

NO MORE GOVERNMENT!

SELECTED WRITINGS BY

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exile of December 2

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NO MORE GOVERNMENT!

Your enemy is your master.

Our correspondent wants no more leaders, no more powers, no more government. He does not even want that of Science, and *Pantocracy* sums up, in his eyes, the Law and the Prophets.

We know very well that the philosophical spirit is drawn into this current, and that the abolition of authority, the last consequence of free examination, has, as a corollary, the abolition of government, the last consequence of sovereignty.

It is nearly half a century since German philosophy marked, in these terms, the last human development, and we heard only yesterday, one of its students from France call, to great clamor, the social evolution: *Anarchy*.

We are not with these ideas, in current politics and as a duty of the day.

The authority of individual reason can only pass into facts, into all facts, when science has clarified the questions, and justice has regulated interests, justice and science will be understood and practiced as religion. Until then, *Pantocracy* would be nothing but anarchy, chaos and dissolution.

Let us not dream of the stars!

Fifty years ago, when Europe rushed towards the French Republic, what would have become of the revolution and the homeland, if there had been *Pantocracy* and not the *Committee of Public Safety*? Well! The revolution is, today, more threatened, more failing than in 93: we have lost our day of battle, and defeat can only be recovered by *organizing*.

If victory comes to us, let us disarm the power, watch over men, spread light, make science and conscience, simplify the law, constitute sovereignty in the people for the great general laws; but let us be careful not to leave all direction to the *Pantocracy*, which is still, alas! only ignorance on the one hand and vices on the other.

Civilization would soon be nothing more than dust, and from this dust thousands of Caesars would be born!

Charles RIBEYROLLES.

Power, that is Pandora's box, from which all the evils of humanity have emerged.

It is power that crucified and tortured the initiators, like Jesus and Galileo, that ordered the martyrdom of the first Christians, the massacre of the Albigensians, the horrors of Saint Bartholomew's Day, the dragonnades of the Cévennes and the hunt for the socialists.

It is power that has bloodied the earth with all the wars of conquest and succession; it is the power that has produced the ferocious beasts of history, the Nimrods, the Attilas and the Napoleons, all these scourges of God that have taken the peoples as prey.

It is power, finally, that, through its competition, has caused the bloody struggles of the parties and the civil dissensions, from Sylla to the Second of December.

Since all these calamities come from power, the logical conclusion is that it must be suppressed, so that they disappear. Immediately liberty and equality are made in humanity, and with them the balance is reestablished in the social world.

So I come to register myself loudly against every power, against all authority, against all government. I want no more leaders; whether they are by birth, conquest or election; whether they are called kings or emperors, decemvirs or triumvirs, because it is always the leaders who, the day after a revolution, when they have not prevented it the day before, have, either by ambition or by incapacity, confiscated or squandered the advantages that the people had just conquered over their enemies at the price of their blood.

The sovereignty of the people, that is to say the right and the power of each to develop all their faculties and to satisfy all their needs, that is the goal of true democracy; the Republic, that is its expression; but it will only deserve this name when it is no longer a form of government, but rather the management of all and for all of the affairs of all. It will not be delegation, because any delegation supposes transfer and consequently the stripping of a right; nor direct government, nor even the government of science, because the word government is essentially repugnant to the future organization. But as humanity will have passed successively through *Autocracy*, *Aristocracy* and *Democracy*, powers of one, of a few or of the greatest number, it will finally arrive after a more or less long lapse of time, at true sovereignty, at *Pantocracy* (power of all), or rather at the suppression of all power, because, as has been rightly said, when everyone is master, no one is master.

It has been claimed that the sovereignty of the people is only a chimera, a utopia; but has not every new idea, thwarting powerful interests, always been treated in this way? Has it not been observed that this sovereignty is constantly moving towards its realization, in humanity, through various phases and momentary obscurations. Is the sun any less the sun, because from time to time it is covered by a cloud? The sovereignty of the people is so little chimerical, that it forms in some way the background of the public conscience, which constantly aspires towards it, and its greatest enemies are forced, in order to maintain themselves, to invoke its name. What has the tyrant who oppresses France today done, for example? Has he not proclaimed loudly that the sovereignty of the people was the basis of his Empire and his legitimacy? Hypocrisy, you will say: yes, but hypocrisy which is no less a solemn homage paid to a sacred principle, a homage which has all the more value because it comes from a powerful enemy.

