway and spontaneously made themselves its promoters.

That is why I hold myself apart from government, more inclined to pity it than to make war against it, devoted solely to the homeland, and I join myself body and soul with that elite of workers, head of the proletariat and middle class, the party of labor and progress, of liberty and the idea, which, understanding that authority is nothing, that popular spontaneity is of no use; that liberty that does not act is lost, and that the interests that need to put themselves in relation with an intermediary which represents them are interests sacrificed, accepts for its goal and motto *the Education of the People*.

O homeland, French homeland, homeland of the bards of the eternal revolution! Homeland of liberty, for, despite all your servitude, in no place on the earth, neither in Europe, nor in America, is the mind, which is all of man, so free as it is with you! Homeland that I love with that accumulated love that the growing son bears for his mother, that the father feels grow along with his children! Will I see you suffer for a long time yet, suffer not for yourself alone, but for the world that rewards you with its envy and its insults; to suffer, innocent, only because you do not know yourself?... It seems to me at every instant that you are at your last ordeal! Awaken, mother. Neither your princes, your barons nor your counts can do anything for your salvation, nor can your prelates know

how to comfort you with their benedictions. Guard, if you wish, the memory of those who have done well and go sometimes to pray at their monuments, but do not seek their successors. They are finished! Commence your new life, O first of immortals; show yourself in your beauty, Venus Urania; spread your perfumes, flower of humanity!

And humanity will be rejuvenated, and its unity will be created by you: for the unity of the human race is the unity of my homeland, as the spirit of the human race is nothing but the spirit of my homeland.

END.