Others, while admitting the sovereignty of the people as possible, have said that it is only achievable by the most moral and the most intelligent, as if the sovereignty of the people and aristocracy of some kind are not two words that cry out against being coupled? The aristocracy that is proposed to us in this seductive form would even be the worst of all, because it would be all the more ardent in imposing its will, as it would act by reasoned conviction; and yet we know only too well that the most intelligent are far from being impeccable and infallible. It has been said that the bed of power drives mad those who lie on it and a Vincent de Paul, having become a minister, would be nothing more than a Guizot or a Metternich.

So no more authority, no more governments; but the sovereignty of the people, which is, I repeat, the right and the power for each to develop all his faculties and to satisfy all his needs. I say right and power, because the right that would remain among the abstractions of metaphysics, without having its application in the facts, for the benefit of the one to whom it belongs, would be null or rather would be only a bitter derision.

Sovereignty is imprescriptible and inalienable; it has its source in the very nature of the human species. All the thefts, all the usurpations exercised on it by the despots and aristocrats of all times and of all colors must be considered as null and void. Until it has been reintegrated in its entirety, without any hindrance, its claim is for all and for each the most sacred of duties.

Nature has made men to be equal and free; all have the right to live, and no one has the right to put an obstacle to it by monopolizing what is necessary for the life of others; All have the right to develop their faculties, to enlarge the circle of their intelligence and no one has the right to retain them in the stupefaction and darkness of ignorance, to better enslave them. In a word, no one is made to command his fellow men and to dominate them.

In a society organized as it should be, the weak will no longer be oppressed, because physical or intellectual strength will not create more rights, but more duties. It will be the true order that will bear on its flag this noble motto: from each according to his faculties, to each according to his needs. Then there will be no more princes or subjects, masters or slaves, bourgeois or proletarians; there will be freedom in equality, that is to say the sovereignty of all.

Consequently, no more *legislative* power in the current sense of the word. But instead of the omnipotent assemblies and aristocratic councils that have existed had until now, even in what has been falsely called *democracy*, it will be enough for the people to have in their midst and to keep under their constant control an office, always revocable and accountable for its acts, functioning under the public eye, without any authority over the legislation and charged simply with elucidating, coordinating and publishing the proposals, emanating from individual or other initiative, which will be addressed to it and to record the vote. This office, established to help with the vote and to accelerate it, can be multiplied at will according to the territorial constituencies and according to the scope and extent of the proposals to be submitted to universal suffrage. There will be, if one wishes, the communal, cantonal, departmental, national, European, even humanitarian offices, according to the needs of the thing. The proposals being thus elaborated and submitted to universal suffrage, the people assembled in their *comitia*, or elsewhere, if they judge it appropriate, in the commune will vote yes or no and their decision will be law; this law will itself be either communal or cantonal or departmental and according to the amount and nature of the interests to which it will apply.

And there will be no fear that the people will neglect to go to this ballot box of a new kind. When they will have experienced that their vote procures them the well-being that until then they had sought in vain in any other way; they will be all the more assiduous in their *comitia*, as they had shown themselves cold and indifferent to the elections of the past, when there was repeatedly only a comedy of suffrage, the outcome of which always turned against them.

But, one might say, will the people thus find themselves obliged to be constantly in the public square? Not at all, because the law, no longer being oppressive or restrictive, will no longer contain the thousand subtleties and civil or criminal quibbles of the codes of the past and will become much, much simpler. It will bear solely on questions of production

and consumption, the relationships among which will be recognized by social science, which, by becoming more and more popular, will make cases of legislation increasingly rare. Yes, we are convinced of it, a day will come when the normal laws of society will be established and put to the use of all, like the other laws of nature, like steam, like electricity, etc., and when their applications, having become easy, will fall into the common domain, as, so to speak, the chemical match invented by science and producing light in the hands of all.

As for the *executive* power, such as it is constituted, it must also disappear completely. No more kings with or without the Charter, no more presidents who commit perjury and then become emperors, no more praetorian army shooting the people who pay for it, no more of these so-called administrations, composed of parasites and thieves, living richly off public funds, no more hierarchies of servants bedecked in gold. When tyrants with governments of all kinds have been exterminated from the surface of the earth that they squeeze and defile, when the barriers that separate nations have fallen and the people have understood that solidarity must unite them, war will have become impossible and the disguising of our cut-throat generals will serve only to amuse the onlookers at the fair. If the misfortune of the times still requires the maintenance of an armed force, until the fall of the last tyrant, let it be organized in such a way that it can only be the sword of liberty in the hands of the people. Then, when politics, that worn-out and decrepit courtesan, has disappeared from the world stage, ministers and prefects, soldiers and customs officers, informers and gendarmes, all the poisonous mushrooms, all the greedy plants of today's society, which they gnaw and devour, will return to nothingness, with the governmentalism of which they were the supporters. There will be only one thing standing, the sovereignty of the people, functioning itself or supervising its employees who will only act in broad daylight and who will be constantly revocable and seriously responsible for the work with which they are charged.

As for justice, it will have become extremely simple to render, while the long list of imaginary crimes and offenses, invented by despotism, will have been annihilated, with the interminable series of absurd or cruel penalties. The popular jury, no longer sorted and chosen, but drawn by lot from among all citizens entitled to vote and assisted by a simple rapporteur, taken from its midst, will pronounce on the incriminated fact. The penalties inflicted on the guilty party, according to the gravity of the fault, will be public remonstrance, a more or less long stay in a colony of repentance, and banishment from the territory of the Republic. But in the future society, human life will be declared inviolable; no more gallows or scaffolds, which are horrifying; no more prisons or penal colonies where man becomes brutalized and degraded; it will be understood that the guilty party must be moralized and not made to suffer, in order to take revenge. No more gangrenous and rotten magistracy, with double standards; it will have been thrown into the street.

The police of the city will no longer be anything but a guarantee and a mutual insurance and will be carried out in turn by each citizen.

When humanity has thus broken all its shackles, it will put at its own service all the means of instruction and well-being that the privileged monopolized in the past, and progressing continually, it will end up reaching its goal. Then the revolutionary period,

which I have called *Democracy*, will be closed to make way for *Pantocracy* or the advent of universal sovereignty.

But let us be certain, the first decisive step on the straight path to this promised land will only be made with this saving cry: NO MORE GOVERNMENT! Humanity may roll around on its bed of anguish; it may pile revolution upon revolution, if it does not escape the infernal circle of proprietary powers and constituted authorities, there will always be misery and machine-gun fire.

So, citizens, to work against all government, whatever its form. All tyranny must be destroyed and the old world must collapse. Let us prepare ourselves for the last battle against the genius of evil, for the gigantic battle that must change the face of the earth for the benefit of the disinherited and let us give, if necessary, the last drop of our blood, to hasten the triumph of the sovereignty of the people and of humanity, through the universal, democratic and socialist Republic.

Benj. COLIN.

L'Homme, journal de la démocratie universelle (April 19, 1856)

TO FRANCE.

You sleep, France, and you are in irons! You, the advance guard of progress and the future, how long will you tolerate the ignominious régime that oppresses you, and remain sunk in torpor?

Does the blood of the victors of the Bastille and of the 10 August no longer flow in your veins?

Are 1830 and 1848 dead dates in your history?

Would you drink the cup of shame to the lees, without spewing it in the face of the eunuchs who present it to you?

If this were the case, nearly all hope would be lost for humanity.

But, no, it will not be this way. A day will come, and that day is perhaps not far off, when rising from your apathy and shaking off a terror unworthy of you, remembering your victories over despotism, you will rise, glorious in your energy and indignation, to exterminate the ignoble tyrant who oppresses you, with his crowd of vile lackeys.

Your anger will be that much more terrible the more it is contained, and as you will have to wash clean your honor, dragged through the muck by tasseled and mitered louts, and by the heroes of the late empire. You will avenge on the heads of the bandits and crooks, who have tracked them like wild beast, your dearest children, who made themselves the purest defenders of the Republic, and the right shamefully outraged. Woe, then, woe unto those who have cravenly tortured, transported, and shot them down, who have spilled the tears of their widows and orphans. For them, there will be neither grace nor mercy; there will be the justice of the people who will blow them away in a hurricane of iron and fire.

But it is of you above all, Bonaparte the perjurer, Bonaparte the counterfeiter, Bonaparte the assassin, whose hands are still steaming with the blood of CHARLET, with the blood of the martyrs of Clamecy and Béziers, it is of you, the great culprit, that a rigorous account will be demanded of your crimes and of your infamies. Your mad and petty ambition desires bagatelles and a Crown. Well! Listen: if on the steep slope where you slide, you are not stopped by the dagger of a Brutus, you could one day be crowned, as you deserve, by the hand of the executioner!!!

BENJAMIN COLIN, Exile of the 2 December.

THE TRUTH ABOUT DECEMBER 2.

Much has been said thus far about December 2 and its crimes; we have told all about the savage acts of a perjured power, which wanted to gather gold in the mud and in the blood. But what we have even seemed afraid to research and to delve into is the primary cause of our disasters and the insolent success of the bandits of the Elysée. And yet is it not better to point out the pitfall with a bit of light than to leave it in the dark?

We believe we have explained everything by saying that December 2 succeeded because the people did not do their duty. This explanation, which may seem conclusive to superficial minds, is not one for the man who thinks. It is not enough to always repeat that the people did not do their duty; it would also be necessary to say why they did not do it. Is it because they lacked courage, or rather is it not because they were stopped in their momentum and in their invincible strength by those who were still involved in leading them?

Well! If the republic is no more; if it died, assassinated by a drunken soldiery, the fault is not that of the people, but of their visible or invisible leaders.

If the proletarians of Paris did not move paving stones on December 2, it is because they had seen up close and had appreciated at their true value the chatterboxes of the Palais-Bourbon. They knew only too well that this so-called National Assembly was composed in the majority only of stupid or dishonest reactionaries, declared enemies of the people and of all liberties, and that among the representatives of the Mountain many were unfortunately only laughing Montagnards, as afraid of the JACQUES as the Royalists themselves.

The system of temporization and patience, so long employed under Louis Philippe, and put on the agenda of the secret societies by the informer Lucien de La Hodde, while he commanded them for the benefit of the police, this fatal system of enervating the living forces of democracy, had been constantly preached and recommended by the Dantons of the left, in the presence of the most flagrant violations of the Constitution and the most direct attacks on the Republic. It was however easy to foresee that the hero of Strasbourg and Boulogne would not wait for the month of May 1852 without giving in to a whim. But such was the blindness or treason of some of them, that they went so far as to treat as agents provocateurs the men of heart, whose blood boiled in their veins at the sight of the outrages done to the democracy.

Thus I can cite a fact, which is to my personal knowledge and which will suffice in itself to characterize here the Montagnards of whom I speak. Following the plot of Lyon, in which I was compromised, it pleased the magistrates-argouins of Monsieur Bonaparte to release me after having made me go more than 200 leagues, from brigade to brigade, in the snow, handcuffs on my hands and a chain around my neck, in the company of thieves and assassins. On leaving prison, I was charged by Alphonse Gent with a special mission to a certain number of representatives of the left.

From Lyon I went to Paris; but I was far from being amazed by the revolutionary zeal of those to whom I addressed myself; from then on I saw clearly that the Republic was lost with such leaders. There were even some who were absurd enough, or rather cowardly

enough, to treat Alphonse Gent, the condemned man at Nouka-Hiva, as an agent provocateur. It is true that Baudin was not of this opinion; but he too was slandered by the tacticians and the clever; however, he has since shown that he understood better than others what duty is; he died on a barricade, defending the Republic.

What do you want us to do with people of this kind, said the people of Paris and they let the coup d'état pass without deigning to lend the support of their arms to an assembly fallen into the mud. They saw there only a quarrel of political jealousy, between two rival powers, equally enemies of their rights; and as they no longer want to take part in palace revolutions which have no other result for them than to change masters; as they no longer aspire to shed their blood for Antony or Octavian, for dictators or Caesars, they have folded their arms, awaiting the hour of the social revolution for which they reserve all their strength.

The day it breaks out, the lion that was believed to be asleep will show that it knows how to roar.

That is all for Paris.

As for the departments, if innumerable battalions of ardent and devoted democrats have not risen up as one man, at all points at once, in the towns and in the hamlets, it is because the revolutionary ardor and the generous instincts of the masses were compressed and stifled by bourgeois leaders, in whom they still had a vestige of confidence and from whom they expected a word of order that they have refrained from giving. They feared being overwhelmed by a general movement, terrible in its justice, and of not being able to direct, at the whim of their ambition, the impetuous torrent, which would swallow up in its vengeful waters all the iniquities of the past. So they paralyzed everything from the beginning, in order to finally abort everything.

This is the truth about December 2, a truth to which facts, under the title of SOUVENIRS, will serve as proof.

And now people, instruct yourselves in this supreme lesson of misfortune; finally learn to do without leaders and masters; remember that in revolution one needs audacity, always audacity and do not listen in the future to the timid advice of men who say they are skillful and prudent, when they are only traitors or cowards.

BENJAMIN COLIN,
exile of December 2.